

Agassiz, British Columbia  
**Research Station Building #13**  
Agassiz Research Station

Research Station Building #13 consists of a Cow Barn, Maternity Barn and Silos. Section A, the main barn, was built in 1892 and was designed by the Chief Architect's Branch of the Department of Public Works. The most significant change to the barn since its construction is the application of vinyl siding over the clapboard siding. Additions B, C and D were built in 1911, designed by the Department of Agriculture. The four adjacent silos date from the mid-1960s. Agriculture Canada is the custodial department. See FHBRO Building Report 93-05.

**Reasons for Designation**

Building #13 was designated Recognized because of its unique environmental setting, its important historical associations and its architectural craftsmanship and materials.

The Cow Barn, Maternity Barn and Silos make up Building #13, a well known landmark within the city and region due to its status as the oldest extant barn at the Research Station. Its popularity is due to the many visitors who have frequented the grounds or attended memorable community dances. The agricultural character of the group of buildings is compatible with the adjacent corral and surrounding landscape.

Canada's Experimental Farm system was begun in 1886 as a response to the country's expanding agricultural needs. Building #13 is an example of early efforts by the federal government to promote agriculture, the science of agriculture, and particularly dairy farming, in Canada.

The massing and volumes of the various barn and silo elements create a composition typical of additive agricultural architecture. The design components of Building #13 remain relatively intact, with extensive original fabric surviving from the two key construction periods of 1892 and 1911.

**Character Defining Elements**

The heritage value of Building #13 resides in its building forms and massing, in the quality of its materials and construction, and in its landmark farm setting.

The larger component of the building, section A, with its downward sweep of salt box roof slope and large cupola, is visually grounded by the linear form and gabled roof of section B. Together with the modern silos, the forms create a pleasing composition. The balance of forms and the nature of their evolution should be respected.

Section A is considered to have had superior original workmanship and remains in

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excellent condition. The elements which characterize this workmanship are the byre walls, consisting of meter-thick granite masonry and a superstructure framed by Douglas Fir timbers, some 12 inches square and extending the full height of the building. Both construction materials were acquired on the site. The masonry is uncoursed, while the heavy-timber framing features mortise and tenon construction. As an experiment in economic solutions to barn building, the structure of section B was mostly constructed of smaller fir members. As a result, in the 1980s the trusses of the gabled roof required strengthening, which was accomplished with cables. This evidence of structural experimentation is of interest.

Section A is characterized by its functionally-driven pattern of openings, with the grouping of small windows in bays, and the centrally located vehicular-size sliding doors centered under the cupola and equipped with a ramp at second level. Section B ground-level windows were originally full height, with eight-over-eight lights. The existing replacement windows retain the original positions but lack the original interest and character of the originals. Future changes or replacement of windows and doors to Building #13 should aim to conserve existing original features and reinstate missing elements based on documentary evidence. Any elements which highlight the original function of the building as a dairy facility should be retained.

Characteristic of the function of the building, the original 1892 barn and the 1911 additions feature modest decorative detailing due to their construction for practical purposes. The application of vinyl siding over the clapboard siding occurred in the mid 1980s, with the traditional wood tongue and groove siding reported to be intact beneath. Vinyl is a departure from the original design intent of traditional materials that detracts from the heritage character of the building. Any future changes to the exterior cladding should consider removal of the vinyl siding and restatement of the finial over the cupola of section A and the simple barge boards of section D.

The setting of Building #13 is characterized by its central location in the farm's building compound. The nearby park-like stand of trees is a traditional and popular destination for picnickers, allowing a view of the setting. The barn's importance as a landmark should be protected, as should the utilitarian character of the setting.

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

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