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THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF THUNDER BAY

BY-LAW NUMBER 119-2012

A By-law to amend By-law 29-2004, being a By-law to designate certain property, municipally known as the Whalen Building, 34 Cumberland Street North, pursuant to the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Recitals

1. Pursuant to By-law 29-2004, the Council for The Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay designated property and structures known as the Whalen Building, located at 34 Cumberland Street, in the City of Thunder Bay (hereinafter referred to as the "designating by-law").
2. Pursuant to Section 30.1 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the Council may amend the designating by-law to include criteria for determining the cultural heritage value or interest of the designated property and structures (hereinafter referred to as "designating criteria").
3. Council has determined that it is in the public interest to amend By-law 29-2004 to include designating criteria.
4. Council has deemed that The Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay, as the owner of the Whalen Building, has received notice as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act* of the proposed amendment to By-law 29-2004 and has no objection thereto.

ACCORDINGLY, THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF THUNDER BAY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. THAT By-law 29-2004 be, and the same is hereby amended, by:
  - (a) deleting the legal description contained in Section 2 of By-law 29-2004, commencing with the words "Parcel 31..." and ending with the words "City of Thunder Bay, District of Thunder Bay", and by substituting therefore the legal description contained in Schedule "A" attached to and forming part of this By-law, and
  - (b) inserting Schedule "B" - Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest of the Whalen Building, attached to, and forming part of this By-law, as Schedule "A" to By-law 29-2004.

ONTARIO HERITAGE TRUST


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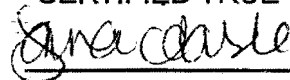
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2. This By-law shall come into force and take effect on the date it is passed.

Enacted and passed this 29th day of October, A.D. 2012 as witnessed by the Seal of the Corporation and the hands of its proper Officers.

  
Acting Mayor

  
Deputy City Clerk

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY  
  
Deputy City Clerk



By-law Number 119-2012

**Schedule "A"**  
**Legal Description**

**Whalen Building – 34 Cumberland Street North**

PCL 31, Sec TBEF; Pt Reserve A McIntyre

COMMENCING in the Northwesterly angle of Reserve "A" in the Easterly Limit of St. Paul St;

THENCE South 55 degrees, 36 minutes East astronomically along the Northerly limit of said Reserve "A", 93.06 feet, more or less, to the Westerly limit of Cumberland Street;

THENCE Southwesterly along said Westerly limit of Cumberland Street, 238.26 feet, more or less, to the Northerly limit of Van Norman Street;

THENCE Northwesterly along said Northerly limit of Van Norman Street, 93.06 feet, more or less, to the Easterly limit of St. Paul Street;

AND THENCE North 34 degrees, 24 minutes East astronomically along said Easterly limit of St. Paul Street, 238.26 feet, more or less, to the place of beginning;

Thunder Bay; being the whole of PIN 62149-0073 (LT)



By-law Number 119-2012

## **Schedule "B"**

### **Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest of the Whalen Building**

**(forming Schedule "A" to By-law 29-2004)**

#### **Whalen Building – 34 Cumberland Street North**

Architects: Brown & Vallance (of Montreal)

Builder: Canadian Stewart Company Ltd.

Contractor:

Commissioned by James Whalen

#### **Building Description**

Construction of Thunder Bay's first 'skyscraper' began in 1913, and officially opened in 1914. In addition to being the tallest building in the area, James Whalen, who commissioned the building, was forward-thinking in other aspects of this building's construction. Steel reinforced concrete, a novel building technique in 1913, was used in the construction of the building.

The Whalen building is an eight-storey building, faced with terra cotta, and has a granite base. The east, south and west sides of the building are nearly identical. The building is noted to be in the Chicago skyscraper style, with elements of the neo-gothic architectural style.

The terra cotta carved ornaments on the building feature human faces, reflecting early settlers of the area; coats of arms of all nine provinces (in confederation at the time of construction); animals, such as lions and beavers; papooses; floral ornaments, berries, leaves and vines.

The building has eight end bays, which shallowly project from the building. The bays contain one window per storey. On the ground floor, they have compound, semi-circular, ornamentally carved arches. The windows from the second to the seventh storeys are squared-headed and the ones on the eighth floor are segmentally arched. The first two storeys of the end bays are marked by fluted pilasters surrounded with carved ornaments. At the top of each pilaster there is a cartouche and carved head with a niche above. The upper windows have recessed between-storeys. The top storey windows have Gothic tracery in their transoms and are flanked by double cavetto-like vertical mouldings. The end bays are topped by short parapets and short

lantern-like polygonal louvered projections (most likely ventilation shafts) with finials.

It should be noted that part of the renovations to the ground floor included the removal of original windows along the street level, which were replaced by filling in the large windows. The semi-circular windows appearing under the first storey arches in the end bays were added as part of this renovation.

The inner bays on the ground floor have square-headed openings and are defined by terra cotta piers. The entrances on the first floor have changed since the building originally opened. Currently, a central entranceway runs through from the east wall to the west wall.

The inner bays are divided by seven-storey pilasters with carved cartouches at the base and head of each pilaster. Except for at the top storey, the windows at each story are square-headed, double windows. On the second storey, the windows are all divided by carved central mullions. The other windows have steel panelled between-storeys, each one of which displays a small, central square-shaped ornament. The top storey has segmental arched triple windows under relieving arches. Under the sill of each top storey bay is a shield and carved ornament.

The rear, or north wall, is centrally recessed and regularly fenestrated. The detailing of the end bays on the other walls is carried right across the top story of this wall and the whole ground floor of the north wall consists of semi-circular arches. One of the bays consists entirely of blind windows. This wall has no steel panelling. Due to the building being built on a slight incline, the west wall is a half-storey shorter than the east wall. The "main" floor inside the building is reached by a short flight of stairs down from the west entranceway, and a short flight of stairs up from the east entranceway.

The interior of the ground floor main hallway is done in terra cotta and marble, featuring a profusion of Gothic and classical detailing. It has medieval paterae, torus moldings with classical foliage, and variations of consoles. Spanning the elevator openings are perpendicular-style rood screen treatments. Marble is used extensively through the interior.

The interior lobby and staircases are constructed of marble. Carved terra cotta designs are featured on some of the stair railings. Terrazzo and marble flooring is featured on each floor off the main elevators.

Each floor was connected with a mail chute, which although no longer functioning, still exists. The building still features the original freight elevator.

There have been a number of interior renovations by various tenants over the years, however, some of the original interior features remain.

#### Notable Architectural Features

- Glazed terra cotta exterior cladding
- Terra cotta carved ornaments, human faces, animals, coats of arms of all 9 provinces in

- confederation in 1913, papooses and floral ornaments
- Reinforced concrete (a novel building technique at time of construction)
- 8 "lanterns" along top of building
- Gothic and classical carved detail in interior of lobby
- Terra cotta and marble features in ground floor main hallway
- Murals depicting scenes in life of James Whalen
- Marble used extensively throughout building
- Marble treads on interior staircase linking floors
- Large vaults set into interior of building (on each floor)

#### Historical Value

The building, originally named after local businessman and developer, James Whalen, has been locally identified with other long-term tenants. Obtained by the City of Port Arthur in 1931, and used to house the Public Utilities Commission, the building became popularly known as the P.U.C. Building (causing a minor public outcry). (The building had housed Port Arthur City offices since shortly after completion of the building and remained there until 1970.) Upon amalgamation in 1970 between the cities of Port Arthur and Fort William, the Public Utilities Commission transferred ownership to Thunder Bay Hydro, and the building became popularly known as the Hydro Building. However, the official name of the building is and has always been the Whalen Building.

James Whalen moved with his family from Collingwood, Ontario, to Port Arthur in 1875, at the age of six. Whalen got his start in the logging and railway contracting business after the completion of public school. Whalen married Laurel Conmee, daughter of James Conmee (local contractor and provincial and federal politician), in 1896. Whalen dreamed of developing Port Arthur into the "Chicago of the North". Whalen has been credited as "the Man who put the PORT in Port Arthur", having established the Great Lakes Dredging Company, being involved in the creation of the Western Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company, and initiating the booming shipping industry in Port Arthur (which still exists in Thunder Bay today). Whalen was not just interested in the City of Port Arthur, but he also actively promoted the City of Fort William, too, to the rest of the country and the United States. Whalen later moved to the west coast, where he continued in his entrepreneurial spirit, developing several companies in the Vancouver area. Unfortunately, Whalen lost his fortune when one of his companies (Whalen Pulp and Paper) went bankrupt in 1925 due to bad market conditions. Whalen lost the Whalen Building due to Tax Arrears, and it was acquired by the City of Port Arthur in 1931 for \$175,000. (The original cost of the building was \$475,000.) A half-day holiday was declared in Port Arthur upon the death of James Whalen in 1929.

#### Contextual Value

The Whalen Building is a very significant landmark for the former City of Port Arthur and the City of Thunder Bay and a prominent feature of the downtown Port Arthur section of Thunder Bay. This building is still among the tallest buildings in the City of Thunder Bay.

Prepared by Kimberly Costa  
October 3, 2012

Final revised version as adopted by the  
Heritage Advisory Committee  
at its meeting held on October 3, 2012