

Armoury to celebrate 150th anniversary next month



For more than a century it stood on the northeast corner of Town Park as a base for the Queen's York Ranger' regiment. For the last five years, it has served from the same spot as a campus for Niagara College's Canadian Food and Wine Institute.

Now, as the Aurora Armoury celebrates its 150th anniversary, the community is invited to take part in the milestone next month.

‘The Aurora Armoury is excited to be commemorating a historical milestone as The Armoury celebrates 150 years in Aurora,’ says Niagara College in a statement. ‘Built in 1874 as a drill shed for the 12th Battalion of Infantry or York Rangers, the building is a Recognized Federal Heritage Building. The Town of Aurora purchased the Armoury from the federal government in 2014 with the intention of restoring the property and returning it to its role as a community gathering space. Now, operated as an event space by Niagara College since March 2020, we are home to many local corporate and social milestones and celebrations from networking, team building, seminars to anniversaries, weddings, and many of life's milestone celebrations.

‘We take great pride in being home to Aurora's best kept secret located in the heart of historic Town Park. We look forward to welcoming residents in joining us on Saturday, September 7, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. to learn about The Armoury's history, present and future. Come meet your neighbors, connect with our team, and enjoy light refreshments and dive into the rich local history that is the Aurora Armoury.’

Further details on the celebration will be announced closer to the date, but one certainty is a nod to its past as a regimental base will be highlighted through the Armoury's ongoing participation in the CONTACT Photography Festival.

Local exhibitions that are part of the Contact Photography Festival launched this past spring, part of a GTA-wide exhibition showcasing the medium. In Aurora, in efforts spearheaded by the Aurora Museum & Archives and Aurora Historical Society with students from the University of Toronto, images have focused on Aurora's past.

Photos at the Armoury include evocative vintage images that tell the landmark's storied history as home base for the Queen's York Rangers Regiment, before they moved to a new armoury base on Industrial Parkway South in the old Aurora Hydro building, eventually making way for its latest chapter as a home for the Canadian Food & Wine Institute. The CONTACT exhibition has been extended at the Armoury, as well as Hillary House National Historic Site, through September 9.

By Brock Weir