

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT TWIN FALLS TEA HOUSE, YOHO NATIONAL PARK, B.C.

FHBRO number: **98-81**
DFRP number: **18730**
Resource name: **Twin Falls Tea House, National Historic Site**
Address: **Yoho National Park, British Columbia**
FHBRO status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1908 and 1923**
Designer: **(1908) Unknown; (1923) Basil Gardom, CPR**
Original function: **Tea House and tourist accommodation**
Current function: **Unchanged**
Modifications: **Two-storey chalet addition (1923); Link between cabin and chalet (1 925-28); Chalet porch replaced, new fire escape (1966); New wooden walkway, concrete bases for stairs and posts installed, kitchen altered (1978); bunkroom walls extended**
Custodian: **Parks Canada**

Reasons for Designation

The Twin Falls Tea House is a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values:

Historical value:

The Twin Falls tea House is associated with the ongoing role of the CPR in developing tourist facilities in the National Parks. Constructed to provide outlying accommodation for trail riders and mountaineers in Yoho National Park, the Twin Falls Tea House was part of the development of the back-country tourist facilities built at scenic points along trails in the park, including lodges, tea houses and bungalow camps. A rare surviving example of this particular type, the Twin Falls Tea House was expanded in 1923 along with other park facilities in response to the growth in tourism due to the increased number of visitors coming to the park by automobile and bus.

Architectural value:

The Twin Falls Tea House is a very good example of rustic architecture and consists of the original single storey, gable-roofed log cabin, a two-storey Swiss Chalet style addition with an overhanging gable roof and a second storey porch, and a one-storey link that connects the two buildings. Constructed of natural local materials, the Twin Falls tea House is a well-crafted, asymmetrical log building with cedar roof shingles, exposed rafter tails, and heavy log door and window surrounds. Typical of the superior quality work executed by the CPR office in Banff, the three construction phases of the building demonstrate the different methods of log construction practised at different periods in the park's history.

Environmental value:

The Twin Falls Tea House is set in the picturesque Upper Yoho River Valley, a scenic point at the upper end of a circuit trail that skirts the foot of the Yoho Glacier. Located in a clearing which slopes down to the river, the tea house is deliberately sited to offer a spectacular view of the escarpment and the Twin Falls Tea House

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from its upper balcony. The Twin Falls Tea House is a National Historic Site and is well known to the hiking and climbing community.

Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the Twin Falls Tea House should be respected:

Its role as an illustration of the ongoing contribution of the CPR towards the development of tourist facilities in the National Parks is reflected in:

- the building's rustic aesthetic which was part of the architectural character of Canada's national park facilities from the 1880s onwards and which the CPR played an important role in perpetuation.

Its rustic style, indigenous building methods and local materials as manifested in:

- the simple, asymmetrical composition of the building which features gabled roofs, prominent roof overhangs supported by massive logs, and the addition's second storey porch which is an essential characteristic of the Swiss Chalet style;
- the use of natural, local materials consistent with the principles of rustic architecture such as the massive horizontal spruce log wall construction using both peeled logs and unpeeled logs, the moss and sapling or quarter round chinking, the cedar roof shingles, and the interior's wood floors and oiled log walls; and,
- the well-executed rustic detailing such as the square corner joints of the 1923 chalet and the saddle-notched corners of the 1908 cabin, the exposed rafter tails, and the heavy log door and window surrounds.

The manner in which the building reinforces the picturesque character of the setting as evidenced in:

- its scenic location which offers spectacular views of the escarpment and the Twin Falls and is along a well-travelled day hiking trail;
- the compatibility of the building's rustic form, natural materials and rustic detailing with the dominant and picturesque wilderness setting; and,
- the retention of its relationship with the site, in particular its location in an open clearing defined by a ridge which slopes down to the river.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*. For further information contact FHBRO.

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