Armoury
Willow Street
Truro, Nova Scotia

The Truro Armoury was constructed in 1907-1908. It was designed and constructed by the Department of Public Works. The building is currently used as a two company armoury. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-1 29.

Reasons For Designation

The armoury was designated Recognized because of its environmental significance, historical associations, and architectural importance.

The building has a commanding presence at the end of its U-shaped driveway leading from Willow Street. It sits atop a generally open ground plane of either asphalt or turfgrass. Mature trees punctuate the lawn to the south permitting unobstructed views from the roadway. Recent foundation plantings mark the south facade. The armoury is a familiar landmark because of its central location and ongoing use by the local militia.

The building reflects the major expansion and organization of the Canadian militia prior to World War One, and is associated with an expanded building campaign for arms storage. The selection of Truro for the erection of the armoury reflects the economic strength of the town and its role as a transportation crossroads in the province.

Like most small commercial or industrial buildings of the period, the armoury has stripped down detailing. The plain appearance is enlivened by the use of bold stonework for the base, the string-course and the slightly crenellated parapet walls. Strong, classically-derived symmetry and proportions and simple massing provide a formal, official character for the building.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Truro Armoury resides in its form, scale and proportions, construction materials and details, interior layout, and site relationships.

The massing of the two-storey building is simple and box-like with a flat roof and a rectangular footprint. There is a balanced, symmetrical pattern of regularly spaced windows and doors which contributes to the classical character of the design. The facades have simple, symmetrical crenellations at the parapet. The simplicity and symmetrical character of the massing, footprint and profile should be maintained.

The simply detailed red brick masonry is complemented by robust sandstone details which provide texture to the design. The sandstone is used rough-faced or smooth, and carved at the south-east facade. The recessed window openings with voussoirs above segmental arches and circular arched heads contribute to solid, weighty effect of the building. The masonry appears to have been extensively repointed and some brick replaced. Masonry maintenance should respect the existing brick size, joint colour and type in repair programs. The copper used for flashing, eavestrough, and gutters adds colour and patina, and is a feature of the design which should be maintained.

The repetitive window rhythms contribute to the symmetry of the building, the shape varies by floor which emphasizes the visual weight of the masonry. The wood windows have sashes and transoms which add texture and introduce a fine pattern to the facade. The existing windows appear to be replacements, they have a large glazing areas and bug screens. At the end of their service life, appropriate replacements should be installed based on documentation or physical evidence. The wood framed double doors and the multi-paned glazed transom at the principal entrance appear to be original and should be maintained.

The simple planning accommodates the two militia companies with the armoury and sundry related spaces and should be maintained. Original interior finishes should be documented and maintained.

The traditional signage found on the building appears to be modern in finishes and materials and is too big. Any replacement signage should refer to historic precedent in finishes and materials. The asymmetrically located exterior lighting and conduit use inappropriate materials and installation which detract from the simple design of the building. Efforts should be made to coordinate lighting locations to the symmetrical design, select appropriate materials and finishes based on precedent, and provide concealed power supply.

The simple relationship of the building to the ground plane should be maintained. Foundation plantings, should be kept to a minimum and should not be replaced on their decline. The open site should not be hindered by excessive tree plantings.

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