

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

### **Battery Commander's Post**

603 Fort Rodd Hill Road  
Colwood, British Columbia

The Battery Commander's Post was constructed in 1901. It was designed by the British Royal Engineers as the command centre for coordinating the firing action of the Upper and Lower Batteries. External modifications over the years include: replication of window shutters and window replacements (nd); removal of the Depression Range Finder, Target Indicator Card, Group Difference Disc and Table and mechanical dials for setting the ranges of the guns of the Batteries (nd); and removal of other electronic communications devices linking this observation post with others as part of the coastal defence system (nd). The building is currently interpreted as part of Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 96-96.

### **Reasons For Designation**

The Battery Commander's Post has been designated Recognized because of its environmental significance and its historical associations as well as its architectural importance.

From its original construction, the post's relationship to the rock promontory is virtually unchanged. Although the building does not stand out within the fort complex - subordinate to the environment as was typical for coastal defences - its presence continues to reinforce the military character of the site.

The Battery Commander's Post is associated with the final program to make Fort Rodd Hill fully operational and is therefore illustrative of a pivotal phase of development. The Battery Commander's Post coordinating function was crucial to the operation of the 6-inch disappearing guns of the Upper and Lower Batteries and is also associated with Signallers operations as part of the coastal defence.

The structure functioned as an observation and signalling post and its simple appearance reflects the functional criteria for housing specialized military equipment. The concrete structure has a craftsmanship well suited to the purposes which is partially concealed by an earth embankment.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Battery Commander's Post resides in the overall massing, profile, construction materials, interiors and site relationships.

The flat-roofed, single-storey structure has a low-scale partially-concealed rectangular

which are intersected by a retaining wall on one side with an irregular ground plane behind, including an open staircase to the rear. The massing, profile, footprint and particularly the partially underground configuration reflect the function of the structure.

The concrete formwork has minimal details with features like rounded edges at openings and projecting copings contributing to the simple expression of the structure. The tubular metal handrailing along the promontory edge, paint finished and simply detailed, reflects modern military detail preferences and contributes to the character of the structure. The exterior materials merit a regular maintenance program. The wood sash windows at the rear appear to be replacements for two wood panel doors and a smaller window as seen in design drawings. When the existing units are at the end of their lifespan, their replacement with doors and windows following original design intentions would enhance the character of the structure.

The interior planning of the two rooms has been altered, with rear door access blocked off. When interpretation programming permits, consideration should be given to reinstating the entrances. The wood shutters are reconstructions.

The integration of this structure with the site's natural features is characteristic of this coastal defence. The low ground cover is typical of the rugged terrain of the site. Tree and shrub growth should be managed to maintain original sight lines both to the strait and to the batteries.

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

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