

Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame & Museum
219 May Street South



Year Built: 1916

Architect: Frank R. Heakes

Added to Heritage Register: September 27, 2010

Description:

The building was originally constructed in 1916 as the Fort William Lands and Titles Building. It was designed by Frank R. Heakes, Provincial Architect for the Department of Public Works. Local contractor for the project was Michael Braden.

The style of this single-storey brick building, on a raised ashlar foundation, may be described as modest Beaux-Arts with its calm horizontal facade, its symmetrical plan, the prominent stone quoins at the corners, and the combination of Classical and Renaissance design elements concentrated around the central entrance. Paired pilasters flank the entrance, with its grand arched opening, which is ornamented by a single cartouche. The entrance bay is further emphasized by its stone construction and its projection from the main walls. The stone used is a limestone from Manitoba and clearly shows the fossil relics of shells. A prominent staircase of stone and concrete leads up to the entrance. The building was extensively renovated in 1958 and 1970.

The announcement that a Lands and Titles Building would be located at Fort William appeared in the press on April 22, 1913. The Fort William Land Registry Office opened in June 1917 and continued in operation until November 19, 1971. The Thunder Bay Historical Society moved into the building and officially opened the Museum on December 8, 1972. In 1977, the Province granted the property to the City of Thunder Bay.

The Northwestern Ontario Sports Hall of Fame took possession of the building in 1996 and undertook extensive mechanical, electrical and architectural renovations to house and display their collection of sports artifacts and archival materials.

The building currently houses a sports museum and hall of fame which has been designed to resemble the various venues of sport including an old style box office and concession, a ski chalet and arena and an old style store front and outdoor stadium all of which contain exhibits about the rich tradition of sports from yesteryear and today.