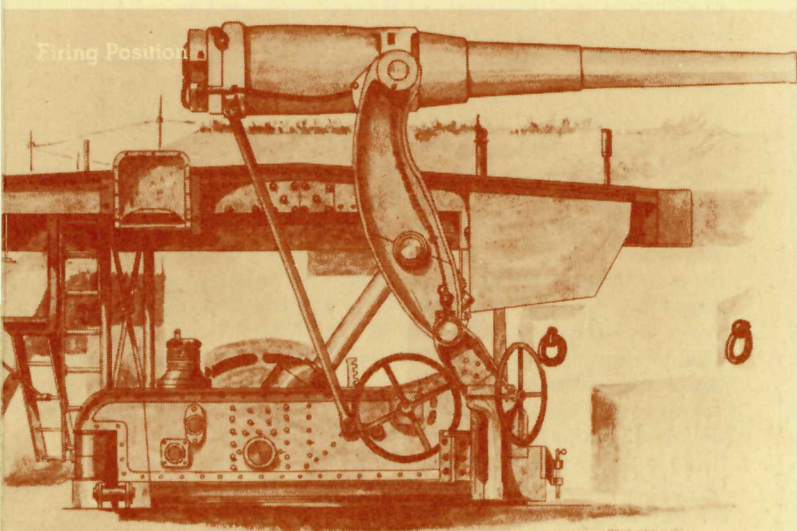
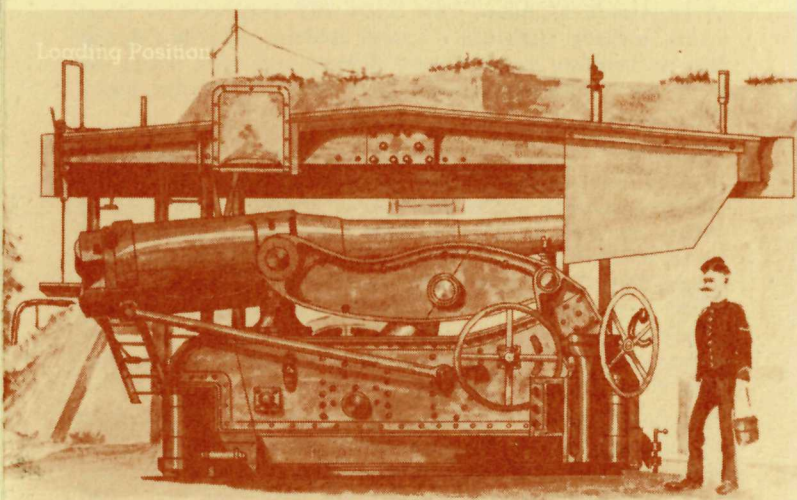


Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse

NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK
VICTORIA, B.C.



Unfortunately the 6-inch Guns of Fort Rodd Hill have been lost in antiquity. Bearing the designation Ordnance, BL, 6-inch, Mk VI on Carriage, Disappearing, 6-inch, Mk IV, they threw a 100-pound projectile to a maximum range of 10,000 yards. The barrel weighed 5 tons and the carriage 13½ tons. These cut-away illustrations give some idea of their size and workings.



Published by the National and Historic Parks Branch under authority of the Hon. Jean Chrétien, P.C., M.P., Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Prepared by park staff and Conservation Group, Information Services. © Information Canada, Ottawa, 1973 Catalogue No. R 64-3770
IAND Publication No. QS-0982-000-EE-A1

Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse

NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

Fort Rodd Hill, a coastal artillery installation constructed between 1895 and 1900, and Fisgard Lighthouse, whose light has warned ships since 1860, have been preserved by the federal government as National Historic Sites.

Lighthouse and fortification, though unrelated in purpose and use, have in common a distinctive relation to the history of the Pacific Coast of Canada and will eventually be developed into an integrated National Historic Park.

In the meantime, Fort Rodd Hill is open to inspection by visitors and is administered as a unit of the National and Historic Parks Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Because its light is still operational, Fisgard Lighthouse is not open to the public. However, visitors are invited to walk out to Fisgard Island for a close-up view of the exterior. The lighthouse - which bears the name of a Royal Navy Frigate employed in a survey of Esquimalt Harbour in 1847 - is 47 feet high and stands on a base of solid granite 13-feet wide. It is built of brick brought around the Horn from England. The 35-foot high cast iron, spiral stairway within the tower was made at San Francisco. The light, beaming 70-feet above mean high water level, is visible for 10-miles in clear weather. Quarters for the lightkeeper consisted of four rooms - two up and two down - but these have not been used since the installation of automatic equipment in 1929. The quarters suffered severe damage when gutted by fire in 1957. As a 1951 defensive measure the Department of National Defence built the causeway to deny use of the passage between Fisgard Island and the shore to enemy craft.

Named after John Rashleigh RODD, First Lieutenant on H.M.S. Fisgard at the time of the 1847 Royal Navy survey of Esquimalt Harbour, Fort Rodd Hill consisted of three coast artillery batteries - Lower Battery with two 6-inch Breech Loading guns; Upper Battery with one 6-inch BL gun, and, Belmont Battery with two 12-pounder quick firing guns.

The Fort Rodd Hill batteries were part of a system of coastal defence designed to protect Esquimalt Harbour - which had been established as a British Naval Base in 1864 - as well as the growing commercial facilities of Victoria Harbour. In 1893, Canada and Great Britain, aware that the earlier batteries constructed by the Canadian Government in 1878 had become obsolete, agreed to share the cost of constructing and equipping the new defence system - which would be manned by British gunners who would be paid by Canada.

The most powerful battery was to be that of Signal Hill, whose two 9.2-inch BL guns would reach some 10 miles to counter-bombard any ships attempting to shell the harbour installations from long range. The Fort Rodd Hill and Macaulay Point 6-inch BL gun batteries were for medium-range work of up to 10,000 yards and the three other batteries - Belmont, Duntze Head and Black Rock - were each equipped with two 12-pounder QF guns with fighting ranges of 4000 yards and maximum ranges of 8000 yards. Searchlights also were mounted at the quick-

firing batteries so covering fire could be brought to bear, by night as well as by day, over the shore-controlled submarine minefield that would be laid to protect the approaches to Esquimalt Harbour in time of war.

The Fort Rodd Hill of 1895, then, consisted of two adjacent but separate coast artillery installations:

- (a) the 6-inch BL Disappearing guns of Lower and Upper Batteries;
- (b) the 12-pounder, QF guns of Belmont Battery.

In the tactical and operational sense, Lower and Upper Batteries were more closely associated with the three 6-inch BL Disappearing guns of Macaulay Battery than with the guns of Belmont Battery, while Belmont Battery was more closely associated with her sister quick-firing batteries at Duntze Head and Black Rock.

With only a few minor changes in types and disposition of gun equipments, the coastal defences of Victoria-Esquimalt remained as described until the second World War. Highlights of the period were the departure of the Royal Navy from Esquimalt in 1905; departure of the Royal Garrison Artillery and the take over of the defences and responsibility for manning by the Canadian government in 1906; formation of the Royal Canadian Navy in 1910, and, the manning of the defences for World War I.

With the approach of World War II, new, updated defences for the protection of Victoria-Esquimalt were authorized. Equipments were ordered from England and construction of several new works as well as remodelling of some of the old works was commenced in 1938.

By the end of World War II, the defences of Victoria-Esquimalt included gun batteries at Christopher Point, Mary Hill, Albert Head, Belmont, Duntze Head, Black Rock, Macaulay Point, Golf Hill and Ogden Point; Fortress Observation Posts at Church Hill, Gonzales Hill and Mount Tolmie; a Fire Command Post on Triangle Mountain; a Fortress Plotting Room at Fort Rodd Hill, and, a chain of seventeen Coast Defence Searchlights stretching from William Head to Clover Point.

By 1956, technical advances in the art of attacking and defending coastal targets had nullified the effectiveness of shore-based gun batteries and Canadian coast artillery was declared obsolete.

In 1962, having been declared surplus to Department of National Defence needs, the Fort Rodd Hill property was transferred to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development for development as a National Historic Park.

Long range plans envisage the restoration of Fisgard Lighthouse to 1859; Lower and Upper Batteries and associated works to 1895; Belmont Battery and associated works to 1945, and, interpretation of the whole story of the Victoria-Esquimalt coastal defences from 1878 to 1956 using modern museum techniques.

Such a program must progress with deliberate care and will undoubtedly be many years in the completion. Meanwhile, the following will assist in making your visit informative and interesting:

POINTS OF INTEREST

(Numbers coincide with those marked on site plan)

WARRANT OFFICER'S QUARTERS (1)

Accommodation for the Master Gunner and his family. Responsible for maintenance, good order and accountability of armament equipments and stores, the Mr Gnr was a key figure in Coastal Artillery. His sturdy quarters reflect the designed permanence of Fort Rodd Hill.

FORT COMMAND POST (2)

From this post the Fort Commander directed and controlled the fire of Upper and Lower Batteries onto the target or targets allotted by the Fire Commander.

SMITH'S SHOP (3)

An experienced Smith with Forge, Anvil and Fitters Tools meant self-sufficiency in running repairs.

CANTEEN (4)

As the 'living-room' of their existence, the Canteen offered to Gunner and NCO some relaxation from the stern disciplines and exacting duties of their calling.

LOWER BATTERY (5)

The area enclosed by the concrete loop-holed wall. Consists of a two-gun 6-inch coastal battery and casemated barracks for troops.

There are a number of points to watch for in Lower Battery:

DEFENSIVE LOOP-HOLED WALLS (6)

Provided as a means of defence against sudden assaults by enemy landing parties.

GUARD HOUSE (7)

Responsible for around-the-clock internal security and good military order, the Battery Guard lived in these quarters.

OIL STORAGE (8)

In the military, separate storage is always provided for the hazardous petroleum products.

7500 GALLON WATER STORAGE TANK (9)

A Ram, operating on piped-in spring water, kept three such tanks filled. (see also items 20 and 26)

GUN EMPLACEMENTS FOR 6-INCH BREECH LOADING, DISAPPEARING GUNS (10)

The two emplacements are similar but opposite - left and right and include:

Lower Roller Race for 6-inch Disappearing Mounting. Shell Recesses, Cartridge Recess, Ring Bolts, Dial Recesses, Ammunition Issue Hatch from Magazine, Tube and Fuse Recess, Small Store Recess, Crew Shelter, Hold-down Rings for Pumps Air or Liquid.

UNDERGROUND (BOMBPROOF) MAGAZINE COMPLEX (11)

The tunnel-like entrance leads to the Magazine which consists of:

Lamp Room, Shell Storage Area, Shifting Lobby with Barrier, Cartridge Stores with Issue Hatch, Gun Issue Passages with Issue Hatches at their ends. Lamp Passage, Magazine Lamp Recesses, Ventilator.

PEDESTALS FOR DEPRESSION RANGE FINDERS (12)

The concrete columns in their own protective concrete alcoves. Known as DRF pedestals, they supported instruments used to measure range and bearing to target.

ARTILLERY STORES AND SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION STORE (13)

The two small concrete buildings on your left as you enter the main gate. The first and larger of the two was the Artillery Stores. The second, smaller building was originally a store-room for small arms ammunition. With the issue of 400 Lyddite-filled, high explosive, 6-inch shell to the Fort in 1902, the small arms ammunition store was reappropriated for their storage. (Lyddite shell were very susceptible to sympathetic detonation and not, therefore, stored in the main magazine).

CASEMATE BARRACKS (14)

The steps and passage found on the opposite side of the main gate to the Guard House, lead down to the casemates.

This barrack accommodation consists of:

Ablution Room, Kitchen, Barrack Rooms (three), Coals Store, Provision Store, General Store, Toilet facilities (not in use), Oil Store (red brick building near lower gate), Lower Gate (present wooden gate is not original).

FORTRESS PLOTTING ROOM (15)

The Fortress Plotting Room is a World War II, bomb-proof, gas-proof, underground complex, built into the side of the hill at the lower end of the Lower Battery protective wall. An important nerve-centre in the World War II Fortress System of Rangefinding, the Fortress Plotting Room received target bearings from widely separated Fortress sources and issued a continuous flow of very accurate map references to gun batteries within the system.

FISGARD LIGHTHOUSE (16)

The path at the Casemate end of Lower Battery leads to the beach and the causeway to Fisgard Island and Lighthouse.

BELMONT BATTERY (17)

Belmont Battery occupies a sizeable area to the right of Lower Battery and consists of:

SEARCHLIGHT EMPLACEMENTS (18)

At the waters edge on the right flank of Lower Battery is a searchlight emplacement. This World War II emplacement occupies the same site as the original. At some distance along the shore to the right of Belmont Battery, there are two more Searchlight Emplacements - one original and one of World War II vintage.

SEARCHLIGHT ENGINE ROOM (19)

On the right as you enter Belmont Battery area, a roadway with concrete retaining walls lead to the searchlight engine room.

WATER STORAGE TANK (20)

The 7500 gallon water storage tank for Belmont Battery is located on the high ground immediately behind the searchlight engine room.

GUN EMPLACEMENT (21)

The concrete and steel complex with the tall tower. In World War II a twin barrelled, quick-firing 6-pounder replaced the original 12-pounders. Because the new concrete work is built onto and into the old, it is difficult to see where the one begins and the other stops. Plans call for the use of two distinctive colours to separate the old from the new.

The original emplacement consisted of:

Lamp Room, Shell Store, Cartridge Store, Oil Store, Crew Shelters (removed), Artillery Store, 2 x 12-pounder gun positions, each with shell and cartridge recesses.

The new emplacement consists of:

Director Tower, Searchlight Directing Station, Generator Room, Magazine, Oil Store, Artillery Store, Crew Shelter, 6-pounder, Twin, QF Gun position with ammunition recesses.

ORIGINAL ELECTRIC LIGHT DIRECTING STATION (22)

As a vital part of the original Belmont Battery, the electric light directing station was located within the confines of Upper Battery (the last building on the right). It was from this post, with its commanding view of the harbour mouth, that the lights and guns of Belmont, Duntze Head and Black Rock, were directed.

UPPER BATTERY (23)

Enclosed by a concrete loop-holed wall and barbed-wire entanglements, Upper Battery provided a secure and commanding position for a single 6-inch Disappearing Gun and its associated works, consisting of:

DEFENSIVE LOOP-HOLED WALL (24)

GUARD HOUSE (25)

The concrete building immediately on your right as you enter the main gate.

WATER STORAGE TANK (26)

Behind and to the left of the guard House, half buried in the rising ground.

GUN EMPLACEMENT FOR ONE 6-INCH BL DISAPPEARING GUN (27)

Other than for one or two minor positional differences, this emplacement is the same as those of Lower Battery.

UNDERGROUND COMPLEX (28)

The stairs on the right of the Gun Emplacement lead down to the following:

Lamp Room, Crew Shelter, Artillery Store, Shell Store, Shifting Lobby with Barrier, Cartridge Store with Issue Hatch, Lamp Recesses, Stairs to Gun Issue Hatch.

PEDESTAL FOR DEPRESSION RANGE-FINDER (29)

The concrete column has been removed from its protective alcove and now stands on the left of its original position. This was done to accommodate the next item.

PRE-WORLD WAR II FIRE COMMAND POST (30)

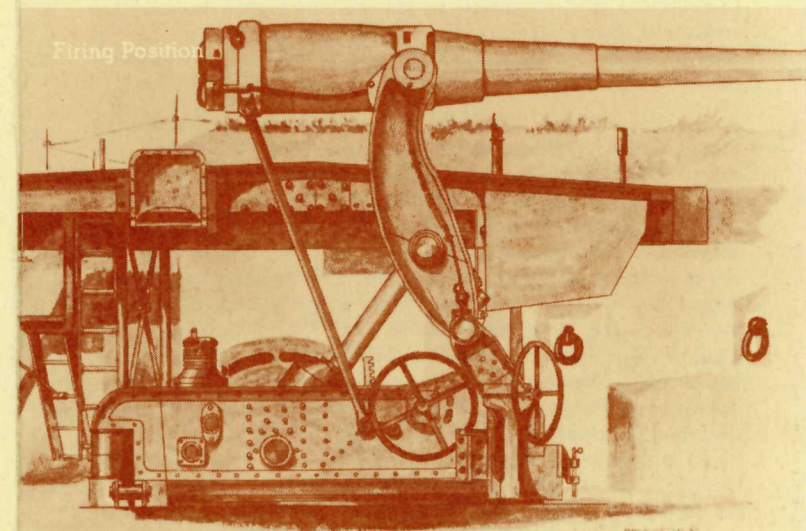
The outline of the building that was the night Fire Command Post for the Victoria-Esquimalt Fortress prior to World War II is still visible. The three concrete columns supported a Depression Position Finder.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE ROOM (31)

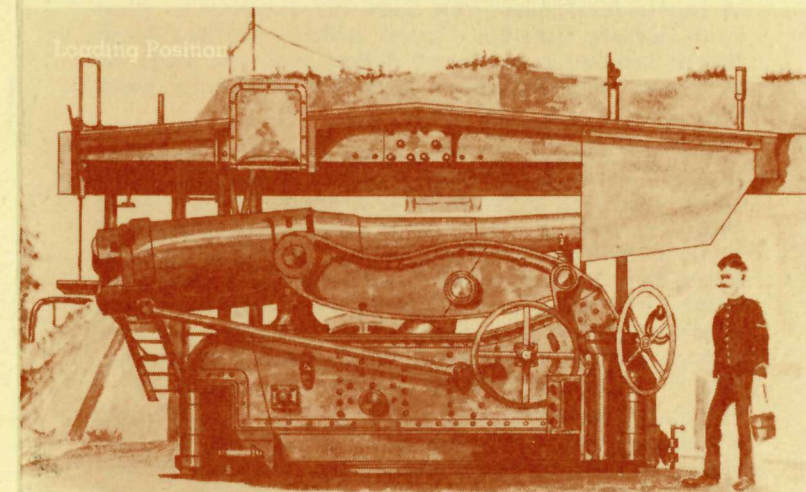
The small concrete building built against the bank at the rear of the position.

Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard Lighthouse

NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK
VICTORIA, B.C.



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A BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL BACKGROUND HISTORY

- 1774—Spanish explorations - Juan Perez.
1778—Visit by Captain James Cook.
1789—Construction of Spanish Fort at Nootka.
1792—Captain George Vancouver meets with Quadra at Nootka and Spain abandons Fort in keeping with Nootka Convention.
1843—Hudson's Bay Company builds Fort Victoria, mounting 6 and 9-pounder smooth bore cannons.
1846—First visit of Royal Naval Squadron from Valparaiso as a show of strength in the Oregon Boundary dispute (54° 40' or fight).
1847—Esquimalt Harbour surveyed by Royal Navy. Many place-names assigned. HMS Frigate FISGARD with Captain J. A. DUNTZE and 1st Lieutenant John Rashleigh RODD.
1854—Crimean War. Fears of invasion. Visit by Royal Navy with sick and wounded after unsuccessful attack, across the Pacific, on Petropauloski. Lack of facilities sees Royal Navy ships continue on to Valparaiso.
1855—First Naval Buildings erected at Duntze Head, Esquimalt.
1859—Construction of Naval Hospital by Royal Engineers.
—Construction of FISGARD and RACE ROCKS Lighthouses.
1861—Formation of local Artillery Company.
1878—Russo-Turkish War. Dominion Government borrows guns from Royal Navy, Esquimalt, and constructs batteries as follows:
FINLAYSON POINT—2 x 64-pdr RML (Rifled Muzzle Loading)
VICTORIA POINT—2 x 64-pdr RML
MACAULAY POINT—3 x 7-inch, 6½-ton RML
BROTHER'S ISLAND—1 x 8-inch, 9-ton RML and 2 x 64-pdr RML
1879—Examination of B.C. Coast Defences wherein both RODD POINT and FISGARD ISLAND are mentioned as being suitable positions for gun batteries (No action taken).
1884—First Artillery School and Camp.
1885—Construction of Dominion Graving Dock in Esquimalt harbour.
1887—Arrival of "C" Battery - first Permanent Force Artillery in Esquimalt.
1893—Agreement between governments of Great Britain and the Dominion of Canada regarding construction of new Forts and the stationing of an Imperial Garrison at Esquimalt. "C" Battery departs for Quebec.
1896—First of new armaments installed in new fortifications by Royal Marine Artillery.

Site Plan



Fort Rodd Hill

NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK



Fort Rodd Hill
NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK
SITE PLAN

ROYAL

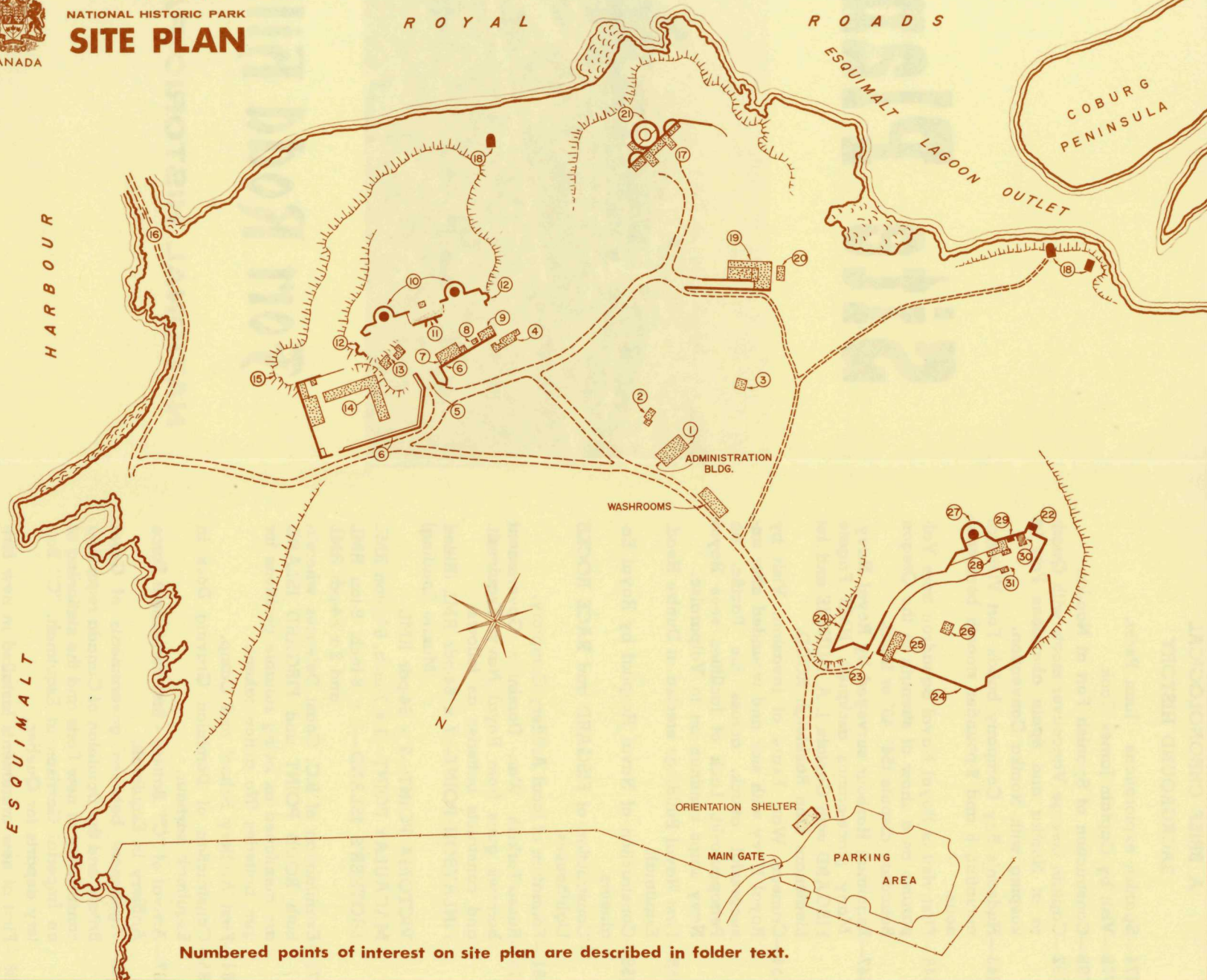
ROADS

ESQUIMALT LAGOON
OUTLET

COBURG
PENINSULA

HARBOUR

ESQUIMALT



Numbered points of interest on site plan are described in folder text.