

FHBRO Number 91-149

Stratford, Ontario

## **Armoury**

Albert and Waterloo Streets

The Stratford Armoury was constructed in 1905. The compact planning follows a standard American Armoury model and was designed by the Chief Architects Branch, Department of Public Works, under T.W. Fuller. Alterations include the addition of an air raid siren. The building continues to serve as an armoury. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 91-149.

### **Reasons For Designation**

The Stratford Armoury was designated Recognized because of its architectural importance and its environmental significance as well as its historical associations

The armoury is a visually complex form with a prominent gable roof. The building relies on dramatic textural and material contrasts and elaboration of details to enliven the facades. The large unobstructed drill hall features a rare exposed wood and metal truss.

The armoury is a prominent building in the town because of its substantial scale and high standard of design and construction. Its central location within Stratford's historic core reinforces its importance to the community. The armoury commands a strong local presence through its continued use for community activities.

The construction of the armoury is associated with the pre-World War I armoury building campaign and the reform and expansion of the volunteer militia. It reflects a government policy to allow the supply of arms to all rural militias, following public debate supporting good local training facilities.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the Stratford Armoury resides in its overall form, proportions, construction materials, military architectural details, interior planning and volumes, and site relationships.

The footprint and massing of the three-storey building is generally simple and rectangular but has prominent corner towers and frontispieces, one of which is asymmetrically located. The roof profile is complex with the use of crenellations, stepped parapets, prominent tapered chimneys and a turret on one side of the gable.

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The composition of forms is balanced by a strong rhythm created by the symmetrical pattern of large round-headed or square-headed windows, which also contribute to the visual richness of the facades. The large round-arched windows of the front and side facades are characteristic features indicating the large, open second floor interior. The complex parapet and roof profile should be respected and profiles and forms should be maintained.

The prominence of this building derives from well-scaled facades executed in smooth red brick, with contrasting carved stone details and expressive mouldings (stringcourses, rusticated horizontal banding, arched voussoirs) creating a well scaled, lively appearance. The masonry detailing alludes to military precedents, particularly the use of crenellations, stepped parapets, buttressing at the frontispieces, and carved stone elements. The masonry requires an ongoing maintenance program, and conservation expertise in the choice of materials and techniques for repair and replacement.

The light coloured asphalt roof of the armoury is a prominent component of the design that may not follow original design intentions. When the opportunity presents itself, replacement roof material should be selected following historic precedent for materials and colours.

The paired vertical-sliding sashes vertically divide the masonry openings, but the visual richness of the traditional frame and sash profiles are greatly simplified and glazed areas are increased especially at the transom panels. Wood sash with traditional members and smaller muntin subdivisions would contribute a prominent fine-scale pattern to the window openings. At the end of their life, historic research should be used to determine appropriate replacements. The upper floor semi-circular window transoms are blocked off with back-painted glazed panels, which alters the expression of the glazing. Where windows have been blocked off they should be reinstated, particularly those windows which introduce interior day lighting to the upper drill hall, as they make an important contribution to the spacious, naturally-lighted character of the hall.

The character of the building would be enhanced by replacing the modern entrance doors with doors of a more sympathetic design based on historical research or extant early material.

The interior of the armoury follows a standard plan, with the principal entrance located in the centre of the short facade. The armoury is characterized by the large open

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volume of the top floor hall, with exposed steel trusses and extensive glazing. The spatial openness and bright, well lighted character of the hall should be maintained. The interior exhibits a deliberately utilitarian, functional design, with wood wainscoting, painted brick walls and exposed trusses and wood plank ceiling finishes.

The public portions of the property are characterized by a simple turfgrass ground plane contained by perimeter deciduous tree plantings. This relationship is to be protected. Foundation plantings would be inappropriate against the stone coursing of the armoury.

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

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