

89-204

Esquimalt, British Columbia
Naden Building #2 (Former Torpedo School)
CFB Esquimalt

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Torpedo School was built in 1929, and continued to be used as a training facility until recently. Following extensive renovations, it now houses offices. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 89-204.

Reasons for Designation

The former Torpedo School was designated Recognized as a result of its early association with the development of the Royal Canadian Navy training school at Naden, and for its prominent location marking the south-east boundary of the original Naden property. Its design and use of materials are also of note.

HMCS Naden, commissioned in 1922, was the first permanent naval training centre established on the west coast. Post-war financial restraint produced a government strategy based on naval reserves. Reserve units were established across the country, but training was centered in Naden on the west coast and Stadacona in the east. The Torpedo School was Naden's first permanent brick structure built for training purposes.

Located near the boundary fence on an open site along the access road to the original Naden property, the building is highly visible, and a local landmark. A rectangular two-storey gable-roofed construction in brick, it is the largest building on the original Naden site.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the former Torpedo School resides in its massing, detailing and materials, and in its historic relation to the original Naden site.

In its solid massing, symmetrical composition, formally organized elevations, pleasing proportions and decorative brick work, the building emulates classically - inspired design. The long facades consist of seven bays divided by brick pilasters, while the end gables have a single pilaster terminating at the peak of the roof. A regular rhythm of paired windows contributes to the sense of orderliness.

The building, constructed of brick on a concrete foundation, is in good condition, and the ornamental corbelled brickwork on the gable ends is noteworthy. The addition of an exterior metal stair on the north end appears to have resulted in staining of the brick; this problem should be addressed by a masonry expert.

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Of the three original entrances on the principal facade - a centrally located primary entrance and two secondary ones at each end - only the southern entrance is still used; the others have been bricked in. Various window openings have also been closed. Reinstatement of these openings, particularly on the primary facade, would greatly enhance the heritage character of the structure.

Photographs from 1950 show multi-pane steel sash in the window openings, which may have been an early feature of the building. They have been inappropriately replaced with modern single-pane windows, and the window sills and lintels have been painted white. Both of these actions have diminished the character of the building. These alterations should be reversed when the opportunity presents itself, based on additional research.

The original layout of the interior is not known. The 1980s renovations led to changes in access and may have modified the circulation patterns. Any remaining early finishes and features should be identified and retained.

The building is located on a sloping site and is surrounded by pavement. When modifications to the site are planned, they should be based on an understanding of earlier configurations as seen in photographs and other documentary sources.

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For further guidance, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.