

89-204

Esquimalt, British Columbia

Naden Building #5 (Former Offices of Officer-in-Charge)

CFB Esquimalt

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Building #5 was built in 1936 to designs by the Department of Public Works. It served as the offices of the officer-in-charge until 1969. Following the integration of the armed forces at this time, the building became the offices of the CFB Esquimalt base commander. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 89-204.

Reasons for Designation

The former Offices of the Officer-in-Charge (Building #5) was designated Recognized for its Art Deco design, skilled use of materials, and landmark status. The designation also recognizes the building's association with the development of the Royal Canadian Navy training school at Naden.

The commissioning of HMCS Naden in 1922 established the first permanent naval training centre on the west coast. As a result of post-war financial restraint, the government's strategy centered on naval reserves, who could be called for duty if necessary. Reserve units were established across the country, but training was centered in Naden on the west coast and Stadacona in the east. The construction of this office building reflected the growth in administrative services associated with the pre-war expansion of naval training at Naden. It continues to function as the main office for the base.

The former Offices of the Officer-in-Charge is a good example of Art Deco design conceived by the Department of Public Works. The two-storey flat-roofed concrete structure, rectangular in plan and symmetrical in composition, exhibits the simple massing, smooth surfaces, and abstract geometric ornamentation characteristic of the style. The only Art Deco design at Naden, the office visually dominates a heterogeneous grouping of buildings on the original Naden site. Its unusual style and its function as the base commander's office make it a well-known regional landmark.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of this building resides in its expression of the Art Deco architectural style through its massing, stylized detailing and use of materials, and in its visual prominence in the setting.

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Naden Building #5 (Former Offices of Officer-in-Charge) (Continued)

The former Offices of the Officer-in-Charge reflects the formal composition, pure vertical lines, and geometric ornamentation characteristic of Art Deco style. Vertical emphasis is created by the full-height stepped-back piers located at the corners and flanking the side and main entrances, by the tall sash windows set flush with the wall surface, and by the flat pilasters which separate the windows. The height of the primary facade is extended by the partial exposure of the basement storey as a result of the sloping site. The large multi-part window extending upwards from the main door creates a focus of attention in the otherwise symmetrical composition. Geometric detailing includes the chevrons which decorate the piers, and the triangular heads of the second-floor window openings. The purity of this profile and these characteristic design features should be respected.

The office building combines the use of modern reinforced concrete construction with well-crafted fittings typical of Art Deco buildings. The ornamental light sconces flanking the three entrances and the glass-panelled bi-fold doors with decorative pulls are distinctive; their loss would impinge on the heritage character of the building.

The interior axial layout is original and should be respected. Any original interior finishes and fittings should be identified and preserved.

The sloping site at the edge of the original Naden property is essentially unchanged. The front and west sides of the building are formally landscaped with grass and shrubs, while the east is bounded by a roadway which curves up and around the rise to the rear of the structure. The 1929 Torpedo School and the late 19th century Royal Naval Hospital Officers' Ward are located to either side of the site. These historic site relationships should be preserved.

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