135 ANDERSON AVENUE

ST. JOHN’S ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL & CEMETERY

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
September 2017
This building embodies the following heritage values as described in the *Historical Resources By-law, 55/2014* (consolidated update July 13, 2016):

(a) St. John’s is Western Canada’s oldest Anglican parish, dating back to the very beginning of European settlement in the region and the present Cathedral building is the fourth built by the parish on this site;

(b) The building and the cemetery are intimately connected with the Anglican Church and its missionary work in Canada in the early 19th century and its continued role to the present;

(c) It was designed in the Modern or Late Gothic Revival Style, popular for religious and educational structures in the first half of the 20th century;

(d) The Cathedral is built of solid stone, some of the material dating back to the second church, completed in 1833;

(e) It is a highly conspicuous and well-known building; and

(f) The building’s exterior has suffered little alteration.
The Selkirk Settlers arrived in what became Winnipeg in 1812 and faced the coming winter with a lack of food, little knowledge on how to survive in their new home and encountering strong opposition from fur traders not connected to the Hudson’s Bay Company. It was a harsh beginning to Western Canada’s first European agrarian settlement which took a heavy toll on the settler families for the first years.

The community’s benefactor, Lord Selkirk, travelled to the settlement in the summer of 1817 to help put the it on firmer ground by officially granting the settlers river lots along the Red River starting from just north of what is today Point Douglas and running north for several miles (Plate 1). Lord Selkirk also promised the settlers, who were mostly Presbyterian and Scottish, schools and a church.1

But the Presbyterian church would not organize until the coming of Reverend John Black in 1851 and the first church, Kildonan, was not completed until four years later.2 It would be three years after Lord Selkirk’s visit that the first Protestant missionary came to Red River. Reverend John West (1778-1845),3 an Anglican sent under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society of England and supported by the Hudson’s Bay Company, arrived in October 1820, describing the settlement as “a number of huts widely scattered along the margin of the river.”4 By 1822, a log church and school had been built near the site of the present-day cathedral (southeast corner of the present cemetery),5 the church boasted a spire with bells (Plate 2).

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Reverend West left the settlement in 1823, replaced by Reverend David Thomas Jones (ca.1796-1844), who oversaw the construction of the second stone church, which was officially opened on November 26, 1833 with approximately 90 pews, (Plate 3). In 1838, Reverend William Cockran (1798-1865) took over from Reverend Jones. In 1849, the Diocese of Rupert’s Land was created with the Right Reverend David Anderson (1814-1885) its first bishop. The existing church was consecration as the first Cathedral in the Diocese in 1853.

The flood of 1852 caused severe damage to the Cathedral building, prompting parishioners to shore up the walls with large timber bracing. As a result, a new cathedral was planned and construction began, using stone from the 1833 building, in the summer of 1861 and completed the next year. The new building measured approximately 10.7 x 21.4 metres with a large stained glass window occupying the rear gable end (Plates 4 and 5).

Archbishop Robert Machray (1831-1904) was the next to serve the Diocese, from 1865 until his death and he oversaw the beginning of the great expansion in the Diocese that mirrored the growth of the West from the late 1880s to World War I.

In 1887, with the congregation growing and the use of the aging church building increasing, the congregation’s vestry met in January and decided to look into “proceeding with the erection of a suitable parochial schoolroom for Sunday School and various parochial purposes” that, according to one member, was needed “for promoting social meetings and good fellowship among the parishioners and for weekly lay services.” The new Parish Hall for St. John’s, known originally as

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7 Ibid., pp. 4-5; and J.B. Hartman, “The Churches of Early Winnipeg,” in Manitoba History, Number 45, Spring/Summer 2003, Manitoba Historical Society, on line version.

8 T.F. Bredin, op. cit., p. 4.

9 Ibid., p. 5.

10 Ibid., p. 6. The original building included an 18.9-metre high bell tower, which had to be removed soon after construction because of structural issues.

the Sunday School Building, was built a block west of the church and cemetery, on the northeast corner of Church Avenue and Main Street – now 181 Church Avenue (Plates 6 and 7).

After the death of Archbishop Machray in 1904, his replacement was Red River born and educated Archbishop Samuel Pritchard Matheson (1852-1942). Under his leadership, the congregation began the slow move towards replacing its aging Cathedral building.\(^\text{12}\) In 1913, the congregation enlarged the Parish Hall/Sunday School Building for use as a pro-cathedral and abandoned the 1862 building.

In 1922, the congregation made a serious push to raise enough funds to build a modern cathedral. In the spring of 1926, demolition of the old cathedral began (Plate 8),\(^\text{13}\) the cornerstone of the new building was laid on June 6 and on December 5, 1926, the first service was held at the new St. John’s Anglican Cathedral (Plate 9).

SITE

The church and cemetery are located on a well-treed site of approximately 4.0 hectares. The cemetery has been used since the arrival of the Selkirk Settlers in 1812 and there are headstones dating to the 1830s.\(^\text{14}\) The cemetery is the last resting place of many of Western Canada’s earliest European settlers as well as business, community and church leaders from the mid-19th century to today (Plates 10 and 11). A monument to the men of the Royal Winnipeg Rifles (Little Black Devils) who died during the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 is found just north of the Cathedral (Plate 12).

The church and cemetery are an important historical site that has been recognized by the Province of Manitoba and the Manitoba Heritage Council as an historic site and has been included in the Federal government’s Registry of Historic Places.

\(^{12}\) Ibid., pp. 6-9.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 9. 50.7 cu. m. of stone from the old church, much of it dating from the 1833 structure, were used to construct the north wall of the new building.

\(^{14}\) A History of Stone, op. cit. According to Cathedral personnel, the earliest documented grave at present is from 1832.
STYLE

The Cathedral is an excellent example of the Modern or Late Gothic Revival style which rose in popularity after 1900 as a reaction to the highly ornamented buildings of the earlier Gothic Revival style. The newer version opted for much simpler silhouettes and subdued ornamentation, in the words of one author, “a calm, disciplined monumentality.”

Flat surfaces were preferred; buildings were often long, low symmetrical masses embellished with crenellated towers and the distinctive pointed arch of the Gothic style. Construction material was monochromatic, usually brick or stone, again a departure from the multi-hued façades of the Gothic Revival style. Inspiration for the detailing of the new style was found in the English Perpendicular Gothic design of the 15th century. Because Modern Gothic found widespread expression on the campuses of many North American universities, it has also been referred to as Collegiate Gothic.

Many early to mid-20th century Winnipeg Protestant churches used element of this style in their design.

CONSTRUCTION

According to the original architect’s plans, the solid stone building with brick and hollow tile support measures approximately 12.5 metres wide by 44.5 metres long and cost $70,000 to complete in 1926. The stone foundation and superstructure walls are 0.6 metres wide and the building is designed in a basic crucifix shape, running north-south. The 6.7 metre square tower rises 12.2 metres above grade (see Appendix I for construction information).

17 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #292/1926.
In 1959, a two-storey addition was built on the northeast corner and to house the Dean’s Vestry and Office, the Sacristy, the Church Office and the Choir Room, costing $40,000.\textsuperscript{18} In 1982, a new basement was excavated under the south end of the building.\textsuperscript{19}

**DESIGN**

The Cathedral’s east façade features the wide, buttressed tower at its south end with pointed arched and rectilinear openings and a flat roof (Plate 13). Buttresses and pointed arched windows with tracery are found along the main building and the cross gable ends. The north end includes the 1959 addition (Plate 14).

The west façade feature projecting entrances at the north and south end and two cross gables near the north end (Plates 15 and 16). The south elevation features a large gable end with three thin pointed arched windows (Plate 17). The north elevation has a smaller gable end but larger and more embellished stained glass window with tracery (Plate 18).

**INTERIOR**

As set out in the original plans, the partial basement of the Cathedral (under the Chancel) held storage and fuel and machinery rooms (Plate 19).\textsuperscript{20} The main floor featured a tower entrance in the southeast corner, large nave with east and west transepts and barrel-vaulted ceilings and the chancel in the north end. Also in the north end were the organ chamber, chapel and choir and clergy vestry (Plate 20).

\textsuperscript{18} Information from St. John’s Cathedral website (http://www.stjohnscathedral.ca/tour/index.htm), no date; and City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 999593-12-3 (PC 90). Below as AR.

\textsuperscript{19} AR.

\textsuperscript{20} Architect’s Plans, No. 292/1926.
Many of the interior elements of the 1862 Cathedral were saved and reused in the present structure, including memorial tablets, the Italian marble font (used since 1887), the oak pulpit (presented to the Cathedral in 1907 – Plate 21) and the brass eagle lectern (installed in 1890 – Plate 22).  

The Casavant Frères organ was installed in 1927 and has been revised over time. The Cathedral also boasts many fine stained glass windows (created by Western Art Glass of Winnipeg, McCausland Company of Toronto, ON and Cakebread Robey and Company of England) – Plate 23. Two large mosaic windows, dedicated in 1959, were the work of Lionel and Patricia Thomas of Vancouver, BC.  

Space in the new basement has been used as a social hall with kitchen (Plate 24). Some original basement space has been renovated into a columbarium.

Today, many of the Cathedral’s interior elements remain intact and are in excellent condition (Plates 25-27).

**INTEGRITY**

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. The building’s exterior is in an excellent state of originality.

**STREETSCAPE**

The cathedral sits in the middle of a large, treed cemetery, removed from busy Main Street and near the banks of the Red River.

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21 “25 Point Interior Tour,” St. John’s Cathedral website, stjohnscathedral.ca/about/tour/online-tour/, no date.

22 St. John’s Cathedral website, https://stjohnscathedral.ca/about/tour/online-tour/, no date.
ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS
Local architects Edgar Prain (see Appendix II for biographical information) and Gilbert Parfitt (see Appendix III for biographical information) were responsible for the 1926 design of the Cathedral. The pair did not work extensively together but both had active private practices for many decades. They have been given 10 points by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

The Sutherland Construction Company, a local firm responsible many fine buildings including Fire Halls at 410 Cathedral Avenue (1911) and Dorchester Avenue (1911 – Grade III), a number of pre- and post-World War I public schools across the city, built the Cathedral.

PERSON/INSTITUTION
The area in which the Cathedral sits has been the centre of Western Canadian Anglicanism since the days of the fur trade and St. John’s Church/Cathedral is its mother church. This is the fourth church on this site and utilized stone from the earlier edifices.

EVENT
There is no known important historical event connected with this building.

CONTEXT
St. John’s Cathedral has been central to the lives of Anglicans in Western Canada since the 1820s. It was the first parish and diocese organized in the West and during the early expansion of the denomination, had an important role in the training of new priests that ministered to the growing populations beyond the province’s borders.
LANDMARK

St. John’s Cathedral is well-known in the City and the region because of its long-term historical importance.
APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Building Address: 135 Anderson Avenue
Building Name: St. John’s Anglican Cathedral

Original Use: religious
Current Use: religious

Roll No. (Old): 14099959300 (419570)
RSN: 185053

Municipality: 12
Ward: 3
Property or Occupancy Code: 90

Legal Description: 43/44 St. John, Plan 1257, Lot 118, Lots 128/129 (except lane), Lots 130/133; Plan 24597, Lots 31/33

Location: south side between Portage and Ellice avenues

Date of Construction: 1926
Storeys: 2

Heritage Status: NOMINATED LIST

Construction Type: brick and stone

- 292/1926 [CS] $70,000 (original); 421/1941 $1,500 (piling); 4350/1950 $1,000 (shed); 3106/1959 $40,000 (addition to northeast corner); 3905/1980 $100,000 (underpinning); 598/1981 $150,000 (excavate basement); 150832/2008 $60,000 (spray foam insulation in attic)

Information:

- 41 x 146 ft.

- 1981 partial basement under south end of building- concrete walls, 12’+ ceilings

- nave with oak doors, 10 fir trusses, stained glass, oak panelling in chancel

- tower 40’

ARCHITECT – E. PRAIN & G.C. PARFITT

CONTRACTOR – SUTHERLAND CONSTRUCTION CO.
Edgar Prain

Edgar Prain was born on March 21, 1881 in Broughty Ferry, Scotland and received his professional education at Collegiate School in his home town. After graduation he worked in the offices of T.S. Robertson, architect, Dundee, Scotland and then for a year for architect H. Harclay in Glasgow. From 1902 to 1907 he worked in the Architect’s Department of the London County Council, London, England, and participated in a number of large housing projects.\(^1\) He came to Winnipeg in 1909 and worked for a short time as a draughtsman in the offices of architect Hugh G. Holman. He began a private practice in 1912 that lasted nearly half a century, either alone or in partnership with other prominent local designers. Prain served as president of the Manitoba Association of Architects in 1939.\(^2\)

Prain lived in East and North Kildonan and continued his own practice until 1951 when he partnered with James T.L. Ward as Prain and Ward. In 1953 he became a consultant for the Winnipeg firm of Ward and McDonald (his son Edgar Prain, Jr. also joined the firm).

Prain retired in December of 1957 and died on January 30, 1958.\(^3\) He is buried at Old Kildonan Cemetery.\(^4\)

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\(^3\) Winnipeg Tribune, January 30, 1958, p. 37.

\(^4\) Henderson's Directory, 1910-60; and “Architect Files,” Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.
A list of his work includes:5

**H.G. Holman and E. Prain:**
- D.A. Ross House, 47 Balmoral Street (1910)
- F.W. Scott House, 190 Kingsway (1910)
- Regent Apartments, Osborne Street (1910)
- Eastman Factory, Young Street (1910)
- W.J. Toshack House, Cathedral Avenue (1910)

**E. Prain:**
- Verona Apartments, 730 Victor Street (1911)
- Acadia Apartments, 590 Victor Street (1911)
- A.M. Manson House, Aubrey Street (1911)
- Three houses for J. Johannson, Victor Street (1911)
- Lanark Apartments, 693 Maryland Street (1912)
- Reliance Block, 480 Young Street (1912)
- James B. Brown Warehouse, 902 Home Street (1912)
- S.M. Cameron House, Harvard Avenue (1912)
- Apartment Block for J.J. Swanson, Maryland Street (1913)
- M.A. McQueen House, Nassau Street (1913)
- Westholm Apartments, 729 Wellington Avenue (1913)
- St. Paul’s Lutheran Old Folks’ Home, Melville, Saskatchewan (1913)
- Elvira Court, 116 Emily Street (1914)
- Apartment Block for Daykin-Scott Co., Maryland Street (1914)
- Apartment Block for J. Johnson, Emily Street (1914)
- Salisbury School No. 2, 795 Prince Rupert Avenue (1920) – demolished
- Prince Edward School, 649 Brazier Street (1920)
- Maritime Apartments, 477 Wardlaw Avenue (1926)
- St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue (1926, with G. Parfitt)
- St. John’s Presbyterian Church, 251 Bannerman Avenue (1928, with G. Parfitt) - Grade III
- Chalmers United Church, Spruce Street at Barrett Avenue, 1928 (demolished in 1977)
- Stony Mountain School addition, Stony Mountain, Manitoba (1930)
- Christian Science Church, Inskter Boulevard (ca.1932)
- Whitehall Apartments, 100 Osborne Street South (ca.1932)
- Perth Dye Works Limited Building addition, Portage Avenue (1933 and 1937)
- Theatre for J.E. Bailey of Windsor Amusement Company, St. Mary’s Road at Mager Drive (1935)

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5 City of Winnipeg Building Permits, 1910-1926; Western Canada Contractor and Builder, various issues (courtesy D. Lyon); “Architect Files,” Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship; WAF; and Hill.
E. Prain (continued):

- Mordue Brothers Funeral Home, Broadway at Edmonton Street (1936)
- Powell Equipment Company, 1060 Arlington Street, 1945
- Deer Lodge United Church, 2093 Portage Avenue, 1946; addition, 1956 (now demolished)
- United Church, 4 Main Street, Sanford, Manitoba, 1948-1953
- School for Selkirk District No. 68, Selkirk, Manitoba, 1949
- MacLeod's Limited, 101st Street, Edmonton, Alberta, 1949
Gilbert C. Parfitt

Gilbert C. Parfitt was born in Kingswinford, County Staffordshire, England on December 22, 1886, studying architecture in Birmingham and working there beginning ca.1905. He immigrated to Canada in 1912 and settled in Winnipeg and took a position as draftsman in the Manitoba Department of Public Works in 1913 under Victor Horwood. From 1920-1929, Parfitt had his own private practice, designing a number of varied structures. From 1929 until his retirement in 1957, he again worked for the provincial government as: Acting Building Superintendent (1929-1933); Building Superintendent (1933-1944); and Provincial Architect and Superintendent of Public Buildings (1944-1957).

Perhaps Parfitt’s best known work was the Winnipeg Cenotaph in Memorial Park (1928), built in the midst of a controversy over the awarding of the contract after a judged competition.

Parfitt was a founding member of the Manitoba Association of Architects in 1914, twice serving as its president (1927 and 1942). Parfitt moved to British Columbia in 1963 and died in Vancouver on May 24, 1966.

A list of Parfitt’s work includes:2

- War Memorial Cenotaph, Stonewall MB (1922)
- St. Martin-in-the-Field Anglican Church, 160 Smithfield Avenue (1922)
- Brookdale School, Brookdale, MB (1924) – destroyed by fire
- A.P. Paget House, 229 Park Boulevard (1925)
- Nurses’ Residence, Selkirk Mental Hospital, Selkirk, MB (1925)
- St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue (1926, with E. Prain)
- Ninette School No. 1028, Ninette, MB (1926)
- Shoal Lake School No. 458, Shoal Lake, MB (1926) – demolished

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G. Parfitt designs continued:

St. John’s Presbyterian Church, 251 Bannerman Avenue (1928, with E. Prain) – Grade III
Winnipeg Cenotaph, Memorial Boulevard (1928)
Deloraine School No. 490, Deloraine, MB (1928) – demolished
Tier Building, University of Manitoba (1932, with A.A. Stoughton)
Buller Building, University of Manitoba (1932, with A.A. Stoughton)
Brandon Hospital for Mental Diseases, Women’s Pavilion, Brandon, MB (1932)

Work for the Department of Public Works:

Major addition, Selkirk Mental Hospital, Selkirk, MB (1929-1930)
Headingley Jail, Headingley, MB (1929-1930)
Manitoba Home for Girls, Main Street (1930-1931)
Administration Building and two cottages, Provincial Industrial Training School for Boys,
    Portage la Prairie, MB (1930)
Provincial Mental Hospital, Portage la Prairie, MB (1937 and addition in 1950)
Plate 1 – Aaron Arrowsmith’s 1816 map of the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, and the original layout of the river lots granted to the Selkirk Settlers by Lord Selkirk in 1817. St. John’s Anglican Church property is at #1, Kildonan Presbyterian Church property is at #2.
Plate 2 – St. John’s Anglican Mission Church, 1822. (St. John’s Cathedral website.)

Plate 3 – St. John’s Anglican Church and later Cathedral, ca.1853. The wood buttresses were necessitated by the severe flood of 1852 that structurally damaged the building. (St. John’s Cathedral website.)
Plate 4 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral (third church building, second Cathedral), ca.1908. (Peel’s Prairie Provinces, University of Alberta Libraries, Postcard No. 1931.)

Plate 5 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, ca.1890. (Courtesy of St. John’s Cathedral Archives, Code Collection.)
Plate 6 – The Parish Hall (originally known as the Sunday School Building, pictured shortly after construction in 1887. Original elements no longer extant include the small gable dormers and the bell tower. The picture also shows the west end that would be covered by the 1915 addition. (Courtesy of St. John’s Cathedral Archives, Code Collection.)
Plate 7 – Former St. John’s Parish Hall, 181 Church Avenue (now a multi-tenant condominium development), south façade, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

Plate 8 – Construction of the present St. John’s Anglican Church, 1926. The pile of material in the foreground is likely from the 1862 building. (Courtesy of St. John’s Cathedral Archives, Code Collection.)
Plate 9 – Architect’s Plans, “Elevation to River,” St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 1926. (Plan No. 929/1926, City of Winnipeg.)
Plate 10 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, date unknown. (St. John’s Cathedral website, stjohnscathedral.ca/2011/01/13/st-johns-from-above/.)
Plate 11 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral Cemetery, 135 Anderson Avenue, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)
Plate 12 – Northwest Rebellion Monument, St. John’s Anglican Cathedral Cemetery, 135 Anderson Avenue, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 13 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, east façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Plate 14 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, north end of east façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 15 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, west façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Plate 16 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, north and west façades, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 17 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, south façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Plate 18 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, north façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 20 – Architect’s Plans, “Ground Floor Plan,” St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 1926. (Plan No. 929/1926, City of Winnipeg.)
Plate 21 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, solid oak octagonal pulpit presented to the Cathedral in 1907 carved by Swiss artist R. Dien, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)
Plate 22 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, brass eagle lectern, used since 1890, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)
Plate 23 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, transept stain glass windows, designed by Western Art Glass, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

Plate 24 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, basement, “John West Hall,” 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)
Plate 25 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, altar, 2017. The stained glass window was installed in 1932 and designed by Cakebread Robey and Company, England. (M. Peterson, 2017.)
Plate 26 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, nave, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)
Plate 27 – St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue, chancel, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)