

## 135 ANDERSON AVENUE – ST. JOHN’S ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL & CEMETERY

*Edgar Prain & Gilbert C. Parfill, 1926*



The present St. John’s Anglican Cathedral, built in 1926, is the fourth church built on this site by the congregation which dates to the very beginning of Anglicanism in Western Canada in the early 1800s. It sits within one of Western Canada’s oldest continuously used cemeteries, approximately 4.0 hectares in size, with known headstones dating to the 1830s.

Reverend John West (1778-1845), an Anglican, was the first Protestant missionary in the Selkirk Settlement, arriving in 1820 and building a log church and school near the present Cathedral site in 1822. A second church, built of stone, was completed in 1833. In 1849, the Diocese of Rupert’s Land was created and the church was consecrated as a Cathedral in 1853.

After suffering extensive damage during the 1852 flood, the parish built a new Cathedral, 1861-1862 using stone from the previous structure. This building was abandoned in 1913 and in 1926, the congregation built and occupied its fine new Cathedral.

The building is an excellent example of the Modern or Late Gothic Revival Style, very popular in the design of public buildings after 1900. Elements of this simpler, subdued style found on the Cathedral include its use of monochromatic stone for exterior walls, pointed arches over window and door openings, buttresses, a tower and window tracery.

The exterior includes the 12.2-metre high tower, 6.7 metres square, several projecting entrances and numerous panes of finely crafted stained glass. The 2-storey section in the northeast corner was added in 1959 and a basement was excavated under the south end of the building in 1982. The cost of construction in 1926 was estimated at \$70,000.

The interior of the Cathedral features a large nave with east and west transepts and barrel-vaulted ceilings and a large chancel with a wealth of wood detailing. It also includes many artefacts dating to the early days of the Parish, including memorial tablets, the Italian marble font (used since 1887), a brass eagle lectern (installed in 1890) and the oak pulpit (presented to the Cathedral in 1907).

The design, finishes and organization of the exterior and interior have not been extensively altered.

Edgar Prain (1881-1958) and Gilbert C. Parfitt (1886-1966) were the architects responsible for the design of the Cathedral and Sutherland Construction Company was the contractor. The Scottish born and trained Prain and British born and trained Parfitt arrived in Winnipeg prior to World War I and both enjoyed successful private practices. The pair worked on only one other structure in partnership, St. John's Presbyterian Church, 251 Bannerman Avenue, built in 1928 (Grade III).

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Exterior-

- The south façade facing Anderson Avenue, the east façade facing the Red River, the west facade facing O'Meara Street and the north facade facing Mortimer Place;
- The east facade with its wide buttressed tower at its south end with pointed arched and rectilinear openings and a flat roof, buttresses and pointed arched windows with tracery on the main building and the cross gable ends;

- The west facade feature projecting entrances at the north and south end and two cross gables near the north end;
- The south elevation features a large gable end with three thin pointed arched windows; and
- The north elevation with gable end with embellished stained glass window with tracery.

Interior-

- The Cathedral's finishes, volume of space, organ, fixtures and millwork.