

COLONY FARM BUNKHOUSE, COLONY FARM

Description of Historic Place

The Colony Farm Bunkhouse is a one-storey wood-frame rectangular-plan building with regular fenestration, located adjacent to the main north-south axis, Colony Farm Road, at Colony Farm in Coquitlam. The house sits perpendicular to the road, with the front facing towards Lougheed Highway. This is one of two original buildings remaining at Colony Farm, the other being the Manager's Residence; both are located across from the original Village Green that was a central grassed feature of the site.

Heritage Value of Historic Place

The Colony Farm Bunkhouse is valued as one of the original buildings constructed for the Coquitlam Hospital for the Mind (now known as Riverview Hospital), for its ties to the province's psychiatric health initiatives and as part of a model farm developed by the province. Colony Farm was purchased by the province in 1904 as the location for a new psychiatric facility to relieve the overcrowding at the original lunatic asylum in New Westminster. The lowlands of the farm were developed to provide opportunities for the inmates to work in a healthy, supervised setting and also to provide food supplies for the hospital complex. Upland from the farm, a campus of buildings for chronic patients was designed, based on the best and most humane practices of the time. The complex, which came to be known as Essondale after the Secretary of Health, Henry Esson Young, strived for self-sufficiency while providing occupational training for the mentally ill. Opened in 1910, the facilities at Colony Farm were conceived as more than just an adjunct to the mental institution, but rather as a provincial demonstration farm with high quality farm and living quarters, ultra modern farm equipment and pristine grounds. The farm was partly staffed by patients, who were paid a small salary to work and live at the farm.

The Bunkhouse was originally constructed as a Pump House; one of the two earliest buildings constructed at the farm; the other being the Engineer's House (now demolished). Visible from the entranceway to the farm, the one-storey Pump House had a central three-storey water tower that served as one of the landmarks in the initial development of the farm, along with the Arena and the Workers' Cottage. A coal-fired, steam-driven water pump propelled over 492,000 liters of water into the tower on a daily basis from three sand points, 5.5 meters deep. The water was used both for farm purposes and for the site's fire protection system. The water tower was not used for long as the sand points silted up, and the farm site was connected to the New Westminster water system. Rooms for workers were located on each side of the pumping tower. During the farm's period of decline after the end of the Second World War, many buildings were deconstructed or demolished. In the 1930s, the tower was removed and the structure was re-roofed and re-sided. The existing rooms, shared bathroom, kitchen pump pit, windows and doorways were retained, but the remainder of the interior was demised to allow for more rooms for use as a bunkhouse.

Additionally, the Colony Farm Bunkhouse is significant as part of the original grand plan of the Essondale complex. The original 1908 competition for the design was won by Victoria architect J.C.M. Keith, but its initial phases were executed by prominent architect Henry Sandham Griffith (1865-1943) who was also responsible for the design of the West Lawn building, which still exists uphill from Colony Farm. Significantly, the original marble showers and mosaic tiled bathroom

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floors, imported from Italy, match those in the West Lawn building. The Bunkhouse and the West Lawn building are the two oldest surviving structures from the original Essondale complex, and the Bunkhouse is the oldest building that survives from the establishment of Colony Farm.

Character-Defining Elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of the Colony Farm Bunkhouse include its:

- setting within historic Colony Farm, adjacent to the Colony Farm Manager's Residence and across from the Village Green
- orientation, facing Lougheed Highway and east of Colony Farm Road
- vernacular functional design as expressed by its modest one-storey wood-frame structure, with low-pitched hipped roof
- substantial cement foundation that reflects the original location of the central tower
- wood-frame construction, with wooden drop siding (over the original wooden siding), corner boards, watertable boards and cedar shingle roof
- regular fenestration including double-hung, 6-over-1 wooden sash windows
- interior details such as high ceilings, wooden window and door frames, cast iron radiators, marble shower stalls and ceramic tiles in the bathroom



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**COLONY FARM BUNKHOUSE, COLONY FARM
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
RESEARCH SUMMARY SHEET**

CIVIC ADDRESS: 200 Colony Farm Road

HISTORIC NAME: The Pumphouse

SOURCE: GVRD, *A History of Colony Farm 1910-1963*, p. 8.

ORIGINAL OWNER: Coquitlam Hospital for the Mind

SOURCE: Riverview Heritage Evaluation, pp.37-44.

CONSTRUCTION DATE: Built circa 1910 as the Pumphouse; converted to the Bunkhouse in 1930s.

SOURCE: BC Archives, Annual Reports Mental Hospital

ARCHITECT: Original design competition won in 1908 by J.C.M Keith of Victoria. Initial phases executed by Henry Sandham Griffiths (1865-1943).

SOURCE: Provincial Archives. GR-0054. Box 22, File 380, 1910.

REFERENCES:

- **Plans:** BC Archives GR-0054 Box: 22 File: 380

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PHOTOS: BC Archives, Historical Photos, # B-00280, and G-04786