

Clan Association Sites

Barkerville's Clan Association Sites

Description

Clan associations played a significant role in the social, political and financial needs of early Chinese Canadians. During the Cariboo Gold Rush, Barkerville became the site of the one of the first Chinese communities established in Canada. By the 1880s, people of Chinese heritage constituted half of the area's population.

[Barkerville National Historic Site](http://www.barkerville.ca/) is a restored and rebuilt historic town site originally founded in 1862 after the discovery of gold deposits in the nearby Cariboo gold fields. The town was destroyed by fire in 1868 and quickly rebuilt. The town declined following the end of the gold rush and the reduction of mining operations in the area. It was rebuilt in the late 1950s to represent the 1869-1885 period.

For more information: <http://www.barkerville.ca/>



Barkerville's main street looking north from Chinatown, ca. 1935. *Barkerville Archives P0654*

BARKERVILLE

Historic Chinese Clan Association and Society Buildings

Click on the building name or address to learn more about each site:

NAME	YEAR BUILT
Chee Kong Tong Building	1874-1877
Lung Duck Tong Restaurant	1904
Min Yee Tong	ca.1869
Tai Ping Fong (Peace Room)	ca.1900

Chee Kong Tong



Barkerville, BC
Built between 1874-1877

Located in British Columbia's Barkerville Historic Town Provincial Historic Site, the Chee Kung Tong Building is a two-storey rectangular structure covered with board and batten, and flanked on the east and north by two log lean-tos. Constructed between 1874-1877, it was originally used by the members of the Chee Kung Tong organization for residential, ceremonial, and social purposes. The ground floor contained a kitchen, a hostel for recent arrivals and winterers, and a socializing space for day-to-day social activities, traditional Chinese celebrations as well as Hong-men society ceremonies. On the second floor were a society hall and an altar room. The hall served as a meeting venue where the society, which was active in the social, political, economic and recreational aspects of its members' lives, dealt with affairs of the Chinese community in the Cariboo District and exerted control over business and personal relationships among its members.

Heritage Values

Located in British Columbia's Barkerville Historic Town Provincial Historic Site, the Chee Kung Tong Building National Historic Site of Canada is nestled in the Cariboo District mountains at an elevation of 1,280.2 metres (4,200 feet). Consisting of a two-storey rectangular structure covered with board and batten, and flanked on the east and north by two log lean-tos, the Chee Kung Tong building is situated on the east side of the principal road, in the centre of Barkerville Chinatown. The designation refers to the footprint of the main building and the two lean-tos.

The Chee Kung Tong Building was designated a national historic site in 2007 because:

1. it is a rare surviving example of Chee Kung Tong architecture in Canada, with the interior divided into a hostel, kitchen and socializing space on the ground floor and a society hall and altar room on the second floor, all of which illustrate 19th-century Chee Kung Tong architectural conventions;
2. it exemplifies the community building and sense of belonging produced among immigrant Chinese labourers and merchants in new settlements throughout Canada by the provision of benevolent services and traditional Chinese and Hong-men society ceremonies and celebrations, as well as the provision of a vehicle for political diaspora to maintain a connection with China;
3. it served as a venue for dealing with the affairs of the Chinese community in the Cariboo District, exerting control over business and personal relationships between members.

Among the oldest surviving structures in the Barkerville Provincial Park, the main structure of the Chee Kung Tong building was constructed between 1874-1877, and was originally used by the members of the Chee Kung Tong organization for ceremonial, residential and social purposes. The division of the interior into a hostel, kitchen and socializing space on the ground floor, and a society hall and altar room on the second floor makes this building an excellent and well-preserved example of 19th-century architecture of the Chee Kung Tong in Canada, and a representative of the organization's structures during the wooden boomtown period of Chinatown architecture in British Columbia. As a benevolent association, the Chee Kung Tong in Barkerville provided a hostel for recent arrivals and winterers, provided venues for day-to-day social activities, and coordinated traditional Chinese and Hong-men celebrations that galvanized the sense of community. The Chee Kung Tong in Barkerville was active in the social, political, economic and recreational aspects of its members' lives, and the society exerted its political control over the Hong-men through meetings which took place in the society hall on the second storey of the Chee Kung Tong building.

Key elements contributing to the heritage value of this site include:

1. the first-storey hostel, kitchen facilities and space for socializing;
2. the second-storey space for a society hall and altar room;
3. its well-preserved wooden components, illustrative of boomtown construction technique;
4. the horizontal and vertical signboards above the second-storey balcony door, that distinguish this building as a Chinese construction;
5. the two log lean-tos that flank the east and north side of the main structure;
6. its setting as part of Barkerville historic town.

Find out more: <http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=11971&pid=0>

Lung Duck Tong Restaurant



Barkerville, BC
Built in 1904

The Lung Duck Tong Restaurant is a one and one-half storey log structure with wood-framed additions built onto its north and east sides. It is located along the east side of Main Street within the Chinese District of the town. The building is said to have stood here since 1904. It was replicated in the 1970s based on the examination of historic photographs. The Lung Duck Tong building provided the local Chinese community with a place to gather, visit, play games and share meals. It was one of the early Chinese business venues in Barkerville. The building also provided weary travellers with temporary accommodation.

Heritage Values

Barkerville Historic Town was designated as a provincial heritage site in 1958 and is protected under the British Columbia Heritage Conservation Act. Barkerville was designated a National Historic Site in 1924 for its significance as the centre of the Cariboo gold fields which were the catalyst for the economic and political development of British Columbia.

The Lung Duck Tong, like the other tong buildings in Barkerville, provided Chinese men with a place to gather, visit, play games and share a meal. In the 1934 Application for Declaration of Title to Lot 65, Chung Lung Fong, agent for the Lung Duck Tong, declared that the Lung Duck Tong had owned this lot and the building that stood here since 1904, and that he had occupied the building for the previous fifteen years. In 1934, the structure was used for “rooms.” A single-storey addition had been attached at the back, by then.

This structure is representative of an essential service and establishment that provided sustenance to those of the Chinese community, as well as weary travellers. This outlet also provided a means for individuals to gather and socialize, hold public meetings and play games.

Key Elements that define the heritage value and/or character of the building:

1. The building is associated with early Chinese business venues in Barkerville.
2. It is located along the east side of Main Street in the Chinese District (situated at the south end of Barkerville).
3. It is located directly south of the Marie's Sporting House, north of an access road and grassed area, and east of the W. Hill Cabin.

Exterior features:

1. It is a larger log structure with wood framed additions built onto the east elevation and the east half of the north elevation.
2. The log structure was constructed with dovetail joints and cement chinking between the logs.
3. Logs were hewed square on both the interior and exterior faces of the log walls.
4. The west elevation is skirted with clapboard siding.
5. The west elevation and board walk are covered over by balcony extending from the wall.
6. The wood-framed pitched roof of the main building slopes downwards to the north and south.
7. Both wood framed additions were built with down sloping roofs.
8. Additions are clad with vertical boards and batten.
9. Openings into the building include a double doorway (with equally spaced windows on both sides) centrally positioned along the west elevation; a door south of center on the east elevation; a window north of center on the east elevation; a door at the west end of the east addition's north elevation; a door centrally positioned along the west gable end wall; and a window centrally positioned along the east gable end wall.

Interior features:

1. The floor area of the main building is completely open for seating.
2. Small partition wall extends south from the north wall in the northeast corner of the main structure to form a small beverage and service area.
3. Doorway east of center along the north wall leads into the washrooms located in the north addition.
4. Double doors positioned midway along the east wall lead into the kitchen in the east addition.
5. In the main structure, floors are covered with tongue and groove boards, the ceiling is covered with boards and batten, and the interior of the log walls has been left exposed.
6. Cloth chinking is visible on the inside of the log walls.
7. The north addition was partitioned into men's and women's washrooms with a small corridor linking each room to the main restaurant area.
8. The east addition contains various stoves and cooking stations.
9. The north side of the east addition is partitioned into storage rooms and freezers.
10. The south side of the kitchen has staircase leading up to the second floor.
11. A partition wall running east-west was constructed between kitchen area and staircase.
12. The second floor is partitioned into several storage rooms.
13. All floor areas, ceilings and walls on the second floor are covered over with plywood sheeting.

Functional/structural elements and/or changes:

1. No evidence for hatches or stovepipe openings on either the main level or second level of the main structure.

Sources:

The Traveller's Site Guide to Barkerville Historic Town, Barkerville Historic Town, 2009.

Barkerville Historic Town Library & Archives, File "Building 081, Lung Duck Tong (Lot 066)".

Min Yee Tong Building



Barkerville, BC
Built ca. 1869

The Min Yee Tong building is a one-storey wood framed structure located in Lot 3 along the west side of Main Street, midway within the Chinese district of Barkerville Historic Town. The structure is known to predate 1894, and may have been built as early as 1869. The building was erected on a level pad dug out of the sloping grade, with the area behind the west side of the building sloping more dramatically and is covered with grasses and shrubs that turns into a dense tree line further upslope.

Heritage Values

The Min Yee Tong building played a vital role in the Chinese community, as it provided a meeting place and support system for individuals whose clans were too small to start their own tong. The structure also provides insight to various recreational activities that were part of the Chinese culture. As such, it forms part of the overall heritage value of Barkerville Historic Town which was designated as a heritage site in 1958 and is presently (2010) protected under the British Columbia Heritage Act.

The Min Yee Tong was an organization of Chinese individuals whose own clans were too small to form their own tong (association). Records note that in 1934, Low Sun and his cousin were the only members of the tong still living in Barkerville at that time. Items found posted on the interior walls of the building include rules for play mah jong and gambling related slogans.

Key Elements that define the heritage value and/or character of the building:

1. It is located centrally within the Chinese district of Barkerville Historic Town towards the southern end of Main Street.
2. Main entrance faces onto Main Street.
3. Grade on lot slopes upwards at the rear of the building (west side).
4. Kwong Sang Wing store is located south and the Lee Chong Co. Store is located to the east.

Exterior features:

1. It's a simple rectangular structure with gable/pitched roof sloping downward to the north and south.
2. Openings into the structure include: a doorway south of center on the east elevation; a window north of center on the east elevation; smaller window centrally positioned on the east gable end wall; doorway midway along the west elevation; smaller doorway north of center on the west gable end wall; and a small window or pass-through near the west end of the north elevation (now boarded over on the interior side of the wall).
3. Its wood-framed roof is covered with shakes.
4. Front elevation is clad with overlapping siding boards over vertical boards.
5. West, north and south elevations are clad with overlapping vertical planks, similar to board and batten style.

Interior features:

1. There are no partition walls, which creates an unobstructed open interior floor space.
2. Walls are covered with vertical boards, and the floor is covered with planks.
3. The ceiling is covered with varying material: northeast and southeast quadrants covered with wide boards and batten; northwest quadrant covered with narrower boards and batten; and the south west quadrant covered with shiplap boards.
4. The floor of attic space is planked.
5. The underside of rafters and collar brace is covered with boards and batten.

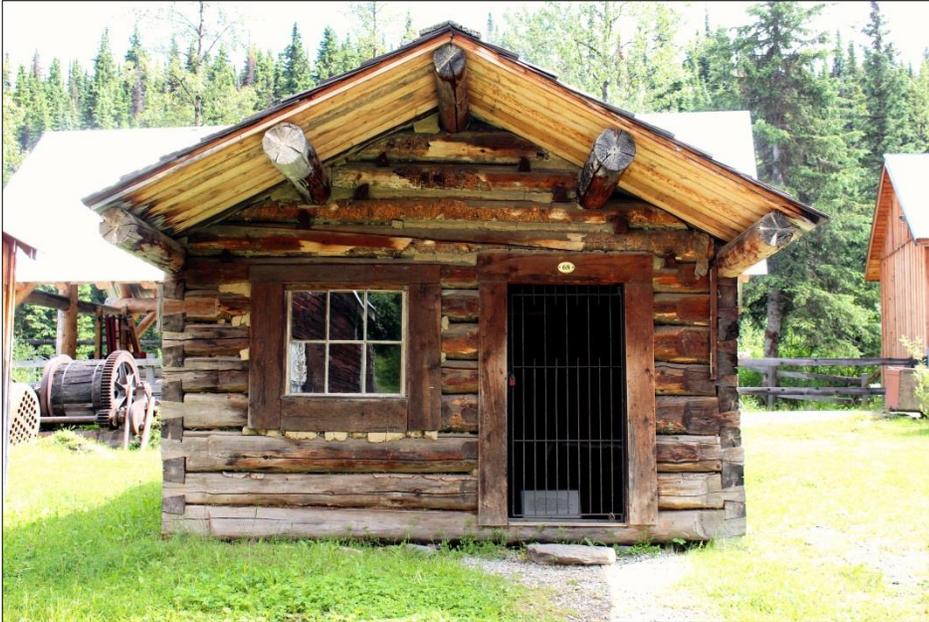
Functional/structural elements and/or changes:

1. What appears to be fascia boards with inverted semi-circular denticulation seem to have been salvaged from elsewhere and used as cladding on the exterior south and west elevations.
2. Evidence exists that a partition wall once ran N-S midway through the building.
3. It appears that the doorway through the partition wall was situated midway along the southern half of the partition wall.
4. Newspapers line the west half of the north wall and the north half of the west wall, which suggests that an additional partition wall once ran E-W from the interior west wall to the partition wall running N-S midway through the structure.
5. The manner in which the boards are fastened to the interior south wall suggests that at one time there was another window positioned along the north elevation that encompassed a portion of the existing window opening;
6. Rather large ceiling hatch located east of center along the south wall provides sufficient room for access to the attic area, as well as for a stovepipe.
7. The use of finishing materials on the floor and underside of the rafters in the attic suggests that the area was used for sleeping accommodations and/or storage.

8. The main door leading into the building along the east elevation has a transom, which is rather unusual for a building of this nature.

The Traveller's Site Guide to Barkerville Historic Town, Barkerville Historic Town, 2009. Barkerville Historic Town Library & Archive, File "Building 003, Min Yee Tong Gambling House (Lot 010)".

Tai Ping Fong (Peace Room)



Barkerville, BC
Built ca. 1900

The Tai Ping Fong (Peace Room) is a one-storey log structure constructed in ca. 1900. The building is situated in Lot 69 along the east side of Main Street near the south end of Barkerville Historic Town (midway within the area referred to as the Chinese district of Barkerville). In more recent documents, the building is referred to as the "Chinese Masonic Hospital House" and the "Masonic sick room". The building is situated on relatively flat land with other buildings located along its north and west perimeters, and open grassed areas along its south and east sides.

Heritage Values

The Tai Ping Fong is the only remaining structure of its kind still standing in Barkerville. This structure served as a hospice and played an integral role in the Chinese community. Wong Mon Hong (also known as Bill Hong), whose personal collection of artifacts, published book – *And So...That's the Way It Happened* - and mapped documentation of Barkerville and Stanley marked the largest firsthand knowledge of the Chinese in the area identifying the association of this structure with the Chinese Free Masons (Hongmen Society) and so marks this structure as one of the fundamental elements of Chinese society in the Cariboo. Individuals that were too sick and too poor to return home for their final days were provided care by members of various Chinese associations. As such, it forms part of the overall heritage value of Barkerville Historic Town which was designated as a heritage site in 1958 and is presently (2010) protected under the British Columbia Heritage Act.

Key Elements that define the heritage value and/or character of the building:

1. It is set back from the street frontage.
2. It is nestled between the Halverson House (Bldg. 82, Lot 68) and the Chee Kung Tong (Bldg. 84, Lot 69).
3. Its west elevation is constructed with extra course of logs to accommodate for the sloping grade.

Exterior features:

1. It's a simple rectangular structure with gable/pitched roof sloping downward to the north and south.
2. Its openings to the structure include a doorway at the south end of the west elevation and a window at the north end of the west elevation.
3. The logs at the corners of the building were notched together with dovetail joints.
4. Logs were not peeled prior to being utilized and the spaces between the logs were chinked with mud.
5. Roof extends a considerable distance over the west side where the doorway is located.
6. The roof, which has been replaced, had a layer of boards with a layer of clay that was covered with a layer of shakes indicative of early fireproofing techniques and was unique to the site.

Interior features:

1. Evidence for unpeeled logs used in the construction of the building is most prevalent along the interior walls, and interior spaces between logs covered over with wood slats.
2. There are no partition walls, which creates an unobstructed open interior floor space.

Functional/structural elements and/or changes:

1. Some evidence exists that the stove may have been positioned in the northwest corner of the building.
2. Gable end walls constructed with wood wedges were notched perpendicular into adjacent logs, indicative of Chinese construction methods used in many structures in Barkerville.

Sources:

The Traveller's Site Guide to Barkerville Historic Town, Barkerville Historic Town, 2009.

Barkerville Historic Town Library & Archive, File "Building 083, Tai Ping Fong Peace Room (Lot 069)".