

Riding Mountain National Park, Manitoba
Tennis Clubhouse (B-6), (Tennis Pavilion)
Wasagaming Townsite

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Tennis Clubhouse in Riding Mountain National Park was constructed in 1934-35 to designs prepared by the Architectural Division of the National Parks Branch. Construction is attributed to Gottfried and Herb Johnson, two log builders from Erickson who were involved in the erection of several park facilities. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 85-54.

Reasons for designation

The Tennis Clubhouse was designated Recognized because of its architectural significance, its environmental qualities, and also for its historical associations.

The Tennis Clubhouse is a highly visible building with considerable architectural merit and a high degree of integrity. The design of the Tennis Clubhouse typifies the National Parks rustic style as applied at Riding Mountain Park, and illustrates the high standard of log construction that took place there during the 1930s. The Tennis Clubhouse illustrates the concerted aim to develop a distinctive architectural appearance for Canadian Parks which was grounded in the English Picturesque movement, combining mock half-timbering and other Tudor Revival elements with rustic materials and construction techniques.

The building is located within the Government Reserve area planned by the Architectural Division, where structures were carefully sited within a planned landscape to create a distinctive visual effect. The Clubhouse has a simply manicured landscape that is in keeping with the surrounding area.

The Tennis Clubhouse was constructed with the assistance of relief labour funded through the 1934 Public Works Construction Act. Massive Depression relief funding was directed to Riding Mountain National Park during this period, and resulted in the subsequent building boom of 1931-1937 of which this building is a product.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Tennis Clubhouse resides in the textures and patina of its natural materials, in its rustic Tudor-inspired architectural details, and in the quality of its setting.

.../2

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The building is composed of a simple block with a large verandah wrapped around three sides. It is contained under a high, slightly bellcast hipped roof, with centered gables forming an entrance portico at the front elevation, and a bay window at the rear. The "Rustic" aesthetic is expressed through the textural quality of the materials - peeled log, wood shingle, stucco and timber - and in the exposed log connections, joints, struts and rafter tails at the building's corners, eaves and verandah. The mock half-timbering in the gables is a typical Tudor reference, as are the multi-paned casement windows arranged in groups of three with transoms above. All of these features are integral to the style and character of the building and should not be altered. Any repairs must be predicated on maximum retention of original material, and the same level of craftsmanship and care taken as is evident in the original work. The wood shingle roof was originally laid with decorative horizontal bands (perhaps a doubled course of butts) at three foot intervals; when re-roofing is required, consideration should be given to reinstating this feature based on the evidence in historic photographs.

The interior plan, which consisted of a symmetrical arrangement of women's and men's toilets and change rooms and a central storage area, has changed to meet functional requirements. In future renovations, efforts should be made to restore the clarity of the original plan and retain any surviving early finishes or hardware.

The Tennis Clubhouse is located on a grassed terrace facing the tennis courts, with mature trees at its rear and sides. Aesthetically, it is compatible with the grounds, surrounding recreational facilities, and the nearby museum/interpretative center. In keeping with the "planned" nature of the site, any modification of the landscape should respect the intended simple formality of the grounds.

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