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IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, R.S.O. 1990, CHAPTER O.18 AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AND PREMISES AT THE FOLLOWING MUNICIPAL ADDRESS(ES) KNOWN MUNICIPALLY AS IN THE CITY OF THUNDER BAY, IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO,

Nancy Smith
T. Bay
RECEIVED
IN THE OFFICE

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

NOV 17 1993

To: Ontario Heritage Foundation
77 Bloor Street W.
TORONTO, Ontario
M7A 2R9

ARCHITECTURE AND
PLANNING

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay intends to designate the properties, including lands and buildings, at the following municipal address(es) as properties of architectural and/or historical value or interest under Part IV of The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18.

a) 409 Victoria Avenue E. - Bank of Commerce

Built in 1910-11 as the Bank of Commerce, this three-storey building is a prime example of Beaux-Arts classicism with its four large scale columns and the consistent detail of classical motifs. Its facade was described at the time of construction as "Grecian Doric design," and the twenty-five foot columns are Doric, fluted and massive in appearance. Unlike Greek columns, these are not free-standing, but rather are extensions of the facade wall. The columns appear to support an overhanging third storey functioning as a frieze, but with windows and a parapet with buttresses defines the roof. A pediment is placed over the entrance rather than above the columns. Bands of relief ornament frame the entrance and the windows; the ornament includes the egg-and-dart, and the anthemion pattern, a stylized floral design. The rather free interpretation of classical motifs and the impressive scale of the building identifies it as an example of Beaux-Arts classicism. The facade is of terra-cotta, originally silver grey in colour; the terra-cotta (fired clay) was imported from Leeds, England. Terra-cotta allowed for elaborate detailing and fire-proof construction. The original doors were of bronze and the cornice was of copper. When the bank opened its doors on July 11, 1911, the interior was described as "something bank managers dream about but only occasionally attain." There were three cages for tellers and a ceiling "adequately ornamented with various artistic designs." The architect was Victor D. Horsburgh (1866-1947), an architect who designed a number of bank buildings for the Bank of Commerce.

The classical architectural details and massive scale were typical of bank buildings constructed in Canada during the early years of the twentieth century. To be designated under The Ontario Heritage Act is the facade as it now appears, particularly the columns, the bands of ornamental relief work, the pediment, the frieze and the parapet above. This is the only remaining older bank building in Thunder Bay with the classical columns and decorative panels intact. For Thunder Bay, it is also a rare example of terra cotta construction.

b) 17 Court Street N. - Thunder Bay Multicultural Centre

The original Court Street Fire Hall was built in 1906 to a design by architect Thomas Hanley of Port Arthur; the contractor W.E. White. The brick two-storey structure was designed for horse-drawn fire wagons with access provided by four round-arched wooden doors; the upper half of each door was glass in the form of a fanlight. Shallow brick buttresses divided the facade into four-and-a-half bays, four for the wagon doors and the half for an ordinary round-arched doorway; the second floor consisted of pairs of round-arched windows over each wagon door and a single window over the doorway.

Rows of ornamental brick work formed the cornice while a simple parapet with buttresses established the roofline. At the southwest corner, a one storey tower featured a rounded pediment; the tower originally housed the fire bell. By 1910, a metal frame above the tower supported the fire bell (now in Hillcrest Park). Another hose-drying tower at the southeast corner rose five storeys with a mansard roof at the fifth level and a pyramidal hip at the peak. Gabled dormers projected from the south and west faces of the mansard whose surfaces are covered with patterned shingles. At each level of the tower, a single round-arched window repeated those on the facade. The Cooke Street side of the building and the north side continue the corbelled brick work, but the north side windows are segmental arched, those on the Cooke Street side are round-arched like the facade. By 1986, the drastically altered building was offered for sale. Over the years, the facade had been transformed with new brickwork and enormous doors added for the firetrucks; the facade tower had been removed. In 1987, the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association acquired the building and commissioned architect Geza Venczel to make renovations. A new facade and addition was added to the west side of the building to extend the structure to the sidewalk. Four large arched openings form a covered entry for four large round-arched solid wooden doors. On the second level are paired arched windows, buttresses and horizontal courses of patterned brick. These architectural elements repeat the basic design of the original fire hall. The new building celebrated its grand opening early in 1989.

The architectural features to be designated under The Ontario Heritage Act include the original Cooke Street facade with the corbelled brickwork, the arched windows connected by brick stringcourses, the stone horizontal stringcourse dividing the two storeys, the parapet with its buttresses and the entire hose tower. Also to be designated is the new Court Street facade, a sympathetic renovation rather than restoration because its design recalls the appearance of the original fire hall and that this project represents a successful recycling of an historic building.

Notice of objection to the proposed designation, together with a statement of the reasons for the objection and all relevant facts may be served on the Clerk of the Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay before the 17 day of December, 1993.

Dated at the City of Thunder Bay

this 17 day of November, 1993.

H. T. KIRK, City Clerk.