

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Creek Cabin

Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site
Banff National Park, Alberta

The Creek Cabin 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 accommodation. 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 Creek Cabin of the Skoki Ski Lodge National Historic Site has been designated Classified primarily for its environmental significance, and 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 Creek 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 Creek Cabin, as a component of the entire lodge, derives from its association with the growth of back-country recreation in the national parks and tourism development. 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. It was the construction of the Creek Cabin, along with the Bunkhouse and Bathhouse in 1936, that completed the site's development. The lodge remains a major destination point within the park.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Creek Cabin resides in its picturesque mountainous setting and in its rustic design. Its simple configuration and use of local materials exhibit the basic tenets of rustic architecture.

The cabin's massing is plain: a simple, one-roomed, gable-roofed cabin. The roof is extended on log purlins over the entrance, sheltering the raised, wooden porch. The entrance door is centred on the front gabled end. A single window is centred on each of the side elevations, while two small asymmetrically-placed windows are located on the back elevation. The patina of weathered wood contributes to the historic appearance. The simple massing of the Creek Cabin is an important feature of the rustic aesthetic.

Wood is the predominant construction material. Locally-hewn spruce logs supply the bulk of 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 clads the roof. Any repairs or upgrades should match the original construction materials and retain the simplicity of their execution. Consideration may be given to replacing the aluminum roofing with wood shingles.

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

Located in a clearing on the banks of Little Pipestone Creek, the lodge consists of the main building surrounded by five guest cabins. The Creek Cabin, along with the Bunkhouse and Bathhouse, were added to the Skoki Ski Lodge site a short distance from the main building to increase the amount of guest accommodation. The Creek Cabin remains on its original site to the west and slightly to the south of the main building. The historic relationship to both the alpine landscape and the other structures has remained virtually unchanged since its construction in 1936.

Beyond respecting the traditional relationships between buildings, preventing vehicular access is the most important factor in maintaining the remote, wilderness quality of the setting.

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

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