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Poultry Science Building
1. Statement of Significance

With construction likely completed in 1918, the Poultry Science Building is one of the earliest University of Saskatchewan buildings. It was one of the first five buildings tendered, the others being the MacKinnon Building, Saskatchewan Hall, the Steam Plant and the Stone Barn. By virtue of its age and distinctive architectural style, the Poultry Science Building is a heritage asset. It also played an important role in carrying out the mandate of the University of Saskatchewan as an agricultural college.

The Poultry Science Building has the form and architectural style of a barn, but it was always actually configured as an educational building and constructed using standard residential wood-frame construction methods. This two storey building consists of a basement, main and first floor. Its location near other University of Saskatchewan barns reinforces its association with the College of Agriculture. Its form, in the shape of a barn, is a distinguishing character-defining element. The building’s form has been altered with the demolition of an east wing and the subsequent addition of a west wing in 1959. However, these amendments to the form have left the style of the building intact. The later addition of the west wing is beyond the scope of this report.
2. Character - Defining Elements

2.1 Materials

Painted cedar shingles define the exterior material character of the Poultry Science Building (Figure 1). Painted wooden sash windows are another important feature, shown in Figure 2. The roof was likely originally clad in cedar shingles, but currently has asphalt shingles.

Douglas Fir is a prominent material in this building’s interior, used as flooring, ceilings and wall paneling. Ceilings and walls appear to have been originally finished with a clear varnish, but have subsequently been painted. Figure 3 shows the condition of the painted Douglas Fir paneling. Doors, also in Douglas Fir, have been painted as well. The high quality of the original fir material is evident in an upstairs closet which has remained unpainted and is shown in Figure 4. Tongue and groove Douglas Fir floorboards have been covered with vinyl composition tile. The building’s interior doors feature beveled glass, another character-defining element. Some of these glass panels have been painted or covered (Figure 5). An original chalkboard made of slate is located in the classroom (Figure 6).

A single staircase, featuring painted wooden balustrades and treads, offers access to the basement and the first floor. The stair treads have been covered in vinyl composite tile. The wooden balustrade has been painted (Figure 8).
2.2 Form & Style

The barn-shaped form of the building, particularly its gambrel roof, is a character-defining element. The gambrel roof is characterized by a shallow-pitched top section and a more steeply-pitched bottom section, with overhanging eaves. This element is illustrated in Figure 9.

Gambrel dormers and decorative truss ends are other exterior elements defining the character of the building (Figures 9 & 10). The gambrel dormers are embellished with wooden roundels to accentuate the arched shape of the windows. (Figures 9 & 11) The building’s doors are characteristic of the ‘arts and crafts’ style. The use of shingles as a cladding material also contributes to the barn-like appearance of the building; the university’s prominent Stone Barn is clad in the same material.
Figure 12. The Poultry Science Building as viewed from the south, ca. 1916. Photo A-681, retrieved from University of Saskatchewan Archives.

Originally, the building featured an elongated ‘brooder house’ (shown in Figure 12) on its east side. In 1959, the small vestibule that protruded from the west face of the building was extended. For a time the building existed with both an east and a west wing before the east wing was demolished in 2000. The form of the new west wing is very similar to that of the former east wing. Figures 12 and 13 show the original form of the building and the current form of the building, respectively. Note the change in the location of the ‘brooder house’ wing. Despite the removal of one wing, and the addition of a new one, the character of the building has been maintained with a good degree of commemorative integrity.

2.3 Location

The Poultry Science Building is not found on the 1909 Campus Plan, but its location is original. Figure 14 shows this location, adjacent to Rutherford Rink and the Curling Rink. It is situated in proximity to the other university barns.

Figure 13. The Poultry Science Building in its current form, as viewed from the south.

Figure 14. The location of the Poultry Science Building is indicated in green on this contemporary campus map.
2.4 Spatial Configuration

The remaining original portion of the Poultry Science Building consists of a two-storey structure, which is entered through a vestibule (now extended to become a wing). The main floor of the original space is raised up from grade level and is accessed from a short set of wide stairs. The raised main floor is subdivided into a number of individual rooms, as shown in Figure 15. Principal spaces included a poultry judging room, a library and records room, an office for ‘Professor Baker,’ an attendant’s room and lavatories for men and women. A cloak room was also provided for the women. The building’s single staircase offers access to the basement and the first floor loft space. Figure 17 illustrates the relative height differences between floors.
Figure 17. Original ground floor plan and section through the Poultry Science Building. The area labelled 'Poultry Judging Room' no longer exists. The west wing has been extended and the east wing has been removed. Retrieved from Asset Record System, File PH-1-T.
As Figure 17 illustrates, the second floor consists of a single large open space, accessed from a stairwell running up the east side of the building. Tall windows on three sides provide ample natural light. A chalkboard is mounted on the north wall. A small closet exists on the east side of the room, above the stairs. A 12’ ceiling height gives the space a light and airy character. The tall gambrel dormer windows create arched niches in the walls of the space. The natural light, arched window niches, open floor plan and the height of the space are all character-defining elements.

The basement is subdivided into three rooms, including a small service room in the southeast corner. It is lower than the other two floors, with a ceiling height of 9’-2” (Figure 15).

The former brooder house consisted of two floors, each of which had an entrance. These entrances are still visible on the interior of the building’s east wall. Both of them are now boarded up. Figure 19 provides a section through the original brooder house.
2.5 Systems

Although its gambrel roof gives this building a distinctive barn-like appearance, this building's structure is more typical of the residential construction methods of the time. Walls consist of 2 x 4” Douglas fir studs, supported on concrete basement wall foundations and footings. Floors consist of 2 x 12” fir joists. The top section of the gambrel roof is formed by a series of fir trusses, which sit on rafters forming the lower portion of the roof.

2.6 Use(s)

The Poultry Science Building is unusual in that it was built to accommodate both live animals and people. The main floor of the two-storey central section of the building housed an office, library and records room, laboratory, washrooms and an attendants’ room. As illustrated in Figure 18, the first floor was used as a lecture theatre. The basement was designated for feed storage, egg testing, and egg incubation. A small classroom was located there as well.

The east wing, now demolished, was both a brooder house for poultry and a dormitory for students. Its basement contained individual rooms for chickens, while the main floor was devoted to poultry judging. The second floor was a student dormitory, such that the students lived above the chickens!

The building no longer houses the Poultry Science Department, and is now unused.

2.7 Cultural & Chronological Associations

Although no longer in use, the Poultry Science Building is still associated with its former role as the home of the Poultry Science Department. In its form, style, use and location, it is associated with agricultural education at the University of Saskatchewan.

A product of the Poultry Sciences breeding program, a pullet by the name of 'Lady Victorine', set a world record in 1927. The bird laid 358 eggs in 365 days to win the prize.
3. Associated Objects

N/A

4. Supporting Documents

Facilities Management Division (2011). Asset Record System [Data File]. Retrieved from \usask\fmddfs\files\iis\IIS_Public\ARS.


5. Summary of Character - Defining Elements

Materials
- painted cedar shingles
- douglas fir flooring, ceiling & wall paneling
- beveled glass
- wood-framed sash windows
- bronze or brass hardware

Form & Style
- barn shape
- gambrel roof
- gambrel dormers
- arches (gambrel and rounded)
- decorative rafter ends
- ‘arts and crafts’ style doors

Location
- original location

Spatial Configuration
- open plan first floor
- tall windows on first floor
- gambrel niches

Uses
- poultry education and research (laboratory, library and records room, office, lecture theatre)
- poultry breeding (brooder house, incubating)
- poultry judging
- student residence

Cultural & Chronological Associations
- agricultural education
- Poultry Science Department