



**200 WOODLAWN STREET
WOMEN'S TRIBUTE MEMORIAL LODGE**

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

February 5th 1987

**200 WOODLAWN STREET
THE WOMEN'S TRIBUTE MEMORIAL LODGE**

... a tribute to the veterans of the Great War who have returned, and a
memorial to those who have not returned....

Act of the Manitoba Legislature (1930)¹

Women of Winnipeg, words will not do!
We must build them a monument high as God's dome.
Showing our love and our gratitude true,
To the men left behind and the men who come home!
Home! Yes, a home that is sacred and free -
That to our heroes, our tribute shall be!

The last verse from a poem written by
Mrs. C.P. Walker for the "Women's Foundation
Tribute Night", 10 May 1917.²

"Allies launch off in Macedonia", "Next Battle to be bigger than Arras", "Britain takes Dramatic Action to Increase Mercantile Fleet", — these were the headlines in the Manitoba Morning Free Press on May 11th 1917. On nearly every page scattered among the headlines were photographs of young Manitoba men who had died in active service. Many of them had given their lives to the capture of Vimy Ridge earlier that spring. For the reader, there was little doubt that Manitoba was involved and committed to the Great War being waged in Europe.³

Women, as well as their male counterparts, were making a significant contribution to the European struggle. Over two thousand women were serving overseas in the Canadian Expeditionary Forces as nurses and aides. Over five hundred were employed in the armed forces in Canada, and many others were holding men's posts in the commercial, industrial and agricultural life of the country. Moreover women's clubs and societies were springing up from coast to coast dedicated to carrying out support for those in action.⁴

It was in this context, during the spring of 1917, that a group of influential and well placed Winnipeg

women met at the Central Congregational Church. Their purpose was to devise a plan to raise money for the creation of a perpetual monument to Manitoba's war heroes. The idea to build a lasting war memorial was that of Harriet Walker, wife of C.P. Walker of the Walker Theatre. On that evening of the 24th of May 1917 Mrs. Walker and a number of her distinguished friends were elected to a Board of Trustees which illuminated Winnipeg high society. Included on the board were Lady Aikens, wife of the Lieutenant Governor, Lady Nanton, Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Colin Campbell, Mrs. D. McKenty, Mrs. R.B. McElheran (Chairman), Mrs. R.A. Rogers, M.L.A. (Treasurer), Dr. M. Ellen Douglass (Secretary) and Mrs. R.F. McWilliams. By the end of the evening the women had entrusted themselves with the task of putting on a gala fund raising event. This event would be the springboard to the eventual construction of the Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge at 200 Woodlawn Street.⁵

The "Foundation Tribute Night", organized by Mrs. Walker and Mrs. R.D. Waugh was characteristic of a superb theatrical production, directed by someone with consummate theatrical skill. The evening began with a parade — "the most impressive military spectacle ever witnessed in Winnipeg", wrote the Manitoba Morning Free Press.⁶ Over three thousand men and women in military uniform gathered at Market Square from where they marched to Portage and Main, from there to Donald Street, and from there up to the Walker Theatre. The parade was led by bands of the 250TH and 251ST Battalions and the Boys' Highland Band. In rank behind were the 5TH and 8TH Battalions, the Princess Pats, the 16TH and 43RD Camerons, the 27TH Battalion, Lord Strathcona's Horse, and Canadian soldiers enlisted in the French army, home in Winnipeg on furlough. Behind came a motorcade — some automobiles were carrying local dignitaries and others were carrying the wounded "on the breasts of many of whom gleamed military medals".⁷ Banners on the cars proclaimed "Keep the Home Fires Burning", "Women Do Your Best", and "To Our Fallen Heroes".⁸ The parade stopped in front of the theatre and there, before entering, everyone observed several moments of silence.

To create atmosphere, in true theatrical fashion, the theatre was decorated with red, white and blue bunting providing a backdrop for military flags of all the allied countries. The flags were entwined

in the folds of a large Union Jack. The theatre quickly filled to capacity with Manitoba women — garbed in brightly coloured dresses. The women from the Foundation Committee were dressed in the uniforms of French nurses. Women from the Volunteer Corps wore their khaki outfits and the nursing sisters who had returned from active service sat in the loges with their "natty costumes of navy blue with high collars and braiding of red". In the first three rows of the balcony sat the widows and mothers who had lost sons, "...their black clad figures being a mute testimony to the sacrifice...Canadian wives and mothers were making in allowing their men to volunteer in defense of the empire".⁹ On the stage sat three hundred veterans, "khaki clad heroes" in company with a few in the blue uniforms of the French army. And finally, a section on the main floor had been reserved for units of local men who, in those days, were mobilizing.

The programme was carefully structured with speeches heard from officials and from men recently returned from the front. A "Trench Concert" which was frequently interrupted by rousing cheers gave some light relief. The highlight of the spectacle was the tribute contribution made by over one hundred women representing every Winnipeg women's organization and many others in the province. The women walked across the stage with a cash donation or a pledge (from 75¢ to \$2,000) in one hand and a bouquet of flowers for ill and wounded soldiers in the other. The evening climaxed when a silent tribute was called for by Lieutenant Dunwoody, the master of ceremonies. As all rose with bowed heads, one of the widows in the balcony fainted. There "wasn't a woman present whose emotions were not taxed to the limit". Before the crowd solemnly departed, the Band of the 100th Grenadiers softly played "Nearer My God to Thee" and then quietly struck up the national anthem.¹⁰

This dramatic "Tribute Night" proved to be a huge success as all the papers announced the following day. Over \$7,000 was donated in cash with the promise of another \$9,503.75 to come in pledges.¹¹ Following the "Tribute Night" an important mass organizational meeting was held several days later on May 14th at the Central Congregational Church. At this meeting the principles were adopted and resolutions were passed upon which the Women's Tribute Foundation was to be established.¹²

Occasional meetings were held by the Foundation Committee from this time, but it was not until the

30th of May 1924 that a constitution was adopted which declared the name and purpose of the organization. It was decided that the name would be the "Women's Tribute Association". Its purpose was clearly defined in three points:

- 1) To unite all the women of Manitoba in an effort for the raising of a tribute to all the veterans of the Great War who have returned and a fitting memorial for those who have not returned.
- 2) That the definite form of the memorial shall be a Community Hall and that such hall shall include a suitable and commodious club room for the free use of all war veterans; that this room shall be properly furnished and equipped, and that the permanent upkeep of this club room shall be assured, either by a definite annual grant or by a percentage of the income of the said hall.
- 3) That this hall shall include a Memorial Room of Silence maintained in the same way as Club Room.¹³

Another six years was to pass, however, before definitive steps were taken to fulfil Mrs. Walker's dream.

On January 21st 1930 the Women's Tribute Association was approached by the president of the Deer Lodge Branch of the Canadian Legion, Mr. Raymond Large. The branch offered to contribute \$9,000 to the construction of a club house, which could be used for returned men and for those convalescing at Deer Lodge Hospital. Further, Mr. Large reported that the Municipality of St. James had agreed to grant a lot adjoining the hospital at the corner of Woodlawn Street and Portage Avenue. The lot would be free of municipal taxes.¹⁴ Thus, at that meeting, a motion was passed which called for the appointment of a joint committee (Women's Tribute Association members and representatives from Deer Lodge Branch) to prepare for the erection of a Memorial Hall at Deer Lodge. The committee was struck and met a few weeks later on February 25th in the library of the Y.W.C.A. It was "enthusiastically" declared —

that the members of the Women's Tribute Association do now unanimously approve the project to assist in the erection of a Memorial Hall on land already offered to the Deer Lodge Branch of the Canadian Legion, for the ex-servicemen who might find it convenient to make use of it; the control of the hall to remain in the hands of

custodians to be appointed by the Board of the Women's Tribute Association with the internal management in the hands of the Deer Lodge Branch of the Canadian Legion, which is to be responsible for the upkeep of the Hall.¹⁵

Title to the land was held by the Women's Tribute Association. Specific appointments of custodians were made at a subsequent meeting in the middle of March.¹⁶ It is important to note that despite the monetary and practical involvement of the Deer Lodge Branch of the Canadian Legion in the project of the Memorial Hall, at no time did the Women's Tribute Association relinquish their control of the procedures.

The clearest example of the determination of the Women's Tribute Association to secure their investment and commitment to a memorial was their insistence that an Act of the Manitoba Legislature be passed which would incorporate "The Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge Foundation". The Act was assented to on April 24th 1930. Key clauses were:

- to create a perpetual body to erect, equip and maintain in perpetuity a building or buildings to be called the Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge...
- to elect a board of directors which would include nine trustees from the Women's Tribute Foundation and seven representatives of the Canadian Legion in Winnipeg, specifically the president and secretary of the Deer Lodge Branch — the chairman was to be chosen from the Women's Tribute Foundation...
- to erect and equip a building as a tribute to the veterans of the Great War who have returned, and a memorial to those who have not returned, and shall provide such building with a Memorial Room of Silence, an auditorium, club rooms...
- to provide for the internal management of the Memorial Lodge by the Deer Lodge Branch #56 of the Canadian Legion, British Empire Service League, so long as the said branch is able to manage and maintain at its own expense and in accord with the general principles laid down by the Board of Directors of the corporation, one of which shall be that no intoxicating or fermented liquor of any kind whatsoever be sold or consumed on the premises...
- to provide for internal management by another body or bodies in case the Deer Lodge Branch fails to fill its obligation...
- to make provision that the Memorial Lodge is not required for purposes for which it was originally intended and the Memorial Lodge and all other assets be transferred to the Winnipeg Foundation provided always that the Memorial Room of Silence be

maintained in this or some other suitable structure in accordance with the original plans...¹⁷

Following the guidelines of the Act the joint committee on June 20th 1930 transferred all the assets (cash and bonds — \$18,294.14) of the Women's Tribute Memorial Foundation from the Bank of Commerce to Northern Trusts Company. At the same time Mrs. R.A. Rogers M.L.A. was elected chairman of the Board of Trustees.

In the ensuing months G.W. Northwood and Cyril Chivers, both Winnipeg World War I veterans and architects, were commissioned to draw plans for the building. After the rejection of two plans, because of their high estimated cost, a plan which projected a cost of \$27,000 was chosen. Tenders were called in January 1931 and Claydon Construction was awarded the contract.¹⁹ By April, however, the funds held by the Women's Tribute Association stood at \$31,126.32 so reconsideration was given to the plan and cost of the building. In June the Manitoba Free Press reported that a decision had been made to choose a drawing prepared by Cyril Chivers for the construction of their Memorial Lodge at an estimated cost of \$32,000. Work began and wherever possible returned men were used on the construction site. On the 4th of July, in a small ceremony, the cornerstone was laid by Mrs. C.P. Walker — "the end to her fourteen year old dream". Lieutenant Colonel G.A. Wells officiated in the company of the women's committee, members of the Deer Lodge Branch and several returned soldiers.²¹

Chiver's buff brick and Tyndall stone building is a fitting memorial to Manitoba's contribution to the Great War. The two storey structure stands on a concrete foundation with cut limestone as a decorative base. The brick walls support a Tyndall stone cornice which marks the top of the first floor. The second floor rises from the centre of the building and is distinguished by a Tyndall stone band which outlines the flat roof. Neo-classical in its simplicity, the building reflects the "Modern Movement" style of architectural design, so popular in the late twenties and early thirties. This style, by its simplicity and functionalism, with plain wall surfaces, simple masses and horizontal lines, is typical of much of Northwood and Chivers' work.²² But a concession to decoration has been made with the raised brick pilasters on the north and south facings, and cut stone memorial plaques —

1914 to 1919. Window arrangement is in threes, on the north and south sides, with a similar, but smaller, fenestration on the second storey. The entranceway evokes the "Modern Movement" motif with a simple handling of the brick and stone staircase leading to a rectangular framed doorway.

The interior of the building is reflective of its purpose. The main floor was designed for a billiard hall, club rooms, office space, kitchen and washroom facilities. The woodwork would appear to be oak. The entrance vestibule is tiled in small ceramic tiles which lead to a terrazzo stone staircase. The first floor is equipped with a ramp for wheelchair patients which opens into the billiard room, but which also continues up to the second storey entering the auditorium. From the landing leading to the second floor one can see the Memorial Room of Silence. The small shrine is impressive with its heavy, possibly cherry-wood doors which open to reveal a chamber paved in marble with Tyndall stone walls. Within the chamber is the Blue Ensign hung there by Lady Nanton who had brought it from London, England, where it had flown over the cenotaph until 1930. To the right of the memorial chamber is a large, quite well lit auditorium with its original light fixtures and a small stage which, until recently, carried a full complement of footlights. The floor of the auditorium is maple, unlike the floors on the first floor which are covered in linoleum and carpet. The ceiling is painted beams and plaster. There is another small kitchen tucked in behind the auditorium. The building was lit by electricity and heated by steam heat which, until this year, was pumped in from the Deer Lodge Hospital Centre.²³

In the inter-war years and the early post-war years the Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge was the scene of much activity, as it offered club rooms, a lecture and entertainment auditorium, a billiard room, canteen and lunch room operated by the women's auxiliary of the Deer Lodge Branch. It continued to be managed by Deer Lodge until 1978 when the Branch closed because of a shortage of members and funds. Custodial duties of the building were transferred to the Valour Road Branch of the Canadian Legion. They continued to maintain and to use the building until December 31st 1986. At that time, they too disbanded because of a lack of members and funds. Presently, the building is closed but it is the responsibility of the Winnipeg Foundation, according to Clause F of the Act passed by the Manitoba Legislature in 1930.²⁴

Generally the building has been well maintained. The first floor has been divided into offices and smaller meeting rooms by means of removable partitions. The memorial chamber and auditorium on the second floor, however, are virtually untouched.

The Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge is a unique building in the architectural landscape of Winnipeg, and of the province of Manitoba. It stands not only as a memorial to those who fought in the Great War, but it is also symbolic of the commitment and determination of a group of Winnipeg women to conserve in brick and stone an important part of their heritage.

FOOTNOTES

1. "An Act to Incorporate, 'the Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge Foundation', Statutes of Manitoba, 1930 vols. I and II p. 614.
2. "Once A Year", Annual Report of Deer Lodge Branch, Canadian Legion, B.E.S.L. 1930 p. 17.
3. Manitoba Morning Free Press 11/05/17 pp. 1 - 2. See also John Herd Thompson, Harvests of War; The Prairie West, 1914-1918 (Toronto 1978) pp. 115 - 116 and W.L. Morton, Manitoba. A History (Toronto 1957) pp. 358 - 359.
4. Year Book, The Great War Veterans' Association of Canada, Winnipeg Branch 1919 p. 152.
5. "Once", p. 13.
6. Manitoba Morning Free Press 11/05/17 pp. 1 - 2.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. "Once" p. 14.
10. Ibid. p. 15.
11. Manitoba Morning Free Press 11/05/17 pp. 1 - 2 and Manitoba Free Press 12/05/17 p. 8.
12. See Appendix 1. See also "Once" p. 15.
13. "Once" p. 16.
14. See Assessment Roll for the Rural Municipality of St. James (19310, Ward 4 p. 949 vol. 35).
15. "Once" p. 17.
16. Ibid. p. 12. Note: In the Board of Directors' Report (1930) - President Raymond Large confirmed that the title to the property at the corner of Woodlawn and Portage Avenue was to be held by the Women's Tribute Association.
17. Statutes of Manitoba (1930) pp. 613 - 616. See Appendix 2.
18. "Once" pp. 16 - 17.
19. Western Canada Contractor and Builder January 1931.

20. Winnipeg Free Press 06/06/31 p. 26.
21. Winnipeg Evening Tribune 06/07/31 p. 41.
22. M.S. Osborne "The Architectural Heritage of Manitoba" in Manitoba Essays, ed. by R.C. Lodge (Toronto 1937) pp. 53 - 86. See Appendix 6. Note the similarity between the design of the Civic Auditorium and that of the Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge. See Appendix 6.
23. "Once" p. 13. The steam heating system from the Deer Lodge Hospital (owned by the Federal government until 1983) was discontinued in 1986 when a new system was installed in the Deer Lodge Centre by its new owners, the Province of Manitoba.
24. Statues p. 614. The author would like to thank Mr. Richard Smith, president of the Valour Road Branch of the Canadian Legion, for his most useful information.

APPENDIX I

Major George W. Northwood (1876-1959) and Brigadier Major Cyril W.U. Chivers (1879-1969)

Major G.W. Northwood and Brigadier Major C.W.U. Chivers were both distinguished Winnipeg veterans of the First World War. Major Northwood joined the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, the "Little Black Devils", in peacetime. After 1914 he served in the 8th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Cyril Chivers, for his part, was a soldier in the First Canadian Mounted Rifles where he rose to the rank of Brigadier Major and, like Major Northwood, was decorated with a Military Cross. Following the war the two veterans formed a partnership and established the architectural firm of Northwood and Chivers.

G.W. Northwood came to Winnipeg in 1905 as a graduate of McGill university. Following the war, in practice with Cyril Chivers, he was a member of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and, locally, he sat on the board of the Manitoba Association of Architects. Additionally, he was the Manitoba representative to the Dominion government for discussion of post-war relief programmes. During this period he was also chairman of the Sanatorium Board and a president of the Manitoba Club.¹

Cyril Chivers arrived in Winnipeg in 1898. He was born in Chislehurst, Kent and as a young man had studied at the London Polytechnic Institute. Throughout his first year in Canada he worked as an apprentice for Winnipeg architect S. Frank Peters and, then, for architect George Browne. The following year, lured by higher pay, he took a post with the Engineering Construction Department of the C.P.R. where he designed several buildings, including the railway station at Banff. In 1910 he left the C.P.R. to open his own practice. Cyril Chivers was a life member of the Engineers' Institute and a Charter member and fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. He was also an Honourary Life Member of the Manitoba Association of Architects and had served the association as president in 1928.²

Northwood and Chivers were responsible for the design of a number of notable public and private

buildings constructed in the post World War I period. For instance, among their accomplishments were the Canadian Wheat Board Building, 423 Main (1929), the Civic Auditorium, 444 St. Mary Avenue (1932), and the Federal Building, 269 Main Street (1935). The second pavilion at the Assiniboine Park and Zoo (1929-30), the Bank of Toronto Branch on Academy Road (1934), the Riverbend School for Girls (ca.1934), and the Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge, 200 Woodlawn Street (1931) all came from the offices of Winnipeg World War I veterans Major George Northwood and Brigadier Major Cyril Chivers.³

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1. See "Obituary Notices", Winnipeg Free Press, 15/12/59 and the Winnipeg Telegram, 15/12/59.
 2. See Manitoba Association of Architects File on C.W.U. Chivers. Also "Obituary Notice," Winnipeg Free Press, 11/08/69 and John Chivers (son), "A History of the Manitoba Association of Architects," (unpublished manuscript, c.1966), pp. 26-27.
 3. Northwood and Chivers also designed St. Ignatius Church (1928), the General Electric Office Building (1931), the Winnipeg Post Office addition (ca.1935), and the Singer Sewing Machine Co. (ca.1940). Note the similarity in style between the Civic Auditorium and the Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge.

Chronology of the Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge - 200 Woodlawn Street

- 24 April 1917 Led by Mrs. C.P. Walker an organizational meeting was held in the Central Congregational Church for the purpose of planning a fund raising event to build a tribute to those fighting in the Great War.
- 10 May 1917 "Foundation Tribute Night" held at the Walker Theatre.
- 14 May 1917 Principles and resolutions of the Women's Tribute Foundation drawn up at the Central Congregational Church.
- 30 May 1924 Constitution of the Women's Tribute Association adopted.
- April 1927 Deer Lodge Branch of the Canadian Legion organized.
- 21 January 1930 The Women's Tribute Association approached by Mr. R. Lodge, president of the Deer Lodge Branch of the Canadian Legion. He offered \$9,000.00 to be put towards construction of a "club house" for returned soldiers and veterans in Deer Lodge Hospital. In addition to the availability of funds he reported that the municipality of St. James had offered the Branch the property at the corner of Woodlawn Street and Portage Avenue for veterans' use. No taxes would be charged.
- 25 February 1930 A meeting was held by the Women's Tribute Association and representatives from Deer Lodge. Approval was granted to proceed with the project of construction of a war memorial and tribute to those who had returned.
- 12 March 1930 The Women's Tribute Association appoint custodians to manage the prospective building.
- 14 April 1930 A Special Act of the Manitoba Legislature was passed incorporating the Women's Tribute Memorial Foundation.
- 20 June 1930 The Board of Management of the Women's Tribute Foundation transferred all funds from the Canadian Bank of Commerce to the Northern Trust Company.
- Spring 1930 Winnipeg architects Northwood and Chivers commissioned to prepare plans.
- January 1931 Tenders called. Claydon Construction granted contract.

06 June 1931	C. Chivers drawing accepted. Building started at an estimated cost of \$32,000.00.
04 July 1931	Laying of the cornerstone.
Autumn 1931	Building opened.
1978	Deer Lodge Branch of the Canadian Legion disbanded. Maintenance of the Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge taken over by the Valour Road Branch.
1 April 1983	Deer Lodge Hospital taken over by the Manitoba Provincial Government. It became Deer Lodge Centre.
31 December 1986	The Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge closed by the Valour Road Branch of the Canadian Legion. Responsibility for the building passed to the Winnipeg Foundation.

200 WOODLAW STREET – WOMEN’S TRIBUTE MEMORIAL LODGE



Plate 1 – Harriet A. Walker, 1921. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)



Plate 2 – Women’s Tribute Memorial Lodge, 200 Woodlawn Street, 1969. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Architectural Survey.)

200 WOODLAW STREET – WOMEN’S TRIBUTE MEMORIAL LODGE

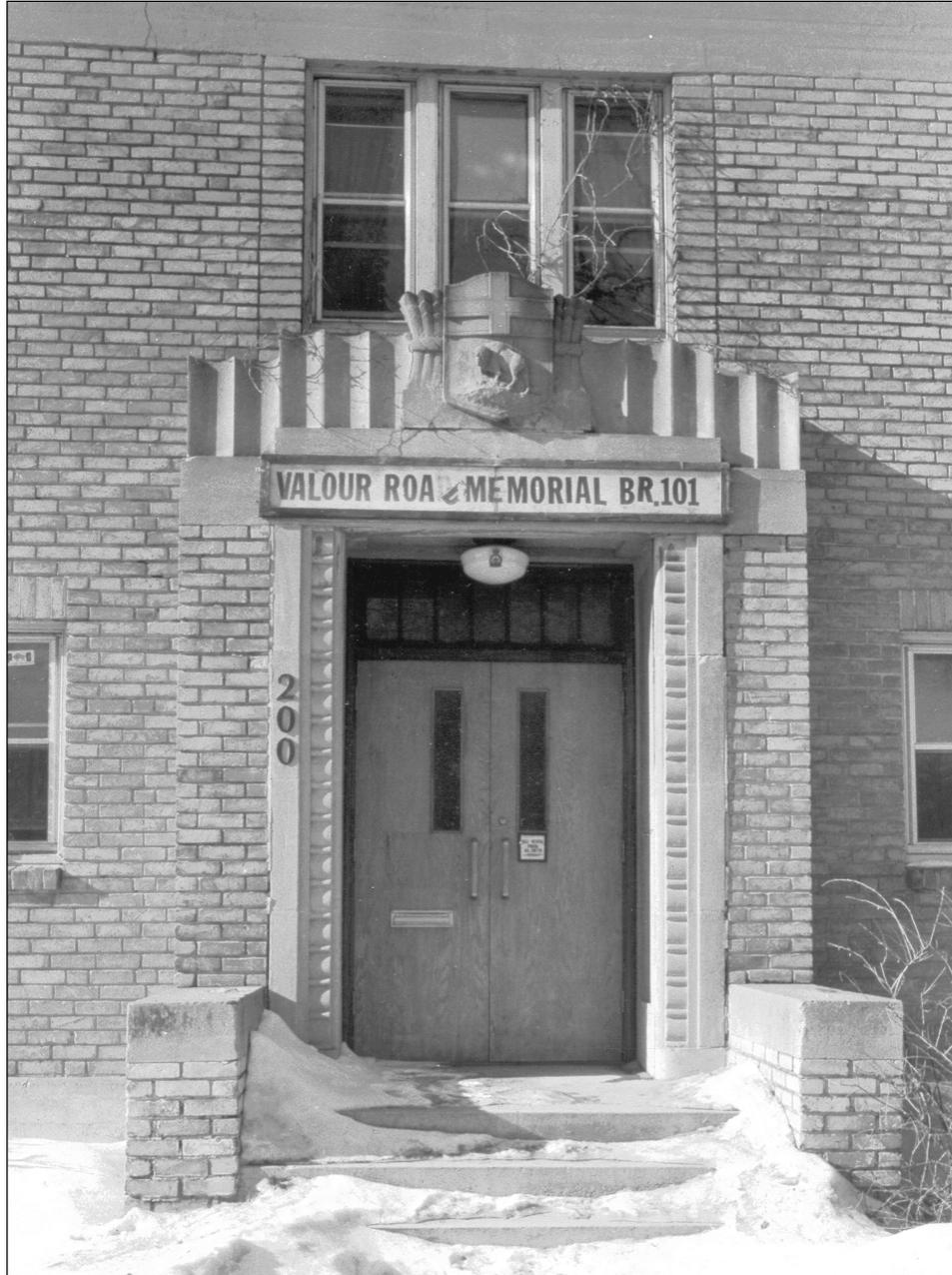


Plate 3 – Detail of front entrance, no date. (M. Peterson.)

200 WOODLAW STREET – WOMEN’S TRIBUTE MEMORIAL LODGE



Plate 4 – Rear (west) and north façades, no date. (M. Peterson.)



Plate 5 – Sanctuary in its new location, inside Deer Lodge Centre, no date. (M. Peterson.)

200 WOODLAW STREET – WOMEN’S TRIBUTE MEMORIAL LODGE



Plate 6 – Sanctuary in its new location, inside Deer Lodge Centre, no date. (M. Peterson.)