

Trois-Rivières, Québec

Armoury

574 St. Francis Xavier St.

The Class “B” Trois-Rivières Armoury was constructed in 1905-06. It was designed by the Chief Architects Branch of the Department of Public Works under T.W. Fuller. The design has been altered by a one-storey addition along one side and the rear. The building continues to serve as an armoury. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-274.

Reasons For Designation

The Trois-Rivières Armoury was designated Recognized because of its historical associations and its environmental significance, as well as its architectural importance.

The construction of the armoury is associated with a pre-World War I building campaign and the reform and expansion of the volunteer militia. The armoury reflects federal policy to both supply arms to all militias, and construct good local training facilities. Chief architect T.W. Fuller is associated with the design of the majority of buildings of this program. He developed the characteristic stylistic treatment, drawing upon military design sources.

The armoury occupies a prominent corner site in a residential neighbourhood. Its importance also resides in its size, scale and high standards of design. In its setting the building is compatible in both its scale and materials. It is a conspicuous and familiar building within the community.

The long facade features crenellated towers; either cylindrical at the front corners or octagonal at the substantial frontispiece, chimneys, and stepped end gables which contribute to the sculptural expression of the facades. The central, prominent, frontispiece features an arched voussoir above a wood-framed infill panel incorporating windows and the troop doors. The textural and material contrasts of the brick and stone facade enliven the design. The functional design locates the administrative offices in front of the large unobstructed drill hall, the most distinctive space.

Character Defining Elements

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

The irregular massing consists of a rectangular, two-storey drill hall with gable roof, which has symmetrical stepped gable ends, and a stepped, flat-roofed ancillary block

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along one side. The two-storey front block has a complex roof profile with three-storey end and paired central crenellated towers reinforcing the symmetrical composition. The external massing and footprint reflect internal functions, and the clarity of this expression should be maintained. The massing is balanced by a symmetrical, regular pattern of windows and doors which contributes to the visual richness of the facades.

The visual richness of this building also derives from well-scaled facades executed in smooth-faced red brick, with voussoirs on the first floor and corbelling at the cornice. The light coloured rough-faced limestone base, sills and second floor window heads, gable string courses, and carved and smooth detailing of the castellations, provide colour and textural contrast. The stone shield at the entrance and the stacked cannonballs detail on the gable corner buttress reflect the military motif. The brick masonry has been extensively replaced and repointed; repair programs in the future should respect the existing brick size, joint colour and type. The addition of an asymmetrically located steel escape stair to one gable end is a prominent modern intervention that introduces an inappropriate material and design. The character of the building would be enhanced by addressing exit requirements in a more integrated manner which does not detract from the building.

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

The main facade has a regular rhythm of paired masonry openings with two-over-two wood sash windows, while the end facades have larger, multi-panel circular-headed windows continuing at the rear elevation. There are various windows blocked with solid panels or fans, which alters the symmetrical expression of the glazing. The military character of the design is expressed in the original wood entrance doors with their panelling, which should be maintained where extant. Replacement doors, when they are end of their life, should be replaced with doors based on historical research or extant early material.

The principal entrance is located at the middle of the drill hall, a typical feature of this plan type. The armoury is characterized by the large open volume of the hall, with exposed steel Fink trusses and extensive glazing. The spatial openness and bright, well lighted character of the hall should be maintained, as should original finishes.

A simple ground plane is characteristic of this building's historic setting. The use of

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turfgrass, asphalt and concrete paving supports this character. Mature specimen trees on the perimeter of the property should be protected and replaced as required. The use of low, clipped hedges gives definition to the site and reinforces the ordered military character. A historically appropriate fence to replace the modern chain link would improve heritage character.

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