

Halifax, Nova Scotia  
**Armoury**  
North Park Street

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Halifax Armoury was built from 1895-99 to designs by Thomas Fuller, the chief Architect of the Department of Public Works. It is the property of the Department of National Defence and now functions as Headquarters, Militia Area Atlantic. See FHBRO Report 90-141.

### **Reasons for Designation**

The Halifax Armoury was designated Classified, in recognition of its historical and architectural significance, and its environmental and landmark value.

The building is one of the best examples of government initiatives undertaken at the end of the 19th century to build militia practice, training and recruitment centres. It is one of five extant regimental drill halls built in major cities in Canada in the last quarter of the 19th century, and the most fully developed. Regionally important, it houses an infantry battalion, the Princess Louise Fusiliers.

Architecturally, it is an excellent example of a bold Romanesque Revival style. The design, functional plan, and novel facilities make the Halifax Armoury an outstanding example of the type. The architectural design and amenities of the drill hall set the standard for subsequent designs across Canada.

The Halifax Armoury was the last major project of Thomas Fuller as chief architect and is one of the best example of his talents.

The Armoury is a distinctive landmark situated in north central Halifax. It has maintained an unchanged relationship to its site and is close to the citadel which reinforces its military identity.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage value of the Armoury resides in the massing, formal visual qualities of the stonework of the street facades and fenestration, its functional plan and facilities, and its unchanged dominant presence in its neighbourhood.

The Armoury, a generally two-storey utilitarian building, has the appearance of an important public building because of its bold Romanesque Revival style. The massing is comprised of a two-storey gabled roof drill hall flanked by two-storey flat roofed wings on two sides with a monumental three-storey

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**Armoury** (Continued)

frontispiece opposite the gable end, and circular, conical-roofed stair towers located at three of four corners. This existing massing is important for the overall character and should be maintained.

The symmetrically organized design has stone arches containing the fenestration and exaggerated repetitive decorative stone details of different sizes, to break down the mass of the building on all four sides. The Cunard Street facade has a central three-storey frontispiece which creates a formal entry and a visually prominent silhouette in the neighbourhood. The design features of the stonework are essential to the heritage character and should be maintained.

The decorative details, which include carved stonework, string courses, corbelled banding, deeply set windows with the multi-panes and heavy mullions, and wide vousoirs above, create an impression of strength and stability. Appropriate measures should be undertaken to ensure the ongoing maintenance and preservation of these intact original features. The original windows and doors should be maintained, repaired or replicated to match if necessary.

The interior of the Armoury incorporated a clear span drill hall, one of the largest of the time, which was accomplished by the use of triangular steel Fink trusses. Planning features included a shooting gallery, a library, a lecture room, a bowling alley and a kitchen. While the recreation features have been modified, the rest of these features remain. Further planning modifications should respect the existing layout. Original interior finishes should be left intact or repaired to match if necessary.

Constructed of red rough-faced Pugwash sandstone surmounting a rough-faced granite foundation, the massive walls are enlivened by bold decorative details, all of which should be preserved and retained as they play an important role in the building's character.

The site is largely unchanged, and the building reinforces present military character of the area and plays an important role as landmark in the neighbourhood.

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