

Butchart Kiln and Old Slot Quarry



Description of the Historic Place

The circa 1895 Butchart Kiln and circa 1895 Old Slot Quarry cultural landscape includes the remains of a vertical kiln (ruin) and a slot quarry with an exposed rock face wall. The slot quarry and vertical kiln are located on an access road 180 metres and 250 metres from Highway 1A on Graymont land eight and a half kilometres west of Exshaw.

Heritage Value

This cultural landscape is significant for its association with the theme of early exploitation of limestone in the Bow Corridor, and for its association with the theme of early settlement in the Bow Corridor.

The Butchart Kiln and Old Slot Quarry are significant for their association with the theme of early exploitation of limestone in Bow Corridor. Robert Prim Butchart began the operation at Gap Lake in the Bow Corridor before the turn of the twentieth century, and was instrumental in introducing Portland cement technology to the area. The quarry was located uphill from the vertical kiln, so that carts filled with limestone could descend the 200 feet to the kiln on the valley floor. Butchart's plant was small and used a vertical cement kiln, which became outdated in 1902 when American inventor Thomas Edison patented a new kiln process of inclined coal fired rotary kilns. With the vertical kiln process, the lime is fed into the top of vertical shaft kilns and heated to 1000° mid-way down the shaft. Air is drawn up from the bottom of the shaft, cooling the lime, and the burnt lime retrieved from the bottom. The new inclined kilns were longer and able to process more lime, improved energy efficiency and process control. Butchart's operation and vertical shaft kiln were unprofitable, so he sold the limestone plant to the Robinson family. The Robinsons continued to quarry and manufacture cement until 1907, when they were displaced by the cement plant at Exshaw. In 1952 the quarry was bought by Steel Brothers, whose operation became Graymont in 1989. The Butchart vertical kiln was partially buried under gravel when the road to the quarry was built and

part of the quarry was destroyed when the road to the quarry was built. Graymont continues to be a major employer in the Bow Corridor.

The Butchart Kiln and Old Slot Quarry are significant for their association with the theme of early settlement in the Bow Corridor. The Butchart Kiln and Old Slot Quarry are located at the former residential community of Gap Settlement. The Gap Settlement was established circa 1900 eight kilometres west of Exshaw, near Gap Lake and was large enough to become a whistle stop on the CP rail line. In 1907, when the first school in the district was opened at Exshaw, it was attended by the children of Gap Settlement and other small communities in the area. The Gap Settlement had a well-known teahouse which was built in the 1940s, followed by the construction of several small cabins, which have now been demolished. The Gap Lake area was also home to the first Rockwool production facility and quarry circa 1930s, located on Grotto Mountain. The Rockwool plant closed in 1983, and the site has since been reclaimed. Some remnants of the Gap Settlement may still exist such as remains of foundations and depressions.

Character Defining Elements

The character defining elements as expressed in the cultural landscape features of the circa 1895 Butchart Kiln and circa 1895 Old Slot Quarry include:

- The exposed rock face wall of the quarry
- The ruin of vertical kiln:
 - The poured in place concrete construction
 - The square plan with square opening