

Esquimalt, British Columbia
Building D26 (former Royal Navy Prison)
Esquimalt Dockyard

Building D26 was built in 1899 as a short term incarceration facility for the Dockyard to designs by T. Woodgate, officer in charge of works at the Dockyard. It continued to serve a number of security related purposes until c.1 945. The building is currently used by Maritime Command for offices and secure storage. The Department of National Defence is custodian of the building. See FHBRO Building Report 89-202 (volume 2).

Reasons for Designation

Building D26 was designated Recognized due to the quality of its architectural design, the superior quality of craftsmanship evident in its construction, and its importance within the built environment of the Dockyard.

The Dockyard derives much of its visual identity and sense of place from the form and material of, and relationships among, the groups of brick buildings clustered in its western section, which were constructed during the Royal Navy rebuilding program of 1895 to 1904. Constructed in brick and richly detailed with stone dressings, corbels, friezes, vaults and archways, Building D26 is one of the most distinctive and best designed of this group of Dockyard buildings.

Building D26 is the first Admiralty constructed building encountered when travelling west on the main Dockyard thoroughfare Hospital Road, and marks the eastern boundary of the original Dockyard. Highly visible from several points, the building is a significant feature in the urban environment of the Dockyard.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of Building D26 resides in its architecture, its craftsmanship and its place in the urban environment.

Building D26 is a two-storey brick building with a gable roof. The main (east) elevation is a high, flat plane with a regular and symmetrical arrangement of windows. The side and east elevations are more complex, with masses that step back in stages reflecting interior plan features such as stairs, entrances and toilet facilities. Each mass has its own gable or hipped roof detailed like the main roof, giving a unified appearance to the irregular plan and massing of the building. Removal of any surviving component of the

building or infilling of the stepped back areas would have a major impact on its heritage character and should be resisted.

The exterior of the building is further unified by a consistent use of materials and careful detailing. Red brick walls, molded stone dressings, circular windows and brick corbels and arches form the basis vocabulary of materials. The corbelled friezes which trace the roof lines and the extensive use of rubbed brick at the building corners and window arches are exceptional. The cupola and several original buttressed chimneys, also in brick, have survived but most have lost their corbelled caps. Reinstatement of these caps would enhance the character of this superior example of Admiralty brickwork. Surviving features should be carefully protected and appropriate expertise consulted for any masonry work including repointing or cleaning.

The building retains its historic, barred, divided-light windows (apparently in cast-iron) and its principal entrance in the south side projection. These features, together with the smaller upper story windows, contribute to the building's appearance of strength and security and to its unified appearance.

The historic plan of the building is largely intact. On both levels it is characterized by a central corridor between entry vestibules, with rooms (cells on the second floor) on either side. Continuation of the present use as secure storage is appropriate as minimal impact on the heritage character of the building is involved.

Building D26 is a significant feature in the Hospital Road streetscape and the urban environment of the Dockyard. This prominence should be respected if development on nearby sites is considered. Most of the historic open exercise yard has been encroached upon by more recent development. The open areas at the north and south ends of D26 are the only indications of its former function. Further construction in these areas would have a negative impact on the architectural character of the building and on its setting and should be avoided.

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