

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

### **Fortress Plotting Room**

603 Fort Rodd Hill Road  
Colwood, British Columbia

The Fortress Plotting Room adjacent to the Lower Battery, was constructed in 1940-41. The structure was designed by the Office of D.E.O., Department of National Defence. The plotter mechanism (Plotter Fortress No, 2 Mkl Type HB8 Regd. No. 25) was installed in the Plotting Room 1943 and removed in 1951 when it became an Anti-Aircraft Operations Room. The new equipment, large transparent panel maps, controllers desks and maps were removed in 1954. In 1966, the Plotting Room was turned over to Parks Canada and in 1975 the plotter was reinstalled. The building is currently interpreted as part of the Fort Rodd National Historic Site. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 96-96.

### **Reasons For Designation**

The Fortress Plotting Room has been designated Recognized because of its architectural importance and its environmental significance as well as its historical associations.

The Fortress Plotting Room is largely concealed by an earthen overburden. The subterranean bomb-proof and gas-proof facility to house the fortress range plotter, is a sophisticated structure. The layout included elaborate provisions to seal off the building from the exterior and the structure used is heavy reinforced concrete construction. This reflected the very specialized planning and design techniques used to accommodate the highly technical functions and equipment.

The above grade exposed concrete is disguised by rocks and the building is covered with an overburden with natural vegetation and it remains camouflaged reinforcing the military character of the site. The park-like open setting and the scattered structures which are low to the ground and subordinate to the environment define the low-key appearance of the military site. The overall inconspicuousness of the structure is a characteristic of coastal defences.

This structure is associated with the "Ultimate Plan" a series of pre-World War II activities to ensure adequate defences on Canada's west coast. The structure is the heart of the fortress system of range finding which could track and direct fire on enemy ships from a central position, and was the most sophisticated development of World War II.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Fortress Plotting Room resides in the overall massing, profile, construction materials, interior planning and and site relationships.

The massing is defined by the scale and proportions of the visible portions of the camouflaged wall and the profile of the two rectangular air exhaust shafts and overburden behind of the roughly L-shaped single-storey structure. The structure was intended to be subterranean. The character also resides in its role as a specialized coastal artillery defence structure, designed for housing the mechanism to coordinate the tracking and response activities of 18 gun emplacements protecting the coast. Externally, the features which define the heritage character are; the projecting single storey entranceway with chamfered profile, the paired doorways and the rectangular air exhaust shafts. The massing, profiles and footprint should be respected.

The simply detailed concrete formwork which is visible has horizontal board forming, or has embedded stonework for concealment, which contributes to the functional appearance of the structure. The functional design is expressed in the entrance doors which appear original to the facility and should be maintained.

The functional interior planning of the Fortress Plotting Room included: airlock entrances, changing areas, an isolated engine room for the de-gassing plant and air conditioning plant and a central room for the plotter, the original layout and access should be maintained. The interiors exhibit a deliberately utilitarian, functional character and should be maintained.

The simple, low ground cover of the landscape and overburden emphasises the rolling, hilly terrain of the site and should be maintained. Maintenance of the site should include management of tree growth to maintain original sight lines. The park-like setting and the integration of the structure with the natural features is a characteristic feature of the coastal defences and should be maintained.

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

1997.11.28