

## TROOP C ARMORY

## IDENTIFICATION

BUILDING NAME: Troop C/2nd Battalion/51st Regt. Armory

COUNTY: Kings BOROUGH: Brooklyn

STREET ADDRESS: 1579 Bedford Avenue

BLOCK: 1274 LOT: 24

OWNER: New York State

ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC: exterior visible from street: Yes  
interior access: by appt.

REPRESENTATION IN SURVEYS: Natl Register: No  
NYC Landmark: No

## DESCRIPTION

## EXTERIOR

Located on a sloping site, the Troop C Armory is picturesquely massed and detailed with stylized military motifs. The main facade along Bedford Avenue is divided into two sections. A long, two story high portion corresponds to the short end of the drill hall. Marked by turrets which project slightly above the cornice at either end, this section contains the principal entry, reached directly from street level through an arched opening framed by semi-engaged columns supporting a projecting balcony. At the south end of the facade, separated from the entry portion by a tall, square tower, is a two-and-a-half-story section which rises above a basement exposed by the dropping slope. Framed by smaller turrets, this portion is distinguished by tall, arched windows around the first floor gymnasium.

Along President Street, the south wing becomes two stories tall and is articulated by small pavillions that mark original stable entrances. Along Union Street, the facade drops to one story, just covering the spring line of the drill shed roof.

The assymetrical massing is unified through the repetition of materials and motifs. The base and window sills are limestone, lintels and cornice buff terra cotta, and walls red brick in Flemish bond. Top floor windows are framed with projecting lintels on brackets, and the cornice trim features macchicolations and crenellations.

## INTERIOR

In the Entrance Hall, a ramp paved in herringbone brickwork runs directly from the sidewalk to the drill shed floor. The hall, the corridor to the south and the double stair to the north are all articulated with pilasters supporting shallow arched groin vaults. The pilasters and the groins are trimmed with brick quoining which contrasts with the cream-colored plaster and recalls identical treatment in the Kingsbridge Armory. A wrought iron chandelier with castle motifs hangs from the center vault.

Semi-circular marble steps lead from the Entrance Hall up to the first floor Corridor, which features niches with display cases along the east (drill hall) side and is treated in the same manner as the entrance, with matching wall sconces.

Opening off the west (street side) of the corridor through doors with leaded glass transoms is the Enlisted Men's Club. The room is finished with wood baseboards and chairrails, a plaster cornice and ceiling, and features a full height fireplace surround flanked by niches.

At the end of the Corridor is a one-and-a-half-story tall Gymnasium. Walls are finished with 4 foot high wood panelling and the ceiling is vaulted. Door surrounds have plaster entablatures with helmet motifs, and the corridor door features a second floor balcony and leaded glass transom.

The Drill Hall measures 180 x 311 feet and is roofed with 17 steel sickle trusses 80 feet high. The hall is lit by windows in the east and west gable ends and a continuous roof monitor. A single balcony level occupies the south and west sides, with a sculptured balcony over the entry door.

The Second Floor Landing above the entry hall features a round, leaded glass dome supported on pilasters with Aztec motifs. The south landing is decorated with pilasters with floral capitals.

In the southwest corner of the third floor is the Council Room, featuring a fireplace in the west end screened by plaster columns and a low railing. Third Floor Offices are finished with wood floors and baseboards, wood doors and trim, and plaster ceilings with beams decorated with acroteria.

#### CONDITION NOTES

**MAINTENANCE HISTORY:** OGS files record the following: exterior pointing and painting (1946); rehabilitation of roofing of old stable (1951); exterior painting (1952) replacement of roofs (1959); rehabilitation of masonry (1961); replacement of roof (1961); rehabilitation of masonry (1969); rehabilitation of roof over stable area, drill hall, and administration bldg. (1971 and 1973); resurface roofs (1979); temporary roof repairs (1986)

**FOUNDATION:** No evidence of problems.

**MASONRY:** Brick is in fair condition. 50% of the front facade and all parapets have been repointed; joints in walls along the sides are generally worn, and have been repointed in patches. Brick surfaces show some spalling and have probably been waterproofed.

Terra cotta is in poor condition. Most cornice blocks are cracked. The center tower has vertical cracks at all corners, probably resulting from water collecting in the tower roof, spalling the cornice trim, permitting water to penetrate to the steel framing and subsequent expansion of the corroded steel.

Limestone base is covered with graffiti.

Granite window wells show signs of movement.

**WINDOWS:** Wood windows are in poor condition. Windows along President Street are broken and backed with plywood. Skylight glazing is broken and causing damage to leaded glass below. Iron window grills are corroded and staining stone and brick below.

**ROOF & DRAINAGE:** Drill hall roof is in extremely poor condition. Roof drains into gutters on Union Street side which appear to be undersized for the load, since masonry below has been worn by water overflow.

INTERIOR: Water damage in third floor conference room. Basement closed due to asbestos.

SITE

SITE FEATURES: Built to sidewalks.

SURROUNDINGS: <sup>3-4 story</sup> Housing on President Street; industrial and commercial buildings on Union and Bedford Avenue.

ZONING DESIGNATION: R-6 ALLOWABLE F.A.R.: 2.0-2.4

RELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING TO SURROUNDINGS: similar in scale to industrial buildings, though tower dominates area.

SIGNIFICANCE

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1904-08

ARCHITECT: Pilcher, Thomas & Tachau

HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE:

Troop C, formed in 1895, gained a reputation as the most exclusive National Guard unit in Brooklyn. They first occupied the old armory on North Portland Street, built for the 14th Regiment. In 1901, the decision was made to relocate to a new armory and, a year later, a site not far from Prospect Park was procured.

Around 1900, the Armory Board of New York City established that designs for future armories must be selected as a result of open design competitions. Troop C was one of the first in the City to benefit from this rule, and the competition attracted the firms of Lord & Hewlett, Parfitt Brothers and Pilcher & Tachau, all involved in the design or alteration of other armories in the city. The job was awarded to Lewis Pilcher & W.G. Tachau, who later designed the drill hall for the 369th Regiment Armory and the 8th Regiment Armory.

The new building was designed with the latest in armory facilities and the finest in architectural style. The headhouse included a board room, officers club, swimming tank and locker rooms. Ample stable areas, designed as separate blocks with large windows for adequate light and ventilation, were an important element in the complex, and members were able to stable their own mounts at nominal expense. The 180' x 311' drill hall was also specially finished for cavalry use, and was meant to accommodate mounted drills for an entire squadron. The roof is 80 feet high, carried on 17 sickle-shaped steel trusses.

The style of the building was described as "Art Nouveau," and reputed to be the first example built in Brooklyn. In fact, the exterior detailing is similar to other turn-of-the-century armory buildings, with castle motifs such as the crenelated parapet arranged in a classical, brick and terra cotta format. The interior does include some unusual, quasi-Art Nouveau elements, including a domed leaded glass skylight and foliate column capitals.

USE:

National Guard: 26 full time staff  
8 building maintenance staff members

Community Use: Veterans Associations  
neighborhood children use gym  
rented to other groups about 20 times/yr

CONTACT: Major Rivera 718-467-5400

DATE: August 13, 1986

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

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King's Views of Brooklyn, p.24.

"Squadron C Armory." American Architect and Building News 89 (20 January 1906):  
pl. 1588.

"Troop C Armory." Inventory Form. New York Landmarks Preservation  
Commission, c. 1976.

Wells, pl. 102.

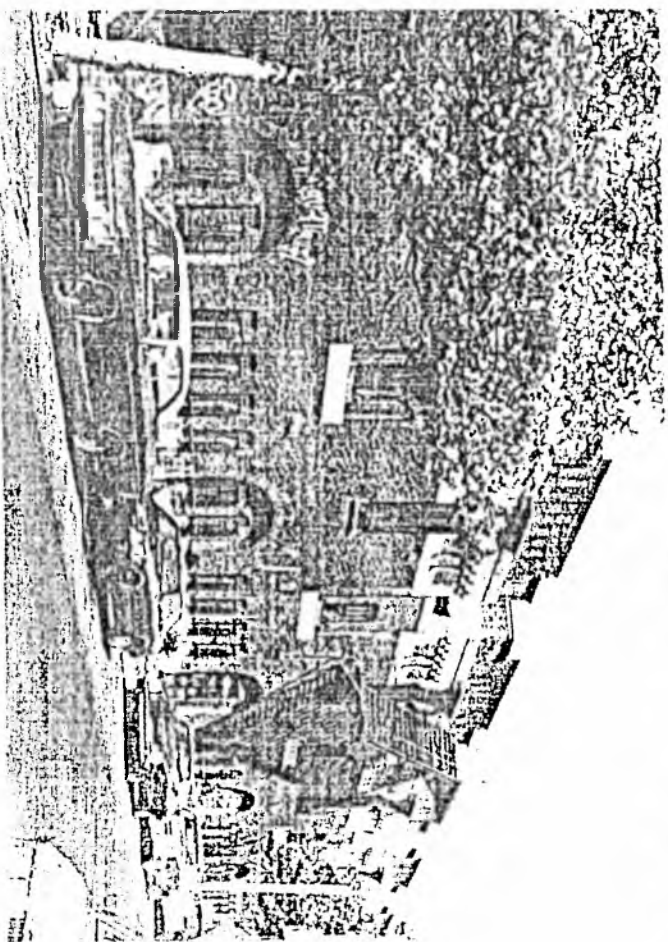
#### ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Elevation of headhouse on Bedford Street.
2. Elevation of drill shed along Union Street.
3. Elevation of former stable area along President Street.
4. View of drill shed.
5. Gymnasium entrance.



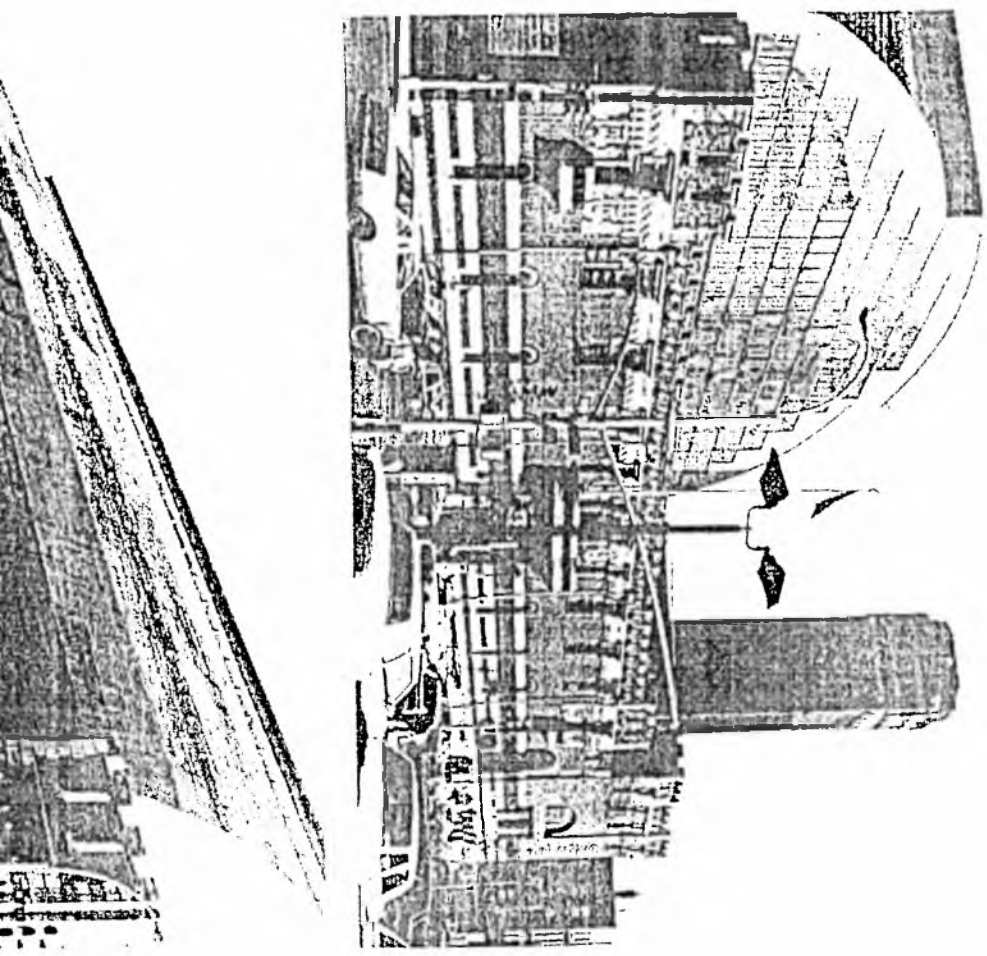
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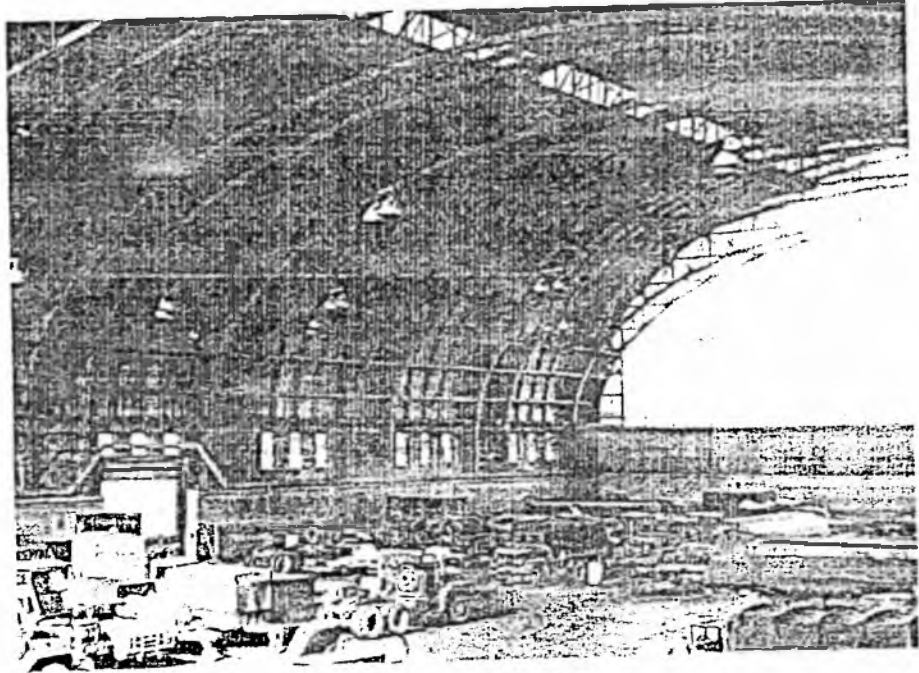


The Armory Study

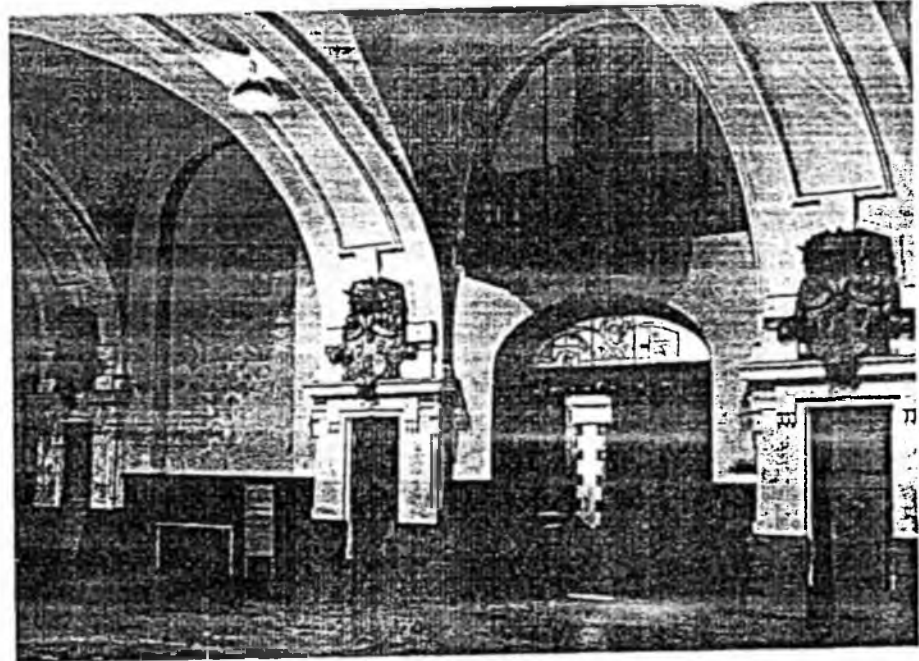
Group of Armory



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Troop C  
23rd Regiment Armory

1573  
1569 Bedford Avenue  
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