



253 MAPLEWOOD AVENUE

RIVERVIEW SCHOOL

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



253 MAPLEWOOD AVENUE RIVERVIEW SCHOOL

Date of Construction: 1929

Building Permit: 3392/1929 (Plans at City Storage)

Architect: Unknown

Contractor: Unknown

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Built in the Riverview neighbourhood in an interior bend of the Red River, Riverview School (originally 620 Casey Street), is one of the few 1920s era public school buildings constructed by the Winnipeg School Division that continues to serve its community.

The original rectangular building fronts Casey Street, the front façade (west) banks of thin windows on the upper two floors separated by modest brick pilasters. The main entrance, located nearer the north end of the building, is set in heavy stone and features a pointed arch that is copied in the window opening above. The school's name, "RIVERVIEW" is carved in the stone above the entrance. The north façade has seen some alteration, some of the windows have been bricked in and a thin addition was added. The south façade appears to be relatively original and the rear (east) elevation is similar to the front with thin windows and pilasters. A large addition (gymnasium) is attached to the rear of the school.



Front (west) and south façades, 2009

The building sits on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and although some windows have been bricked in and additions have been completed, much of the original material and design have remained unchanged.

The school is a reduced example of the Modern or Collegiate Gothic style. This style 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.”¹

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 it found widespread expression on the campuses of many North American universities and then in the public school system, it became known as Collegiate Gothic.²



Rear (east) façade, 2009

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

This is the second school on this site; the original frame building was completed in 1908 and added to in 1918.³

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

Under the Historical Buildings By-law, this building meets a number of important criteria:

- its historical importance- one of only a handful of 1920s era public school buildings still operating in Winnipeg and a good illustration of the type of subdued structure built during this period;
- its associations- its long-term connections to public education, the Winnipeg School Division and the neighbourhood of Riverview;
- its design- a reduced example of the Modern or Collegiate Gothic style;
- its architect- N/A;
- its location- contributes to its neighbourhood streetscapes and a conspicuous building in the area; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



The 1908 school with the 1929 building in the background, no date
(Riverview School website)

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ L. Maitland et al., A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd., 1992), p. 166.
- ² Ibid., p. 166; and Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, 1991), p. 20.
- ³ “Two New Schools”, Manitoba Free Press, November 9, 1908 and “Winnipeg Schools – Riverview”, Manitoba Free Press, November 16, 1922.