

Sintaluta Crown Elevator Co. Grain Elevator.

Statement of Significance

Draft December 1, 2006



Description of Historic Place

The Crown Elevator Co. Elevator in Sintaluta occupies a 0.17 hectare lot on the Canadian Pacific railway siding on Montrose Street in the south-east side of the town of Sintaluta. The site consists of a grain elevator of wood crib metal-clad construction built circa 1901-03 (pending). The elevator is attached to a larger non-contributing elevator constructed in 1965. The property also features a non-contributing wood-frame annex.

Heritage Value

The heritage value of the Crown Elevator Co. elevator lies in its status as the second oldest line elevator in Saskatchewan. Constructed between 1901 and 1903 by the Crown Elevator Co, the property is one of only two known line elevator buildings to predate the formation of the province in 1905. Although moved several dozen meters away from its original location during the 1920s, the elevator remains near the Canadian Pacific Railway's mainline and its place within the row of elevators that historically stood in Sintaluta.

The heritage value of the Crown Elevator Co. Elevator also lies in its status as a representative example of the standard design widely used during the period. Elevators employing this "Squat Standard Plan"¹ were built on the prairies between 1880 and 1910. With their shorter stature and narrow cupolas, these elevators were a shorter predecessor of the "standard plan" sloping shoulder style that later became so common. The Crown Elevator Co. Elevator has a capacity of 42,000 bushels held in ten bins. For an elevator of this capacity, ten bins were too few and the heavy pressure of grain in each large bin overstressed the crib walls. Evidence of extensive repairs is visible on the exterior of the elevator. This design oversight suggests that this "squat standard plan" elevator design was a prototype that led to later, better designs. Elevators built between 1880 and 1910 were of two basic varieties: the squat pyramidal roof style and the squat sloping shoulder style. Only one example of each style is known to exist in Saskatchewan —the pyramidal roof elevator in Fleming, SK and the squat sloping shoulder elevator in Sintaluta.

The heritage status of the Crown Elevator Co. elevator also lies in its ownership history and long service through many changes in the grain industry. The elevator is the second oldest elevator in Saskatchewan and is the last remaining elevator built by the Crown Grain Company and the second last known elevator of Northern Grain Company. Although Crown Grain was later acquired by the Northern Grain Company in 1907, elevators operating under its name did not change to Northern Grain for several years. Northern Grain merged with National Grain in 1940, which in turn was acquired by Cargill in 1975. In 1990, the elevator was sold to a private farmer.

The Crown Elevator was an active facility for many decades and is representative of the significant changes in the grain trade from the early 1900s to the present day. Built during the early years of the grain industry, the elevator was an active facility through the grain trade's period of expansion between 1900 and the 1930s, the period of maturity from the 1930s to the 1970s and survived the widespread attrition and consolidation of wood crib structures that took place through the 1970s to the present by being converted to an annex to a newer elevator in 1965 and sold to a private farmer in 1990. Elevators of this vintage and architectural style are now exceedingly rare.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of the Crown Elevator Co. elevator lies in the following character-defining elements:

- Elements that reflect the grain elevator form and design typical of the smaller “squat standard plan” elevators of the early 1900s, namely: the elevator’s rectangular design with sloped-shoulder gable roof, topped by a narrower 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; its flat-bottomed wood bins braced at regular intervals by wooden crossbrace supports- a feature found only in older elevators; its wood framed narrow cupola enclosing mechanical equipment. The narrow cupola is indicative of a smaller gerber spout and fewer bins and is a design feature characteristic of older elevators. Other elements reflecting the form and design typical of this era are: minimum fenestration, with two small windows with plain sashes in the cupola and one small window on the bin floor directly below the cupola; the loading dock beside the railway tracks; the galvanized steel “Manitoba Siding” on the exterior of the elevator that was characteristically applied in the 1920s and 1930s side and preserve old elevators.
- Elements that reflect the early technology of the elevator’s grain handling equipment, including: the revolving gerber spout which distributed grain through wooden spouts in the cupola floor- a feature found only in the elevators of this vintage; the associated belts and pulleys; wood bins and chutes; various bin slide valves which control the flow of grain into the garner funnel and to the boot; an early example of a steel frame counter-weighted manlift system.
- Signage within the elevator’s work floor prohibiting smoking, noting compliance with rodent control, and poster advertising Wilson flour. Corporate signage of the National Grain Company visible on the exterior of the elevator.

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.