

FHBRO Number 96-96

Colwood, British Columbia

**Searchlight System** - Searchlight No. 7

603 Fort Rodd Hill Road

The Searchlight No. 7 of the Searchlight System, part of the coastal defence system for the Royal Navy base at Esquimalt, was constructed in 1940, replacing Defence Light No. 2. The Searchlight No. 7 is presumed to have been designed by the Canadian Army. The structure had housed a 60-inch Canadian General Electric Type B searchlight, which was removed in the mid 1950s. The current camouflage structure is a reproduction (nd) and the light was installed to aid in the interpretation of the structure 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 Searchlight No. 7 has been designated Recognized because of its environmental significance and its architectural importance, as well as its historical associations.

The continued relationship of the camouflaged structure (boathouse with boat and rails) to the rocky outcrops along the shoreline has been generally maintained. The scale and form of the structure typify traditional boathouses in this maritime setting.

The simple form of Searchlight No. 7 is concealed by camouflage (wood boarding and painted “faux” details) which conveys the impression that it is a boathouse. The single-room layout reflects the accommodation required for a searchlight. The concrete construction contributes an overall expression of simplicity and functionality of design and craftsmanship.

The structure is an integral part of the Searchlight system, and is also associated with the upgrading of the night-time capabilities of the Esquimalt-Victoria coastal defence capability. It is also associated with the Interim Plan for defence readiness and the International Joint Defence Plan for Juan de Fuca Strait.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Searchlight No. 7 resides in its overall massing, profile, construction materials and site relationships.

The single-storey flat-roofed massing of the searchlight structure is obscured by the camouflage additions which are the simple gable-roof and the lean-to shed-roof. The

---

FHBRO Number 96-96

Colwood, British Columbia

**Searchlight System** - Searchlight No. 7

603 Fort Rodd Hill Road

rectangular footprint with rounded front has a rear extension at the back which is incorporated into the massing and contributes to the boathouse profile. The massing, profile and footprint should be respected.

The simple concrete formwork and the steel doors reflect the simple functional purpose of the building and should be maintained. The exterior materials, including the original solid wood doors with metal plate covering, merit regular maintenance. The “faux” paint finishes and wood-planked add-ons contribute to the camouflage effect and should be maintained.

The structure has maintained its original layout and single functional use as well as the original sliding steel shutters and heavy wood doors with metal plate covering. These should be maintained.

The setting of Searchlight No. 7 is typical of most coastline environments, characterized by rock outcroppings, driftwood and miscellaneous military additions such as fencing. The careful attempt to create the impression of a maritime structure contributes to the character of the site.

1998.03.31

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

---