

FEDERAL HERITAGE BUILDINGS REVIEW OFFICE

BENCHMARK REPORT 10-102

TITLE: Military Family Support Centre (WP 1163)
Work Point Barracks
CFB Esquimalt, British Columbia

DFRP: 17402

SOURCE: Jennifer Cousineau, Historical Research Branch

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO) has been asked by the Department of National Defence (DND) to evaluate one building at Work Point Barracks, Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. WP1163, the Military Family Support Centre, has reached over 40 years of age. It is slated to be demolished, and is being submitted for evaluation as per Treasure Board policy. WP1163 was constructed around 1895.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Thematic

Building WP1163 was acquired by the Department of National Defence during a period of expansion associated with military build-up during World War II. The building itself predates this period by several decades, was built privately, and does not have a direct association with the military themes of either coastal defence or Canada's participation in postwar conflicts or peacekeeping exercises.

Person/Event

This house was built for and lived in by the well-known local figure John Jardine, who called the house "Ellerslie." Jardine was a Scottish-born joiner, decorator and a prominent political figure in British Columbia. He represented Esquimalt as a Liberal from 1907-1912 in the Provincial Assembly. Jardine served as a member of the Royal Commission on Labour and was a founding member of the local Board of Trade.¹ Jardine died at Ellerslie in 1937 at the age of 84.

Local Development

From the time of its construction until the eve of World War II, when the property was expropriated by the military, WP1163 stood alone on the side of Macaulay Plains. A few other homes from the same period still exist, but they are closer to water and are at a significant distance from WP1163. In other words, there was no significant development around the house until it was purchased by the military in 1941. The land on which WP1163 sits was part of the

¹ E.O.S. Scholefield, *British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present*, Volume IV (Vancouver: S.J. Clark Publishing Company, 1914), 44-47.

Macaulay Farm of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company, a subsidiary of the Hudson's Bay Company located in the Esquimalt District. The land was first offered for sale in the mid-1890s.² The current community for this building is Work Point Barracks, and more specifically, the Permanent Married Quarters around Belmont Park, southeast of the main parade ground. The

building is not shown on a 1951 plan for the future development of Work Point Barracks, but is listed in the Work Point Development Plan of the same year. At least two other houses besides this one were also included in the WWII expropriation: the nearby 218 Anson (WP1209) (late 1930s), and 300 Victoria View Road (WP1134) (1939), further away on the base.³ 218 Anson also functioned as part of the Permanent Married Quarters after World War II. WP1163 was most recently used as a child-care facility.

ARCHITECTURE

Aesthetic Design

The Military Family Support Centre is an attractive but modest variant of the North American Craftsman style house of two-and-a-half storeys. It is distinguished by polychromatic (red and yellow), horizontal wood-frame siding, a deeply-pitched cross-gable roof with flared, overhanging eaves and a wide, semi-enclosed front veranda. The house also has a smaller, fully enclosed back veranda. Other picturesque details include two gabled dormers at the front and back, with their own miniature front-gable flared roofs, secondary, decorative “eaves” at the base of the gable, decorative shingle work and moulding in the gable, mullioned windows enclosing $\frac{3}{4}$ of the veranda, and short wood columns with classical capitals and bases articulating the verandah windows. The house also has two red brick chimneys with decorative brickwork.

Functional Design

The house has a centre-hall plan with two rooms at the front of the house and two rooms at the back on either side of a central entry and stair hall. On the main level, the hall has been cut short because the kitchen and pantry stretch across what would have been the hallway space at the back of the house. The raised basement contains four storage rooms, while the main floor provides two rooms for child care, the kitchen, pantry, and a lecture room, and facilities. The second floor contains large lecture room, three smaller offices, a small storage room, and a full bathroom (inside the dormer space), all distributed about the central hallway.

The house is in good condition. Its overall functional quality is increased by the generous veranda at the front of the house, which acts as an additional room in good weather.

Craftsmanship and Materials

WP1163 is a wood-frame building clad in horizontal wood siding, reflecting common west-coast building practices. A certain level of refinement in craftsmanship is evident in this house. The exterior shingling is typical of Craftsman/Queen Anne/Shingle Style houses, and the first floor fireplace has a neo-Renaissance surround delineated by two thin columns and ornamented with coloured tiles and painted relief swags. The two brick chimneys and glass enclosing the verandah

²Personal Communication with Sherri Robinson, volunteer archivist with the Township of Esquimalt, April 2012.

³F.D.H. Nelson and N.E. Oliver, *CFB Esquimalt Military Heritage* (CFB Esquimalt, 1982), 149-150.

are practical but material choices for their functions, but also add to the picturesque quality of the design.

Designer

The designer of the house is not known.

ENVIRONMENT

Site

WP1163 is set back from Anson Road, and has generous front, side, and back lawns. Several mature trees and other plantings grace the property. The house appears, even decades after the Permanent Married Quarters were built across the street, to be somewhat isolated from the rest of the houses that make up the PMQ. It is distinct within its semi-rural environment. The large empty field behind the house, as well as its unique architectural character in context, contribute to the sense of distinction.

Two notable changes have occurred over the course of a century, the first, the addition of a wheelchair ramp along the north side of the house, and the second, the erection of a simple and attractive low wooden fence around part of the property at the rear of the house. The wheelchair ramp allows access to the original back door. Neither of these significantly alters the house-site relationship or patterns of egress to the house. Both ramp and fence were designed sympathetically.

Setting

The house is part of the south central quadrant of Work Point Barracks, where the Permanent Married Quarters are located. Behind the house, to the west, is a large sports field and a smaller parade ground. To the south are two other single family dwellings, and there are more directly across Anson Road. There is a playground kitty corner from WP1163, and the 1930s house at 218 Anson Crescent is not far away. The former Ellerslie is the oldest dwelling in a setting constituted mainly of other single family dwellings. Since their appearance is unknown, it is impossible to determine whether WP1163 had any direct influence on architectural aesthetics in the neighbourhood.

Landmark

This building is recognized by the heritage community in the Township of Esquimalt, as is its first owner, John Jardine. Sherri Robinson, volunteer archivist for the Township of Esquimalt, local historian, and member of the city's Centennial Committee has underscored the value of this house for the community. Liz Dill, Chair of the Esquimalt Heritage Advisory Committee, has stated that the committee takes a great interest in the buildings and sites that are part of Esquimalt's history, even when, as in this case, the sites no longer fall within the boundaries of the Township of Esquimalt.⁴ Susan Green, Heritage Registrar for the Province of British Columbia, has been notified that this building was being evaluated by FHBRO and has noted that although the building is not listed on the provincial heritage register, it would be of interest to local heritage groups.⁵

⁴ Personal communication with Liz Dill, April 2012.

⁵ Personal communication with Susan Green, 26 March 2012.