



Crystal Lake Historic Preservation Commission



Bertram House

50 North Caroline Street

Built 1914

The Bertram House at 50 North Caroline Street was built by Paul Bertram in 1914. Paul Bertram was born in South Australia and eventually made his way to Crystal Lake in September 1897 at the age of 17. In 1901, Mr. Bertram began his lifelong commitment to civil service, starting with the fire department, pumping water, then moving up to the first chief. He then moved to the building department, then onto the Zoning Board of Appeals. He also held several positions with other organizations. He had 68 years of dedicated service to the Crystal Lake area before his death in 1966.

The house was first sold in 1920. It was sold to the Shaler family in 1954.

The house is American Foursquare or Prairie Box architecture. The house is made of formed concrete blocks. The blocks were manufactured by W.E. Dunn Manufacturing out of Chicago. The American Foursquare style is a simple square usually two-stories with a low-pitched roof with gables. There is a full-width front porch which is framed by two stone lions on either side of the entry stairs. The front of the porch also has two lion heads.

The garage is detached and is constructed of brick and slip-glazed, hollow terra cotta blocks. The blocks were created by John T. McRoy to carry underground electrical lines. The garage is unique because it uses these blocks as building materials. Both the house and the garage are landmarked by the Crystal Lake Historic Preservation Commission.