

44,600			87,2,400		
49,200		\$63,100	\$61,900		
42,900		\$56,100	\$63,900		
49,400		\$43,000	\$68,500	McINTYRE AV	
1,000		\$46,100	\$60,800	\$90,000	\$63
89,800		\$96,100	\$60,100	\$56,300	\$83
2,800		\$45,600	\$44,600	\$58,900	\$70
8,100		\$48,100	\$43,400	\$60,300	\$52
7,500		\$60,600	\$43,400	\$59,400	\$58
2,700		\$41,400	\$47,800	\$58,900	\$67
1,300		\$55,500	\$71,300	\$59,800	\$76
2,900		\$92,900	\$52,700	\$61,200	\$47
9,800		\$46,600	\$242,000	\$58,800	\$39
3,700		\$48,100	\$146,700	\$490,000	\$47
4,200		\$48,100	\$146,700	\$490,000	\$47
3,800		\$53,200	\$53,200	\$490,000	\$47
1,900		\$53,200	\$53,200	\$490,000	\$47
1,900		\$53,200	\$53,200	\$490,000	\$47
1,900		\$53,200	\$53,200	\$490,000	\$47

906	894 892 890 889	884	840B 840A	806	804
6,500	\$177,400	\$146,700	\$243,000	\$77,900	\$197,000
7,500	\$58,000	\$65,300	\$46,800	\$368,100	\$47,000
3,300	\$68,000	\$53,800	\$49,700	\$43,800	\$56,700
800	\$60,300	\$82,100	\$50,700	\$37,100	\$57,700
900	\$44,100	\$62,100	\$51,700	\$38,600	\$58,300
900	\$42,000	\$52,000	\$85,900	\$41,900	\$53,000
700	\$65,900	\$51,000	\$65,600	\$30,600	\$49,200
1,000				\$53,800	\$66,900



790 BANNING STREET
FIRST FEDERATED CHURCH OF UNITARIANS
 PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



790 BANNING STREET FIRST FEDERATED CHURCH OF UNITARIANS

Date of Construction: 1921

Building Permit: 2382

Architect: First Federated Church of Unitarians Congregation (owner)

Contractor: J. McDiarmid Company

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Built at a cost of \$20,000,¹ this brick and concrete structure has stood for nearly 90 years on a busy corner in Winnipeg's West End.

The front (east) façade includes the centrally placed entrance set in a projecting section and cladding of smooth-cut stone rising more than a metre above grade leading to the brick of the superstructure. Openings on this elevation, as elsewhere, feature pointed arches and the corners are embellished with simple brick and stone buttresses. The building is covered by a medium-pitched gable roof.

The north and south façades include large square-headed windows in the raised basement wall and in the superstructure. The rear (west) façade is blank.



Front (east) and south façades, 2009

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. There do not appear to be major exterior alterations to the original design or materials.

The church has elements of the Modern or Late Gothic Revival style that 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.”²

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.³

James McDiarmid (1855-1934) was a contractor who undertook work across Western Canada including the construction of this church. He also became an architect and was a co-founder and/or director of a number of construction industry enterprises.⁴

Born March 9, 1855 at Dunkeld, Perthshire, Scotland, McDiarmid trained with his father in draughting and contracting. He pursued the same occupation after coming to Winnipeg in 1881 or 1882 with some of his brothers. Other siblings followed, including John (1861-1943) with whom a contracting partnership known as J. and J. McDiarmid was formed in the 1890s. In 1906, James and John McDiarmid, along with another brother Peter (1857-



Front (east) and north façades, 2009

1915) and fellow contractors Edward Cass, Peter Muir and Thomas Borgford, incorporated the J. McDiarmid Company.⁵

McDiarmid continued to be registered as an architect⁶ up to his death on February 24, 1934. After his brother John died in 1943, steps were initiated to dissolve the McDiarmid Company, which ended in 1946.⁷

Work by James McDiarmid or the company that has been designated by the City of Winnipeg includes Penrose (Bell) House, 444 Logan Avenue (originally 232 Bell Avenue), built 1894 (Grade III); Donald H. Bain Building (The Brokerage), 115 Bannatyne Avenue (1899, Grade II), Former McClary Building, 185 Bannatyne Avenue (1899, Grade III), Marshall-Wells Warehouse, 123 Bannatyne Avenue (1900, Grade II), Anne Building, 87 King Street (1901, Grade III), Wilson House 545 Broadway, (1904, Grade III), Canada Building, 352 Donald Street (1910, Grade III), Ralph Connor House, 54 West Gate (1913, Grade II), Pantages (Playhouse) Theatre, 180 Market Avenue (1913, Grade II), R.R. Scott House, 29 Ruskin Row (1914, Grade II), Scott Fruit Company Warehouse, 319 Elgin Avenue (1914, Grade III) and Robinson Building (Public Press Building), 290 Vaughan Street (1917, Grade III).⁸



Rear (west) and south façades, 2009

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Unitarianism in Winnipeg, and in North America in general, was diverse with various groups arising from many different liberal religious backgrounds. Both the Icelandic- and British/American-based sects practiced separately in the city.

The earliest work was done by Icelandic groups, which established a presence in Winnipeg in 1891, erecting a church the next year. A second group of Icelanders built a new church, known as First Icelandic Unitarian Church of Winnipeg, in 1904 at the corner of Sherbrook Street and Sargent Avenue. This would become the centre of Icelandic Unitarianism in Winnipeg until the congregation's move to their new church on Banning Street in 1921.⁹

An Icelandic Lutheran Church had also organized, known as "The Tabernacle". This group built a church at the corner of Furby Street and Sargent Avenue in 1894. Within this congregation there were two sides: one favouring independence and the other wanting to join the Lutheran Synod. When the two factions could not agree, the independent faction split and in 1912 built the church at 580 Victor Street, known as First Lutheran Church. When Lutheran vs. Unitarian factions again developed, the Lutherans were awarded the Victor Street building, the Unitarians combined with the First Icelandic Unitarian Church congregation to build the Banning Street facility in 1921 (the official name of the congregation became "The First Federated Church of Unitarians and Other Liberal Christians").¹⁰

A third separate stream of Unitarianism came from British roots, this group's first meeting was held in 1904 and was connected to the American Unitarian Association of Boston. All Souls' Unitarian was incorporated in 1909 and completed their fine church at 103 Furby



Left: Former All Souls' Unitarian Church, 103 Furby Street
Right: First Lutheran Church, 580 Victor Street

Street in 1913. In 1929, this congregation decided to vacate its Furby Street building and worship at the First Federated Church's facility, holding separate English and Icelandic services.¹¹ This continued until the Banning Street was vacated and taken over and renamed the Sri Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Winnipeg.

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 Unitarian churches remaining standing in the City of Winnipeg and a good example of the type of worship facility constructed during the pre-World War I boom period by many of the city's congregations small- to medium-sized congregations and an reminder of an important Icelandic institution located in Winnipeg's Icelandic sector, the West End;
- its associations- its long-term connections to Unitarian congregations, both Icelandic and British/American;
- its design- a good example of the Modern or Late Gothic Revival style;
- its architect- N/A;
- its location- defines an important intersection and contributes greatly to two historic streetscapes in Winnipeg's West End; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (east) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #2382/1921.
- 2 L. Maitland et al., A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd., 1992), p. 166.
- 3 Ibid., p. 166; and Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, 1991), p. 20.
- 4 Biographical information supplied by R.R. Rostecki.
- 5 Province of Manitoba, The Manitoba Gazette 35, 29 (July 21, 1906), pp. 945-947.
- 6 From lists of members of the Manitoba Association of Architects published annually in the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal, 1923-24 to 1928 and 1930 to 1933.
- 7 Province of Manitoba, The Manitoba Gazette 74, 10 (March 10, 1945), p. 248; and 75, 45 (November 9, 1946), p. 1587.
- 8 Historical Buildings Committee records.
- 9 Petursson, Rev. Philip M., "The Unitarian Church of Winnipeg, 1891-1966," in The Icelandic Canadian (Spring 1967).
- 10 Loc. cit.
- 11 Ransom, Edgar J., "The Unitarian Church of Winnipeg, 1904-1943," in The Canadian Unitarian, Vol. 2, No. 8 (December 1943).