

Arlington Apartments
230 Brodie Street North



Year Built: 1913

Architect: R.E. Mason

Notable Features: Symmetrical bay windows

Open covered porches with decorative woodwork

Cut-stone window sills and lintels

Designation Date: October 11th, 1988

By-Law No.: 230 - 1988

Legal Description: Plan 210 Lot 81 to 82

Current Owner: Mervin Thomas McKay

Description:

The Arlington Apartments were built in 1913 by Charles Jenkins, owner and first tenant of the building, to R.E. Mason's architectural design. It was the first apartment building at the Lakehead, and was obviously needed, as plans for an addition were underway almost immediately after the construction was completed. The suites of Arlington apartments were elegant and large, the entire three-storey building held eight apartments, four with six rooms and a bath and four with three rooms plus a bath.

There are many features of the Arlington Apartments, which still remain today, that are of historical interest. The appliances and electrical fixtures of the suites were, at the time, quite modern. The doorways leading to the main halls were fire-proof, and the apartments were separated by a heavy brick fire-wall. Upon each door was a brass door knocker, which still remains today. The mahogany and oak flooring combined with the spiral staircase and open covered porches made this building "equal, if not better, than any structure of a like nature in the twin cities."

Charles Jenkins sold the building in 1938 when he moved to Vancouver. It was bought in 1967 by Merv and Barbara McKay, who restored the site to its' original elegance. The Arlington Apartments were formally designated a Heritage Property in 1988.



Architecture:

Architecturally, the Arlington Apartments adopt the straight parapet and multi-storied appearance of a business block. The open covered porches crossing the façade of each of its' three levels, however, identify it as an apartment building. Supported by brick piers, the porches have decorative woodwork in the form of multiple brackets and balustrades. Symmetrical in design with bay windows flanking the central entrance, the brick construction is enhanced by cut-stone window sills and lintels. The exterior of the Arlington Apartments preserves its' original appearance, thanks to restoration work done in the early 1990's and it continues to function as an apartment house.

The elegance of the building was enhanced by the mahogany and oak finished suites, as well as the spiral staircase and tapestry carpets. The first floor of the apartments was divided into two suites, each consisting of six rooms (den, drawing room, dining room, two bedrooms and a kitchen) and a bath. The second floor was identical in layout and design to the first. The third floor contained four smaller apartments, each with three rooms and a bath. By 1992 there were nearly 20 residents occupying the building.

Robert E. Mason; Architect

Mason arrived in Fort William in 1905, at the age of twenty-two in connection with the survey of the Grand Trunk railway. He became quite prominent in the area as an architect, and "many of the larger buildings stand as a monument to his skill." He was observed as possessing a "cheery disposition" and was "always ready to say a genial word."

Along with the Arlington Apartments, R.E. Mason designed the Fort William Vocational Institution, many of the other public schools in the area, the Fort William Police Station and Court House (now Thunder Bay Museum), the Masonic temple and a wing of the McKellar hospital.