

FHBRO Number 96-96

Colwood, British Columbia

**Lower Battery** - Casemate Barracks (six buildings)

603 Fort Rodd Hill Road

The Casemate Barracks of the Lower Battery are six buildings, five of which (the Barracks Building, the Coal Store, the Provision Store, the Latrine, and the Oil Store) were constructed in 1898. The sixth, the General Store, was built in 1903. Located within the defensible wall of the fort, they were designed by the British Royal Engineers. External modifications have included removal of the Provision Store loophole doors and reconstruction of one doorway (nd). Internal modifications have been more extensive. The Barracks has seen several function changes; the ablution room was gutted and converted to an officers quarters (1944), then reinstated for ablutions (1950s) and the fittings removed (pre-1960); the cook house had the sink and stove removed (nd) and the windows were refurbished (after 1960); the central barracks room was fitted with conduits (1950) and the third room was converted to the cook's quarters; and the Barracks was electrically wired in the 1950s. The Provision Store and the Coal Store had new wood floors installed, and the General Store has had some portions of the roof replaced (after 1960). The Latrine had the dry earth type fittings removed (nd) with flush toilets installed (1920s). The buildings are currently interpreted as part of the Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site. Parks Canada is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 96-96.

### **Reasons For Designation**

The Casemate Barracks have been designated Recognized because of their environmental significance and their architectural importance as well as their historical associations.

The site is unchanged from its early appearance, with the structures providing both south and west edges to the parade ground. The scale of the walled enclosure of the Casemate Barracks reinforces the functional appearance of the Lower Battery's military character.

The six structures were intended to accommodate support services for artillerymen, and they have an unassuming appearance derived from the simple designs. The good craftsmanship of the concrete structures (with the exception of the Oil Store which is brick), their plaster finish and their distinctive paint patterns around windows and doors, are characteristic of the military structures on this site.

The Casemate Barracks at the Lower Battery are closely associated with the original planning and construction of Fort Rodd Hill. They have a secondary role in the theme

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of coastal defences in being indirectly related to the active operation of the Lower Battery guns. Within the complex there is a hierarchy of associative relationships to the theme of coastal defence, with the Barracks Building being the most important building in the complex, followed by the stores buildings.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the six buildings of the Casemate Barracks - the Barracks Building, the Coal Store, Provision Store, the General Store, the Latrine, and the Oil Store - resides in their overall massing, profile, construction materials, interior planning, and site relationships.

The six flat-roofed structures have a low, rectangular massing. The L-shaped Barracks Building is a detached structure, which includes a sloped porch roof with colonnade completing two sides of the walled open barrack parade ground. The Coal Store, Provision Store, General Store, and Latrine structures are adjacent structures which are partially integrated with the defensible perimeter wall comprising part of the Lower Battery fortifications. This contributes to their simple uniform massing, footprint, and profile. The massing, profile, and footprint of all the buildings should be respected.

The concrete formwork with plaster finish features rounded edges at openings and projecting sills, contributing to the simple expression of the structures. The paint finish is a distinctive feature reflecting the military purpose. The woodwork of the porch shelter, with its exposed rafters, roof sheathing, and wood posts with chamfered edges, reflects late-19th century modern military detail preferences and should be respected. Exterior materials merit regular maintenance. The wood six-over-six sash windows of the Barracks Building and the wood four-over-four windows of the Coal Store appear to be original and should be maintained. The heavy vertical boarded doors of the structures also appear to be original and contribute to the military character of the design.

Interior planning has been maintained, reflecting the functionality and flexibility of the original design. Wood casings, trims, and the heavy wooden doors of the loopholes generally survive, contributing to the functional, military character of the interiors. Other finishes include the painted plaster walls and wood flooring which exhibit a deliberately utilitarian, functional character in keeping with the design.

The setting of these six buildings is characterized by heavy concrete construction

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(defensible walls, steps) and the crushed stone ground plane of the parade square. These features are integral to the intended function of this area and should be maintained.

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

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