

BEAR CREEK, Yukon
FHBRO Number: **89-08**
DFRP Number: **20008**
V.I.P. Guest House (Building #11)
Bear Creek Compound

The V.I.P. Guest House (Building #11) is made up of two small cabins with a common roof. The oldest part of the building dates from 1905-1908 and is said to have been the residence of Joseph Whiteside “Klondike Joe” Boyle, a person of national historic significance. Boyle was the founder of the Canadian Klondike Mining Company, which established the Bear Creek complex, a service facility for the gold mining operations later run by the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation (YCGC). The house served as the home of the facility’s superintendent until 1936, when it was converted into office space. It was reverted back to residential use in 1941, after its office functions were relocated to the new Engineering Office (Building #28). Operations at the Bear Creek complex ceased in 1966, and the property was acquired by Parks Canada, the present custodian, in 1975.

Reasons for designation

The V.I.P. Guest House (Building #11) is a “Recognized” Federal Heritage Building because of its historical, architectural, and environmental values:

The V.I.P. Guest House, part of which is one of the oldest extant structures within the Bear Creek Compound, represents an important symbol of the beginnings of the corporate phase of Yukon’s gold mining history and may have served as the residence of the founder of the Canadian Klondike Mining Company. It is also one of the best examples of the early residential development within the service facility, and of the need to adapt buildings to meet new requirements.

The V.I.P. Guest House is simple and functional in design, and exhibits good workmanship and appropriate use of materials. Its irregular form is clad with horizontal wood siding, like other residential buildings on the site, but its unusual gambrel-like roof shape (resulting from the joining of two existing gable roofs) distinguishes it from its neighbours. Its residential function is reinforced by the front verandah. The post-and-mudsill foundation, with its insulated box skirting, demonstrates an approach to building on permafrost that was once common in Dawson City and central Yukon. Its interior, which has clearly undergone modification, is divided into two parts corresponding to the two attached cabins, and one has a rear extension.

The V.I. P. Guest House reinforces the residential character of this functionally obsolete but remarkably intact village-like mining service facility, with its 80 structures and several landscape features relating to large-scale mechanical placer mining. Like the site’s other main buildings, it faces the large open yard. From its prominent position on the east side, it enjoys a view down the

centre of the site that befits the former home of the superintendent.

Character-defining elements

The following character-defining elements of the V.I.P. Guest House should be respected:

- The simple and functional nature of its design, and its overall good workmanship and appropriate use of materials.
- The features of its form, construction, and materials that unify it with the site's other structures, including its simple shape, its horizontal wood siding, painted grey, with white trim, the metal covering of its roof, and its wood-frame structure.
- Its distinct features, including the distinctive gambrel-like shape of the roof, the front verandah, the arrangement of windows and doors, and the boxed foundation skirting.
- Its comfortable relationship – due to its form, materials, detailing, and colour scheme – with the other structures and landscape features of the site, in particular the residential buildings on the north side of the open yard.

For guidance on interventions, refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*. For further information, contact FHBRO.

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