

Toronto, Ontario  
**Fort York Armoury**  
700 Fleet Street

The Fort York Armoury was constructed in 1935. It was designed by the Chief Architect's Branch of the Department of Public Works. The building is currently used as a drill hall and armoury. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-1 54.

### **Reasons For Designation**

The armoury was designated Recognized for its architectural importance and environmental significance and also for its historical associations.

The armoury exhibits the stylized and simplified details and smooth, crisp appearance of 1930s buildings reflecting a preference for functional design. The use of Edwardian Baroque details on the facades are stylized and stripped down to emphasize the geometric lines of the building. The main entrance facade has a projecting front pavilion with an elaborate stone frontispiece which is complemented by carved shields reinforcing the symmetry.

The armoury has maintained its relationship to the large flat site. The building is compatible with its setting of large industrial and exhibition buildings. Its large scale contributes to its prominence and local familiarity.

The armoury is one of twelve constructed between the World Wars I and II. The Fort York Armoury was constructed for a new unit created as a result of a major reorganization and modernization of the militia. The drill hall is the largest example of a reinforced concrete parabolic roof used from the 1930s.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The heritage character of the armoury resides in features expressing the simplified, Edwardian Baroque style, including the massing, scale and proportions, construction materials, interior planning and volumes, and site relationships.

The massing of this armoury is dominated by the two-storey parabolic vaulted roof of the drill hall which is surrounded by two-storey flat-roofed ancillary blocks. The external massing and footprint reflects internal functions and the clarity of this expression should be respected. The simple roof profile of the two-storey blocks include prominent chimneys and elaborate carved shields projecting above the parapets which reinforce the symmetrical composition.

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The simplified Edwardian Baroque detailing is concentrated at the frontispiece on the main facade and includes the carved stone heraldic shields at the building corners. The facades have simpler, flatter, linear moulding details reflecting modern preferences for geometric shapes. These details should be respected. The smooth red brick has extensive quoining and an ashlar treatment of the base which contributes to the horizontal and linear expression of the design. The smooth and carved stone details are the main colour contrast. The masonry would benefit from an ongoing maintenance program and conservation expertise in the choice of materials and techniques for repair and replacement.

The asphalt shingle finish of the drill hall roof is a prominent feature. When the roofing is being replaced, historic precedent should be followed for the selection of the roof colour.

The multi-paned wood sash windows as well as the large multi-paned steel windows appear original and should be maintained. The wood sash with their relatively heavy members and lighter scaled muntins contribute a prominent sub-pattern to the regular pattern of glazing in the walls; the steel windows reflect stylistic preferences during the 1930s. The glazing of the drill hall introduces interior day lighting to the spacious volume and should be maintained. Original wood entrance doors should be maintained.

Original interior finishes should be documented and maintained. The armoury is characterized by the large, open volume and bright, naturally lit character of the drill hall which should be maintained. The exposed concrete of the structure, the spartan interior finishes and the balcony design found in drill hall reflect the functional character and should be maintained.

The simple turfgrass ground plane should be maintained reflecting the characteristically simple landscaping of armouries. The presence of mature deciduous trees should be maintained. Site furniture, such as the low fencing and flag pole appear to be sympathetic to the design vocabulary of the armoury and should be maintained.

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

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