

Statement of Significance

1379 Esquimalt Road - St. Peter and St. Paul's Church

Common Name: St. Peter and St. Paul's Church

Other Names:

- St. Paul's Anglican Church (re: Heritage Designation Bylaw, 1999, No. 2377)
- St. Paul's Naval and Garrison Church
- 1379 Esquimalt Road

Civic Address: 1379 Esquimalt Road

Description of Historic Place

St. Peter and St. Paul's Church sits at the corner of Esquimalt Road and Grafton Street in the Township of Esquimalt. It is a small wooden Gothic Vernacular Style church, with a steeple at its west end. It is white with black trim. The church is set amongst several large mature trees. There is a small cemetery on the eastern side of the church.

Heritage Value

St. Peter and St. Paul's Church is valued for its historic, spiritual, and aesthetic heritage values.

St. Peter and St. Paul's Church is valued as a symbol of the importance of the early military presence in the development of the Esquimalt community. Built with an Admiralty grant, and originally located at the foot of Signal Hill, close to the gates of the Dockyard, the church is representative of the connection between the community of Esquimalt and the Royal Navy. Built in 1866, the church is one of the earliest surviving buildings in Esquimalt, and is a historic landmark situated on the virtual border between Esquimalt and the naval lands [Canadian Forces Base (CRF) Esquimalt], where it was moved to in 1904. The church was dismantled board-by-board and reassembled at its present location, to safeguard it from the threat of damage from gunnery practice at Signal Hill.

St. Peter and St. Paul's Church is important to Esquimalt's heritage as a place of memorial. The interior of the church houses numerous features and artifacts that celebrate and honour the dedication of Esquimalt's earliest settlers, church congregation members, and also the community's naval heritage. In particular, the memorial stained glass windows reflect the desire of the church community to create points of remembrance for significant members of the church, local, and naval communities. The fact that, the installation of memorial stained glass windows has

endured as a commemorative practice in this church, with windows dating from 1878, 1960, and 2012, reflects the ongoing importance of St. Peter and St. Paul's Church as not only a place of worship but also as a centre for the commemoration of over 150 years of Esquimalt's local and military heritage. The importance of this location as a place of commemoration is further evident with the presence of the centre panel of the first war memorial, built in Canada (dating to 1917) and honouring those people killed in action during the First World War, which now hangs on the inside of the south wall of the church. The small cemetery next to the church holds value as a record of early community members.

Architecturally, the church is valued as a building of pioneer architect Thomas Trounce; who was important to the design and construction of many of the early buildings on the Dockyard base. Constructed by contractor William Sayward Parsons, the Gothic styling of the church reflects the typical aesthetic for Anglican churches of this era. The architectural significance of this building is further reinforced by the addition of transepts and the installation of the first memorial stained glass windows, both supervised by prolific early architect John Teague, in 1879.

Spiritually, St. Peter and St. Paul's Church is a reflection of the importance of the Anglican Church in the development of the mid-nineteenth century colonial town. As the fourth-oldest Anglican Church on Vancouver Island, St. Peter and St. Paul's Church demonstrates the ideals of town builders at that time – places of worship were seen as an integral component of complete and ideal communities. It is significant that this church continues to function in its original purpose. The ongoing importance of this church as a place of worship is also evident in the historic 1891 pipe organ, which has been accompanying services in this place since 1912. The organ received heritage designation from the Royal Canadian College of Organists in 2006.

Character-Defining Elements

The heritage character of historic St. Peter and St. Paul's Church is defined by the following elements:

- Gothic Vernacular style architecture, including features such as the steeply pitched roof, tripartite pointed-arch windows, simple white ship-lap siding with black corner boards and accents, and a louvered bell tower surmounted by a spire.
- Wooden construction elements of the 1886 design, and 1879 addition to the church, including doors, paneling, siding, and trim.
- The footprint of the church, which reflects its original 1866 design, and its 1879 additions.
- The memorial stained glass windows, including excellent examples of the work of Clayton & Bell, London, England, and Mercer & Schaefer Glass Studios, Victoria.
- Evidence of the building's move in 1904, including the rubble foundation dating to that time.

- The use of the church as a place of worship.
- Interior features of the church that commemorate significant pioneers, congregation members, and military persons and events, including the font, the WWI memorial, the life buoy from HMCS Condor, the Pulpit, the Altar, many flags of naval vessels and historic events that have been “laid up” here for safekeeping, and the sanctuary furniture, and the bell.
- The small cemetery next to the church.
- The 1891 pipe organ hand built by the Peter Conacher Company in Huddersfield, England.

