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Name of Historic Place: Val Marie Elevator
 Current Name:
 Historic Use: Food Supply
 Municipality: Val Marie
 Street Address:

Formal Recognition

Type of Recognition: Municipal Heritage Property
 Date of Recognition: 2003/07/14

Statement of Significance



The old Val Marie Elevator is a Municipal Heritage Property occupying a .6-ha lot on a former Canadian Pacific Railway siding at the south end of Centre Street in the Village of Val Marie. The property features a wood-crib grain elevator built ca. 1924, a frame-type annex built in the early 1950s, and a detached one-storey office.

The heritage value of the old Val Marie Elevator lies in its association with Saskatchewan's evolving grain industry, and in its status as one of the last remaining grain elevators of its age in the Val Marie area. From the 1920s onward, the province's privately-owned "line elevator companies" underwent a series of amalgamations in response to growing competition from the farmer-owned Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. Built around 1924, the old Val Marie elevator was owned by a succession of private grain companies, eventually becoming part of the Federal Grain Ltd. system. In 1972, Federal, then Canada's largest private grain company, was purchased by the prairie Wheat Pools.

Saskatchewan Wheat Pool operated the Val Marie elevator until 2000, when, like many small prairie communities, the village lost its rail line.

There were once over 3,000 "country elevators" in Saskatchewan. With the evolution of transportation networks and changes in the grain handling system, however, the traditional wood elevators are rapidly being replaced by large, centralized terminals. It is estimated that fewer than 500 of the iconic wood elevators still exist province-wide, and their numbers continue to dwindle. The old Val Marie Elevator, still located on its original site, is a valued landmark that anchors the village's principal streetscape and commemorates the community's agricultural heritage.

There is further heritage value in the property's architectural and mechanical integrity. The elevator is a largely intact example of the sloped-shoulder, standard-plan elevators that were promoted by the Canadian Pacific Railway during the first half of the twentieth century. The elevator's cribbed construction, in which dimensional lumber was stacked and nailed on its wide side, created a strong and relatively fire-resistant structure for the storage of large amounts of grain. The elevator's weighing, elevating and cleaning equipment enabled the efficient receiving, sorting, storage and shipping of grain. The positioning of the elevator, annex and office on their original sites on the former railroad right-of-way illustrates the typical spatial configuration of a prairie elevator complex.

Source:

Village of Val Marie Bylaw No. 6/03.

The heritage value of the Val Marie Elevator resides in the following character-defining elements:

- those elements that contribute to the property's landmark status and speak to the elevator's prominent role in the community, including the location of the elevator, annex and office on their original sites at the head of Centre Street on the former railway right-of-way;
- elements that reflect the typical grain elevator architecture of the period, including the elevator's tall vertical proportions with its sloped-shoulder gable roof and cupola; the attached drive shed with tall, double wood doors and earth approach ramps; the elevator's wood-crib construction; the annex's wood-frame construction with exterior wooden staircases; the windows and window patterning of the office and elevator; the wood and tin cladding and roofing materials of the elevator, annex and office; the catwalk connecting the elevator and office; and the original spatial relationships among the structures;
- mechanical elements related to the elevator's grain handling function, including the grated receiving pit and weigh scales, the elevating mechanism (the "leg"), distributor, cribbed storage bins, spouts, controls, drive mechanisms, man-lift, and grain cleaning apparatus.