

Cambridge, Ontario
Cambridge Armoury
Ainslie Street South

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

The Cambridge Armoury was constructed in 1914-15 to the designs of the Chief Architect's Branch of the Department of Public Works. The building serves as the home of the Highland Fusiliers of Canada. It is the property of the Department of National Defence. See FHBRO Building Report 86-84.

Reason for Designation

The armoury was designated Recognized because, as a functioning drill hall, it continues to serve its historical and ceremonial role. Its historical associations are significant. The building was, and still is, the home of an active unit, the Highland Fusiliers of Canada, direct successor to the 29th Waterloo Battalion of Infantry, formed in 1866 and later known as the Highland Light Infantry of Canada.

The Cambridge Armoury is a good example of a smaller armoury of the 1910-20 period. It is a simple structure lacking the complexity of those in larger centres but well proportioned, finished, and detailed. Over the years, the area has evolved somewhat but the site of the armoury has retained its character mostly because the open area in front of the building has remained. The building is an important landmark in Cambridge due to its location and distinctive appearance.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Cambridge Armouries lies in the continuity of its historical function, its representative architecture, historic associations, and prominent profile. Specifically, this refers to the interior drill hall and its structure and the exterior elevations, particularly the west, north and south façades. These aspects of the building should be handled with care.

The aesthetic quality of the building is best revealed in the proportions and symmetrical composition of the office block façade. Simple and functional, the façade has a solid, slightly fortified, but picturesque appearance. The flanking towers with their three crenelated turrets and buttresses, the large, stone-framed central doorway, and the contrasting quality of the brick and limestone contribute significantly to this character, typical of the period. These characteristics should be retained.

The major function of an armoury is to provide a large covered, clear span space for drilling and a space for offices, stores and other facilities. These two functions are clearly expressed in the plan and section of the building - a long

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Cambridge Armoury (Continued)

gable roofed drill hall, fronted by a two-storey office block. The exposed steel trusses over the drill hall and the large side windows which light it, are essential to the building's function. These features survive and should be protected in their present form.

Retention of sufficient unobstructed exterior space in front of the building should be a priority as should retention of the two existing main entry points in the south and west elevations.

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