

Weyburn Inland Terminal in Weyburn, SK

Statement of Significance

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Description of Historic Place

The Weyburn Inland Terminal is a large concrete structure occupying a 60.0 hectare lot on the Canadian Pacific railway siding in the RM of Weyburn. The property features a large reinforced concrete grain elevator and integrated silo bins, four concrete storage annexes, a truck dump, two warehouses for fertilizer and chemicals, and an office.

Heritage Value

The heritage value of the Weyburn Inland Terminal lies in its status as Canada's first farmer-owned grain terminal. In the early 1970s, the Palliser Wheat Growers Association believed that the grain handling system was inefficient and over-regulated. Believing the solution lay in the creation of a producer-owned elevator, the Association organized meetings across southern Saskatchewan that led to the plan to build a high volume terminal elevator. Incorporating as the Weyburn Inland Terminal Society, the Society sold shares to landowners or farmers with Canadian Wheat Board permits and by 1975, construction began on the terminal. The completed structure had a capacity of 1,000,000 bushels (27,000 tonnes), grain cleaning and drying facilities, and had a 100 car rail shipping capability. For the first time in decades, the large cooperatives and other grain handling companies faced competition from a new producer owned corporation. Although faced with stiff competition, opposition, and a few operating losses, the terminal enjoyed widespread support among producers and soon became profitable.

The heritage value of the Weyburn Inland Terminal also lies in its distinctive form and design—a return to the concept of large concrete inland terminals first pioneered by the Federal Government Elevators built in 1914 in Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Calgary. Unlike the 1914 Government Elevators, where the workhouse was a separate structure from the storage annexes, the Weyburn Inland Terminal elevator was constructed with the workhouse attached to the storage bins. The construction of this elevator marked the introduction of slip-form construction for primary grain elevator construction. While slip forming was used for building shipping terminals and flour mills in Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, the Weyburn facility represents the first time the technique was used in the construction of a primary elevator. Slip-formed concrete construction would soon be the building method of choice and by the late 1980s, eclipse the wood crib construction method as the dominant method for constructing grain elevators.

The heritage value of the Weyburn Inland Terminal also lies in its status as the first primary elevator to arrange its tall concrete silos in a rectangular form. The elevator consists of a workhouse building containing elevating equipment and cleaners as well as 46 various storage bins in the workhouse. On each side of the main workhouse are two wings that each house 21 honeycomb-shaped concrete bins each of which has a capacity of 530 tonnes. After its construction in 1975, other grain companies began to build large concrete high-capacity elevators to replace their network of smaller wooden facilities. The great size and overall imposing form of the elevator has contributed to an emerging prairie landscape characterized by the occasional massive concrete grain elevator in rural regions—a significant change from the former image of the wooden grain elevator as a significant symbol of rural

Prairie settlements. The layout pioneered by this facility was employed in the design in subsequent inland terminals.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage value of the Weyburn Inland Terminal elevator resides in the following character-defining elements:

- Those elements reflecting the 1976 structure's design and form, namely; the tall rectangular arrangement of the honeycomb-shaped silos and their connection to the main workhouse elevator structure; the tall rectangular form of the cylindrical annexes added in 1992, 1994, 1998 and 2002; the concrete surface of the silo bins which indicate they were built using slip-formed reinforced concrete
- Those elements reflecting the grain elevator's great size and capacity as well as its sturdy construction and practical design. Such elements include: the 1976 elevator main house containing elevating, cleaning, processing equipment and 46 bins with a capacity of 121,622 bushels (3,310 tonnes); the attached wing annex storage bins built in 1976 with a storage capacity of 817921 bushels (22,260 tonnes) held in 42 honeycomb bins each of which holds 530 tonnes; the 1992 annex with a storage capacity of 510,741 bushels (13,900 tonnes); the 1994 annex with a storage capacity of 650,368 bushels (17,700 tonnes); the 1998 annex with a storage capacity of 815716 bushels (22,200 tonnes); the 2002 annex with a storage capacity of 1,109,668 bushels (30,200 tonnes).
- The minimum exterior fenestration on the elevator main house. Because slip-formed concrete construction is not conducive for use on structures with complex windows and doors, the elevator workhouse features only several simple doors and windows.

SOURCES:

Driver, Deanna. Just a Bunch of Farmers. Houghton Boston Printers, Saskatoon. 2001.
Gord Anderson, Plant Manager at Weyburn Inland Terminal.