

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Wolverine Cabin

Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site
Banff National Park, Alberta

The Wolverine Cabin of the Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site was constructed in 1932. Constructed during the management tenure of Peter and Catherine Whyte, it was one of two structures built to provide additional accommodation shortly after construction of the main building. The cabin 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 Wolverine Cabin of the Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site has been designated Classified primarily for its environmental significance but also for its architectural qualities and historical associations.

The Skoki Ski Lodge is environmentally significant for several reasons. 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 Wolverine Cabin 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.

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.

The historical significance of the Wolverine Cabin, 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 Skoki Ski Lodge influenced further recreational development in the area. The immediate popularity of the resort resulted in the construction of the Wolverine and Honeymoon cabins, built the same year. The lodge remains a major destination point within the park.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Wolverine Cabin of the Skoki Ski Lodge resides in its picturesque mountainous setting and in its simple, rustic design. In its simple

configuration and use of local materials, it exhibits the basic tenets of rustic architecture.

Its massing is plain: a simple, one-roomed, gable-roofed cabin. The roof is extended on log purlins over the entrance sheltering the wooden porch. Centred on the front gabled end is the entrance door. A single multi-paned window is centred on each of the remaining three elevations. The only additional features include a wooden stoop and a rustic porch swing. The patina of weathered wood contributes to the historic appearance. The simple massing of the Wolverine Cabin 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 traditional log construction as practised in the mountain parks during the early decades of this century. Multi-paned windows, the plank door and tongue-and-groove floorboards are constructed of milled lumber components. Wood shingles clad the roof. Any repairs or upgrades should match the original construction materials and the simplicity of their execution.

The one-room interior is heated by a small wood-burning stove. Facilities are simple but adequate, contributing to the back-country recreational experience. It would be fitting to maintain the function and layout.

In 1932, the Wolverine and Honeymoon cabins were added to the Skoki Ski Lodge site a short distance from the main building; by 1936, the number of cabins had increased to five. Wolverine Cabin remains on its original site directly east of the main building but its relationship to both the alpine landscape and the other buildings has evolved slightly since 1932. In spite of this, and 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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