

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

### **Banff Museum**

Banff National Park  
Banff, Alberta

The Banff Museum was built in 1902-03 by the Department of the Interior to the designs of John Stocks, the Assistant Chief Engineer for the Department of Public Works in the Northwest Territories. It is the property of Environment Canada. In 1985 it was declared a national historic site by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 85-10.

### **Reason for Designation**

On June 10, 1986 the building was designated Classified because of its excellent design and craftsmanship and because of its importance to its environment.

The Banff Natural History Museum was the child of the old Natural History Branch of the Geological Survey of Canada. Opened in 1895, the museum moved to the present building in 1903. It is the oldest surviving building in the town of Banff, and, more significantly, the oldest surviving building constructed in the federal government for the Rocky Mountains Park (now Banff National Park), Canada's first national park.

The 1903 museum building was the largest and most elaborate product of the early phase of park design utilizing decorative log construction. It displays unique approaches to the functional requirements of museum design of the period. The high quality of materials and craftsmanship throughout indicate that the building was clearly intended as a showpiece for the park.

Its distinctive appearance has always made it a local landmark, and its style and setting contribute strongly to the period character of the town.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the property is defined by the exterior elevations and setting, and by the publicly-accessible areas of the interior.

The exterior is of distinctive shape, with a layering of shingled roof surfaces moving from the wide bracketed verandah eaves to the hip roof to the large central lantern. The walls are of crossed-log veneer with protruding shingled bays at the mezzanine level. It is important that all exterior materials and detailing be meticulously preserved.

On the interior, the lantern provides natural light to both the mezzanine gallery and the ground floor. The wood finish, trim and detailing, including display cases and other furnishings, are for the most part original to the building; recent restoration work has

allowed the recovery of some elements and the sympathetic insertion of new work. All publicly-accessible areas should be carefully maintained in their present status.

The landscape setting for the building has been modified over time in response to the demands of heavy use; the evolution of the property requires more detailed study with a view to ensuring that the development and treatment of the grounds, in particular circulation, grades, and plant materials, is in keeping with the historical significance of the building itself.

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

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