

106 SUCCESS STORY

Supporting Military Readiness While Preserving the Past

New Hampshire

“Conversion of the Milford armory into a modern day facility was essential to meet National Guard standards and provide soldiers and the community a state-of-the-art facility that is energy efficient and safe. With the support of our design consultants and the early collaborative effort with the State Historic Preservation Office, the New Hampshire Army National Guard was able to preserve the history of one of the first post-World War II armories constructed in the state while deferring construction of a new armory—a savings of more than \$20 million (in federal taxpayer dollars). The Milford armory represents our commitment to meet the future needs of our military force and community while preserving our heritage.”

—LT. COL. GREG HEILSHORN
Director of Public Affairs for the NHNG



THE STORY

The passage of the National Defense Act of 1950 resulted in a great wave of brick armories similar in size and design dotting the country. Eighteen armories—or readiness centers—were built in New Hampshire during the mid-20th century using federal funds and standardized plans. Irving W. Hersey Associates of Durham, New Hampshire, a prolific architectural firm for educational buildings, was the primary architect for the design of the 18 New Hampshire Army National Guard (NHARNG) armories. Hersey utilized four prototype armory plans provided by the federal government: “Of modern design, all of the armories are centered on a demonstration and assembly hall which can be utilized for civic and athletic functions. They are designed so that additions can be made if required to take care of more units.” As the result of an inventory which began in 2005, NHARNG determined 13 of the 14 state-owned readiness centers in New Hampshire are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

THE PROJECT

The Milford Readiness Center was one of the smallest in the state, yet it hosted the NHARNG’s second largest unit, C Company, 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Regiment (Mountain). The National Guard Bureau (NGB), a unit of the Department of the Army, provides funding through annual budgets to state National Guards including to NHARNG, who chose to use its funding to renovate and add more than 6,000 square feet to the existing Milford Readiness Center for command offices, a platoon leader meeting area, a conference room, convertible classrooms, and computer lab. The sizable addition had the potential to adversely affect the historic building.

THE 106 PROCESS

The project funded by the NGB required compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires federal agencies to identify historic properties and assess the effects of the projects they carry out, fund, or permit on those properties. Federal agencies also are required to consult with parties that have an interest in the historic property when adverse effects may occur. In 2012, NHARNG’s

Photos: Above, Milford Armory; Right, Milford Armory 1954 shortly after construction, representative of post-war armories throughout the state (photos courtesy NHARNG)

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Photos: from left, Littleton army (photo courtesy NHDHR); members of the NHARNG, NHDHR, Bureau of Public Works celebrating the award at NH Preservation Alliance 2014 ceremony (photo courtesy NH Preservation Alliance)

Cultural Resource Management (CRM) program and New Hampshire State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) began meeting face-to-face on large, complex, or high profile projects early in the process and will continue this way of working into the future. This process of consultation very early in the planning and design phases is resulting in expedited SHPO review once the Section 106 package is submitted, allowing projects to launch in a shorter timeframe.

The addition was initially proposed on the main façade of the building. Recognizing the potential for an adverse effect under Section 106, staff at the NHARNG with cultural resources and training expertise and their architect discussed all design options during consultation with the SHPO to identify alternatives that minimized adverse impacts to this historic resource while still meeting programmatic needs. The outcome resulted in a new design that met the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and preserved the historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property.

THE SUCCESS

The Milford Readiness Center Addition was a milestone project, combining respect for the past with the modern military mission and paving the way for future NHARNG readiness center renovations. This early and collaborative approach resulted in savings for NHARNG, avoiding the costs of redesign later in the process. The Milford plans are a prototype for future work at the remaining historic readiness centers, given their similar construction and layout. Milford's model already helped a town further north, Littleton, New Hampshire, as its Readiness Center was scheduled for expansion. Due to programmatic requirements, the Littleton addition required siting that affected the building's character-defining façade. After extensive consultation, a Memorandum of Agreement was executed with several creative mitigation stipulations. The building's historic entrance was preserved in the passageway connecting the old and new sections, historic windows were replaced in a sympathetic manner, and a large educational display was created and installed within the connector.

In May 2014, the NHARNG received an award from the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, the statewide preservation non-profit organization, for the Milford Readiness Center Addition. NHARNG's CRM team also won First Place in the Environmental Security Award-Installation from the NGB the same year. The SHPO highlighted the Milford project as a success at a day-long symposium celebrating the 50th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act in 2016 (<https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/symposium.htm>).

Consulting Parties:

New Hampshire Army
National Guard
New Hampshire
State Historic
Preservation Officer

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