

FHBRO Number 90-152

Brampton, Ontario

Armoury

John and Chapel Streets

The Brampton Armoury was constructed in 1914-15. This mid size armoury follows the Militia Council plan type “B” and was designed by the Department of Militia and Defence. The building continues to serve as an armoury. Alterations include chain link fencing, signage above the main entry, new windows and doors, an exit stair along one side, as well as construction of a one storey building to the rear. The Department of National Defence is the custodian. See FHBRO Building Report 90-1 52.

Reasons For Designation

The Brampton Armoury was designated Recognized because of its architectural importance and its environmental significance as well as its historical associations.

The Brampton Armoury is a brick, gable-roofed structure that relies on textural and material contrasts as well as the elaboration of details on the gable end to enliven the facades. It has a good functional design, with an end entrance into the large unobstructed drill hall which is the most distinctive space. The exposed steel roof truss construction is a characteristic feature.

The armoury contributes significantly to its surrounding townscape because of its scale and high standards of design and construction. It is compatible with the mixed residential and commercial neighbourhood scale. The armoury has a strong local presence through continued use for community activities.

The construction of the building is associated with the pre-World War I armoury building campaign and the reform and expansion of the volunteer militia. The building reflects the federal commitment to provide good local training facilities for the militia. The construction of the armoury was in response to the importance of the town as a military centre and in recognition of its prosperity and growth.

Character Defining Elements

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

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The two-storey structure has a rectangular footprint and low-pitched gable roof which reflect the simple functional planning, and the clarity of this expression should be maintained. The functional roof profile is accentuated by the stepped gable parapet. The symmetrical massing is complemented by a repetitive rhythm of buttresses on the gable and the sides as well as a balanced pattern of windows and doors which contribute to the visual richness of the facades.

The well-scaled facades are executed in smooth red brick, with smooth-faced limestone detailing such as keystones, sills, and coping at the parapet providing colour and textural contrast. The masonry is simply detailed with flat-voussoired windows and troop doors, and pilasters reflecting the structural grid. The gables have elaborate tracery corbelling with a stepped profile, and a circular vent with limestone keystones. The masonry requires an ongoing maintenance program, and conservation expertise in the choice of materials and techniques for repair and replacement. The stone coping of the gables is a characteristic feature of these drill hall types and should be maintained.

The addition of asymmetrically located steel escape stairs to the side is a 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. Signs which conceal architectural details and overpower the facade should be removed when operationally appropriate and replaced by signage more in character with the building.

The roof of the armoury is a prominent feature. Replacement roofing materials should be based on historical precedent for materials and colours to ensure respect for the design.

Wood sash with their relatively heavy members and smaller subdivisions contribute a prominent, fine-scale pattern to the window openings. The multi-paned wood and metal sash windows, where original, should be maintained. Modern replacements greatly simplify the visual richness of the traditional frame and sash profiles and increase glazed areas. When existing replacements reach the end of their life, care should be taken to ensure sympathetic replacements. The building has various transoms blocked off with wood panels and air conditioning units, reducing interior day lighting and introducing a different material to the facades, which alters the symmetrical expression

of the glazing. Where windows have been blocked off, they should be reinstated, and a

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less obtrusive approach to air conditioning considered.

The entrance doors are modern metal doors with large glazed panels. When these doors are at the end of their life they should be replaced with doors based on historical research or extant early material more in keeping with the design of the building.

The armoury interior follows a standard plan, with the principal entrance located in the centre of the short facade. The interior is characterized by the large, open volume of the hall, with exposed steel trusses and extensive glazing contributing to the bright, well lit character of the hall. The original interior finishes are an important part of the heritage character, reflecting the functional approach to materials and finishes of the military.

A simple, austere ground plane is typical of armoury sites: the use of turfgrass, asphalt and concrete paving supports this character and should be continued. Shrub plantings could be used but sparingly. Foundation plantings and ornamental plantings adjacent to the chain link fence should not be allowed to obscure the characteristic lines of the building. The placement of mature specimen trees adjacent to the entrances reinforces the symmetry of the front facade. Research is recommended to determine a more historically appropriate and compatible substitute for chain link fencing.

97.03.03

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