

92-08

Banff, Alberta
Upper Hot Springs Caretaker's Cottage
Banff National Park

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Upper Hot Springs Caretaker's Cottage was built in 1934-1936 to the designs of the National Parks Branch Architectural Division under the direction of W.D. Cromarty, Chief Architect. The custodian is Parks Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 92-08.

Reasons for Designation

The Upper Hot Springs Caretaker's Cottage was designated Recognized for its historical associations, its landmark qualities, and its architectural value.

The building is associated with the Upper Hot Springs Bathhouse, a major recreational facility in Banff National Park, and with the theme of staff accommodation within the National Parks at sites remote from settled areas. It is also associated with the Public Works Construction Act of 1934, a significant national Depression-relief initiative which provided funding for many federal construction projects and employment for local residents.

Designed as a subsidiary structure to the nearby bathhouse, the cottage is an important part of this major landmark. The architectural value of the building stems from its appearance, which was intended to complement the Tudor-Rustic image of the nearby bathhouse. This design repeats a formula that was applied to a range of park facilities between the late 1920's and 1930's. The formula entailed the embellishment of a basic rectangular plan with various design elements based on rustic building practices, and stemmed directly from the English Arts-and-Crafts tradition.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of the Caretaker's Cottage resides in its Arts-and-Crafts derived fusion of historic styles and its relationship with the nearby bathhouse.

Important features of the building which should be retained include its Tudor-Rustic decorative detailing on the front facade, specifically the mock half-timbering on the wall surfaces and front-porch gable, and the distinctive treatment of limestone (quarried on nearby Mt. Rundle) on the porch surrounds. The exterior image was substantially altered when the original stucco and half-timbering finish was replaced by a veneer of taped siding. A return to the finish of the original design would improve the visual quality of the building.

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Upper Hot Springs Caretaker's Cottage (Continued)

Existing key visual elements which should be preserved include the front porch detailing, the fenestration pattern, the hipped roof treatment, and the exposed rafters which repeat design features found on the bathhouse. Although a shed dormer was installed on the rear slope of the roof to create living space in the attic, this modification has minimal impact on the visual quality of the composition. The roof, now sheathed in split shakes, was originally covered with sawn cedar shingles which might be reinstated during the next re-roofing program.

The cottage, of standard platform-frame construction resting on a concrete block foundation, provided basic living accommodation on one floor, with the 1950s renovation providing additional usable space in the attic. Care should be taken to preserve the relationship of early interior features in any future renovation plan.

A key element in the importance of this site is its location on the extreme end of the flat shelf of land created on Sulphur Mountain to accommodate the Upper Hot Springs Bathhouse. The building-site relationship remains substantially unchanged from its inception, apart from the removal of a fence which historically differentiated the cottage from the public area. This relationship should be preserved in any future development of the site.

Intended to complement the bathhouse, the cottage is landscaped with lawn and shrubbery, with a flanking simple gravel driveway leading off the public area. Preservation of these features is important to maintain the ambience and historical presence of the building.

1996.01.08

For further guidance, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.