

FHBRO Number 92-017

Longview, Alberta

Stud-Horse Barn (Building 1) FINAL

Bar U Ranch

The Stud-Horse Barn at the Bar U Ranch is thought to have been constructed between ca. 1909 and 1910. Its designer is unknown. Although the building's exterior is virtually unchanged in appearance, the original attached paddock was replaced by a smaller one by 1930, and several internal modifications have taken place over the years. The Stud-Horse Barn is a component of the Bar U Ranch National Historic Site. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 92-17.

Reasons for Designation

The Stud-Horse Barn, as a component of the Bar U Ranch complex, was designated "Classified" because of the historical associations of this building and the ranch as a whole, because of its functional design and its contribution to the overall aesthetic qualities of the complex, and because of the exceptional qualities of the site and setting.

The Bar U Ranch is strongly associated with the development of ranching in Alberta. The Stud-Horse Barn is one of a pair of identical stables constructed to accommodate the Percheron horse breeding program at the Bar U, lead by George Lane, an important local ranching figure and the Bar U's first ranch foreman. The Stud-Horse Barn accommodated the stallions, while the second stable, demolished by 1930, accommodated the mares. Other buildings related to the horse breeding program were also built around this time, but the two stables were the most striking, contributing to George Lane's reputation as a leading Canadian rancher and to the Bar U Ranch's status as an important ranching operation.

A major building on the site, the Stud-Horse Barn is the product of a simple, function-oriented design and yet has a strong aesthetic impact due to the interplay of its unusual roof slopes and the high level of patina found within the interior. Like other buildings of this phase, the Stud-Horse Barn reflects the gradual shift from the log building tradition and use of native materials, to a reliance on external sources for form, structural design and building materials.

As part of a cohesive complex of buildings arranged to great functional effect in a simple and beautiful natural setting, the Stud-Horse Barn contributes significantly to the character of the Bar U Ranch. The building is a conspicuous component of the Percheron area, located in an open field on the eastern perimeter of the ranch site, west of the valley embankment. It is also a component of the collection of pre-1927 buildings which contribute to the landmark value of the complex as one of the region's most important early ranch sites. This landmark value is reinforced by the designation of the complex as a National Historic Site.

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Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Stud-Horse Barn resides in its plan, massing, construction materials, exterior finish, interior hardware and features, the utilitarian nature of its materials and construction, the remaining clues it holds to its original configuration, its patina of wear and its setting.

The Stud-Horse Barn has strong, clean massing. The symmetrical T-shaped form and segmented plan give evidence of the building's specialized original purpose. The barn's colour scheme (red walls and white trim) is in keeping with tradition for ranch buildings across the Prairies and visually links it to the other buildings on this site. The barn's design, scale and finish are impressive for its region and period.

Construction materials and techniques chosen for the Stud-Horse Barn follow precedents elsewhere on site and contribute to its utilitarian character. Its main section, built of light frame construction using commercially milled lumber, has a medium-pitch gabled roof finished with cedar shingles. A large cupola on the main section's roof is a prominent visual feature with a practical purpose. The barn's shed-roofed adjoining section is of balloon frame construction, with studs rising the full height of the walls.

The exterior walls are clad with beveled siding, while the interior walls are sheathed with shiplap to provide a smooth wall surface for the horses. All of these features contribute to the building's heritage character and should be protected in any future modifications or maintenance work.

The gable-roofed portion of the building was altered to accommodate a smaller amount of livestock. This change represents the thrift and ingenuity of ranchers as the thrust of their operations changed, and echoes the evolutionary nature of many buildings on the site. Clues to the original configuration should be protected, as should the remaining hardware and features relating to this earlier use, such as iron rings at various locations on walls and on joists above each stall, door hardware, extant salt boxes, mangers and oat bins, areas of wear related to the stabling of horses, and graffiti at the interior ("Halifax") and exterior ("AJB" and the Bar U brand). Because of the significant patina that has developed on all interior surfaces, replacement of materials should be avoided. Serious roof and loft sagging has occurred due to the inappropriate replacement of original centre loft beams. This structural problem should be addressed promptly using sound conservation practices, maximizing the retention of original fabric.

The Stud-Horse Barn is a prominent feature on the river valley floor, with views to and from relatively unobstructed by any other built features. Any site development should seek to retain the unadorned, functional quality of the site, and respect existing patterns of access and site circulation. The Stud Horse Barn's relationship to the Feed Mill and

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its prominent setting are important to its heritage character. Any changes to circulation or access should consider historic patterns related to the movement of grain tanks, wagons and motorized vehicles.

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

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