

FHBRO Number 93-103

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Carrall Building (S-17)

CFB Halifax

The Carrall Building at CFB Halifax was constructed in 1941-44 as an administration building. It was designed by the architectural firm Ross and MacDonald, of Montreal. Alterations over the years have included window replacement and the addition of exterior exit stairs. The custodian is the Department of National Defence. See FHBRO Building Report 93-103.

Reasons For Designation

The Carrall Building was designated Recognized because of its environmental significance and its architectural value, as well as its historical associations.

The Carrall building is a significant component of HMCS Stadacona because of its size and dignified design. Together with other buildings, it defines the former main parade ground perimeter, completing the prominent south facade. The siting is characteristic of the large flat sites required for drill exercises and parades. The continued use of the building for base administration functions contributes to its status among base personnel.

The stripped-down Classicism of the Carrall Building was the style used for many federal buildings constructed in the early 20th century. The underlying classicism is clearly expressed by the bilateral symmetry and by the abbreviated pilasters of the simplified colonnades. The composition and proportions of the masonry are integral to the dignified and competent design.

The construction of the building reflected the increasing administrative complexities and the importance of shore activities in support of the marshaling of the materials of modern warfare. The building also continues to illustrate the ongoing importance of the navy in the history of Halifax and the need for an administration center to guide the efforts of this service.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the Carrall Building resides in the building's form, proportions, classically inspired design and architectural details, construction materials, interior planning, and site relationships.

The Carrall Building is a generously proportioned, flat-roofed three-storey structure characterized by its symmetrical U-shaped massing. The underlying classicism is reinforced by the classical tripartite division of the facades into base, body and cornice, and by the subtle corner notching of the main facade to create the effect of a front pavilion and end wings. The use of brick with limestone mullions and spandrels for the end structural bays, and the regular rhythm of the window placement contribute to the classical references and the visual richness of the facades. These features should be respected.

The facades are executed in matte red brick and limestone, set upon a limestone base,

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providing dramatic textural and colour contrast. The masonry is simply detailed. The limestone features provide understated classicism in the carved panels, the colonnade of ribbed pilasters and recessed spandrel panels, and the horizontal dentilated string courses. The masonry merits an ongoing maintenance program, and conservation expertise in the choice of materials and techniques for repairs and replacement. Based on early photographs, the carved panels were not painted and careful paint removal may be considered. The addition of an asymmetrically located steel escape stair at one end wing is a modern intervention that introduces an inappropriate material and design. When the opportunity presents itself, consideration should be given to addressing exit requirements in a more integrated manner which does not detract from massing of the building. The modern entrance lighting would also benefit from eventual replacement with lighting of a sympathetic material and design.

The principal entrances appear consistent with the original materials and character of the design, as do the operable multi-pane sash windows. The modern replacement windows in the third floor differ from the original design in their flat member profiles and large scale glazing. When they are at the end of their service life, replacement with units sympathetic to the original design intent would enhance the character of the building.

The original interior configuration of double loaded corridors with offices to the exterior has survived, as has the relationship to the principal entry. These plan elements are important to the character of the interior and should be maintained. Original interior finishes (exposed brick partition walls, wood doors, frames and transoms) reflect durability and high quality of construction and should be maintained.

The simple ground plane is characteristic of the historic setting and should be maintained. The use of turf grass, asphalt, and concrete paving reflects the austere character and should be continued.

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

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