

Whitehorse, Yukon
Building No. 200
(former Northwest Highway System Headquarters)
200 Range Road

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Building No. 200 was constructed in 1951-52 by the Department of National Defence to designs by its Directorate of Works and Accommodation. Built as the principal barrack block at the former military base of Camp Takhini, the operational headquarters for the Northwest Highway System was moved into the building in 1955. The building has served as the headquarters for the maintenance and development of the Alaska Highway since that date. Public Works Canada is the custodian of the building. See FHBRO Building Report 91-1 74.

Reasons for Designation

Building No. 200 has been designated Recognized because of its historical associations, its architectural design and the integrity of its site.

As the main administration building for the Alaska Highway in the post-war period, the building has strong associations with the development of the north by the federal government, particularly with regard to surface transportation infrastructure. As one of Camp Takhini's earliest and most prominent buildings, it also illustrates the importance of the establishment of the military base to the community of Whitehorse.

Built to a standard DND plan, Building No. 200 is a blend of classical composition and modernist design elements. The smooth streamlined surfaces and long, clean composition executed in a flattened, stylized manner resulted in a modern and sophisticated building for early 1950s Whitehorse.

Despite some minor changes, the site retains its plain, institutional character, and this part of Range Road, occupied by the former administrative and operational buildings of the Camp Takhini military base, retains the character of the base. Because of its size and its attractive design, Building No. 200 is the predominant building in the group.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of Building No. 200 resides in those characteristics which identify it as a part of the former Camp Takhini and the Northwest Highway System, as well as in its Classical Moderne design and its open, green site.

Building No. 200 is a large, two-storey building constructed in monolithic concrete. Architecturally, it represents a blend of both classical and modernist design. Its

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composition - a distinctive raised, central, entrance portico with large free-standing columns flanked by long symmetrical wings - is classical in inspiration. The ends of the wings are stepped back from the front elevation, softening the overall composition. Modernism is strongly expressed through the simplicity of the building's overall massing and geometric volumes, restrained form, and smooth surfaces. The absence of decorative detailing and the strong horizontal emphasis created by the window bands and string courses on the wings are also modernist features. The grillwork pattern in the three tall windows above the doors in the entrance portico is characteristic of the 1950s design and should be retained.

The main entrance foyer and stairs are in their historic location and configuration. These should remain. Otherwise the layout of the remainder of the building has been considerably altered and could be managed with some flexibility in the future.

Building No. 200 is the most attractive and visually conspicuous building of the former Camp Takhini military base. Any future site development should not diminish this characteristic prominence.

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