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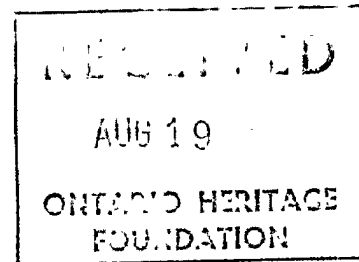


# CORPORATION of the TOWN OF STRATHROY

52 Frank Street N7G 2R4 • Telephone (519) 245-1070

16 August, 1988

Ontario Heritage Foundation  
77 Bloor Street West  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2R9



Dear Sirs:

RE: DESIGNATION OF AN ARCHITECTURAL STRUCTURE

This is to inform you that at the August 15, 1988 Special Council Meeting Bylaw No. 73-88 was adopted.

Bylaw No. 73-88 designates 52 Frank Street, Strathroy (Strathroy Town Hall) of historical and architectural value. A copy is enclosed for your attention.

It is our understanding that this designation makes this municipality eligible for funding from The Ontario Heritage Foundation to assist in the restoration of this structure.

Would you please let me know what steps we must now take.

Yours truly

V. M. Tait, A.M.C.T.  
Clerk

/dw  
c: C. Ventin's Office/File  
encl. as noted

RR

CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF STRATHROY

BYLAW NO. 73-88

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A BYLAW TO DESIGNATE 52 FRANK STREET (STRATHROY TOWN HALL)  
A PLACE OF HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL VALUE

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WHEREAS pursuant to The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O., 1980, Chapter 337, the Council of a Municipality may, by Bylaw, designate a property, including buildings and structures thereon, to be of historic and architectural value or interest;

AND WHEREAS Notice of Intentio to so designate the property known as the Strathroy Town Hall, 52 Frank Street, Strathroy, Ontario, having been duly published and served, no Notice of Obejction being received to such designation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ENACTED by the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Strathroy, as follows:

1. THAT there is designated as being of historic and architectural value or interest the real property, more particularly described in Schedule "A" hereto, known as Strathroy Town hall, 52 Frank Street, Strathroy, Ontario, for the reasons as set out in Schedule "A" hereto.

2. THAT the Town Clerk is authorized to cause a copy of this Bylaw to be registered upon the title of the property described in Schedule "A" hereto in the proper Land Registry Office.

3. THAT the Town Clerk is authorized to cause a copy of this Bylaw to be served upon the Owner of the aforesaid property and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause Notice of this Bylaw to be published in the Strathroy Age Dispatch and to enter the description of the aforesaid property, the name and address of its registered owner and short reasons for its designation in the Register of all properties designated under The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O., 1980.

4. THAT this Bylaw shall come into force and take effect upon the date of its final passing thereof.

Read a FIRST time this 15th day of August, 1988.

Read a SECOND time this 15th day of August, 1988.

Read a THIRD time and FINALLY PASSED in Open Council this 15th day of August, 1988.

MAYOR

CLERK

SCHEDULE "A" BYLAW NO. 73-88

3) STRATHROY TOWN HALL, 52 Frank St

Architectural and Historical Description

HISTORY

- 5) The current town hall is the fourth to have been built in Strathroy. Its construction in 1928 was probably motivated by both civic pride and understandable confidence in the town's potential growth. As Mayor Oakes commented at the time of the hall's dedication, "We cannot hope to make progress without good roads and good buildings." Warden Comfort added that Strathroy now faced the future "splendidly equipped." Watt and Blackwell, London's premier architectural firm during this period, served as project architects; McEachern Contracting Co. served as contractor.

SITE

The site chosen for the new town hall was that occupied by the third town hall. Immediately to the south was the original Market Square (site of the current public library and art gallery); to the west was public park land (a function that continues today). The importance of the Hall's position in the streetscape was not missed by The Age Dispatch of 7 June 1928; "Strathroy will have every reason to feel proud of its new Municipal Hall. It will make a big change in the appearance of Frank Street, and will give travellers a decidedly good impression of our town."

STYLE

The town hall was designed in what is termed the Georgian Revival Style, a style that became popular in Canada during the 1910s and 1920s. The choice of this style for an Ontario town hall appears to have been unusual. In fact, the Detroit Free Press is quoted in The Age Dispatch of 10 January 1929 as saying that "The hall combines beauty and utility, and is reminiscent of a New England style of architecture not found elsewhere in the province." The main elements of the building's exterior, particularly those of the front elevation, include a centrally placed tower with balustrade and octagonal lantern as well as a projecting central bay with a Palladian window on the second floor and an entryway framed by a diminutive portico on the first floor. The central bay is contained by a loosely interpreted pediment with returned eaves. The entire five bay, red rug brick facade is given additional presence by a strongly articulated string course (limestone?) between the basement and the first floor and by an emphatic cornice and frieze set below the parapet. Keystones (limestone?) punctuate the lintels of the sash windows, while decorative brickwork suggests the outline of either rondels or clock faces on the sides of the tower.

4) August

August - 1st line  
Please insert to  
1928 - August  
in appropriate  
place

### FUNCTION

The compact massing of the building appears to reflect the tendency for twentieth century town halls to be treated more as administrative buildings than as nineteenth century multi-functional structures responding to the diverse needs of a community. However, the Strathroy Town Hall seems to represent a rather unusual amalgamation of twentieth century form with nineteenth century function. At the time of its opening the basement contained "the Public Health Department, Chief of Police's office, jail, firemen's quarters, furnace room, etc." The first floor (with a central corridor) contained the "women's rest room and public library on one side, and the civic reception office, clerk, and treasurer's department and municipal vault on the other." The council chamber was located at the end of the hall (a small addition to the rear of the building) were "the living apartments for the driver and his family." Originally the interior walls were white and the woodwork was fir treated in a light oak shade.

### SUBSIDIARY BUILDING

At about the same time as the present town hall was built, the community constructed an octagonal band stand as part of the public park to the west. The band stand, which remains extant, is distinguished by its good proportions, chambered posts, tongue and groove ceiling, bracketed finial, and two diagonally boarded panels below the band stand platform. The simplified lattice work railing may well be original.

### SUMMARY

The Strathroy Town Hall is an assured example of the Georgian Revival style. Since the use of this style for Ontario town halls seems to be unusual, it can be argued that this building has more than local importance. The building can also be seen as a particularly good example of a community choosing a style that projected its self-image. As Judge Ross remarked at the opening of the hall, Strathroy was known as the "Athens of Ontario." Clearly, the use of a style with a classical lineage was both pleasing and appropriate.