

95 MACDONALD AVENUE

**POINT DOUGLAS UNITED (PRESBYTERIAN) CHURCH
(OUR LADY OF LOURDES ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH)**

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2007



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POINT DOUGLAS UNITED (PRESBYTERIAN) CHURCH
(OUR LADY OF LOURDES ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH)**

Date of Construction: 1905

Building Permit: 2682/1905

Architect: McDiarmid, John

Contractor: Brynjolffsson, S.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Designed as a traditional Presbyterian Church at the turn-of-the-century, this brick and stone structure has been used as a religious facility for over 100 years.

The front (south) façade features two brick corner towers framing the projecting stone entrance. Rusticated stone is used to clad the lower portion of the façade and as quoins on the towers, and smooth-cut stone accents window openings and the entrance. This stone accenting takes the form of egg and dart moulding, carved faces and floral motifs. Upper storey windows on this façade have been bricked in. The pyramidal roofs of the towers are highlighted by exposed rafters and wood finials.



Front (south) and west façades, 2006

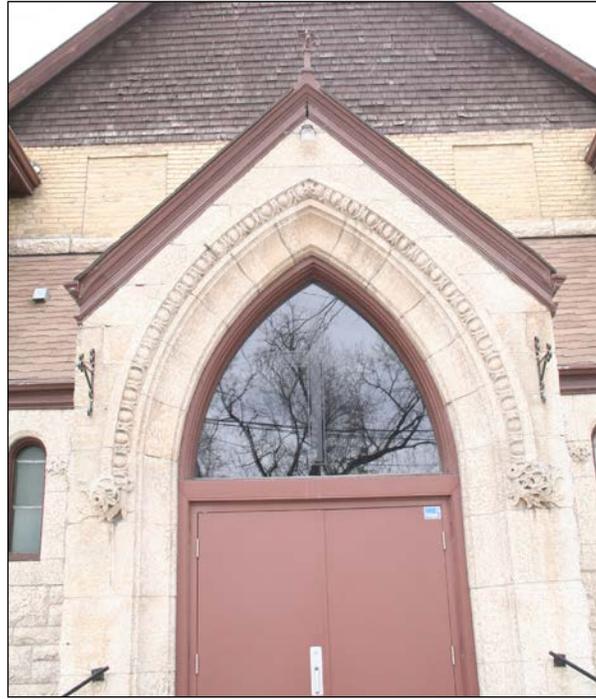
The east and west façades feature stone bases, brick walls and pointed arch windows. The rear (north) façade includes a number of square headed window openings that have nearly all been bricked in.

The building measures approximately (56 x 78 feet) and cost \$20,000 to complete in 1905.¹

Stylistically, the church building has many of the features of the Gothic Revival style – the pointed arch, the use of stone, finials, overall symmetry, etc. The style was popular throughout North America from 1900 to the 1940s and its use was especially evident on large schools and university buildings, so much so that it was often referred to as Collegiate Gothic.² Winnipeg has a good collection of pre-1915 Gothic Revival style buildings.

James McDiarmid was born on March 9, 1855 in Dunkeld, Perthshire, Scotland, and his early adulthood was spent in the building trade in that country.³ He came to Winnipeg in 1882, during the real estate boom, with two of his brothers, Peter (1857-1915) and John (1863-1943). Peter took up farming in the Poplar Point district; John and James chose to become involved in the building trade that at the time was struggling to keep up with local demand. One of their early contracts was the construction of the Broadway Drill Hall (1884-1919) on the site of the present Legislative Building. At the time, the brothers were part of the firm Murray and McDiarmid, although G.W. Murray would form his own company in the early 1890s.

During the 1890s, James McDiarmid began designing as well as building structures. St. Andrew's Presbyterian (United) Church, corner Elgin Avenue and Ellen Street, built in 1894, was one of his earliest works as an architect. The J. McDiarmid Company Limited incorporated in 1906 and went on to build many outstanding Western Canadian structures.



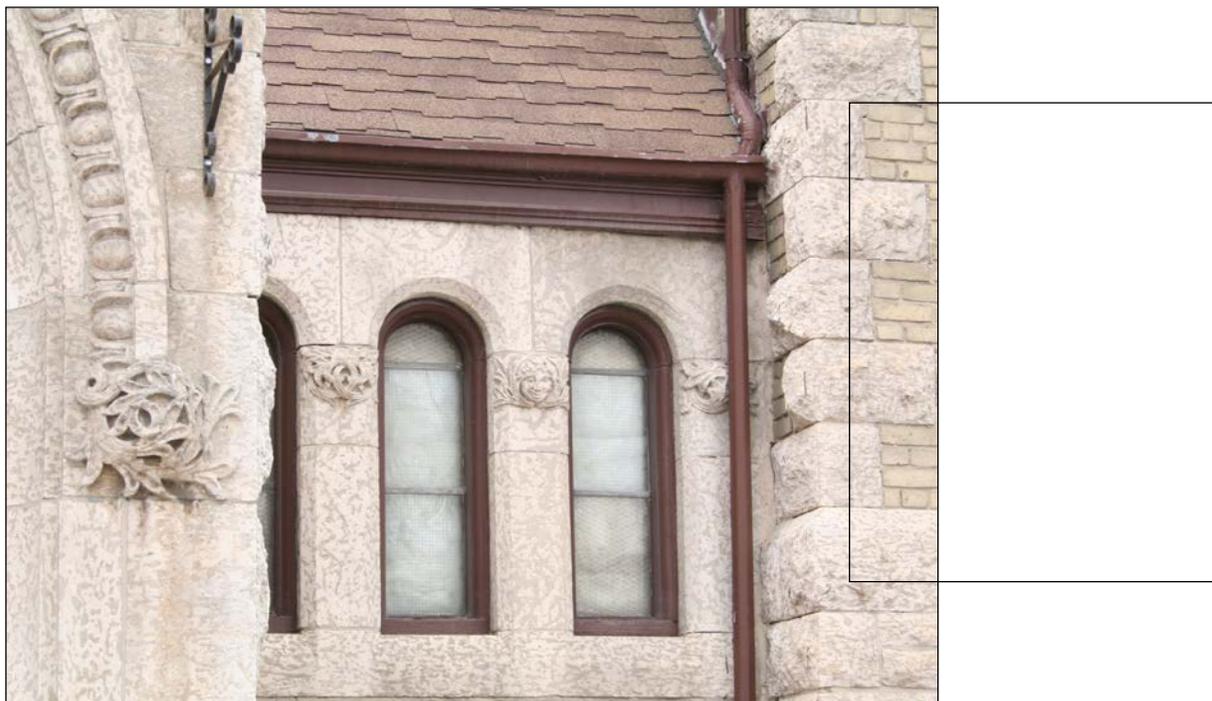
Front (south) entrance detail, 2006

James was also known as the “Father of Municipal Golf in Winnipeg,” having assisted in the establishment of the Kildonan Golf Course. He was an avid art collector and for many years was closely involved with the Winnipeg Art Gallery. He died on February 24, 1934.

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), 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).⁴

The firm also completed the Manitoba Legislative Building on Broadway after the original contractor was fired over charges of embezzlement and fraud. He and his firm have received 10 points from the Historical Buildings Committee.

Local Icelandic builder S. Brynjolffson is listed as the contractor of the building.



Front (south) window detail, 2006

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

This small church served the immigrant community of the area for many years until it was sold and reborn as a Roman Catholic church for a new and growing immigrant community in the city.

It was owned by the Point Douglas Presbyterian and then United congregation until its sale to the Roman Catholic Diocese in 1963 and Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Slovenian Parish.⁵ Slovenian immigrants arrived in Winnipeg starting around 1930 and to this group was added 15 families who arrived during the 1940s. Between 1956 and 1960, almost 200 families arrived in the city. Most of the early Slovenian Catholics worshiped at Our Lady of Fatima, Czechoslovakian Parish on Main Street but with their numbers growing rapidly in the late 1950s, they purchased the church on MacDonald Avenue. The building not only serves as a place of worship but also a meeting place for Winnipeg's Slovakian community to this day.⁶



Rear (north) and east façades, 2006

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 church buildings in downtown Winnipeg and an example of the early missionary effort of English-based parishes to tend to immigrant communities in their neighbourhoods;
- its associations- its long-term connections to two parishes- Point Douglas Presbyterian (United) and Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Slovenian Parish;
- its design- an excellent example of the Gothic Revival style;
- its architect- J. McDiarmid was a respected and important designer and builder;
- its location- contributes to its streetscape; and
- its integrity- its façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



East façade, 2006

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, 2682/1905.
- 2 Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and
Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, 1991), p. 20.
- 3 R.R. Rostecki, “Manitoba Hall – 291½-295 Portage Avenue,” report for the Historical Buildings
Committee, April 1991, p. 24.
- 4 Historical Buildings Committee records.
- 5 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 13-091178100, 1910-1970; and
<http://www.brezmadezna.com/zupnija/winnipeg/history.htm>.
- 6 Ibid.