



235 ANDREWS STREET

SALEM REFORMED CHURCH

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



235 ANDREWS STREET SALEM REFORMED CHURCH

Date of Construction: 1907

Building Permit: 2135/1907

Architect: Teeter, George G.

Contractor: Gillis, Fraser and McDonald

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This sturdy church has served one of Winnipeg's major immigrant communities for many decades.

This building is a scaled-down version of Protestant churches constructed throughout Winnipeg and North America during this era. The floor plan is based on the cross, a common device. Familiar elements that adorn the exterior include pointed arches on all window and door openings, single and triple lancet windows, a steeply pitched gable roof with cross gables, a corner tower with battlements and corner buttresses.

The cream-coloured brick superstructure rests on a raised, broken-course, rusticated stone base. Rusticated stone is also used as trim on windows (lug sills) and on corner buttresses



South façade, 2009

(bases, caps and accents). Tracery windows of simple design are found on both the Andrews Street and Burrows Avenue façades.

The combination of the building's horizontal configuration, its thin window openings, and the pale colouring of the brick and stone give a lightness and grace to the structure, thereby reducing the massiveness of the design.

This church is a good example of the Late Gothic Revival style, popular in North America from approximately 1900 to 1940. Use of the style in Winnipeg and elsewhere was most prevalent among churches and schools and its detailing, which was based on fifteenth-century English Perpendicular Gothic, became intimately associated with the architectural language used to describe such public buildings.¹ Numerous local examples can be found in the existing stock of church and educational structures. Common elements included an increased use of flat wall surfaces, as well as the application of horizontal elements and detailing, pointed arches, crenellation, lancet and rose windows, towers, and steep gable roofs.²

The designer of this block, G.G. Teeter, was a distinguished Winnipeg architect whose practice spanned four decades. Born in St. Annes, Ontario, Teeter received his architectural degree in Toronto. After graduation he moved to North Bay, Ontario and became a junior partner in a large local firm. He moved to Winnipeg by 1907 and set up a private practice, designing a number of fine apartment blocks throughout the city. After World War I, he became Chief Draughtsman for the Manitoba government while continuing his private practice.³ At one time, he was also the president of the Manitoba Association of Architects. He died in Winnipeg in 1949.⁴ Some of his more prominent local designs include: Salem Reformed Church, 235 Andrews Street (1907); Trinity Baptist Church, 549 Gertrude Avenue (1907-09); Windermere Apartment Block, 224 Kennedy Street (1909); St. Elmo Apartments,



South façade detail, 2009

177 Colony Street (1910); King Edward Memorial Hospital, Morley Avenue (1910-11, demolished); Ellesmere Apartments, 74 Carlton Street (1911); and Elmwood Presbyterian Church, Cobourg Avenue (1912).⁵

The church stands on its original site, has suffered little in the way of alteration. Major cracking is appearing in some of the sections of the building, suggesting uneven settling of the structure.

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

In 1907, a group of German citizens who had been attending Zion Church, Alexander Avenue at Ellen Street, decided to form a church closer to their homes.⁶ Quickly they organized and collected money for a solid new building that opened in the North End in early March of 1908 and was named the Salem Reformed Church.

The Reformed Church, formed out of a Calvinist tradition, established in North America in the early eighteenth century with the emigration of Swiss, French, Dutch, and especially German followers. Settling in Pennsylvania and the Carolinas, the early congregations had few pastors and relied on the laity. The first Reformed Church service held on the continent occurred north of Philadelphia in 1725.⁷ In 1793 the German Reformed Church in the United States was formed, with 178 churches, 15,000 communicants and 22 ministers.⁸ In the 1800s a flood of German immigrants into the Midwest dramatically increased the numbers of Reformed members. Congregations were formed throughout the United States and Canada.



West façade detail showing settling and cracks, 2009

By the early 1900s the Reformed Church was looking at the possibility of union with the Evangelical Church, a German Lutheran organization. They amalgamated in June of 1934 after six years of discussions, forming the Evangelical and Reformed Church. By 1940 their membership was over 650,000.⁹ By 1943 they again began to look at a union with the Congregational Christian Church, itself the result of a 1931 union of a number of smaller congregations.¹⁰ In 1957 the United Church of Christ (UCC) was incorporated, and U.S. adherents numbered 750,000 from the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the 13 million members of the Congregational Christian Church. The UCC became the fourth largest Protestant denomination in the United States at union.¹¹

In Canada, Reformed congregations also formed as a result of German immigration. Winnipeg's first Reformed Church was Zion Church at the corner of Alexander Avenue and Ellen Street. When the Salem congregation organized in 1907, it took only eight days to set up a building committee and solicit funds. The site was bought in late August for \$536.25,¹² plans were completed by September 1907, and the church was opened by early March 1908. Its German heritage always played a large role in the church and it was not until January of 1938 that English services were held (once a month).¹³

The congregation grew and prospered until after World War II when, like other churches, it began to suffer from shrinking numbers and the changing nature of the immediate neighbourhood. Union with the United Church of Canada, a path taken by nearly all other UCC churches, was considered and rejected in 1966. As a result, Salem United Church of Christ and the UCC church in Josephsberg, Alberta (near Fort Saskatchewan) were the last Canadian UCC congregations.¹⁴



Front (east) façade detail, 1978

In 1970 the last of the funding from the affiliated UCC in the U.S. ended, although the affiliation continued.¹⁵ Numbers began to grow after an influx of Filipino immigrants into the area. Many had attended UCC churches in the Philippines. The original congregation, faced with decreasing numbers and increasing membership from the local Filipino community, decided to disband and attend other churches throughout Winnipeg. The church was sold and transferred to the Filipino congregation in January of 1986. The new congregation renamed the church the Filipino United Community Church (UCC).

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

Under the Historical Buildings By-law, this building meets a number of important criteria:

- its historical importance- one of the older immigrant built church structures still standing in Winnipeg's North End and one example of the development of the German community in the City after 1900;
- its associations- its long-term connections to the German community and this congregation;
- its design- an good example of the Late Gothic Revival style;
- its architect- G.G. Teeter was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- defines an important intersection and contributes greatly to the historic streetscape of two major arteries within the North End; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, 1991), p. 20.
- ² Loc. cit.; and L. Maitland, et al., A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1992), p. 43.
- ³ S.C. Grover, "Morley Avenue - Winnipeg Municipal Hospitals," report for the Historical Buildings Committee, p. 5.
- ⁴ Winnipeg Citizen, February 17, 1949.
- ⁵ Compiled from City of Winnipeg, Building Permits; and D. Spector, Apartment House Architecture in Winnipeg to 1915 (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, 1980).
- ⁶ Salem United Church of Christ, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 75th Anniversary (Winnipeg: Salem United Church of Christ, 1982), p. 2. Below as "75th Anniversary."
- ⁷ Douglas Horton, The United Church of Christ (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1962), p. 34.
- ⁸ L.H. Gunnemann, The Shaping of the United Church of Christ (New York: United Church Press, 1977), pp. 22, 124 and 174.
- ⁹ Ibid., pp. 13, 190-91.
- ¹⁰ D. Horton, op. cit., p. 36.
- ¹¹ Ibid., p. 18; and L.H. Gunnemann, op. cit., pp. 13 and 23.
- ¹² "75th Anniversary," pp. 2 and 6.
- ¹³ Ibid., p. 13.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 16-18.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., p. 17.