

FHBRO HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

GYMNASIUM, ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY, COLWOOD, BC

FHBRO number: **99-137**
DFRP number: **17452**
Resource name: **Gymnasium (RR22)**
Address: **Royal Roads University, Colwood, BC**
FHBRO status: **"Recognized" Federal Heritage Building**
Construction: **1942**
Designer: **Naval Service Directorate of Works and Buildings**
Original function: **Gymnasium**
Current function: **Gymnasium**
Modifications: **Addition of windows to ground level on the principal façade and replacement of the metal roof (1992); addition of an enclosed walkway to the swimming pool; reconstruction of entrance stair**
Custodian: **Department of National Defence**

Reasons for Designation

The Gymnasium is a "Recognized" Federal Heritage Building because of its historical associations, and its architectural and environmental values.

Historical value:

The Gymnasium is associated with the expansion of the Canadian Armed Forces during the Second World War. The Gymnasium was built during the first phase of the development when DND purchased J. Dunsmuir's Edwardian estate to establish the self-contained military college. Designed to fulfill the training curriculum of cadets and to foster physical fitness in the forces, the Gymnasium also signaled the removal of non-essential activities from the Esquimalt Dockyard in preparation for war.

Architectural value:

The Gymnasium is a good example of a surviving but modified temporary wartime building developed during the Second World War. Simple and functional, the Gymnasium is a wood frame building on a concrete pier and joist foundation that features an open plan, a gambrel roof, light timber framing, large span timber trusses, and shingled side walls. Intended for use as a ball court, the interior was designed as a column free space using Warren Trusses. Support activities and change rooms were housed in adjoining structures. The Gymnasium is constructed of good quality materials, some of which were selected due to wartime shortages.

Environmental value:

Owing to its scale, simple wood construction and location, the Gymnasium is compatible with the pastoral character of the campus and the nearby farm buildings that are part of the former estate's agricultural zone. The Gymnasium is located on College Road below Hatley Castle, on a hillside, at the edge of the forested zone. Due to its current use by the YMCA, the Gymnasium is known beyond the college community.

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Character-Defining Elements

The following character-defining elements of the Gymnasium should be respected:

Its role as an illustration of the expansion of the Canadian Armed Forces during the Second World War, is reflected in:

- its functional design and “temporary” building materials.

Its simple aesthetic and functional design, and its materials as manifested in:

- the building’s simple composition and massing;
- the light timber framing and large span timber trusses which are characteristic features of this class of temporary wartime buildings; and,
- the use of sawn wood shingles on the side walls.

The building’s compatibility with the pastoral character of the university campus as evidenced in:

- its location on a hillside, at the edge of the forest zone; and,
- its simple wood construction which allows it to blend in with the nearby farm buildings.

For guidance on interventions, please refer to the FHBRO Code of Practice. For further information contact FHBRO.

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