

524 OSBORNE STREET – FIRE HALL NO. 15

Alexander R. & William N. Melville, 1913



This 1913-built stone and brick fire hall is one of more than a dozen built by the City of Winnipeg based on a set of standard plans developed in 1904. The construction was an acknowledgement of the maturation of the area – Fort Rouge-River Heights-Riverview neighbourhoods – and a desire by civic leaders to have their expanding services housed in facilities that stood out as example of civic pride and prosperity. It became, as all fire hall did, an important neighbourhood landmark.

The solid brick Osborne Street Fire Hall's rests on a rubblestone foundation and its design includes rusticated stone cladding on the ground floor, a two-storey front section with an oriel window on the second floor and a one-storey stable at the rear. A 21.9-metre hose drying tower with stone and brick accenting, arched windows, an overhanging metal cornice and crenellated parapet is the most obvious exterior element. Exterior alterations have included the replacement

of almost all window units, the original equipment doors, the replacement of other doors and the bricking in of several openings.

On the interior, the original design called for a ground floor with equipment and horse stalls, a second floor with bedrooms, washrooms and a sitting room and an attic used for storage. The machinery area was finished with ornamental tin ceiling and white tile walls (much of this is still present). Today, the animal stalls have been converted into offices, emergency equipment is still housed behind the large doors and the second floor is used as office space. The main personnel entrance foyer (northwest corner) and staircase to the second floor are original.

Scottish born and trained brothers A.R. and W.N. Melville were responsible for the 1904 standard plans and for overseeing the construction of this hall. They were an influential partnership that began in the City around 1900 and lasted until just before World War I. They were responsible for the design of 10 fire halls and many fine local buildings.

This hall was replaced by a modern facility in 1958 and for many years, the 1913 hall was used as an ambulance station.

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Exterior:

- Multi-storey building facing west with main façade fronting Osborne Street on the southeast corner of Arnold Avenue;
- Boxy, rectangular, structure with a heavily rusticated raised limestone base and common clay brick superstructure with prominent hip roof;
- Front (west) façade with arched personnel entrance at north end topped by plaque with the words “FIRE STATION NO 15”, large equipment doors on the ground floor and second storey oriel window; and
- Hose drying tower in the northeast corner with recessed windows with stone accenting, ornamental brickwork, brick drip moulding with limestone keystones, arched windows with limestone keystones on the top level, heavy overhanging metal cornice and brick and stone crenelated parapet.

Interior:

- Volume of the ground floor equipment space, ornamental tin ceiling (covered) and tile wall cladding; and
- Main (northwest) entrance foyer with metal, stone and wood staircase and tile walls.