

Esquimalt, British Columbia  
**Museum Square - Building No. 37**  
CFB Esquimalt

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

Building No. 37, the Administration Block with the original Royal Naval Hospital complex, was constructed in 1889 to the designs of Victoria architect John Teague. It was subsequently expanded to the west with a large frame addition, and served as part of an Esquimalt Military Convalescent Hospital, operated 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. 37 became the Sick Bay. HMCS training complex continues as an important component of modern-day CFB Esquimalt, and Building No. 37 presently serves as office space. The custodial department is National Defence. See FHBRO Building Report 88-1 54.

### **Reason for Designation**

Building No. 37 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 received its large frame addition and became a central 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 original building represents a significant phase in the evolution of hospital planning and design. The complex it is 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. The large frame addition does not interfere with the interconnected courtyard façades of Buildings 35, 37 and 39.

### **Character Defining Elements**

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Esquimalt, British Columbia  
**Museum Square - Building No. 37 (Continued)**

The heritage character of Building No. 37 is defined by its exterior façades and its

integrated setting within the surviving Royal Navy Hospital complex.

Buildings 35, 37, and 39 were erected as freestanding structures united along their courtyard elevation by a continuous balcony. This has since been converted to a covered verandah. Building No. 37 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.

These original elements of the building should be carefully maintained. Consideration should be given to restoring features such as the original cedar shingle roof and cresting which have been lost over the years.

The frame addition is evidence of the use of the site during World War I by the Military Hospitals Commission, and is therefore of some historical interest. It is of little architectural interest, however, and its removal could be considered as part of an overall approach to the complex which also involved removing Buildings 36 and 38 and restoring elements of the landscape.

The landscape setting is important to the historical and architectural integrity of the buildings. On the courtyard side, the connection to Buildings 35 and 39 should be preserved, and the arrangement of site features within the compound designed to enhance the period quality of the five original buildings. On the harbour side, the open space quality which originally gave prominence to these façades should be maintained as far as is reasonable.

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