

200 WOODLAWN STREET – WOMEN’S TRIBUTE MEMORIAL LODGE
Northwood and Chivers, 1930-31



This two-storey commemorative building adjacent to the former Deer Lodge Military Hospital was initiated by a group of Winnipeg women as an active symbol of gratitude and remembrance for those who served in World War I.

The project was promoted by Harriet Walker, wife of the owner of the Walker Theatre. In April 1917, she brought together a number of influential women to plan a fundraising event for a perpetual monument to Manitoba's war heroes.

A gala Foundation Tribute Night was held in May 1917 at the Walker, preceded by a parade of military personnel, local dignitaries and wounded veterans. Speeches, a concert and silent tributes to the dead were part of the emotion-laden event. About \$7,000 in cash and \$9,500 in pledges were received from women's organizations and others.

Founding principles of the Women's Tribute Foundation were approved a few days later but it was 1924 before a formal constitution was adopted, committing the group to raise funds for establishment and upkeep of a community hall and Memorial Room of Silence.

In early 1930, the women's association approved a proposal from the Canadian Legion's Deer Lodge Branch under which the branch would add \$9,000 to the already accumulated \$18,300 for the project, and the Municipality of St. James would contribute a tax-exempt building site adjacent to the military hospital. The Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge Foundation subsequently was incorporated by a special act of the Manitoba Legislature. A joint board of directors formed with representation from the women's association, Legion and hospital.

George W. Northwood and Cyril W.U. Chivers, both decorated war veterans, were commissioned to design the building. After several delays, Clayden Construction proceeded in 1931 with a plan by Chivers costing an estimated \$32,000. Chivers arrived in Winnipeg in 1898 after studies in England. He apprenticed with architects S. Frank Peters and George Browne; joined the Canadian Pacific Railway; then returned to commercial practice in 1910. He subsequently served with the First Canadian Mounted Rifles. His post-war partnership with Northwood produced several major buildings in Winnipeg.

The lodge, on the northwest corner of Woodlawn Street and Portage Avenue, reflects the simplicity and functionalism of the Modern Movement style. Its buff-coloured brick walls stand on a concrete foundation and are topped at the first level by a concrete cornice. Part of the second storey rises from the center of the building. All sides have natural lighting through variously-placed trios of windows.

The Portage (south) façade features raised pilasters flanked by moulded concrete date stones that mark the years of the war inside wreaths. Inscribed in the cornice are the building's name and Manitoba's coat of arms. Plain shields highlight the corners. At the front (east) elevation, a brick and concrete staircase leads to double wooden doors framed with wood and concrete and topped by a glass transom and concrete pediment, again featuring the provincial coat of arms.

The vestibule has ceramic tile flooring and a terrazzo staircase. The first floor originally held a billiard hall, clubrooms, offices, and kitchen but now mainly is divided into meeting spaces and offices. Upstairs are an auditorium, small kitchen, and Memorial Room of Silence. Entered through heavy wooden doors, this memorial has a marble floor, Tyndall stone walls, and a Blue Ensign which flew over the cenotaph in London, England until 1930.

The lodge was an active place well past World War II. In 1978, the Legion's Deer Lodge Branch folded and building management was transferred to the Valour Road Branch. When it too disbanded in December 1986, responsibility for the building was assumed by the Winnipeg Foundation in accordance with the 1930 legislation. The Foundation has been exploring various options for the building which, at present, stands vacant and without steam heat since its original source, the hospital, has converted to another system.