

Armoury

515 Machray Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba

The armoury was constructed in 1914-15. It follows the Type "D" alternate plan of the militia council, and H.E. Mathews was the architect. It was built by the Department of Public Works. The building continues to be used as an armoury. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 94-23.

Reasons For Designation

The armoury has been designated Recognized for its architectural importance, environmental significance, and its historical associations.

The influence of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts is reflected in this two storey brick and stone trimmed armoury, which has a monumental scale. The Ecole advocated clear volumes, axial planning, horizontal massing, and less decorative detailing, characteristics which are found in this building. The stepped parapet profiles, corner towers reflect the use of medieval military motifs. Built to a standard plan, following departmental guidelines, the ancillary spaces are at either end of the drill hall. The structural design, employing steel trusses, allows the use of large glazed areas between piers, a characteristic feature of pre-World War I armoury design.

The armoury contributes significantly to its surrounding streetscape because of its dominant scale and distinctive design which reflects its military function. The armoury has a prominent location and has a generous front lawn and surrounding grounds which reinforce its importance. The characteristic, large, flat site required for drill exercises is associated with this armoury.

The construction of the armoury is associated with the reform and expansion of the volunteer militia under Sir Sam Hughes. Hughes instigated the development of standard plans to aid in the efficient implementation of the intensive armoury building program. The armoury reflects a government policy to supply arms to all militias and to construct good local training facilities. The drill hall has a steel truss to span the large open area, a typical feature, pre-World War I, in the development of the Canadian drill hall.

Character Defining Elements

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

The simple massing of this armoury is dominated by the two-storey, gable roof of the drill hall. The armoury has two-storey, flat-roofed blocks with projecting corner towers, at either end of the drill hall. The external massing and footprint reflect internal functions and the clarity of this expression should be maintained. The two-storey front blocks also have varied parapet profiles and prominent chimneys in contrast to the simple, gable roof profile. These profiles should be respected. The pleasing balance of building masses reflects modern preferences for simply composed forms. These characteristics should be respected.

The prominence of the building derives from well designed facades executed in buff brick, with white limestone detailing and decorative carving providing colour and textural contrast. The features which should be maintained include the ashlar treatment of the masonry and the decorative balustrade above the arcaded entrance. The carved stone scrolls and shields are additional enhancements reflecting military precedents. The masonry requires an ongoing maintenance program and conservation expertise in the choice of materials and techniques for repair and replacement. The simpler, flatter detailing is uniformly applied to all facades and employs smooth surfaces and geometric forms characteristic of the Beaux-Arts tendencies to simplify exterior ornamentation. These details should be respected.

The extensive surface area of the drill hall roof is a component of the design. The roofing material is asphalt shingles and these appear to be recent. The choice of replacement roof material should be based on research to confirm historic precedent for materials and colours.

The wood, multi-paned, sash windows found in the ancillary blocks and the large, multi-paned, steel windows of the drill hall appear to be original. Original windows and doors with multi-paned transoms should be maintained as they enhance the revival designs and the military character of the building.

The armoury has some windows blocked off with solid panels, introducing a new material which alters the symmetrical expression of the overall window placement. Where windows have been blocked off they should be reinstated, particularly those windows which introduce interior day lighting to the drill halls as they make an important contribution to the spacious, naturally lighted character of the hall.

The interior follows a standard plan, with the principal entrance located in the centre of the drill hall's short facade. The drill hall is characterized by the large open volume, with exposed steel trusses and extensive glazing. The spatial openness and bright, naturally lit character of the hall should be maintained. The drill hall interior exhibits a deliberately utilitarian, functional design, with exposed brick walls, steel trusses, and concrete floors. This character should be maintained.

A simple ground plane is characteristic of the historic setting for this building. The use of turf grass, and asphalt or concrete paving supports the austere character of these

sites, and should be continued. Mature specimen trees should be protected. The asymmetrical relationship of the armouries on their sites should be maintained.

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