



August 19, 2015

Cliff Clark
Chair, Northfield Heritage Preservation Commission
City of Northfield
801 Washington Street
Northfield MN 55057

Dear Mr. Clark,

We offer a formal letter of encouragement and support for locally designating the Northfield National Guard Armory, located at 519 Division Street as a historic site.

The building, built in 1915, is located outside the Northfield Downtown Commercial Historic District, which is a locally designated historic district and is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). It is a two-story building with a three bay garage addition off its southern corner. The building has a concrete foundation and brick masonry walls. The building has a three bay symmetrical face that features rectangular corner towers flanking the central entry way. Above the central entrance there is a name plate with the word "ARMORY" inscribed on it.

According to a Minnesota Historical Society historic architecture inventory, the significance of the building is:

The physical fabric of the Northfield Armory remains faithful to its original design. It is perhaps the plainest of the Early Period armories constructed between 1911 and 1917 and reflects a restrained, three bay castellated design that became typical of Minnesota armories constructed during the 1920s.

According to the Minnesota Historic Preservation Office, the building has been determined individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It is a significant architectural and historic resource within the downtown historic streetscape of Northfield.

Locally designating the property will offer protection of its historic integrity and may be considered a first step in getting the property listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an individually listed property or adding it to the NHRP-listed downtown historic district through an expansion of the district boundaries. Once it is listed in the NRHP, and depending on the type of ownership and proposed redevelopment, the a rehabilitation project for adaptive reuse of the building may be eligible for 20% Federal and 20% State historic preservation tax credits and may also qualify for Legacy grants from the Minnesota Historical Society.

The building is more than an old building. The development of this property is a community story. According to a Jan. 15, 1915 Northfield News article, "the City will have a fine new armory that it has been searching for." The Northfield business community raised \$2,435.50 towards bringing the new Armory to Northfield. The Armory was to be the home to Company D of the National Guard. Many service clubs held fundraisers to help raise the additional money needed.

The finished building consisted of a company library with reading room, a ladies retiring room for times when the hall is rented—with rest room facilities, a check room, a ticket office and an officer's room. The basement was to be divided up into quartermaster's room, locker room, shower, baths, a kitchen, dining room, indoor rifle range, and a bowling alley. The bowling alley was never built.

When the building was dedicated on December 3, 1915, Minnesota Governor Winfield S. Hammond was the keynote presenter, along with other local politicians, and members of the state militia were also present.

Many of the people in attendance at the dedication admired the outside of the building. However, the indoor rifle range drew the most attention. It was a 50 foot range, rather than the typical 200 foot range most armories had, but users of the range would get the same quality as the 200 foot range by using smaller bullets.

The Northfield Historical Society Board of Directors recently voted to formally encourage and offer support to locally designating the armory as a historic site. We feel the building deserves this designation and should be recognized as such.

Sincerely,



Sarah Beimers
Board President



Hayes Scriven
Executive Director