

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Former Bathhouse

Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site
Banff National Park, Alberta

The former bathhouse of the Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site was built in 1936. Constructed by Earl Spencer for Jim Boyce, it was one of three structures erected in the same year to provide additional guest facilities. The building currently retains its original use as tourist accommodation. Parks Canada is the custodian of this National Historic Site. See FHBRO Building Report 96-1 05.

Reasons for Designation

The former bathhouse of the Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site has been designated Classified primarily for its environmental significance but also for its historical associations and architectural qualities.

Situated twelve miles north of Lake Louise in the Skoki Valley, the resort lies in the centre of magnificent ski touring country close to several glaciers. The former bathhouse and the four other guest cabins are arranged in a fan-like semi-circle around the centrally placed main building. Since access to the site has not changed, being restricted to foot, horseback and ski trail, the remote wilderness character remains unspoiled.

The historical significance of the former bathhouse, as a component of the entire lodge, derives from its association with the growth of back-country recreation in the national parks and the development of tourism. Being the first such facility to operate on a commercial basis in Canada, the Skoki Ski Lodge represents the pioneering phase of skiing as a major recreational activity.

The popularity of the Skoki Ski Lodge influenced further development of the site. However, with the construction of the bathhouse, along with the Bunkhouse and Creek Cabin in 1936, the development of the site was complete. The lodge remains a major destination point within the park.

Architecturally, the Skoki Ski Lodge in Banff National Park is a unique example of an original rustic winter resort characteristic of the Banff region. It has remained virtually unchanged since its completion in 1936.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the bathhouse at the Skoki Ski Lodge resides in its picturesque mountainous setting and in its simple, rustic design. Its simple configuration and use of locally hand-hewn materials exhibit the basic tenets of rustic

architecture.

Its massing consists of a simple, gable-roofed structure with a shed-roofed extension along the back. The front elevation is articulated by two entrances, each with a gabled porch roof. Multi-paned windows are regularly located along the side elevations. The patina of weathered wood contributes to the historic appearance. The simple massing of the former Bathhouse is an important feature of the rustic aesthetic.

Wood is the predominant construction material. Locally-hewn spruce logs supply the bulk of the construction material. The walls are of unscribed horizontal log construction with saddle-notched corners, characteristic of the traditional log construction practised in the mountain parks during the early decades of this century. Multi-paned windows, the plank door and the tongue-and-groove floorboards are constructed of milled lumber components. Aluminum sheet metal roofing has replaced the original wood shingles. Any repairs or upgrades should match the original construction materials and retain the simplicity of their execution. Consideration may be given to replacing the roof covering with wood shingles based on the original design.

Originally constructed as a bathhouse, the building now provides tourist accommodation. The interior is divided into three, roughly equal parts, each with a separate entrance. Facilities are simple but adequate, contributing to the back-country recreational experience. It would be appropriate to maintain the current use and plan layout.

Located in a clearing on the banks of the Little Pipestone Creek, the lodge consists of the main building surrounded by five guest cabins. The former bathhouse remains on its original site, northwest of the main building. The historic relationship both to the alpine landscape and the other buildings has remained virtually unchanged since its construction in 1936. Beyond maintaining the traditional site relationships, preventing vehicular access is the most important factor in maintaining the remote, wilderness quality of the resort's setting.

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

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