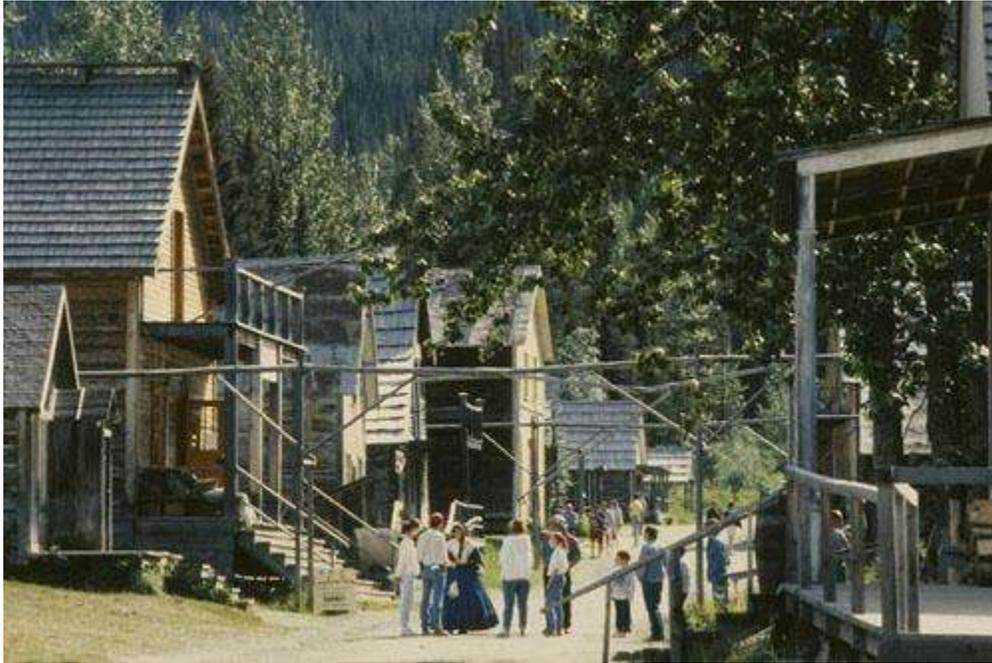


Barkerville – Statement of Significance



DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

Barkerville - located in central British Columbia, ninety kilometers east of Quesnel at the edge of the Cariboo Mountains - is a heritage district that includes a historic town situated in a narrow

valley along the west bank of Williams Creek, and a cemetery north of the townsite. The district includes all surveyed lots, buildings, roads, and physical remnants of historic mining activity.

HERITAGE VALUE

The heritage values of Barkerville lie in its importance in the Cariboo Gold Rush of the 1860s and its impact on patterns of economic development and the resettlement of British Columbia, and in its role as the province's primary project for the 1958 British Columbia Centennial.

Originating in 1862 around English miner Billy Barker's strike, Barkerville is valued primarily as the most intact example of the types of communities and buildings that were constructed during the Cariboo Gold Rush. The British Columbia gold rushes, which started in 1858, are important to the history of BC because they brought gold seekers from around the world and directly led to the creation of the British colony which set the foundation for the future province (1871).

Once the Cariboo region's largest and most important town, it is significant that Barkerville survived and prospered in the extreme conditions of the natural environment high in a remote mountainous region of British Columbia's snowbelt. Although burnt to the ground in 1868, Barkerville was quickly rebuilt; this 'second town' - which included a large Chinatown - is a testament to the symbiotic nature of gravel, gold, water, and habitation in the Gold Rush boom town. It is significant that Barkerville's wooden architecture, layout of streets, historic cemetery, and authentic mining equipment remained largely intact to illustrate the evolution of the community and gold mining up to 1958, when the Province began acquiring lots in the townsite and developing Barkerville as a historic park.

Barkerville's secondary heritage value resides in its importance as a British Columbia Centennial project, which has become the province's most noted museum town and one of its foremost heritage resources. Barkerville is an icon of the Cariboo Gold Rush and possesses significant social value as a place that effectively presents aspects of British Columbia's multi-cultural settlement, and its economic and developmental history.

Source: BC Heritage Branch properties files

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

The character-defining elements of Barkerville include:

- the containment of the place by the Williams Creek valley and the gentle rise of the valley from north to south
- the meandering nature of Williams Creek and its close proximity to the townsite
- the harsh climate and challenging physical environment of the historic place
- the careful and appropriate screening of modern intrusions into the historic place
- the unfinished nature of the earth and gravel main street, its rise from north to south along Williams Creek, and its slight bends
- the historic natures of all resources (such as wooden boardwalks, flumes, and piping systems) and buildings dating from the period of 1860 to 1958, both restored and unrestored
- a variety of building styles and construction types, such as balloon-framing, log construction, post-and-beam construction, and wood framing
- historic exterior and interior features such as finishes, patinas, fixtures and fittings of all pre-1958 structures
- the evidence of multiculturalism, seen in such physical elements of the town as the varied building designs, the large number of buildings in Chinatown in relation to the rest of the town, and the Chinese terraced gardens
- the historic mining equipment, paraphernalia, and remains within the surrounding landscape, including slag heaps and monitor pits

- the intactness and nature of the pre-1958 section of the Barkerville cemetery and the rustic nature of the headboards and grave cribs which symbolize the passing of time