

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Building No. 35, the South Ward within the original Royal Naval Hospital complex, was constructed in 1888 to the designs of Victoria architect John Teague. It subsequently served as part of the Esquimalt Military Convalescent Hospital, operated on the same site by the Military Hospitals Commission from 1915 to 1922. In 1922, HMCS Naden was established as a west coast naval training complex by the Royal Canadian Navy, and Building No. 35 became the Mess deck. The training complex continues as an important component of modern-day CFB Esquimalt, and Building No. 35 presently serves as the Roman Catholic Chapel. The custodial department is National Defence. See FHBRO Building Report 88-1 54.

Reason for Designation

Building No. 35 at CFB Esquimalt has been designated a Recognized heritage property because of its historical associations, and its role as part of a significant institutional complex.

Historically, it was an integral part of the 1887-1894 Royal Naval Hospital complex, an essential service in maintaining Esquimalt as the headquarters of the Pacific station of the Royal Navy from 1865 to 1905. This was one of thirteen hospitals maintained by the Admiralty in Britain and abroad. From 1915 to 1922, when the complex was on loan to the Military Hospitals Commission, it became an element of this important national medical program set up to care for World War I casualties and service personnel suffering from tuberculosis. From 1922 through the mid-1930s, the former hospital buildings housed the first west coast Royal Canadian Navy training establishment, illustrating the evolution of Canadian control over all aspects of national defense. This function, as part of HMCS Naden, continues to the present day.

Architecturally, the building and its matching counterpart, Building No. 39, represent a significant phase in the evolution of hospital planning and design. The complex they are part of is a rare surviving Canadian example of a "pavilion hospital," a building type popular in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to counter overcrowding and the spread of disease through improved ventilation and greater separation of functions. Building No. 35 survives relatively intact, still connected by a verandah to other buildings within the complex.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of Building No. 35 is defined by its exterior façades and its integrated setting within the surviving Royal Navy Hospital complex.

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since been converted to a covered verandah. Building No. 35 is a one-storey structure in brick. The hipped roof and the verandah, as well as the raised foundation, the bracketed cornice, and the segmentally-arched door and window openings with stone surrounds, give the building an architectural vocabulary consistent with the other original buildings in the compound.

Building 35 is I-shaped in plan, with small projecting side wings at the front and back, an arrangement typical for pavilion hospitals of the period. On the façade facing the harbour, opposite the courtyard, the massing is more pronounced, allowing an intermediate porch between the wings, and there is fairly rich Italianate detailing. This harbour façade, repeated symmetrically on the North Ward, welcomed those approaching the hospital complex from the shore.

The building is an important anchor and a visually integral part of the complex. There have been minor modifications such as the changes to the courtyard porch, the insertion of some new door and window openings, and reroofing with asphalt shingles, but in general the building has remained virtually intact and should continue to be carefully maintained. Every opportunity should be taken to restore original features such as the cedar shingle roof, based on historic evidence.

The setting is important to the historical and architectural integrity of the building. The connection to Buildings 37 and 39 should be preserved. Buildings 36 and 38 could be removed, if desired, without detracting from the heritage character of the complex. The arrangement of site features within the compound should be designed to enhance the period quality of the five original buildings. On the harbour side, the open space quality which gave prominence to these façades should be maintained as far as is reasonable.