

FHBRO Number 89-202  
Esquimalt Dockyard  
**Building D1**

(former Chief Engineer's Residence)  
Esquimalt, B.C.

Building D1 was constructed in 1879 as accommodation for the Chief Dockyard Engineer. It has continued to serve as the residence of senior officers ever since. The building was modified in 1899 and again in 1931. Since 1974 it has been the official residence of the CFB Esquimalt base commander or Pacific Fleet commodore. The Department of National Defence is the custodian of the building and the building is part of Esquimalt Naval Stations National Historic Site. See FHBRO Building Report 89-202, volume 2.

### **Reasons for Designation**

Building D1 has been designated Recognized because of its historical associations, its importance in the early history of the dockyard and its architectural and environmental qualities.

Since its construction, building D1 has been directly associated with the administrators of the dockyard, either the senior engineer or the naval officer-in-charge. As the former residence of the dockyard Chief Engineer, building D1 is directly associated with the establishment of ordnance repair capability at the dockyard in the early 1870s and consequently the naval defence of Canada during both the British and Canadian periods.

Constructed in 1879 at the end of the earliest phase of dockyard development, building D1 is the earliest building extant on the site and the last surviving pre-1890s wood frame building in the dockyard.

Constructed primarily in wood, with steep roofs, porches and asymmetrical massing, the building is an imposing example of late Victorian residential architecture on the west coast. Both the original construction and the later alterations exhibit competent, quality carpentry on the exterior and interior.

Building D1 is situated on a large, open, formally landscaped site, set back from the main north-south road. It is somewhat isolated from the industrial and administrative buildings of the dockyard.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage value of Building D1 resides in its associations with the formative years of the dockyard and its senior officers, in the quality of its original design, construction and

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craftsmanship, and in its subsequent alterations, particularly those carried out in 1931. The building's large, open, landscaped site provides a compatible setting.

Building D1 is a large, rambling, wood-framed, two-storey house. Constructed in 1879, altered in 1899 and again in 1931, it has late Victorian characteristics as well as features more typical of 1930s residential architecture.

The overall massing of the building, expressed in its irregular roof line, 'L' shaped plan, projecting off-centre gable and door placement and arrangement of windows, is asymmetrical in the Victorian taste. Window trim, squared porch posts and the two-storey porch give the building a slightly formal, classical flavour, popular in residential architecture in the 1930s.

Most interior features, among them the fireplace, window casings, living room frieze and main staircase, reflect the taste of the 1930s. The dining room retains original 1879 detail in the mantels and panelling.

Originally clad with shiplap siding, the present exterior finish is wood shingles. This finish has served to unite the various additions to the building into a single harmonious composition.

Fabric and design features from both the late 19th century and the 1930s should be protected and retained in appropriate balance.

Originally a rather simple landscape with typical late Victorian gardens, the site has evolved into a more open and formally landscaped area. These characteristics of the site should be retained.

1998.03.31

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

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