



**Statement of Significance and Integrity
for
Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol
1937 Warden's House and Yard**

**10006 – 100 Avenue
Fort Saskatchewan, Alberta**

June 2014

Prepared for: City of Fort Saskatchewan, Culture Services Department

Prepared by: Ken Tingley, M.A.
David Johnston, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP

**HISTORIC RESOURCE
EVALUATION FORM**

**Statement of Significance and Integrity
Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol
1937 Warden's House and Yard**

JUNE 2014

Prepared for:

The City of Fort Saskatchewan
Culture Services Department

c/o:

Richard Gagnon, B.Sc., MPE
Director

Prepared by:

Ken Tingley, M.A.
11018 – 160 Street NW
Edmonton, AB
T5P 3G4

David Johnston, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP
133 Laurier Drive NW
Edmonton, AB
T5R 5P8

The project team wishes to acknowledge the invaluable contributions made to the project by Provincial Archives staff, Fort Saskatchewan Museum and Historic Site staff, and City of Fort Saskatchewan administration staff.

**HISTORIC RESOURCE
EVALUATION FORM**

Table of Contents

DRAFT Historic Resource Evaluation Form and Statement of Significance and Integrity	4
Appendix 1 – Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol and Warden’s House Context	36

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

SUMMARY

Resource: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Wide <input type="checkbox"/> Community	File #
---	--------

1. Description

Resource Name	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard		
Alternate Names	N/A		
Address	10006 – 100 Avenue		
Neighbourhood	Downtown		
Legal Description	Lot 2, Plan 922 1716		
Year of Construction	1937		
Architectural Style	English cottage style design influences		
Architect	Unknown		
Builder	Government of Alberta – Department of Public Works		
Use Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce <input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> Defence <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Food Supply <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Research <input type="checkbox"/> Industry <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Use <input type="checkbox"/> Religion, Ritual and Funeral <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Transport	
Original Use	Residence for Warden of Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol		
City Owned	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Criteria of Significance	Theme/Activity/Cultural Practice/Event	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Wide	<input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> NA
	Institution/Person	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Wide	<input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> NA
	Design/Style/Construction	<input type="checkbox"/> City Wide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> NA
	Information Potential	<input type="checkbox"/> City Wide	<input type="checkbox"/> Community <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NA
	Landmark/Symbolic Value	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Wide	<input type="checkbox"/> Community <input type="checkbox"/> NA
2005 Provincial Master Plan Theme <small>(please select one)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric Alberta <input type="checkbox"/> Fur Trade <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Life <input type="checkbox"/> Resource Development <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Development <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Development <input type="checkbox"/> Politics and Government <input type="checkbox"/> Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Work and Leisure <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual Life <input type="checkbox"/> Business and Industry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Sports <input type="checkbox"/> Intellectual Life <input type="checkbox"/> The Face of Alberta	

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

**Context
Image**



Title Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard

Description View from 100 Avenue, looking northwest showing house and curved driveway access

Source David Johnston

Date March 25, 2014

Copyright David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Contemporary
Image



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	South and west elevations, looking north
Source	David Johnston
Date	March 25, 2014
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Historic Image



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	Warden J.D. McLean in front of Warden’s Residence, portrait in uniform 5 February, 1940
Source	Provincial Archives of Alberta
Date	February 1940
Copyright	Provincial Archives of Alberta

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Map



Title	Map of Warden's House and Yard site
Description	Map of Warden's House and Yard Historically Significant Area
Source	Culture Services Department, City of Fort Saskatchewan
Date	June 17, 2014
Copyright	City of Fort Saskatchewan

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

2. Significance

Summary	<p>This site is significant because....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Warden's House and Yard has direct and significant association with the operations of the former Provincial Gaol complex that was located in downtown Fort Saskatchewan from 1914 to 1988, a major institution and employer in the community; the building was the official residence of the Warden from 1937 to 1973, and has associations with the Theme of Law Enforcement (Theme/Activity/Cultural Practice/Event value – city-wide significance) - the building was the official residence of the Warden of the former Provincial Gaol complex, a major institution that operated in Fort Saskatchewan from 1914 to 1988; law enforcement activities have been a central theme and institutional component of Fort Saskatchewan since the establishment of the original Fort Saskatchewan in 1875 (Institution/Person value – city-wide significance) - the Warden's House is representative of the English cottage revival style of construction that was popular in Alberta in the 1930s, including the use of stucco materials, gables, and bellcast rooflines; it is a somewhat rare example of the type remaining in Fort Saskatchewan; also included on the site is the 1941 detached garage that was built at the Warden's request, which retains a similar style and materials to the Warden's House and is in its original location (Design/Style/Construction value – community significance) - the Warden's House has direct and significant association with a landmark in the Fort Saskatchewan community – the site of the former Provincial Gaol, just west of the downtown area; the building is located on the former Gaol site, and was the official residence of the Gaol's Warden; the building also possesses significance through its symbolic value, representing the official aspects of law enforcement in the community (Landmark/Symbolic Value value – city-wide significance)
Era of Development <small>(please select one)</small>	<p>Development Era</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pre 1850 <input type="checkbox"/> 1850 to 1874 (Pre Settlement) <input type="checkbox"/> 1875 to 1884 (Frontier) <input type="checkbox"/> 1885 to 1905 (Railway/Early Settlement) <input type="checkbox"/> 1906 to 1913 (Pre WW I Boom, Age of Optimism) <input type="checkbox"/> 1914 to 1918 (WW I) <input type="checkbox"/> 1919 to 1929 (Post WW I to Stock Market Crash) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1930 to 1939 (Depression) <input type="checkbox"/> 1940 to 1945 (WW II) <input type="checkbox"/> 1946 to 1956 (Oil Boom) <input type="checkbox"/> 1957 to 1982 (Modern) <input type="checkbox"/> 1983 onward
Dates	<p>As well as the year of completion other significant dates are:</p> <p>1941 – detached garage added to the site</p> <p>1942 – significant interior decorations added to residence</p> <p>1973 – building no longer used as Warden's residence; converted to office and administration use for Gaol staff</p>

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

	<p>1988 – Provincial Gaol complex closes</p> <p>1994 – Provincial Gaol complex buildings demolished, apart from Warden’s House and Facility Shop Building</p> <p>2013 – Facility Shop Building demolished; Warden’s House becomes last remaining structure from the overall former Provincial Gaol complex</p>
Integrity	<p>Does the resource retain sufficient integrity to convey significance?</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
Classification	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> City Wide Historic Resource (important for the whole of Fort Saskatchewan)</p> <p>OR</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Community Historic Resource (important for the whole of a particular neighbourhood or community)</p>
Designation	<p>Federal <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Provincial <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Registered <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Municipal <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
Evaluation Authors and Contact Information	<p>Ken Tingley 780-484-0964</p> <p>David Johnston 780-952-1720</p>
Date Evaluated by City of Fort Saskatchewan	
Date Approved by City of Fort Saskatchewan	

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Additional Images



Title	Former Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol site
Description	Aerial view of Warden's House, indicated in circle
Date	April 21, 2005
Source	Google Earth
Copyright	Google Earth

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

**Additional
Images**



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden's House and Yard
Description	South elevation, showing cross-gable roofline
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

**Additional
Images**



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden's House and Yard
Description	West elevation, showing sweeping bellcast roofline
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston


HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Additional Images



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	North and west elevations, looking southeast, showing sweeping bellcast rooflines
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Additional Images	
Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden's House and Yard
Description	North elevation, showing sweeping bellcast roofline
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Additional Images	
Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden's House and Yard
Description	East elevation
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Additional Images



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	Detail of main entrance with shaped hood over entry and closed railings
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

**HISTORIC RESOURCE
EVALUATION FORM**

Additional Images



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	Detail of façade showing bay window, upper three-paneled window and stucco entablatures
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

**HISTORIC RESOURCE
EVALUATION FORM**

Additional Images



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	Detail of moulded stucco soffit on south elevation
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Additional Images



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	Detail of porch on rear (north) elevation
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

**Additional
Images**



Title Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden's House and Yard

Description View from northwest at north/west elevation of Warden's House and 1941 detached garage

Date March 25, 2014

Source David Johnston

Copyright David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Additional Images	
Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	Detail of rear (north) elevation, showing moulded stucco soffits, plain fascia, window openings, and sweeping bellcast roofline
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Additional Images



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	Detail of southwest corner of west elevation, showing sweeping bellcast roofline
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

**Additional
Images**



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	View from the northeast east elevation of 1941 detached garage
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

**Additional
Images**



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	South elevation of 1941 detached garage
Date	March 25, 2014
Source	David Johnston
Copyright	David Johnston

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

**Additional
Images**



Warden's House, home of J.D McLean from 1937-1959

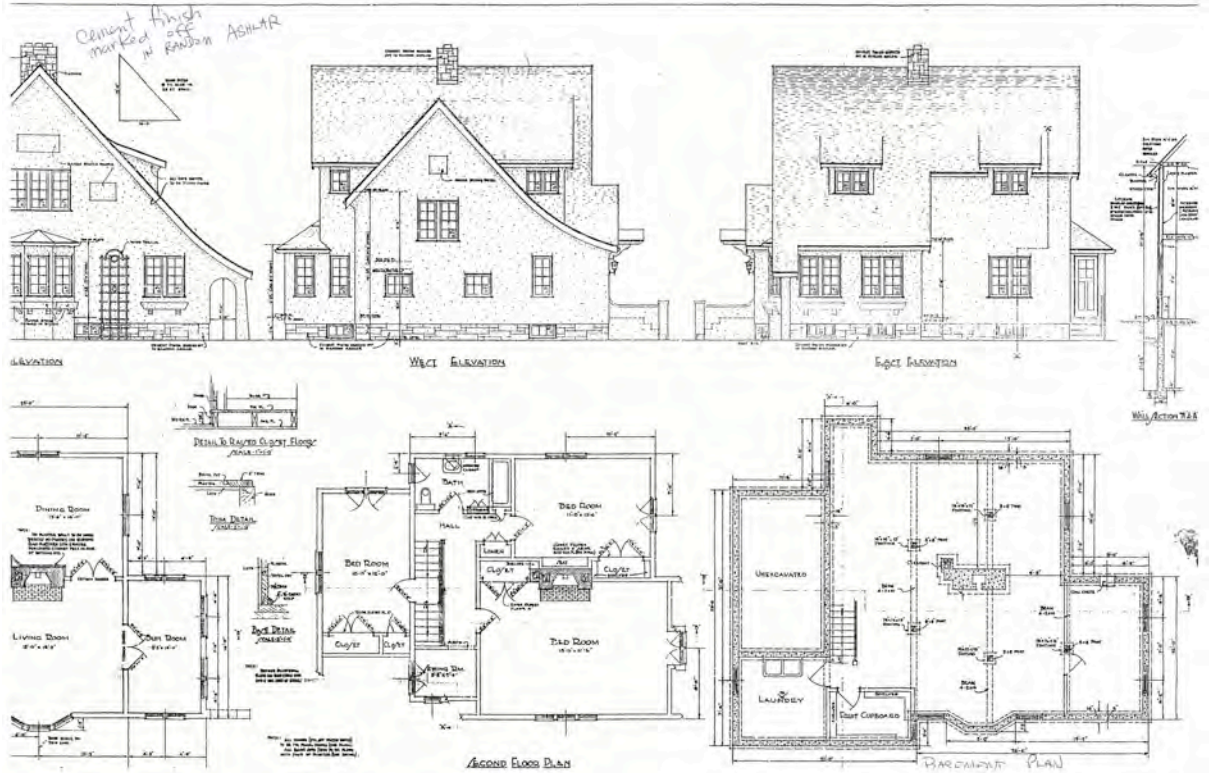
Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden's House and Yard
Description	Photo of Warden's House, showing formerly landscaped yard and curved driveway
Date	Unknown
Source	Fort Saskatchewan Museum & Historic Site
Copyright	Unknown

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

<p>Additional Images</p>	
<p>Title</p>	<p>Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard</p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>Copy of original blueprints for Warden’s House – first page</p>
<p>Date</p>	<p>July 1937</p>
<p>Source</p>	<p>Fort Saskatchewan Museum & Historic Site</p>
<p>Copyright</p>	<p>Government of Alberta, Department of Public Works</p>

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Additional Images



Title	Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol – Warden’s House and Yard
Description	Copy of original blueprints for Warden’s House – second page
Date	July 1937
Source	Fort Saskatchewan Museum & Historic Site
Copyright	Government of Alberta, Department of Public Works

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Preliminary Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The 1937 one and one-half storey Warden's House is a English cottage-style design-influenced building located adjacent to the site of the former Provincial Gaol in downtown Fort Saskatchewan. The historic place includes the 1937 Warden's House, the 1941 detached garage, and the surrounding yard (the boundaries of the designation area are shown on the map on page 8). It is of wood frame construction, and is distinguished by its original stucco exterior. It has a composite, cross-gable roofline, with high-pitched gables on the south, west, and north elevations. The façade is characterized by an offset, high-pitched gable over the open front porch. There is a large shed dormer on the west elevation, and two smaller shed dormers on the east elevation. The front door is placed within a rounded opening with a decorative surround. An arched entryway on the east side of the building leads to the rear of the property. A small one-storey detached garage, built in 1941 for use by the Warden, is also located on the site, and assists in the interpretation of the overall site. The Warden's House and Yard is located on 100 Avenue, near the Fort Saskatchewan Museum & Historic Site property. The municipal heritage designation applies to the Warden's House, the detached garage, and the front yard and grounds of the property, including the curved driveway feature. The designation does not include the unenclosed deck and wheelchair ramp at the rear of the building.

Heritage Value

The Warden's House and Yard is significant for its direct association with the operations of the former Provincial Gaol complex that was located in downtown Fort Saskatchewan from 1914 to 1988, a major institution and employer in the community. The building was the official residence of the Warden from 1937 to 1973, and has associations with the Theme of Law Enforcement. The building also has significance as the official residence of the Warden of the former Provincial Gaol institution. Law enforcement activities have been a central theme and institutional component of Fort Saskatchewan since the establishment of the original Fort Saskatchewan in 1875. The residence was constructed just off the actual grounds of the Gaol complex, allowing convenient access for the Warden, but also symbolically being located in the community itself, and not within the prison grounds. This was an attempt to create as normal a living circumstance for the Warden and his family, recognizing the dual roles of a law enforcement supervisor and a husband/father. The grand nature of the residence and elements such as the curved driveway also denote a level of importance to the position of Warden of such a major provincial facility.

The Warden's House and Yard is also significant for its English cottage-style design influences, a revival style of construction that was popular in Alberta in the 1930s, and typically included the use of stucco materials, gables, and bellcast rooflines. It is a somewhat rare and grand example of the type remaining in Fort Saskatchewan. Finally, the building has direct and significant association with a landmark in the Fort Saskatchewan community – the site of the former Provincial Gaol, just west of the downtown area. The building is located immediately adjacent to the former Gaol site, and was the official residence of the Gaol's Warden. The building also possesses significance through its own symbolic value, representing the official aspects of law enforcement in the community.

The one and one-half storey building is valued aesthetically for its stylish stucco-clad English cottage style-influenced design, which is rare in Fort Saskatchewan. The design of the house was not likely a standardized plan used by the Public Works Department. Instead, it was likely a conscious approach to make the residence building not look like it was part of the correctional facility. The orientation of the building on the overall Gaol site, away from the main complex and its buildings, suggests an attempt to make residing in the building as normal as possible for the Warden and his family. Design elements include the composite, cross-gable roof line that features high-pitched gables on the south, west, and north elevations. All of the gables have projecting eaves and verges, plain fascia, and feature moulded stucco soffits. The façade is characterized by a high-pitched main gable with a

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

bellcast roofline, and an offset, high-pitched gable over the open front porch. The building retains its original stucco finish. There is a large shed dormer on the west elevation, and two smaller shed dormers on the east elevation, all with projecting eaves and stucco soffits. All of the window openings on the building are original and feature moulded lintels to direct rain away; however, all of the windows have been replaced. There is an original three-panel bay window on the façade. The open porch on the façade has a shaped hood with brackets, and dentilation along the eave. The straight staircase features closed railings in the original stucco. The front door is placed within a rounded opening with a decorative surround, and has a semi-circular sidelight window on the left. An arched entryway on the east side of the building leads to the rear of the property. There is a stucco-clad chimney centrally-located on the roofline.

The building was purpose-built by the Provincial Department of Public Works in 1937 to accommodate the Warden of the Provincial Gaol. At that time, the Warden was J.D. McLean. On July 10, 1937, the Foreman-Carpenter of the construction crew building the new residence wrote to W.D. Stacey, Superintendent of Buildings for the Alberta Department of Public Works, stating: "We are on the way with the basement for Warden McLean's house, and I am enclosing a list of material I shall need about the end of next week." During the summer months of 1937, most of the construction was completed on the house. Stacey, in his annual report, stated: "August, September, October, November and December (1937) were spent on new construction house and grounds to Warden's residence which gave employment to some 24 men." Men usually worked in 15-man crews, and was possibly done in part by inmates at the Gaol. Stacey reported that hardwood floors were in place shortly after completion of the main structure. "Maple floor laid in bed room and hall to Warden's house, sanded and finished," he reported.

Stacey further noted in the annual report submitted in March 1938: "...Warden's old residence was taken down." This seems to have occurred in January 1938.

As the summer of 1940 approached, the McLeans were living in the new residence, and some thought was given to providing some of the modern comforts. Harry Looker wrote to W.D. Stacey: "With reference to Mr. McLean's house, is it possible to have a cooling system installed for summer use? Last year when I mentioned this to you, you thought it would be possible to have this unit put in by spring." The Warden's detached garage, which is also located on the site, was kalsomined and painted in June 1941. The garage is in its original location and retains its original materials, providing additional context for the overall site as it existing during the operations of the Gaol.

Superintendent Stacey reported in 1943: "The Warden's residence was decorated inside from top to basement." This occurred in May 1942. A door was repaired, and the storm windows and screens painted at the warden's Residence in May 1944.

The *Montreal Gazette* and other newspapers published an advertisement calling for a warden for the Fort Saskatchewan Gaol, with a salary "up to" \$10,860. The competition closing date was December 28, 1967.

Historian Peter T. Ream, in *The Fort on the Saskatchewan*, records that in 1973 the Warden's House was vacated. Thereafter, it was used as additional office space for the Gaol administration, and for a brief period as a half-way house for female prisoners. When the Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol closed in 1988, it served as the transition office for the move to the new location. Ream writes that demolition of the house was considered during the late 1980s. In 1990, the Fort Saskatchewan Allied Arts Council looked to the site for a community centre. At this time, the residence had been vacant for about three years, and was in need of maintenance and repair.

From 1991 onwards, the Warden's House accommodated a number of users, including the Fort Saskatchewan Allied Arts Council and its gift shop, a Tea House Restaurant, and the

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

	<p>Warden's Attic Gift Shop. Over the years, as use of the building continued, ongoing deterioration and required maintenance was identified and undertaken, including to windows and the foundation. The City installed bathroom fans and a sprinkler system, a fire alarm system, drywall and fire doors, handicap washroom components, electrical work and chimney lining. The Allied Arts Council provided the make-up air unit, and exhaust fan in the kitchen. An unenclosed deck and wheelchair ramps were added to the rear of the building in 1997.</p> <p>Today, the building houses the offices, gift shop, and public amenity space of the Fort Saskatchewan Museum & Historic Site.</p> <p>Character-Defining Elements</p> <p>The character-defining elements as expressed in the form, massing and materials of the 1937 Warden's House and Yard include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Original stucco cladding and Storybook design influences ▪ Composite, cross-gable roofline featuring high-pitched south, west, and north-facing bellcast gables ▪ Projecting eaves and verges with moulded stucco soffits and plain fascia ▪ Offset, high-pitched gable over the open front porch that is complementary to the main gable ▪ Large shed dormer on west elevation, and two small shed dormers on east elevation, all with projecting eaves and moulded stucco soffits ▪ Original window openings with moulded lintels ▪ Original three-panel bay window on the façade ▪ Open porch on the façade with shaped hood with brackets and dentilation along the eave, and straight staircase featuring closed railings in original stucco ▪ Front door within a rounded opening with a decorative surround, and semi-circular sidelight window on the left ▪ Arched entryway on the east side of the building leading to the rear of the property ▪ Central stucco-clad chimney ▪ One-storey, original stucco-clad detached garage, built in 1941. The structure is a character-defining element of the overall site ▪ Semi-circle driveway access from 100 Avenue, in its original orientation. While the materials have been altered, the location and orientation of the access is a character-defining element of the overall site <p>Period of Significance</p> <p>1937 - 1973</p>
Historical Title Search	N/A
Henderson's Directory Search	N/A
Additional Sources	<p>Provincial Archives of Alberta, Attorney-General's Papers, Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol, 68.29 Box 14: Foreman-Carpenter to W.D. Stacey, Superintendent of Buildings, Alberta Department of Public Works, Report, 10 July 1937</p> <p>Provincial Archives of Alberta, Attorney-General's Papers, Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol, 68.29 Box 14 "Correspondence H. Looker A-1": Harry Looker to W.D. Stacey, Superintendent of Buildings, Alberta Department of Public Works, in Report, 31 March 1938</p> <p>Provincial Archives of Alberta, Attorney-General's Papers, Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol, 68.29 Box 14: W.D. Stacey, Superintendent of Buildings, Alberta Department of Public</p>

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

	<p>Works, 31 March 1938</p> <p>Provincial Archives of Alberta, Attorney-General's Papers, Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol, 68.29 Box 14: W.D. Stacey, Superintendent of Buildings, Alberta Department of Public Works, Report, 31 March 1938</p> <p>Provincial Archives of Alberta, Attorney-General's Papers, Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol, 68.29 Box 14: Harry Looker to W.D. Stacey, Superintendent of Buildings, Alberta Department of Public Works, 10 May 1940</p> <p>Provincial Archives of Alberta, Attorney-General's Papers, Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol, 68.29 Box 14: W.D. Stacey, Superintendent of Buildings, Alberta Department of Public Works, Report, 31 March 1942</p> <p>Provincial Archives of Alberta, Attorney-General's Papers, Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol, 68.29 Box 14: W.D. Stacey, Superintendent of Buildings, Alberta Department of Public Works, Report, 31 March 1943</p> <p>Provincial Archives of Alberta, Attorney-General's Papers, Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol, 68.29 Box 14: W.D. Stacey, Superintendent of Buildings, Alberta Department of Public Works, 31 March 1945</p> <p>Provincial Archives of Alberta, Attorney-General's Papers, Fort Saskatchewan Provincial Gaol, 68.29 Box 14 (General Correspondence 1934-1946): W.D. Stacey, Superintendent of Buildings, Alberta Department of Public Works, Report, 31 March 1938</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Dennis P. Fjestad, "Warden's House Development," 24 June 1991</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Dennis P. Fjestad, "Warden's House Development", 17 July 1992</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Memorandum, 2 November 1994; City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, "Conditions of Approval of Building Permit No. D – 94-229", 1 November 1994</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, leasing agreement between the City of Fort Saskatchewan and Tea House Inc., operating as the Warden's Tea House, 6 November 1994.</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Memorandum, "Warden's House Renovations Update," 11 January 1995</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Memorandum, 15 February 1995, Terry Robertson, Facilities Director to Tofiel Wegner, Manager, Community Services</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Municipal Safety Code Inspection, Agency Inspection Report 8306 9 June 1997</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Memorandum, "Warden's House Renovations Update," 11 January 1995</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Shirley Macleod, president, Fort Saskatchewan Allied Arts Council, to Jacquie Spencer, Coordinator of Recreation and Culture, 6 June 1998</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Warden's Attic Gift Shop, Lease Agreement,</p>
--	---

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

	<p>29 October 1999</p> <p>Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Quotation, KSN Interiors Ltd., 1 October 2001; City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Planning and Public Works to Basement Systems, Edmonton, 2 October 2001; City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Invoice, Basement Systems, Edmonton, 12 October 2001</p> <p>City of Fort Saskatchewan, Municipal Records, Work Order, Basement Systems, Edmonton, 28 September 2001; includes drawing of work location</p>
--	--

CRITERIA OF INTEGRITY

<p>Statement of Integrity</p>	<p>Location</p> <p>The Warden’s House building remains in its original location on 100 Avenue in downtown Fort Saskatchewan, and comprises the original placement of the building on the property.</p> <p>Design</p> <p>The Warden’s House building retains a high level of design integrity. The only addition or alteration to the building is an unenclosed deck on the rear of the building.</p> <p>Environment</p> <p>The historic, institutional context of the Warden’s House remains only marginally intact, given it is in its original location. However, the former Provincial Gaol complex that it was associated with has been demolished, altering its environment significantly.</p> <p>Materials</p> <p>The original materials of the Warden’s House remain intact, apart from the introduction of new windows (within the original window openings), an unenclosed deck and wheelchair ramp, new roofing materials and eavestroughs, upgrades to the building foundation, and new exterior paint.</p> <p>Workmanship</p> <p>The original workmanship of the Warden’s House remains intact, apart from the introduction of new windows (within the original window openings), an unenclosed deck and wheelchair ramp, new roofing materials and eavestroughs, upgrades to the building foundation, and new exterior paint.</p> <p>Feeling</p> <p>Since the building retains a high degree of exterior and contextual integrity, the property retains a historic feeling.</p> <p>Association</p> <p>The building no longer functions in its original role as the residence for the Warden of the Provincial Gaol complex nearby. The Gaol complex itself was demolished in 1994, apart from the Warden’s House and the former Facility Shop Building. The Shop Building was demolished in 2013, leaving the Warden’s House as the only remaining building from the Provincial Gaol complex. The building is still associated with the Gaol by the community and retains its direct link to that institution, and now serves as the welcome centre and administrative space for the Fort Saskatchewan Museum & Historic Site complex nearby, and provides interpretative services for both</p>
--------------------------------------	---

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

	<p>the North West Mounted Police history, as well as the Gaol.</p> <p>Chronology of Alterations to the House and Yard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Warden's House constructed in 1937 ▪ Installation of maple hardwood in bedroom and hall shortly after completion ▪ Detached garage built, kalsomined and painted in 1941 ▪ House decorated from top to basement in May 1942 ▪ House door repaired and storm windows and screens painted in May 1944 ▪ House vacated by Warden in 1973 ▪ Post 1991 – installation of bathroom fans, sprinkler systems, fire alarm system, drywall and fire doors, handicapped washroom components, electrical work and chimney lining ▪ Air unit and exhaust fan in kitchen ▪ Unenclosed deck and wheelchair ramps at rear of building in 1997 ▪ Foundation repair in the fall of 2001 – excavation down to footing of west wall for 12 feet north of the southwest corner. Below grade sealant was installed with 20/20 mesh at all the cracks that had appeared in the foundation wall. A delta membrane system was applied from grade down to the footing to complete the repair. Also, 26 feet of waterguard was installed at the northwest corner of the basement leading to the new super sump (C.W. 1/3 horsepower Zoeller sump pump). The discharge lines were plumbed up and out to the back yard. Twenty-five feet of coiled hose was installed to take the water away from the foundation waterguard
--	--

Does the resource maintain sufficient overall integrity to convey its significance?

Yes No

1. LOCATION	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Location is the place where an historic resource was constructed or the site where an historic activity or event occurred.</p> <p>The location of the Warden's House and Yard has not changed.</p>	
2. DESIGN	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure and style of a resource.</p> <p>The design of the Warden's House has not changed, apart from an unenclosed deck and wheelchair ramp at the rear of the building.</p>	
3. ENVIRONMENT	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Environment is the physical setting of an historic resource. Whereas location refers to a specific place, environment refers to the character of the place in which a resource played its historic role.</p> <p>The environment of the building has changed, due to the demolition of the overall Provincial Gaol complex.</p>	
4. MATERIALS	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period(s) or time frame and in a particular pattern or configuration to form an historic resource.</p> <p>The authentic materials of the building have not changed, with the exception of new windows (within the original window openings), an unenclosed deck and wheelchair ramp, new roofing materials and eavestroughs, upgrades to the building foundation, and new exterior paint.</p>	

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

5. WORKMANSHIP	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history. It is important because it can provide information about technological practices and aesthetic principles.</p> <p>The workmanship of the building is authentic, with the exception of new windows (within the original window openings), an unenclosed deck and wheelchair ramp, new roofing materials and eavestroughs, upgrades to the building foundation, and new exterior paint.</p>			
6. ASSOCIATION	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Association is a <i>direct link</i> between an historic resource and a significant historical theme, activity or event, or an institution or person.</p> <p>The building retains its association with the former Provincial Gaol institution, despite the balance of the buildings of the complex being demolished in 1994.</p>			

**HISTORIC RESOURCE
EVALUATION FORM**

APPENDIX 1
HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR
FORT SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL GAOL
AND
1937 WARDEN'S HOUSE AND YARD

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

“The jail was part of Fort Saskatchewan’s growth from the beginning of the 1900s and, for as long as anyone can remember, was a focal point in the community.”

-Daneve Freeborn, chair, Save the Jail Committee, quoted in Lawrence Herzog, It’s Your Heritage, *Real Estate Weekly*, 20 January 1994

“Jails don’t make history easy. But they make it in a way few other structures can....”

- Rev. Peter Ream, Fort Saskatchewan historian, quoted in Lawrence Herzog, It’s Your Heritage, *Real Estate Weekly*, 20 January 1994

Inspector W.D. Jarvis of the North-West Mounted Police established Fort Saskatchewan on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River in 1875, as one of its first outposts on the northern fringe of its territory in the far west. The community that grew up under the security created by this important commercial, legal, and social establishment was incorporated as a village in 1899. By 1904, when Fort Saskatchewan had grown sufficiently to become a town, and Edmonton a city, the western settlement and railway-building boom during the heyday of “the last, best west” in the North-West Territories had promoted significant local and regional growth. Regional development would accelerate with provincial status for Alberta in 1905, and confirmation of neighbouring Edmonton as the new capital in 1906. Even more importantly, the arrival of the Canadian Northern Railway at Fort Saskatchewan in 1905 tied the new town into the proliferating network of railway connections crisscrossing the province, and placed it on a transcontinental line, so vital to the provision of agricultural supplies, and the exportation of agricultural produce. The first local bridge over the North Saskatchewan River, replacing the ferry, was constructed at this time, with the railway company building its impressive station on free land provided by Fort Saskatchewan in exchange for the new railway bridge.

The original Fort had a guard room facility that was used by the North-West Mounted Police to house criminals. The overall complex served an important role as a regional security centre, and many modifications were made to it over time to accommodate increased activity. The fort became the headquarters of the ‘G’ Division of the Mounted Police in 1889. By 1907, the heavy dependence placed upon the Fort Saskatchewan facility by the new province and the nearby city of Edmonton could no longer be accommodated. The *Edmonton Bulletin* reported on 29 June 1907 that the federal penitentiary would be enlarged in Edmonton. This was an addition to the federal buildings already constructed in 1903 on Government Avenue, just south of the Canadian Northern Railway tracks. “The building was intended when its construction was begun, for a territorial prison, and when the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan were formed, instead of handing the building and grounds over to the province of Alberta, as at first deemed advisable (sic), the Federal authorities decided to use the property for a penitentiary for the two provinces.”¹

Within the next few years, the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan will have one of the most up-to-date and best arranged penitentiaries in the Dominion of Canada. This is the ambition of the authorities and towards that end they are now working. The present buildings at Edmonton are but the nucleus of what the western provinces will possess in five years’ time, when the plans that are now arranged have been put into execution. Each of the coming years will witness an addition to the penitentiary till at the last the entire structure will form a symmetrical whole - the equal in size and equipment of any in the Dominion and the superior in many respects.

And this work will not be a charge upon the Dominion Government either for material or labour. The material will be procured near the property in the form of clay and manufactured into brick and artificial alone by the inmates of the penitentiary - thus saving an immense expense and giving the

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

unfortunates who have fallen under the stern arm of the law an opportunity to learn useful trades which will serve them in good stead upon their release. ².

Nearly a thousand people lived in Fort Saskatchewan by the outbreak of the First World War. A new Provincial Gaol was being constructed there by this time. The expensive facility, valued at \$200,000, would open in 1915, to replace the Royal North-West Mounted Police guard room that no longer could accommodate the needs of the burgeoning district. Increased crime inevitably accompanied the new growth and settlement, and the old 34-cell guard room was obviously in need of replacement. The guard room had been an important part of the development of Fort Saskatchewan, as well as territorial and provincial history, from 1875 onward. When responsibility for the provision of a secure incarceration facility passed from the North-West Mounted Police to the Province, the new gaol would become an important part of the local scene, especially as it provided increasing employment for local residents. Additions of more cellblocks, and later its own power plant, created a significantly substantial addition to the town as greater demands were placed on the facility.

The North-West Mounted Police were gradually relocated from Fort Saskatchewan to Edmonton between 1909 and 1913. During this time, the 200-acre site used by the Police since 1875 was transferred to the Province of Alberta to meet its increased needs for jail facilities, but word of the transfer was not popular in Fort Saskatchewan. "For a generation or more the Mounted Police barracks have stood on the north bank of the river at Fort Saskatchewan, amid the picturesque beauty of sylvan surroundings," the *Edmonton Bulletin* observed on 13 February 1913. "Fort Saskatchewan and the barracks have been inseparably associated in the public mind for more years than the old-timer cares to count." ³.

To speak frankly, the townspeople do not like it, F.A. Morrison, the unsuccessful Conservative candidate against W.H. White at the last Dominion election, who has charge of the government patronage for the district, has been approached by the Fort Conservatives and asked to persuade the government to leave at the Fort the last remaining link with a by-gone age, but Mr. Morrison's influence at Ottawa cannot be of a very far-reaching character, for he was unable to report any progress. Quite a number of the Conservatives are exceedingly sore at Mr. Morrison for his lack of interest in the matter, and they now pass him by on the other side. ⁴.

On 9 March 1914, the actual transfer of the barracks took place, with the last sixty prisoners held at the Fort guard room being moved to the new Edmonton facility. Dismantling of the barracks and guard room did not begin until June 1915 due to the outbreak of war in Europe and the attendant allocation of resources. A new cellblock on the site opened that fall.

The Rev. Dr. Peter Ream writes that many problems faced Fort Saskatchewan at the end of the Great War in 1918. When the Sturgeon River power dam failed in 1912, it left Fort Saskatchewan with a massive debt that could not be paid off for two decades. A fire had destroyed the business district in 1913, the year of an international financial crisis, which slowed rebuilding. The war had claimed the lives of 41 Fort Saskatchewan men. At least three died during the disastrous Spanish influenza pandemic of 1918 - 1919. "The dreams of a glorious future for the Fort had evaporated by this time, and the people settled down to face stern reality. This was the age of retrenchment, consolidation, and the eking out of the dollars." In this atmosphere, the stable employment opportunities provided by the new Provincial Gaol were a local, and even regional, anchor upon which many families depended. ⁵.

As noted in the *Fort Saskatchewan Record* during the Alberta centennial year, "Fort Saskatchewan originated as a North West Mounted Police fort site but gained the reputation of 'the jail town' once the Provincial Gaol ... was

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

constructed in 1914....” While subsequent developments would overshadow this fact, it is important to recall that for over seven decades, the Provincial Gaol was the principal defining element in the history of Fort Saskatchewan, and provided a major source of employment for many years. Inmates also worked as cooks and cleaners in the gaol, cut firewood to increase revenue, laboured on the 800-acre prison farm, and maintained the impressive lawns and numerous flowerbeds throughout the grounds. In fact, the jail became self sufficient through the prison greenhouse, with several root cellars and barns operated by the inmates. Road building and maintenance, threshing crews, ice harvesting in winter, and work in carpentry and blacksmith shops also occupied male inmates, sometimes adding to prison revenue as well. Later, men worked manufacturing license plates, until the Province privatized this occupation; the shop was converted to an auto-body shop at that time. Women prisoners, of which there were a few, usually worked at domestic occupations, many of them sewing prison uniforms. ⁶.

The Fort Saskatchewan facility continued to grow over the years. A women's cellblock was first built in 1919, with an extension in 1921, and a second addition in 1952 (later converted to a men's maximum-security block in the mid 1970s). An addition to the men's cellblock was built in 1931, while a warehouse conversion to a cellblock later held 96 medium-security inmates. A new siren was purchased by the town on 23 September 1931, and was installed at the Gaol to notify the Fire Brigade of any emergency in the town or Gaol. This plan would prove useful, as inmates would later help to lay emergency water pipe to control spread of fire that destroyed Our Lady of the Angels church and heavily damaged the *Fort Saskatchewan Record* plant in September 1967. Inmates helped lay pipes from the irrigation system to fight the spread of fire during a high wind during that event. ⁷.

The Warden's Residence was constructed in 1937, and was occupied by Warden J.D. McLean and his family soon thereafter. At the time, the Residence was considered one of the finest homes in Fort Saskatchewan, and locals who visited the home were impressed by the hardwood floors, well-kept grounds, and prisoners in white coats servicing refreshments.

A powerhouse also was constructed in 1952, and a gym and trades center in the mid 1970s. In 1960, E.E. Buchanan, Inspector of Jails, announced that the Fort facility would see its new administrative wing during the following year. ⁸.

Mr. Buchanan said the additional space will provide more interview offices and increase the visiting area. He said visiting time on Saturdays would be increased from the present 15 minutes to about half an hour.

Mr. Buchanan said the new kitchen at the gaol is almost completed and an addition to the dining room is expected to be ready within two months. At present, the gaol has about 300 prisoners and is filled almost to capacity but prisoners are rarely transferred to less crowded gaols. Instead, an attempt is made to keep down the gaol population at Fort Saskatchewan by sending prisoners from the Red Deer area to Calgary and Lethbridge gaols. Formerly, prisoners from this area often served their time at Fort Saskatchewan.

Mr. Buchanan said the centre of Alberta's population has shifted northward largely as a result of the rapid growth in the Edmonton and Peace River areas. Women prisoners will still be sent to the Fort, which is Alberta's only jail containing a women's section.

Alberta's total jail population at present is 1,100, slightly below the total of recent years and the peak of 1955. Mr. Buchanan said the increase in probation services has resulted in many prisoners being released on probation.

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

The inmate population grew, as did that of the increasingly larger staff, further increasing the importance of the Provincial Gaol to the local economy. The whole community used the Gaol's water tower (built in 1914) until 1956. This tower famously caught on fire twice in 1971, with both fires taking place within a month of each other. During a welding repair, shavings (used as insulation and covered by shingles) were ignited accidentally, causing the fires.⁹

Despite the series of renovations and additions, overcrowding and living conditions generally continued to deteriorate at the facility. A series of riots focused attention on the problems. The riot of January 1955 was given much media attention. The *Edmonton Journal* reported that "Squads of RCMP and guards, using tear gas, brought a half-hour riot under control at Fort Saskatchewan jail ..., but not before the dining room was reduced to shambles and a storeroom gutted by fire...."¹⁰

The rioting broke out about noon as 96 inmates, led by about 12 ringleaders, sat down for their noon-day meal in the prison dining room. Dishes were thrown and tables and other furniture hurled and smashed. The riot came less than 24 hours after the chief guard and two other guards were dismissed. Police and guards ended the disturbance almost as abruptly as it started, as the ringleaders, who had barricaded themselves in a bakery, were flushed out by tear gas and were herded to their cells.

A guard, believed to be Stuart Palmer, was the only person injured. He was only slightly injured, when he is reported to have tripped over some of the debris.

Squads of RCMP from Edmonton, numbering about 50 men, were rushed to the gaol in 10 cars to assist the guards in putting down the riot. Members of the Fort Saskatchewan town fire department also were called to extinguish the blaze in the storeroom, where an unestimated amount of clothing and other stores was burned or damaged. Information was denied reporters seeking to interview Warden J.D. McLean. Eyewitnesses reported that besides dishes being broken and furniture smashed, food was splattered on the walls, the floor and ceiling. They said the dining room was a shambles.... Reporters were greeted by shouts from inmates in one prison block, believed the one containing the rioters. The inmates shouted, "Get the story straight." To a question about what had caused the riot, they shouted, "Food!"

*The gaol houses about 300 men prisoners and between 150 and 200 women.*¹¹

Sherritt Gordon Mines started construction of its large nickel refinery in Fort Saskatchewan during 1952. This plant started production in 1954. Industrial development in the town grew significant after this, providing a greater base of employment opportunity. Population doubled between 1951 and 1956 as a result. Dow Chemical opened its plant in 1961, and expanded it in 1967. This led to a further substantial population increase. Despite these new industrial operations, the Gaol retained an important role in the community as a major employer.

During the 1960s, three reports on conditions at the Fort Gaol raised public opinion on the subject of conditions in the facility. Mrs. Wilbur F. Bowker, a well-known and very active member of the Edmonton Welfare Council, declared in 1963, following a visit to the site on behalf of the Council: "Fort Saskatchewan jail provides little more than punitive and custodial care." She added that she regarded the Fort "as a real blight in our penal system." In tones reminiscent of 19th Century reformers, she reported to the *Edmonton Journal*: "Prisoners spend their days in enforced degenerative idleness in an atmosphere conducive to contamination."¹²

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Marjorie Bowker's concerns were reported in some detail in by Ruth Bowen:

At Fort Saskatchewan gaol, no diagnosis is made of inmates on admittance. There is neither classification nor segregation of first offenders, chronic alcoholics, drug addicts, sexual offenders. Mrs. Bowker felt there was too much emphasis on maximum security. Of approximately 450 inmates at the Fort, well over half are confined to cell blocks. The remainder are in dormitories. Since only 15 to 25 per cent of the prisoners require maximum security she felt graduated security without bolts and bars would reduce resentments and hostilities.

- *There is no recreation program although it is recognized that this can be important as a morale builder and to release tensions.*
- *There is no vocational training.*
- *There are no facilities for hobbies or crafts.*
- *There are no leisure-time evening programs.*
- *There are no religious programs, but Sunday services have voluntary attendance.*

Of the women, Mrs. Bowker said they are isolated in cell blocks, subjected to enforced idleness with work limited to such routine jobs as cleaning, cooking and mending. They must endure long hours of enforced silence. Prison garb is the hideous mother hubbard uniform. Women prisoners are not allowed lipstick or curlers. She saw no incentive for improvement, which is "demoralizing to persons already demoralized." The prison library provides reading but many of the prisoners haven't the education to be interested in reading beyond comic books. ¹³.

Things had not changed appreciably by 1967, and the local media were taking a greater interest in reform at the Fort. "Fort Saskatchewan Jail was built in 1914 to accommodate 300 inmates," reporter Art Robinson wrote in the *Edmonton Journal*. "Today it holds almost 500, with few changes in the structure.... Just outside the jail proper there is a 100-bed dormitory built in 1960 as a temporary structure. It is still being used and is full.... Thirty or so of these older cells are being shared by two inmates."

F.C. Oswin, Provincial Superintendent of Correctional Institutions, described this as an "extremely undesirable situation." ¹⁴.

A similar "expose" was written by Brian Kiernan for the *Edmonton Journal* in November 1967. "At the Fort Saskatchewan Jail," Kiernan wrote, "inmates are fighting emotional decay with productivity, while officials fight physical decay with constant maintenance."

Although the walls and floors are cracking in the old gaol, an antiseptic cleanliness pervades everything. Silent men in unemotional blocks of concrete are fighting in an early 20th century setting to create some sort of personal meaning out of impersonal order. Some have taken up leather work and painting and they produce beautiful handicrafts.

Others lie on their bunks and aimlessly thumb through 25-cent paperback novels. Prisoners need emotional outlets, like gymnasiums and other recreational facilities. The temporary warden at Fort

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

*Saskatchewan Gaol, J.F. Jackson, calls them "valves" and for the most part, the jail doesn't have any....*¹⁵.

Some efforts were made to add activities to the daily regime. Art Robinson presented an overview of these efforts in the *Edmonton Journal* in March 1967. "Most of the inmates of Fort Saskatchewan Jail are put to work, in one way or another," he reported. "Either they are in the forestry camps, working on the jail's farm or on the job in the automobile license-plate plant. Or they are working as plumbers, carpenters, mechanics of cooks, bakers or ground-keepers."

F.C. Oswin, Superintendent of Provincial Correctional Institutions, declared: "There is no vocational program as such. The big thing is that they are learning work habits here."

About 115 men are employed in the agriculture and associated operations at the gaol. The inmates manage a full dairy herd, along with hogs, and work in greenhouses. They also work taking care of the gaol grounds. There are usually about 45 men working in the license-plate plant. A certain amount of skill is required in handling a number of the jobs. During the past year, the farm operation and the license plate plant provided revenue of \$208,119. The two employ the largest number of men at the gaol. Warden Wilson said the gaol would like to have expanded facilities for vocational training, but he wonders just how practical they would be.

*Women inmates, who number about 60, work in the laundry, do housekeeping, knit, sew and take some lessons in beauty culture.*¹⁶.

J.D. Lee, Alberta Correctional Services Director, announced a plan "to overcome the obsolescence of Fort Saskatchewan" to the Provincial legislature session in 1967. Lee studied the problem from the time he was appointed in 1965 until the release of his report. Despite earlier reports and recommendations, Lee still was thinking in terms of "a major overhaul" to the facility.

He said the present cells contain 35 square feet, considered adequate in 1914.... Now the department of health regulations alone call for 80 square feet and this will be complied with under the new plans. The problem now is how to phase the construction and keep prisoners in the jail.... Mr. Lee, who was at one time Canada's youngest RCMP superintendents, said parts of the Fort Saskatchewan Jail are archaic.

*He had praise for the new Peace River Jail, which, he says, is the finest in Canada.*¹⁷.

On 14 March 1968 the annual report for the Provincial Superintendent of Correctional Institutions was tabled in the legislature, reporting that the Fort Gaol was very overcrowded, at almost double the designed capacity of the facility. Superintendent F.C. Oswin reported that, at about 600 inmates, conditions were considered untenable at the Fort. The *Edmonton Journal* reported:

To prepare for such numbers, the report suggested building a women's jail nearby by 1974, thus releasing 120 spaces for male inmates. With a daily average of 57 prisoners, the female section is not crowded.

Also, by 1974, a 25-inmate gaol should be built in or near Fort Saskatchewan, it added, even considering that a remand centre for persons awaiting trials is being planned and that the Peace

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

*River Correctional Institution will open this year.... The Fort Saskatchewan Gaol is Alberta's cheapest jail, with each inmate costing \$5.37 per day to keep and 68 cents a day to feed.... [As compared to \$8.98 per adult and 82 cents for food per day elsewhere in the province.]*¹⁸.

In 1973, the house ceased to be the Warden's Residence, and was converted to use for prison administration, a half-way house for female prisoners, and as the office to support the transition to the new prison complex.

The end of the Fort Saskatchewan Gaol was in sight when a consultants report by Moyer Associates of Chicago, commissioned by the Province in 1978 and completed in December 1979, was released on 7 February 1980. This report condemned the Calgary Remand Centre and the Lethbridge Correctional Institution, as well as the aging and increasingly-criticized Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institution for inadequate design. Solicitor-General Graham Harle stated that he favoured replacing the Fort Saskatchewan facility with a new minimum-medium security prison somewhere in the Edmonton area.¹⁹

The Fort Saskatchewan facility was singled out for outdated recreational, visiting and living quarters, as well as for the difficulty of policing the grounds, and concluded that it was beyond rehabilitation through renovation. Fred Moyer, the principal consultant, concluded that "despite continuing renovations, Fort Saskatchewan's conditions 'preclude the development of a modern-day progressive correctional program.'"²⁰

The centre's grounds are so large that they are inaccessible from guard stations, undermining security. Visiting and recreational activities must be limited because of inadequate space, and the building's age makes plumbing a constant and costly maintenance problem.

*If a new centre is built, the report continues, only essential repairs should be made at Fort Saskatchewan since major renovations would encourage continued operation after a new centre was constructed.*²¹

The Edmonton Remand Centre, when it opened, relieved some of the crowding at the Fort Saskatchewan Gaol. In 1982, it was certain that the Fort Saskatchewan facility would be closed when the new Edmonton Prison opened in northeast Edmonton. Solicitor-General Graham Harle, writing to Edmonton Councillor June Cavanagh in September 1982, noted:

*Our problem is that we have an urgent and pressing need to replace the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre - which is almost a Dickens-era jail - with a new facility. The Fort is inefficiently designed, increasingly expensive to operate and keep in working repair. It does not provide acceptable working conditions for the staff, and - even as a jail - is no longer suitable for housing the inmates. It is difficult to work toward rehabilitation in premises that are physically depressing.*²²

Solicitor-General Harle would regret the "Dickens-era" comment when it took longer to close the Fort Gaol than he had hoped.

A debate developed during 1984 over the possible provincial designation of the original 1875 North-West Mounted Police fort site, as well as the Gaol, as historical resources under the *Alberta Heritage Act* (1975). "There's confusion over whether Solicitor General Ian Reid will try to stop Alberta Culture from making part of the Fort Saskatchewan jail into a historical resource," the *Edmonton Journal* reported. "Reid told the *Journal* Wednesday he had not heard of

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Alberta Culture's plan and was concerned about it. The confusion arises because Reid sent a memo to culture Minister Mary LeMessurier in May stating he saw no problem with the historical designation."

Alberta Culture is working on putting a historical designation on part of the gaol site to prevent anything from ruining the remains of an 1875 North-West Mounted Police fort that lies underneath it....

He added he was concerned the designation would mean his department would have to get approval from Alberta Culture every time it wanted to make structural changes to the gaol for security reasons....

Alberta Culture only wants to designate the area under and around the gaol's auto body and welding shop because that is where the original fort lies, said Art Looye, the department's designation liaison officer. "What we are looking at is that any new buildings don't further destroy the remains under the ground," said Looye. The department's public intent notice to designate the area as an historical resource may be sent out in about a week, added Looye.... Meanwhile, Reid said the jail would be in use for several more years....

*Solicitor General Ian Reid announced he would not try to stop the designation process in October 1982 since it applied only to the archaeological site.*²³

Although the site of the Mounted Police fort was designated as a Provincial Historic Resource, the fate of the Gaol itself remained uncertain. In 1994, Lawrence Herzog noted that after the gaol was closed in 1987, it was allowed to deteriorate. Daneve Freeborn, chair of the Save the Jail Committee, observed: "The jail was part of Fort Saskatchewan's growth from the beginning of the 1900s and, for as long as anyone can remember, was a focal point in the community." Rev. Peter Ream, Fort Saskatchewan historian and heritage advocate, agreed. "Our city council has done virtually nothing to ensure that the jail was maintained in a reasonable state until a sound decision on its future could be made," he added. "At the very least, they should have had the foresight to leave the door open for future possibilities." He added, "Jails don't make history easy. But they make it in a way few other structures can...."²⁴

For a while, it seemed that the gaol would survive the heated debate on its preservation. Don Thomas reported in the *Edmonton Journal*, on 13 July 1993: "There was a stay of execution Monday for a Fort Saskatchewan jail where 29 people were hanged before the building was closed five years ago. But this time the sentence of death hung over the old cell block itself.... A motion calling for the immediate demolition of the cell block of the Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Institute was defeated on a tie vote of 3-3."²⁵

Jail supporters say they'll go ahead with a community survey and a plan to raise \$1 million to \$2 million from the community and area businesses for renovations. It's hoped to be a tourist draw, tied to Fort Saskatchewan's tourist theme of law, order and justice, says Daneve Freeborn, chair of the Save the Jail committee.

The old cell block is shabby and forlorn. Paint is flaking off the exterior, marred by the remains of old additions torn off by demolitions crews.

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Vandals have smashed all the windows. Interior damage is extensive. RCMP arrested thieves carting off old copper plumbing from inside. Piles of dirt and rubble sit on the former landscaped grounds.

If it were financially possible to save the jail, it would happen, said Ald. Deanna Fjestad, who proposed the motion for demolition. But community support is lacking and the potential for provincial support is zero, she said.

Preserving the jail is only preserving the worst part of Fort Saskatchewan's history, said Ald. Neil Colvin. "I don't think you'll entice tourists to Fort Saskatchewan just to see where they hung the last man," he said. "The sad, sleazy history of that building doesn't deserve preservation. It's better that it be forgotten. The stories that are there really don't deserve to be remembered."

But Ald. Ken Hodgins said the building deserves a stay of execution and Mayor Pryce Alderson agreed. "I feel certain things happen in their time," Alderson said. "I just don't feel comfortable with the immediate demotion of that building." He said it may be best to mothball it and wait until the community and the provincial economy make it possible to renovate it as a museum.²⁶

The Provincial Gaol remained in operation until 1988, at which time a new prison was built southeast of Highway 15. However, despite efforts to save the gaol, except for the Warden's Residence, gym, trades centre and a management office and workshop, all the buildings were destroyed in 1994. By 2012, only one building from the former complex, in addition to the Warden's Residence, still stood, the Facility Shop Building, which was originally built in 1965. In 2013, the Facility Shop Building was demolished, leaving the Warden's Residence as the last remaining physical linkage to the former Provincial Gaol complex.

Fort Saskatchewan Gaol gained a bleak reputation over time. Life was very regulated for prisoners with few opportunities to speak to each other, and little contact with the outside world. Being behind bars also meant execution for 29 criminals hanged between 1916 and 1960. Initially, the newspaper reported hangings, but in later years public executions were withdrawn due to changing views on capital punishment. Still, the Fort Saskatchewan Gaol became known for the series of executions carried out at the facility. Several gained notoriety, like Vernon Booher, a mass murderer convicted for shooting his mother, who apparently disapproved of his girl friend, as well as his brother and two farm hands, witnesses to the crime. The murders occurred on the family farm near Mannville on 9 July 1928. Booher was hanged at the Fort on 24 April 1929. Robert Raymond Cook was hanged at the Fort at midnight 14 November 1960, for the murder of his father. He also shot and bludgeoned to death his stepmother, and the couple's five children in Stettler. This case has become well known through works such as Jack Pecover's *The Work of Justice: The Trials of Robert Raymond Cook: the Story of the Last Man Hanged in Alberta* in 1996, and Betty Jane Heregat's *The Boy*, in 2011. Filumena Lossandro, the last woman hanged in Alberta, was executed at the Fort Saskatchewan Gaol in 1923. Her story was told in 2005 by the Calgary Opera, a successful adaptation from the work developed at the Banff Centre. Edmonton Opera then produced *Filumena* in 2005, taking the story of Filumena and Emperor Pic (Emilio Piccarello), the famous bootlegger from the Crowsnest Pass, to Ottawa where it played the National Arts Centre during Alberta centennial celebrations.

HISTORIC RESOURCE EVALUATION FORM

Footnotes

1. *Edmonton Bulletin*, 29 June 1907
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Edmonton Bulletin*, 13 February 1913
4. *Ibid.*
5. Ream, Peter (1974) *The Fort on the Saskatchewan*. Metropolitan Printing. pp.: 420 - 425
6. "Fort dubbed the 'jail' town," *Fort Saskatchewan Record*, posted online c.2005
7. "Prisoners Aided Fire Fighters," *Edmonton Journal*, 23 September 1967
8. "\$100,000 Addition Planned At 'Fort' Jail," *Edmonton Journal*, 11 May 1960
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*
11. "Fort Jail Riot Quelled By Tear Gas, 96 Prisoners Involved," *Edmonton Journal*, 20 January 1955
12. *Ibid.*
13. Ruth Bowen, *Journal Women's Editor*, Fort Saskatchewan Jail Said 'Blight On Penal Institutions' *Edmonton Journal*, 27 May 1963
14. *Ibid.*
15. Art Robinson, *Edmonton Journal*, March 1967
16. Brian Kiernan, "Inmates Face Constant Emotional Decay Battle," *Edmonton Journal*, 29 November 1967
17. Art Robinson, "Inmates Must Work, Forestry, Farming, Or Making Plates," *Edmonton Journal*, 23 March 1967
18. Eaton Howitt, "Fort Jail Overhaul Proposed, Report Suggests Ending Tier System," *Edmonton Journal*, 6 December 1967
19. 'Fort' Jail Crammed - Report, Male Inmates Double Recommended Figure, *Edmonton Journal*, 15 March 1968
20. Denise Harrington, "Fort jail condemned, Sweeping changes recommended for correctional services," *Edmonton Journal*, 8 February 1980
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. Robert Sibley, "Harle presses Fort jail replacement," *Edmonton Journal*, 28 September 1982
24. "Fort jail historical plan no problem, says Ian Reid," *Edmonton Journal*, 9 October 1984
25. Quoted in Lawrence Herzog, It's Your Heritage, *Real Estate Weekly*, 20 January 1994
26. Don Thomas, *Journal Metro Beat*, "Doomed jail gets a reprieve, Old cell block at Fort Saskatchewan to be renovated as tourist draw," *Edmonton Journal*, 13 July 1993