

Queest Lookout Tower

751 Highway 97B NE

Salmon Arm, B.C.

Circa 1952

Previous location: Queest Mountain (1952-2003)

Description

The Queest Lookout Tower is a distinctive one-storey Forest Service building made from prefabricated panels and a wraparound deck. It is situated on the highest point at R.J. Haney Heritage Village. A 16-step wooden staircase leads to its north-facing entrance.

This simple building was constructed in 1952 and is commonly called Queest Tower. It was originally located on Queest Mountain, 18.9 km north of Malakwa. The tower was dismantled and moved to Salmon Arm in 2003 before being reassembled at R.J. Haney Heritage Village in 2005.

Values

The Queest Lookout Tower is valued for its aesthetic, heritage and social significance.

The Queest Lookout Tower has aesthetic value as an excellent example of utilitarian form.

B.C. Forest Service used J.H. (Howard) Taylor's 1946 plan to originally construct the tower. It was made by panel construction, prefabricated and transported to the site.

The lookout was put together with interlocking pieces, framing a single 4.27 x 4.27 metre room. The structure had a low slope roof that was often covered in snow in winter. The building was vented where panels met its ceiling. It was both a residence and workspace.

The building was elevated and guy wires were installed to stabilize the tower in high winds.

The Queest Lookout Tower has historic value, representing the evolution of design and materials of mid-20th century towers and corresponding forest management practices.

Queest Lookout Tower served the public until after the 1998 fire season. Improved technology and aircraft surveillance made the cost of repairing access roads to the tower impractical.

The tower illustrates the way of life of a stationed Lookout Person, tasked with monitoring the landscape for any sign of fire. The last Lookout Person at Queest Lookout was Pam Axley who witnessed the strike that ignited the Silver Creek Fire (K30285) in 1998 that led to the largest scale evacuation in the Province of BC to that date.

The Queest Lookout Tower has social value as a community building project.

When the Salmon Arm Forest District closed its doors permanently on March 31st, 2003 and the operation was incorporated into the Okanagan Shuswap Forest District at Vernon, BC, staff and community partners spearheaded a campaign to restore and relocate Queest Lookout Tower as a legacy project. It was a positive gesture, a farewell gift to the community the served. Two years later the tower was refinished by volunteers and reinstalled at R.J. Haney Heritage Village.

Character Defining Elements

Site:

- Location on the highest point of Land at R.J. Haney Heritage Village with commanding 360 degree views

- Views of Fly Hills, Little Mountain, Mt. Ida, Tappen Mountain, Mount Hilliam, Bastion Mountain, Queest Mountain, Larch Hills, and the surrounding landscape

Building:

- Visual prominence owing to its scale, square and vertical massing
- Wood and concrete construction materials
- Simple gable roof
- Exposed wrap-around balcony, exterior staircase, and expansive windows
- Simple interior layout well suited to the lookout's function
- A firefinder and other artefacts associated with the tower's historical use
- A log carving of iconic Smokey the Bear
- Exterior signage related to the tower