

Saskatchewan Wheat Pool #1 Elevator, Bulyea
Statement of Significance
Draft December 1 2006



Description of Historic Place

The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool #1 Grain Elevator in Bulyea occupies a 0.66 hectare lot on the Canadian Pacific Railway siding opposite Main Street on the north side of the Village of Bulyea. The property features a wood crib construction grain elevator built in 1925, a frame annex constructed in 1955, and a larger wood crib elevator constructed in 1968 to which the 1925 elevator is attached.

Heritage Value

The heritage value of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool #1 elevator lies in its association with the development of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, particularly its status as the first elevator built by the Pool. In 1921, a Royal Commission recommended the incorporation of a co-operative grain handling company for the prairies. With the support of the United Grain Growers and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, a voluntary wheat pool was formed in 1924 and the following year Saskatchewan Pool Elevators was incorporated. Pool Elevators acquired the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company with its 451 elevators and Lake Head Terminals. In 1925, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool constructed 47 elevators according to a standardized plan. The Bulyea facility was designated “Saskatchewan Wheat Pool #1” and on July 1, 1925, P.B Thompson delivered the first load of grain purchased by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. The facility operated as an elevator until 1968 when a new grain elevator was constructed and Saskatchewan Wheat Pool #1 was converted for use as a storage annex. This elevator served as an active elevator from the early years of the grain handling industry, during expansion in the 1940s and 1950s and through the period of widespread attrition from the 1960s until its closure in 2000. The elevator commemorates Bulyea’s agricultural heritage and, because it was the first Saskatchewan Wheat Pool elevator, is widely seen to symbolize the determination of a generation of grain farmers to create a producer-owned co-operative that transformed the grain handling system.

The heritage value of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool #1 Elevator also lies in its form and design. The building exemplifies the ‘medium-height standard planⁱ’ design common between 1905 and 1925. The structure features a sloping shoulder roof topped with a centered cupola. This design was, with minor variations, used by many elevator companies during the industry’s period of expansion between the years 1900 to 1930ⁱⁱ. The Saskatchewan Wheat Pool #1 grain elevator had a capacity of 30,000 bushels (816 tonnes) held in 21 bins. The elevator which is typical of structures built in the 1920s, occupies its original location in a line of elevators and for decades has been regarded as a landmark that distinguishes the town of Bulyea.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool #1 elevator lies in the following character-defining elements:

- Elements that reflect the grain elevator form and design typical of “medium height standard plan” elevators constructed between 1905 and the 1920s. Elements include: a rectangular design with sloped-shoulder gable roof topped by a cupola; the elevator’s wood-crib construction consisting of dimensional lumber stacked and nailed on its side, strong timber lintels above the crib walls, exposed structural members visible in the work floor; semi-hoppered wood bins braced at regular intervals by wooden cross-brace supports- a feature found in older elevators; its wood framed cupola enclosing mechanical equipment. Other elements reflecting the form and design typical of this era are: minimum fenestration, with two small windows with plain sashes in the cupola; the loading dock and rail car loading spout beside the railway tracks
- Elements that reflect the early technology of the elevator’s grain handling equipment including: the leg and 1950s era electric motor and Holroyd gearbox in the cupola; the steel spout receptacles in the cupola floor and carried by piping into 21 bins; wood bins and chutes; the garner funnel and wooden hopper scale; various slide valves; the steel frame counter-weighted manlift system.
- The elevator’s 21 bins is representative of 1905-1920s standard plan elevators which needed a larger number of smaller bins to separately store a variety of crops and grades produced by the many small farmers in the district.
- Signage within the elevator’s work floor that indicate its continual use over many decades. Such signage includes: posters that prohibiting smoking; 1960s era posters regarding the regulations of the Canada Grain Act; other posters outlining rules and regulations; the chalkboard bin chart which indicates the original locations of the coal shed and temporary annexes; fire prevention posters from the Pool Insurance Company; grain loading tables for loading railcars.
- Those elements associated with the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, including: the location of the elevator on its original site; the signage on the exterior of the elevator stating “Saskatchewan Bulyea No.1”.

ⁱ Everett’s work identifies six major styles in elevator design and their associated years of construction. Between the years 1880-1910, the “Pyramidal Roof” design, Hybrid Plan with Offset Roof” design and “Squat Standard Plan” were constructed. Between 1905-1925, the “Medium Height Standard Plan” elevators were constructed and between 1910 to 1965, “Tall Standard Plan Elevators” were constructed. Most elevators built after 1950 were of the “Tall Modern” design.

See Everitt, John. A Study of Grain Elevators in Manitoba. Province of Manitoba, Historic Resources Branch 1992.

ⁱⁱ Fulton’s work identifies 4 stages in the development of the modern grain handling system. The grain handling system went through four general periods as follows: a period of genesis between 1876 and 1900; a period of

expansion between 1900 to 1930; a period of maturity between 1930-1970; and a period of attrition between 1970 to the present. See Fulton, Gordon. "Framework and Criteria for the Evaluation of Country Grain Elevators" Government of Canada, Historical Services Branch 1995.