

FHBRO Number 90-271

Montmagny, Québec

Armoury

194 Rue de la Gare

The Montmagny Armoury was constructed in 1915. The medium-sized armoury follows the Militia Council plan Type "B" and was designed by the Department of Militia and Defence. The building continues to serve as an armoury. Alterations include a small one storey addition to the rear, metal flashing at the gable parapets, an exit stair, and miscellaneous steel framed lean-to's. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-271.

Reasons For Designation

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

The Montmagny Armoury is a brick, gable-roofed structure that relies on textural and material contrasts of the white keystones and the pilasters and corbelling of the gable to enliven the facades. It has a good functional design, with an end entrance into the large unobstructed drill hall, the most distinctive space. The exposed steel roof truss construction is a characteristic feature.

The armoury contributes significantly to the Montmagny townscape because of its substantial scale and high standards of design and construction. The centrally located armoury is compatible with the scale of the mixed residential and commercial neighbourhood. The armoury has a strong local presence through its continued use for community activities.

The construction of the building is associated with the pre-World War I armoury building campaign and the reform and expansion of the volunteer militia. The building also reflects the federal commitment to provide good local training facilities for the militia. The construction of the armoury was in response to the importance of the town as a military centre and in recognition its prosperity and growth as an industrial center.

Character Defining Elements

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

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The two-storey structure has a rectangular footprint and low-pitched gable roof which reflect the simple functional planning. The clarity of this expression should be maintained. The roof profile is accentuated by the stepped gable parapet. The symmetrical massing is complemented by a repetitive rhythm of buttresses on the gable and the sides as well as a balanced pattern of windows and doors which contributes to the visual richness of the facades.

The well-scaled facades are executed in smooth red brick, with smooth-faced limestone sills, keystones, coping, and trim at a circular gable window providing colour contrast. The masonry has minimal decoration but includes the stepped buttresses reflecting the structural grid, the gable fringe of corbelled brickwork, and the flat-arched voussoirs over the windows and troop doors. The masonry merits an ongoing maintenance program, and conservation expertise in the choice of materials and techniques for repair and replacement. The metal flashing over the coping has introduced a prominent colour and material on the facade. The original stone coping, in its material and colouring, was intended to create a visual link to other details of the facade and to contribute to the solid, compact appearance of the building. A return to the original coping would improve the character of the building.

The asymmetrically-located steel escape stairs, the electrical service mast located on the front of the building, and the exhaust hood respond to functional requirements, but detract the simple design and historic character. When operational feasible, these elements should be integrated in a manner more sympathetic to the design.

The roof is a prominent feature. Replacement roofing should be based on historical precedent for materials and colours to ensure respect for the original design.

Wood sash with their relatively heavy members and smaller subdivisions contribute a prominent, fine-scale pattern to the window openings. The multi-paned wood and metal sash windows, where original, should be maintained. The entrance doors are modern metal doors. When these doors are at end of their life they should be replaced with doors based on historical research or extant early material in keeping with the quality of the design.

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

the hall, with exposed steel trusses and extensive glazing contributing to the bright, well

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lit character. Original interior finishes are an important part of heritage character, reflecting the functional approach to materials and finishes of the military.

A simple ground plane, characteristic of austere armoury sites, is reinforced through the use of turfgrass, asphalt and concrete paving. Shrub material might be used sparingly on the site, but not as foundation planting. Tree plantings, in particular, should be positioned so to reinforce the symmetry of the front facade. The historic relationship between the armoury and the cannon is to be maintained. A more compatible alternative to chain link fencing along the street would improve heritage character.

97.03.03

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