611 ACADEMY ROAD

FORMER JULIA CLARK SCHOOL

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings Committee

August 1997
Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of one of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me.

Winnipeg’s first and greatest real estate boom in the early 1880s vastly altered western Canada’s major city. Economic growth from the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the founding of many service industries changed the face of the downtown from a small outpost into a teeming community. Businesses sprang up overnight, and the possibilities seemed endless.

The bust, however, fashioned its own transformations. As the ranks of the destitute and unemployed began to rise, several citizens created private social organizations to meet the requirements of the needy. Although all levels of government lent financial support, public campaigns for donations were the rule as these groups each attempted to address and better the social conditions of the less fortunate.

This public support through donations of money and other essentials was the backbone of many of the city’s most successful pre-World War I organizations. Two of the best examples were the Margaret Scott Nursing Mission, founded in 1904 to provide home visits to the sick and destitute, and the All Peoples’ Mission founded in 1892 and one of the highest profiled of the social agencies under the leadership Rev. J.S. Woodsworth beginning in 1907.

Children were often the worst off in these conditions, and several agencies took on the task of caring for the abandoned and abused. The Children’s Home of Winnipeg (CHW) grew from

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1 The name has also been found in several sources as “Clarke.”
2 An often-quoted Biblical phrase used by the Board of Directors of the Children’s Home of Winnipeg.
modest beginnings in the early 1880s to become one of the province’s most important child welfare agencies. As the Home’s role within the system grew, so too did the need for larger and more up-to-date facilities. In 1915, after a succession of small facilities was used and then outgrown, the CHW completed a large complex on extensive grounds on Tuxedo’s Academy Road. Three years later, noting that the buildings were quickly filling to capacity, the provincial government funded the construction of a school on the premises, named after one of the Home’s early directors, Mrs. Julia Jane Clark.4

**STYLE**
The Julia Clark School, designed by J.B. Mitchell, Commissioner of School Buildings for Winnipeg School Division No. 1, followed accepted patterns of exterior ornamentation established by the Division. The outbreak of World War I and the fact that the structure was not a public school in the true sense of the word combined to reduce the amount of money spent on the building, thereby lessening the exterior detailing.

The structure nonetheless featured some classically-based detailing at grade, around the main entrance and at the eaves. Since the provision of natural light and ventilation for the interior was of utmost importance, much of the wall surface was taken by banks of large windows.

**CONSTRUCTION**
The school measures 20.2 x 9.7 metres (66’2” x 31’10”), and rises two storeys on the concrete foundation.5 The solid, cream-coloured brick walls are accented with rough-cut stone covering the raised foundation wall and around windows and doors. The materials and type of

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5 “Architect’s Plans,” City of Winnipeg Archives (below as “Plans”), No. 1083/1918.
construction are consistent with other facilities built before and after 1918 by the Winnipeg School Division.

Total cost of construction and furnishing was $24,000 ($19,400 for the building) and was covered completely by the provincial government. The Winnipeg School Division agreed to cover the day-to-day operational costs of the facility.6

DESIGN
The main (south) façade is asymmetrical. The 4.5-metre (14’8”)7 wide bay containing the main entrance extends out from the main wall and is slightly off-centre (Plates 1, 2 and 3). Above the double-door entrance is a brick panel with a stylized stone plaque displaying the date “1918.” A large, arched window with stone keystone is located above this plaque and a complete entablature with dentils and a plain brick parapet top this section.

The wall to the east of the entrance, which measures 8.2 metres (26’9”), is filled with large double-hung windows in single and double sets on all three levels. The wall to the west (7.5 metres, 24’9”)8 features two bays of thin windows framing a central section with no openings. All windows on this and the other three façades are accented with rough-cut stone lug sills and plain heads.

The west façade windows duplicate the east-end openings of the front elevation. As well, heavy overhanging eaves are continued from the front. The east façade has only two tall, thin windows at its north end. These windows, and the two side doors, were not part of the original design, although the windows were likely added during construction. Physical and photographic


7 “Plans,” No. 1083/1918.

8 Ibid.
evidence suggests the doors were added after construction but prior to 1969 (Plates 3 to 7), a result of changing fire code regulations.

The rear also has been altered from the original drawings to include several small windows and a second-storey exit (Plates 8 and 9). It is unknown when these changes occurred, although physical evidence (stone sills) suggests that some of the openings are original.

The building is typical of the schools designed and built by the Winnipeg School Division at the time, although the unbalanced front façade is unusual.

**INTERIOR**

As originally planned, the school had four classrooms, two on each floor (Plates 10 and 11). The large, open rooms were located on either side of the central hallway and measured 7.0 x 8.3 metres (23 x 28’8”), including a small changing area for coats and hats. A washroom was located on each level.

The original basement had a furnace, fuel and storage space, as well as play rooms for girls and boys, and washroom facilities (Plate 12).

The interior finishes, as would be expected, are functional rather than ornamental, durability being of the utmost importance.

At present, the interior space is virtually unchanged; the classroom, washroom and basement areas continue to occupy their original space. The finishes, due to lack of heat, have deteriorated and the basement floor is badly heaved (Plates 13 to 15).

As with the exterior, the interior is similar to other schools built by the Division.
INTEGRITY
The school occupies its original site and alterations to the exterior have only modestly changed the original design. Discussions with on-site contractors indicate the building is in good structural condition. The only major problem in the foundation is located at the southeast corner due to the root system of a large elm tree (Plate 16). A note in the CHW Annual Report, 1940 states that the building was underpinned and that “it is quite obvious that further work in this respect will be required.”

STREETSCAPE
The Julia Clark School is set well back from Academy Road, and is hidden from view by a newer structure. To the north between the school and Wellington Crescent is a large open area. Much of the neighbouring building stock is newer. After the original CHW facility was demolished, the compatibility of the school was further reduced.

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR
Plans for the school were drawn up by the School Division’s Building Department and its Commissioner J.B. Mitchell. Mitchell was the Division’s architect for nearly 40 years, designing many of the school buildings that were considered to be some of the finest in North America at the time (see Appendix I for more biographical information). He has received 20 points from the Historical Buildings Committee.

The contractors for the building were the local firm Fraser and Kelly.

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INSTITUTION

The founding and evolution of the CHW underlines the growth of child welfare agencies in the city. The first organized attempt to help Winnipeg’s needy children grew out of the Christian Woman’s Union of Winnipeg (CWU), an organization formed in March 1883 and incorporated a year later. The group created a home for women working in the city away from their homes, using the old Bannatyne residence on May Street in Point Douglas. When better facilities were obtained, the earlier building became a maternity hospital for rural immigrants and destitute mothers (this role was ultimately taken over by the General Hospital in late 1887).

In January 1885, a small building adjacent to this hospital was converted into a children’s home for those born at the hospital, although it quickly began to service the needs of others as well. Growth was rapid and in April of that year a larger building was secured on Assiniboine Avenue at the foot of Hargrave Street. Just over a year later, the need to upgrade resulted in a move to 227 Portage Avenue.

In June 1887, an act of legislation incorporated the CHW as a separate entity from the CWU. Original members of the executive included Mrs. Sarah McKilligan (first director), Mrs. Georgina Smith, Mrs. Ella Ross, Mrs. Agnes Culver and Mrs. Lizzie Hunter. The Board of the CHW was given the power to contract with the parent to place the child under the Board’s absolute control, allowing the Home to proceed with adoptions (unless the parent or parents paid a yearly amount). Boys under the age of six and girls under the age of 14 were to be accepted.

The prospective adopter was required to furnish two certificates (from a member of the clergy and a justice of the peace), send the child to school a minimum number of days, properly clothe the child and send an annual report on the child’s progress to the CHW Board. All adoptions had a three-month probation period.\(^\text{12}\)

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\(^{12}\) Mrs. G. Bryce, op. cit., pp. 18-19.
Realizing more suitable facilities were required, a city-wide canvass netted over $8,500, leading to the purchase of a home on River Avenue in 1888 (Plate 17) and five vacant lots adjoining the rear of the house in 1890. A series of additions and renovations marked the history of the CHW in the building (Plate 18), including a new structure built in 1901-02 and known as the “Infant’s Home” (Plate 19). The new building cost approximately $14,000 and was designed by J.H.G. Russell and built by Saul and Irish (masonry and brick), S.B. Ritchie (carpentry), and McRae and Wynne (plumbing, heating and gas).

The entire complex functioned during this period as a shelter for abandoned and destitute children – a safe place to stay during the adoption process. This seemed a relatively simple task since, as one observer noted, “the demand from the country for children is far greater than the supply.” In 1891, the first school room was set up, beginning many decades of educational work with the children.

In 1909, in response to overcrowding, the Board purchased land in Tuxedo and once again hired J.H.G. Russell to prepare plans for an expansive new complex. Raising the money proved a slow process, one hampered in 1912 by an outbreak of fever and measles that nearly meant financial collapse. To alleviate some of the overcrowding, a house at 187 River Avenue was rented in 1911.

Finally in 1915, the plans were finalized. They called for a complex of three, interconnected structures – a main building to house offices, reception area, and girls’ dormitory and separate buildings for infants and toddlers and the boys (Plate 20). Unfortunately, the devastation of

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13 Ibid., pp. 18-19; and CHW Annual Report, 1890, p. 5. The complex was located on the south side of River Avenue approximately where the Mid-Town (Donald Street) Bridge now stands.

14 CHW Annual Report, 1901, pp. 5-7, 16.

15 Mrs. G. Bryce, op. cit., p. 29.


17 Ibid., 1909, p. 5. There were 84 cases turned away due to lack of space that year.

18 Ibid., 1911, p. 7.
World War I, and lack of manpower and materials forced a scaling-down of the project. The final result was a two-building complex comprised of the Boys’ Dormitory and the Main Building with the girls on the upper level and the infants and toddlers on the ground floor (Plates 21 and 22). It was noted in the CHW Annual Report of 1919 that there already was overcrowding because of the lack of a separate girls’ wing.\textsuperscript{19}

Increasing numbers of admissions meant reduced space for education purposes and the CHW Board appealed to the provincial government and the Winnipeg School Board for financial assistance. The provincial government, recognizing that many of the children at the Home were from outside the City of Winnipeg, granted the CHW $25,000 to build a school. The Winnipeg School Board, realizing the children were being educated within the Division, agreed to pay the annual operational costs.\textsuperscript{20}

The new school was immediately hailed a success. CHW Superintendent and Business Manager J.C. Lawson summed it up this way in 1919:

\begin{quote}
We have found the new school building on our grounds of untold benefit in its fine, airy rooms, and the additional space it gives us in our Home for the work.\textsuperscript{21}
\end{quote}

The CHW Board named the school after Julia Clark (née Murray), the daughter of one of the original Selkirk settlers who was born in Kildonan and married the Hudson’s Bay Company’s last chief factor in Winnipeg, William Clark. The Clarks were well-known in the city for their work with charitable organizations including the Young Men’s Christian Association and the Girls’ Home of Welcome. But it was the CHW in which Mrs. Clark was most intimately

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 1919, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{20} Manitoba Free Press, November 25, 1922, p. 10; and Trustees’ Report, 1917, pp. 53-5, and 1918, pp. 69-70.
\textsuperscript{21} CHW Annual Report, 1919, p. 20.
\end{flushleft}
involved. She was a member of the Board for 12 years, seven as president. She died in August of 1919 and the school was quickly named in her honour.\textsuperscript{22}

Tight budgets and overcrowding were constant companions of the Home over the next decade, but the institution continued to supply an invaluable service to the children and the community-at-large. Events like trips to circuses, weekly films, summer camps, picnics and the annual Christmas tree party were all important in the lives of the children and the Home.\textsuperscript{23} The children were well-fed and cared for - the fact that 36 litres (8 gallons) of cod liver oil were consumed during the winter of 1939-40 is one indication of this!\textsuperscript{24}

In 1931, the province created a Child Welfare Department, taking over complete control of adoptions in Manitoba. This drastically changed the role of the CHW, causing a return to its original mandate as a place for children to stay while they awaited adoption – “to house and nourish the child in the interval between its two homes.”\textsuperscript{25} In an effort to save money, the Home shared its facilities beginning in 1937 with the Children’s Aid Society.

By the early 1940s, heightened government support for mothers, an increased emphasis on foster homes and a major study on the child welfare system in Manitoba, all combined to once again redefine the role of the CHW (see Appendix II for Tables on population and budgets for the CHW from 1888-1946). The Home was asked to take a leadership role in remedial and therapeutic care for “disturbed” children. Following the new theories of the times, it was felt that smaller, community-based facilities were more appropriate.\textsuperscript{26} The Home entered into negotiations with the federal government resulting in the sale of the Academy Road facilities to the Department of Veterans Affairs in 1944 as the Annex of the Deer Lodge Veterans’


\textsuperscript{23} CHW Annual Report, 1931.

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 1940, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 1931, p. 8.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 1985, n.p.
Convalescent Hospital. The Home officially vacated the facilities in February 1945, occupying its new building at 422 Assiniboine Avenue where children would continue to “be given care, understanding, and be helped through a period of adjustment until such time as they [could] return to their own homes or to Foster homes.”

The CHW, which has recently changed its name to New Directions for Children, Youth and Families, operates a number of facilities throughout the city and offers a wide variety of courses, support, and resources to those who need it.

The Deer Lodge Centre continued to use the Academy Road complex into the 1950s, when it became the Assiniboine Residential School for Indian Children, which operated until 1972. During that period, a gymnasium/chapel was constructed to the south of the Julia Clark School. Parks Canada took over the facilities in 1972, using the school as an artifact storage facility. The old dormitories were demolished in the early 1980s, to be replaced by a forensic laboratory for the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (Plate 23). Parks Canada vacated the school building in 1993.

Present redevelopment plans for the site include a call centre in the former gymnasium/chapel and use of the former Julia Clark School to train call centre staff. Classroom space, executive offices and training labs will be located in the former school, allowing it to once again function as an educational facility.

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27 Ibid., p. 10.
28 Information supplied by Sheila Reid, New Directions for Children, Youth and Families.
29 K. McFarlane, “Old School Building, 611 Academy Road,” Parks Canada Building Report #89-161 (July 16, 1990), p. 5; and City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #2519/1965. The gymnasium and chapel are two buildings connected by a wide corridor and both are one-storey, masonry structures.
30 K. McFarlane, op. cit, pp. 1, 5-6; and City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 718154-12-1 (PC 50).
**EVENT**

There is no known significant event connected with this building, although the supplying of a quality education in an up-to-date facility, jointly funded by both the provincial government and the Winnipeg School Division No. 1, was certainly a noteworthy accomplishment.

**CONTEXT**

The former Julia Clark School is associated with the development of child welfare in the city, a reminder of the period when institutionalization was deemed the most productive method of handling the ever-increasing numbers of destitute and abandoned children. Every effort was made by the staff and board of the Home, as well as by citizens, to make the children’s stay comfortable and enjoyable. Education also grew in importance within the mandate of the CHW and the ultimate result of this growth was the 1918 construction of the Julia Clark School.

**LANDMARK**

This building is virtually hidden from view by passers-by on Academy Road, although the rear of the structure can be seen across a wide open field between it and Wellington Crescent. Because of this, it is not conspicuous or familiar in the neighbourhood.
JAMES BERTRAM MITCHELL-

J.B. Mitchell was born in 1852 in Gananoque, Ontario to Scottish immigrant parents. After studying architecture at the Montreal Art Institute, he came west as a 21-year-old member of the first detachment of the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) in 1874. Mitchell was no stranger to the military life, having been a teenage bugler in the Canadian militia during the Fenian raids of 1866 and a member of the Wolseley Expedition to the Red River Settlement in 1870. As Mitchell passed through Manitoba on the NWMP's famous western march, he noted the prosperity of the area and returned to the province after his tour of duty ended in 1877. His military career also included service as a colonel of the 100th Winnipeg Grenadiers in World War I.

Mitchell was elected to the Winnipeg School Board in 1888 and later was appointed to the post of Commissioner of School Buildings (architect for the Division). Until his retirement in 1928, Mitchell designed some 48 school buildings costing more than $8,000,000.

Mitchell was assisted and supported by the Division’s Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Daniel McIntyre. McIntyre held his post from 1885 until retirement in 1928, the same year as Mitchell stepped down. These two men worked tirelessly to provide universal, modern education in

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2 Ibid., Part B, p. 8.
6 Ibid., p. 3.
7 Ibid., pp. 7-10.
Winnipeg. Their success was recognized throughout the country and their legacy is the fine structures that have remained useful to the present.

Until 1901, a number of well-known local architects prepared and submitted plans to the School Board for new facilities, under the supervision of Mitchell and McIntyre. During this period, 1888-1901, Mitchell himself designed two schools: Wellington in 1898 and Somerset in 1901. After 1901, he took full control over the designing process. He often used his knowledge of other school division building advances to create better buildings, touring parts of Ontario and the United States to understand their approaches.

Mitchell died in Winnipeg in 1945. In 1956, the J.B. Mitchell School (1720 John Brebeuf Place) was opened to honour one of the city's leading educational administrators.

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9 Ibid., pp. 7-10.
# TABLE ONE – POPULATION OF THE CHILDREN’S HOME OF WINNIPEG

<table>
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<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>1888</th>
<th>1890&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>1894</th>
<th>1901&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>1910&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>1912</th>
<th>1919&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>1931&lt;sup&gt;5&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>158</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>323</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>243</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL IN HOME ON DECEMBER 31&lt;sup&gt;ST&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>40</td>
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SOURCE: CHILDREN’S HOME OF WINNIPEG, ANNUAL REPORTS, 1888-1940.

<sup>1</sup> The Annual Report for 1890 states that there were many requests for adoptions, but because only a few of the parents leaving children gave the Home legal control, there were only two adoptions (p. 5).

<sup>2</sup> The Annual Report for 1910 does not give an exact figure of the number of children adopted but states that 18 children were adopted “on trial” and 7 of the older girls were “in service in good homes” (p. 9).

<sup>3</sup> Figures for 1911 do not give a total at the end of the year, however, the Annual Report does state that 310 children were processed by the Home over the year and that 161 other children were turned away due to lack of space (p. 7).

<sup>4</sup> The figure for adoptions in 1919 is the number of children placed in foster homes, 11, added to the number of children transferred to other Institutions, 13 (p. 15).

<sup>5</sup> The total number of children in the home (136) is as of September 1, 1930, the Home’s year end (p. 9).

<sup>6</sup> The figure 33 under other included 11 British Isle evacuees (p. 13).
### TABLE TWO – ANNUAL EXPENDITURES OF THE CHILDREN'S HOME OF WINNIPEG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>1889(^7)</th>
<th>1919</th>
<th>1930-31</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1945-46</th>
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<td>$2,118.39</td>
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<td>$16,617.94</td>
<td>$15,454.84</td>
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<td>$2,401.32</td>
<td>$2,766.17</td>
<td>$2,187.02</td>
<td>$424.89</td>
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<td>$6,482.39</td>
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<td>$5,232.78</td>
<td>$9,014.23</td>
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<td>EDUCATIONAL</td>
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<td>$320.11</td>
<td>$178.14</td>
<td>$278.04</td>
<td>$6.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHER</td>
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<td>$9,342.04</td>
<td>$8,786.22</td>
<td>$8,160.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$2,118.39</td>
<td>$47,990.41</td>
<td>$47,412.97</td>
<td>$41,752.28</td>
<td>$26,196.06</td>
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\(^7\) This figure represents money spent on food and clothing above the donations from public and private sources (p. 5).
Plate 1 – Former Julia Clark School, 611 Academy Road, main (south) façade. (Murray Peterson, 1997.)
Plate 2 – Julia Clark School, July 1921. (Courtesy of the Western Canada Pictorial Index, Slide A0360-11615.)
Plate 3 – Julia Clark School, 1969. Note the lack of significant alterations to the exterior during its first 50 years. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Architectural Survey Collection, 1969, 621 Academy Road.)
Plate 4 – Julia Clark School, Architect’s Plans #1083/1918, “Side Elevation.” (Courtesy of City of Winnipeg Archives.)
Plate 5 – Former Julia Clark School, west façade. (Murray Peterson, 1997.)
Plate 6 – Julia Clark School, Architect’s Plan #1083/1918, “Side Elevation.” (Courtesy of City of Winnipeg Archives.)
Plate 7 – Former Julia Clark School, east façade. (Murray Peterson, 1997.)
Plate 8 – Julia Clark School, Architect’s Plans #1083/1918, “Back Elevation.” (Courtesy of City of Winnipeg Archives.)
Plate 9 – Former Julia Clark School, rear (north) façade. (Murray Peterson, 1997.)
Plate 10 – Julia Clark School, Architect’s Plans #1083/1918, “First Floor Plan.” (Courtesy of City of Winnipeg Archives.)
Plate 11 – Julia Clark School, Architect’s Plans #1083/1918, “Second Floor Plan.” (Courtesy of City of Winnipeg Archives.)
Plate 12 – Julia Clark School, Architect’s Plans #1083/1918, “Basement Floor.” (Courtesy of City of Winnipeg Archives.)
Plate 13 – Former Julia Clark School, interior staircase (note the high banister designed for extra safety). (Murray Peterson, 1997.)
Plate 14 – Former Julia Clark School, second floor classroom. (Murray Peterson, 1997.)
Plate 15 – Former Julia Clark School, basement. (Murray Peterson, 1997.)

Plate 16 – Former Julia Clark School, foundation crack (southeast corner). (Murray Peterson, 1997.)
Plate 17 – Children’s Home of Winnipeg, 200 River Avenue, 1900. (Courtesy of Provincial Archives of Manitoba, “Winnipeg – Buildings – Municipal – Children’s Home #1.”)
Plate 18 – Plan of the recently vacated Children’s Home of Winnipeg, River Avenue. (Fire Insurance Plan of the City of Winnipeg, Vol. IV, Sheet 423 (May 1917).)
Plate 19 – “Infants’ Home,” 198 River Avenue, 1903. (Courtesy of the Western Canada Pictorial Index, Slide A0303-09656.)
Plate 20 – Planned layout of the original Children’s Home of Winnipeg, Tuxedo complex.  
(Reproduced from the Architect’s Plans #873/1915, City of Winnipeg Archives.)
Plate 21 – Children’s Home of Winnipeg, Tuxedo, ca.1920. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg – Views #76/62.)

Plate 22 – Children’s Home of Winnipeg, Tuxedo, ca.1924. (Courtesy of the Western Canada Pictorial Index, Slide #1893-59811.)
Plate 23 – 611, 615 and 621 Academy Road, 1979. (Courtesy of the City of Winnipeg.)