

2373 MAIN STREET – NISBET HALL
Unknown, 1865



Nearly 40 years after the mostly Church of Scotland adherents known as the Selkirk Settlers arrived in what would become Winnipeg, they welcomed a Presbyterian minister. Reverend John Black (1818-1882), arrived in 1851 and on September 28th, approximately 300 of the original settlers and their descendants attended his first service in the log manse/church built for Reverend Black by parishioners.

Construction on the actual church, which now stands at 201 John Black Avenue, was completed in 1854. The church doubled as a school house until it was outgrown by the enrollment and in 1865, West Kildonan School was opened.

The structure was designed and built by Reverend James S. Nisbet (1823-1874) who had arrived 3 years earlier and had travelled to Eastern Canada in 1863 to raise funds and collect school materials for the new facility. Nisbet was born in Glasgow, Scotland and had trained as a carpenter and mason in his homeland. Reverend Nisbet stayed in the Kildonan only four years, moving further west to mission near present-day Prince Albert, SA.

The one-storey building was completed with local stone with plain, square-headed windows on both side elevations and its original entrance facing east towards the Red River and was topped by a carved date stone. A simple wooden spire graced the east end of the gable roof and was topped by a metal weather vane. Several alterations over time added or moved entrances.

The 1980s move utilized the original stone and the original timber roof trusses, although some replacement of material was necessary.

The building's interior has been totally replaced, years of vacancy, a fire in 1969 and the move and renovations of the 1980s have completely altered the interior.

The school, with attendance dwindling, was sold to the Kildonan West School District in 1905 and stood vacant until 1919 when it reopened as a parish and community hall and took the name Nisbet Hall. It was vacant again in the 1970s but when the congregation decided to build a modern church building to the north in the early 1980s, Nisbet Hall was carefully dismantled and rebuilt as part of the Kildonan Community Church in 1988.

The building, as one of Winnipeg's oldest standing structures, is very important historically. It is known that at least two meetings were held by Métis leaders in the hall during the 1869 Riel Rebellion. It was also one of the earliest schools in Manitoba, an important facility for the development of the settlement.

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

Exterior-

- One-storey stone structure with gable roof completed in 1865 and reconstructed in 1987 with original timber roof trusses and stone walls, set far back from Main Street;
- The windowless main (south) façade with its centrally-placed entrance topped by a carved date stone;
- The east and west façades with windows in rectilinear openings;
- The windowless rear (north) façade partially hidden by an attached addition; and
- Original weather vane.

Interior-

- None.