

# Conquest Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company Grain Elevator

## Statement of Significance

### Draft December 1 2006



#### Description of Historic Place

The Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company Grain Elevator in Conquest occupies a 3.67 hectare lot on the Canadian Pacific Railway siding on Railway Avenue in the north east of the village of Conquest. The site consists of a grain elevator of wood crib construction built in 1911. The elevator is currently serves as an annex to a larger non-contributing elevator constructed in 1957. The property also features two non-contributing hopper bottom steel bin annexes added in 1986.

#### Heritage Value

The heritage value of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company elevator lies in its status as one of the oldest remaining elevators built by Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company.. Believing that elevator companies were colluding to suppress grain prices, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association lobbied the provincial government to expropriate the grain handling system and administer it as a public utility. A compromise was reached in 1911 where the provincial government guaranteed loans to farmer owned co-operative elevator company. In 1911, the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company was incorporated by provincial statute and it quickly began building a system of elevators based on a standard plan. Designated Elevator #32, this elevator was one of forty-six constructed in the Co-operative's first year . In 1926, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool acquired the co-operative and its 451 elevators.

The heritage value of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company elevator also lies in its form and design. The building exemplifies the “medium-height standard plan elevators<sup>i</sup>” built by the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company between 1911 and the 1925. From 1905 to 1925, the “medium-height standard plan” was a common design built with minor variations by several grain companies during the industry's period of expansion<sup>ii</sup> between the years 1900 and 1930. The structure features a sloping shoulder structure topped with a centred cupola. The Conquest elevator had a capacity of 30,000 bushels (800 tonnes) held in 12 bins.

#### Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company elevator in Conquest lies in the following character-defining elements:

- Elements that reflect the grain elevator form and design typical of the medium height “standard plan” elevators built by the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company. Elevators of this vintage were characterized by: a 30,000 bushel capacity; their 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; the semi-hoppered wood bins braced at regular intervals by wooden crossbrace supports that are characteristic features of older elevators; a wood framed cupola; the loading dock beside the railway tracks; the minimum fenestration with four small windows with plain sashes in the cupola and one small window on the bin floor directly below the cupola.

- Elements that reflect the early technology of the elevator's grain handling equipment, including: the revolving gerber spout which distributed grain through steel spout receptacles in the cupola floor and carried by piping into 12 bins; wood bins and chutes; various slide valves; the wheel and equipment for controlling the gerber spout distributor; the steel frame counter-weighted manlift system.
- Those elements associated with the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company namely the location of the elevator on its original site.

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<sup>i</sup> 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.

<sup>ii</sup> 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.