

90-235

Waterton Lakes, Alberta

Comfort Stations

Waterton Lakes National Park

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Waterton Lakes National Park Comfort Stations (five in total) were constructed in 1932 under unemployment relief programs to designs prepared by the Architectural Division of the National Parks Branch. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-235.

Reasons for Designation

The Comfort Stations were designated Recognized because of their environmental significance and historical associations, and also for their architectural design.

Of uniform design and using natural materials to create a rustic image, the euphemistically-named Comfort Stations are an example of the picturesque Rustic style used in the national parks during the 1920s. The use of log siding and field stone, exposed rafter tails and beams are characteristic of the style.

Waterton Lakes National Park was one of the first national parks to develop a series of specific facilities for park visitors. The construction of these support facilities relates to the theme of automobile-accessible campground development in the national park system, and is also associated with Depression relief construction activity.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Comfort Stations resides in their form and overall proportions, in features of the picturesque Rustic style, and in site relationships.

The single-storey buildings have a cruciform footprint and steep, cross-gable roofs. The footprint, simple massing and distinctive roof profile should be maintained.

Rusticity is expressed by materials which are natural in color and rough in texture. Fieldstone-faced foundations and gable end plinths, half-log slab siding, mock purlins and exposed rafter tails are typical of the style. Only one station, Number 6, retains all these features; removal of the fieldstone or the log siding has occurred at the other stations. Original drawings indicate shutters; confirmation of this should be sought through photographs or physical evidence, and reinstatement considered. Research is required when re-roofing to confirm appropriate materials and color.

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Waterton Lakes, Alberta
Comfort Stations (Continued)

The original design featured multi-pane wood windows with operable transoms, and glazed panelled doors, which added texture and scale to the facades. Heritage character is compromised where slab doors have been installed and original windows have been blocked off. When replacement doors are at the end of their service life, they should be replaced with doors compatible with the original design intent. Original windows should be retained, and those which are blocked off should be restored.

The symmetrical layout of the washrooms and the position of entrances at each end have survived and should be retained. Extant original interior finishes and details should be preserved and maintained as part of any rehabilitation work.

Site access and the footprint of the building are unchanged since construction and should be maintained. The simple concrete steps are appropriately utilitarian. The adjacent landscape varies at each station, ranging from exposed and park-like to bush, and should continue to be treated accordingly.

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