

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Federal Building (former Post Office)
Perrault Street and Portage Avenue
Rouyn, Quebec

The Federal Building at Rouyn, Quebec was built as the town Post Office in 1935-1936 under the supervision of Chief Architect T. W. Fuller of the Department of Public Works. The building is now used as an Armoury. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 83-06.

Reason for Designation

The Rouyn Federal Building was designated "Recognized" for its historic associations, its architecture and its landmark qualities.

The building is an example of a popular design used for a number of small federal post offices built in towns across Canada as part of a job creation program conceived by the Federal Government to combat the economic crisis of the 1930s, and was part of a Federal - Provincial plan to settle the Abitibi region using unemployed workers from the Saint Lawrence valley. The materials used for the construction of the Rouyn building - stone from Westmount, hardware from Toronto, steel from the mills of Sarnia, and B.C. lumber - result in a structure that is truly Canadian in its materials and workmanship.

Architecturally, the building displays Classical forms and detailing interpreted in a stripped-down manner, illustrative of the nascent transition to Modern design.

The Rouyn Federal Building has provided a federal presence within the community since its construction, and is highly visible on its corner site.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Rouyn Federal Building resides in its architectural design, its overall form and detailing, and its landmark qualities.

A two-storey rectangular flat-roofed form, the building responds to its corner site with formal stone entrance porticos on its Portage Avenue and Perrault Street elevations. The symmetry of the principal facade, the regular rhythm of window and door openings on both elevations and the simple stone entablature reflect the building's Classical inspiration and merit preservation. The Modern influence is expressed in minimal ornamentation, which in this case is limited to soldier courses in the red brick walls. The rough textured "Tapestry" brick contrasts with the elegant classical stone porticos. Masonry repairs should be done in consultation with a masonry conservation professional.

While the Perrault and Portage elevations are generally intact, a one-storey addition to the building is visible from both elevations and actually steps forward from the original building at one side. Future modifications should not undermine the prominence of the original structure, and should respect original fenestration and patterns of access to the building. Doors and windows on the original building have been replaced with contemporary metal units. When these elements require replacement, a return to appropriate materials based on historic photographs is recommended.

The interior plan of the Federal Building was designed with differentiation between public and private spaces, such as terrazzo floor for public spaces and maple hardwood for offices. Remaining features and finishes of the interior which reflect this original design intent should be respected.

The site, at the corner of Perrault Street and Portage Avenue, is set back from the curb and bordered by wide promenades. Future interventions, such as the addition of street furniture or signage or the replacement of surface materials, should employ simple, traditional materials and respect the prominence of the principal facades. A use that continues the building's public presence is encouraged.

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