

Thunder Bay, Ontario  
**Federal Building**  
130 South Syndicate Avenue

## **HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT**

The Thunder Bay Federal Building was designed according to plans prepared by the Chief Architect's Branch of the Department of Public Works in 1932, and built in 1934-36 under the supervision of local architect R.E. Mason. The building's custodian is Public Works Canada. See FHBRO Building Report 88-50.

### **Reason for Designation**

The Thunder Bay Federal Building has been designated Recognized because of its historical associations, its architectural significance and its environmental value.

The building portrays an important theme in Canadian history, and represents a turning point in the development of Thunder Bay. Its construction is part of a national effort to consolidate government accommodation and upgrade public services, while stimulating the economy of the early 1930s. Its Fort William location is a significant demonstration of the determination of that community to attract federal support.

The building's architectural significance relates primarily to the aesthetic quality of its Beaux-Arts design, especially expressed in a main façade richly articulated with classical components, and in the opulence of its materials.

The building's environmental values lie in the relatively unchanged nature of its relationship to its site, and its role as a familiar landmark for the citizens of modern-day Thunder Bay.

### **Character Defining Elements**

The character of this property is defined by the careful articulation of its Beaux-Arts composition and the quality of craftsmanship employed on its four principal façades. The elements of the original design including window and door treatments, the classical decorative elements, the use of granite approaches, and the opulent detailing of stonework should be properly maintained to preserve the coherence of the designer's intent. The columned central pavilion containing the front entrance provides a strong vertical counterpoint to the façade's general horizontality.

Though alterations in 1965 (following departure of the post office as tenant) resulted in substantial alterations to the use and appearance of the ground floor, consideration could be given in future alterations to restoration of the original entrance hall, associated galleries and front entrance bronze doors. The best uses for the building would be those similar to its original post office function.

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**Federal Building** (Continued)

Surviving interior detailing - terrazzo and marble trimmed ground level floors; marble archways, entrances, wainscoting and stairs; bronze elevator doors, grilles, stair rails, door and transom frames; and mahogany stained wood work on the upper floors - bear witness to the lavishness of the original design conception, and should be carefully maintained in future planning.

Future changes to the site should respect the building's architectural qualities and the monumental effect based on the Beaux-Arts formula.

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