

Montréal, Québec
Armoury
Côte-des-Neiges

The Côte-des-Neiges Armoury was constructed in 1934-35. It was designed by the Montreal architectural firm of Ross and Macdonald. The armoury design was unique for including a riding hall (the only extant one in the country) and maintains its original militia functions. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 91-30.

Reasons For Designation

The armoury was designated Recognized for its architectural importance and its environmental significance and also for its historical associations.

The armoury reflects a stripped down Chateausque style in the details of the entrance with its paired conical roofed stone towers, parapet loophole recesses, and arch headed too entrance. The three buildings exhibit the stylized and simplified details which reflect contemporary interest in smooth surfaces and geometric volumes. The unusual plan features an administrative head house, a linking small drill hall and a clear span, large riding school reflecting the functional planning. The riding school features exposed Warren trusses for the non-standard design.

The building is set back from the corner and is a prominent component of the largely undeveloped treed site. The scale and proportions of the building is in marked contrast to the park-like setting and contributes to its prominence. The building is located on the southwest perimeter of Mount Royal Park which has contributed to its local familiarity.

The armoury is associated with the pre-World War 1 armoury building campaign and is one of twelve constructed between the Great Wars. Typical of inter-war armouries it employs modern structural design - concrete floors supporting a steel frame - which augments the more simpler and functional designs used for armouries.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the armoury resides in its massing, proportions, construction materials, architectural details, interior planning and volumes, and site relationships.

The massing of the armoury is comprised of three structures, a two-storey flat-roof "head house", a two-storey flat-roof drill hall, and a two-storey gable-roofed riding school which is the predominant structure. The massing, footprint, and profile reflect

modern preferences for simply composed volumetric compositions. The twin-towered frontispiece expresses the stripped down Chateausque style and contributes to the symmetry of the design. The external massing, profiles and footprint reflect internal functions; the clarity of this expression should be respected.

The principal facades are executed in limestone with a subtle textural contrast between the rough-faced even-coursed stone and the dressed stone quoining, stringcoursing, coping and carved stone shields. The masonry requires an ongoing maintenance program, cleaning at the entrance, and conservation expertise for repair and replacement. The Chateausque detailing is concentrated around the main entrance on the main facade and the slate roofing of the towers are a feature to be maintained. All the facades have simpler, flatter moulding details using smooth surfaces and geometric forms. These forms and details should be respected.

The asphalt shingle finish of the drill hall roof is a prominent feature. The roofing has an uniform, inappropriate colour which lacks visual texture. When the roofing is being replaced, historic precedent should be followed for the selection of the roof colour.

The multi-paned wood sash windows as well as the large multi-paned steel windows appear original and should be maintained. The glazing of the drill hall introduces interior day lighting to the spacious volume and should be maintained. The revival design of the armoury is expressed in the original wood entrance doors with their panelling, heavy iron hardware and multi-paned glazing; these should be maintained.

The unique plan, with major functions in separate buildings should be maintained. The drill hall and riding school is characterized by its large open volumes, with exposed steel trusses and extensive glazing. The spatial openness and bright, naturally lit character of the halls should be maintained. The design of the seating found in the riding school is a unique feature which should be maintained. Original interior finishes should be maintained.

The simple turfgrass ground plane should be maintained reflecting the characteristically simple landscaping of armouries. The presence of mature deciduous or coniferous trees should be maintained and the use of shrub material should be limited to the site perimeters. Site furniture, such as the flag pole appear to be sympathetic to the design vocabulary of the armoury and should be maintained.

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