

Westmount, Québec

Armoury

4625 St. Catherine Street

The St. Catherine Street Armoury was constructed in 1925. It was designed by an unknown private sector architect and construction was jointly funded by the local communities and the government. The building is currently used as a drill hall and armoury. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 91-29.

Reasons For Designation

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

The main entrance facade is designed in the Tudor Revival style with stone details like the projecting arched head and stepped parapet over the troop door, the carved dropped label window heads, and the stone shields. The armoury exhibits a distinctive compact, weighty appearance which reflects the stylized and simplified details and smooth, crisp appearance of 1930s buildings.

The St. Catherine Street armoury has a landscaped perimeter which contributes to its prominence. The scale of the building and its quality of construction are compatible with the medium-density urban environment. It is a familiar landmark in the neighbourhood.

The armoury is associated with the pre-World War 1 armoury building campaign and is one of twelve constructed between World Wars I and II. The siting of the armoury is associated with inter-war expansion of the city to the north and west and the establishment of separate buildings by the various local regiments. The building has an exposed iron Fink truss which is a feature of the drill hall.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the St. Catherine Street armoury resides features expressing the Tudor Revival style, including massing, compact scale and proportions, construction materials, interior planning and volumes, and site relationships.

The symmetrical massing of the two-storey structure is well proportioned. The flat-roofed administrative wings wrap the two-storey gable-roofed drill hall increasing the

importance of the facades with corner towers. The pleasing balance of building masses reflects modern preferences for simply composed volumetric compositions. These characteristics should be respected. The twin-towered frontispiece of the main facade with its projecting pavilion ends and corner tower entrances express the stripped down Tudor Revival style and contribute to the symmetrical design.

The prominence of the building derives from well designed facades executed in smoothly detailed red brick, contrasting with white limestone detailing and decorative carving which provides the main colour and textural contrast. The masonry requires an ongoing maintenance program and conservation expertise. The simplified, Tudor Revival style detailing is uniformly applied to all facades, with the richest details around the entrances as befits their importance. Copper sheathing is used for the prominent bell-shaped tower caps and used for flashings and copings of the masonry which contributes to the visual richness of the design. It should be maintained.

The wood multi-paned sash windows found in the blocks and the large multi-paned steel windows of the drill halls appear to be original and should be maintained. The glazing of the drill hall introduces interior day lighting to the spacious volume and should be maintained. Windows which are blocked off with air conditioners and screening which obscure window details should be removed. The revival design of the armoury is expressed by the original wood entrance doors with their panelling, heavy iron hardware and multi-paned glazing which should be maintained.

The feature of the planning is the large open volume of the drill hall with the principal entrance located in the centre of the long facade. The drill hall is characterized by its exposed steel trusses and extensive glazing. The spatial openness and bright, naturally lit character of the drill hall should be maintained. Original interior finishes should be documented and maintained.

The simple turfgrass ground plane should be maintained reflecting the characteristically simple landscaping of armories. The presence of mature deciduous trees should be maintained; and existing shrub material obscures the simple relationship of building to grade and at the end of their life, should not be replaced. Site furniture, such as flag poles appear to be sympathetic to the design vocabulary of the armoury and should be maintained.

96.11.26

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