

TUXEDO SCHOOL
2300 CORYDON AVENUE

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings Committee
Researcher: Murray Peterson
February 1998

TUXEDO SCHOOL

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The development of the Town of Tuxedo is intimately connected to Frederick William Heubach who had arrived in Winnipeg in 1879 as the private secretary of the Land Commissioner of the Hudson's Bay Company. He stayed with the Company until 1893 when he took over the position of Manager of the Winnipeg Industrial Development Exhibition Association. In 1905, he incorporated the Tuxedo Park Company Limited, the list of investors included businessmen from all over North America. The Company acquired 3,000 acres of land from a number of local farming families for over \$½-million and hired a Montreal-based landscape architect to draw up plans for the "Tuxedo Park" development. This development failed because of other, closer up-scale districts such as Crescentwood which funneled off some of the potential investors in the Tuxedo Park scheme.¹

Heubach reorganized his land company into the South Winnipeg Company, increased his holdings to 11,000 acres with the help of new backers, including some British money. A new American landscape architect was hired and the new subdivision created (see Plate 1). This plan would be the blueprint for the development of Tuxedo with only subtle changes.² Throughout this entire period, Heubach and others believed that the University of Manitoba would build its campus on the Tuxedo property. Even when the Agricultural College relocated to Fort Garry, Heubach and others still felt the University would maintain some presence in Tuxedo (the University finally consolidated its campus at Fort Garry in 1926).

In 1913, the developers were able to incorporate the Town of Tuxedo with F.W. Heubach its first mayor, holding the office for only a short time until his death in June 1914.³

¹ Tuxedo: A History and Walking Tour (Winnipeg: Tuxedo Tour Committee, 1991), n.p.

² Ibid., n.p.

³ Ibid., n.p.

The first meeting of the new School District of Tuxedo #1709, was held January 28, 1914 at the Canada Cement Company plant in Tuxedo.⁴ The school, which became known as Tuxedo School No. 1, was built the same year on land described as the “dairy farm district” (Outer Two Miles of the Town of Tuxedo, Plan 1543, Block 2, Lots 12 to 22 and 34-44).⁵ This small school was used until June of 1954 when it was closed. It was sold to the Town of Tuxedo for \$1 in March 1961 and demolished.⁶ It was a small, frame structure that was adequate for the small, rural population it served.

The present school, known for many years as Tuxedo Public School No. 2, was built in the mid-1920s at the beginning of the major residential development stage of Tuxedo. As such, it would naturally be a slightly more ostentatious structure to match the expensive housing that surrounded it. The architect’s plans called for a solid brick structure, one-storey in height with a steep-pitched projecting front (north) entrance (Plate 1). The door was set in an ornate wooden frame and an ornamental brick arch was set above the small, paired windows atop the entrance (Plate 2). Windows throughout the building were large and multi-paned to afford the interior with ample natural light and ventilation. The School District issued a \$20,000 debenture for the construction of the new school on June 25, 1926.⁷ The architects and the District had set out to design and build a small facility that would fit in with the surrounding residential development, choosing brick instead of wood and adding some unique exterior elements.

Architects for the structure were the Winnipeg firm of Northwood and Chivers. Major George W. Northwood (1876-1959) came to Winnipeg in 1905 as a graduate of McGill University, Brigadier Major Cyril W.U. Chivers (1879-1969) had arrived in the city in 1898. Both were distinguished World War I veterans and formed their partnership after the fighting had ended.⁸ They were responsible for many fine public and private structures including the Canadian Wheat

⁴ “Minutes,” School District of Tuxedo #1709 (below as Minutes), January 28, 1914. Courtesy of the Assiniboine South School Division No. 3, C. Guicheret.

⁵ Minutes, Letter dated February 27, 1961 and Agreement signed March 11, 1961.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Minutes, Debenture dated June 25, 1926.

⁸ Winnipeg Free Press, December 15, 1959 and August 11, 1969; and Winnipeg Telegram, December 15, 1959.

Board Building, 423 Main Street (1929), the second Assiniboine Park Pavilion (1929-30), and the Federal Building, 269 Main Street (1935).

On the interior, wood was used throughout to increase the warmth of the space. The original school featured two classrooms to the rear (south), office space and a cloakroom in the front (north) and a staircase along the front wall leading to the basement. Here was located the offices of the Town of Tuxedo policeman, Paul Behr, and his dog, Sprite. The office also included a small cell, the Constable using it to detain criminals until he could move them to Winnipeg.⁹

It is obvious that the community grew quickly and by the early 1930s, the District issued another debenture, this one for \$11,500, for a two-room addition to the south side of the school (Plate 2).¹⁰ The addition matched the fenestration and building materials of the original school and provided much needed room (Plate 3).¹¹ Frank Ruttan was hired as the superintendent of construction on the project.¹²

During the 1940s and 1950s, the school and the District continue to offer education for area children, although the higher grades were sent to Winnipeg School Division facilities because of the low numbers of pupils in Tuxedo. Rising populations and the closure of the older school in the mid-1950s necessitated the construction of an addition to the east side of the school. Debentures for \$80,000 and \$30,000 were issued for the construction of a three-room addition and an assembly hall.¹³ The architect for this addition was E.J. Smith, the contractor was the Roziere Construction Company. It was officially opened on January 7, 1958 and was renamed Tuxedo School.¹⁴

⁹ Information from Mrs. D. Devick, daughter of P. Behr, courtesy of Tuxedo School, C. Tanguay.

¹⁰ Minutes, Debenture dated June 6, 1932.

¹¹ One of the fascinating items discussed by the District's Board regarding overcrowding occurred in 1956 when it was decided that if the capacity of any room was reached, the overflow children would be sent east to Winnipeg School Division facilities. The choice would be made based on the length of time the family had lived in Tuxedo.

¹² Winnipeg Free Press, May 21, 1932, p. 25 (rear section).

¹³ Minutes, February 8, 1957 and Debentures dated April 29, 1957.

¹⁴ Minutes, June 4, 1957 and January 2, 1958.

Just over a year later, the Tuxedo School District was amalgamated with a number of other small Districts to form the Assiniboine South School Division No. 3. The vote in the region was overwhelmingly in favour of the move except in Tuxedo where the totals were 348 against and only 23 for. Tuxedo became Ward 1.¹⁵ Strong opposition to this move was voiced by the Tuxedo School District which argued that amalgamation would force it to end its policy of sending the older pupils to the Winnipeg School Division.¹⁶

Losing this battle, additional space at Tuxedo School was needed for the upper grades and a \$45,000 debenture was issued on April 20, 1959 for the construction of a three-room addition. Designed by Smith, Carter and Searle, it was not completed by September of 1959 and the grade 7 and 8 students had classes in the auditorium.¹⁷

The present structure has seen a number of changes on both the exterior and interior. The most obvious and drastic alteration to the exterior is the replacement of many of the original windows with smaller units and the filling of the extra space (Plate 4). This has negatively affected the look of the school. The additions to the east side of the building are low and have been carefully designed to blend with rather than detract from the original design (Plate 5).

On the interior, there is a mix of original and renovated space, classrooms have been upgraded over time (Plate 6) but there is also a good deal of the original finishes remaining (Plates 7 and 8).

¹⁵ Minutes, March 20, 1959. The vote was taken February 27, 1959.

¹⁶ Brief submitted to the School Division Boundaries Commission, December 18, 1958 (in Minutes Book).

¹⁷ Minutes, March 20 and August 21, 1959 and Debenture dated April 20, 1959.

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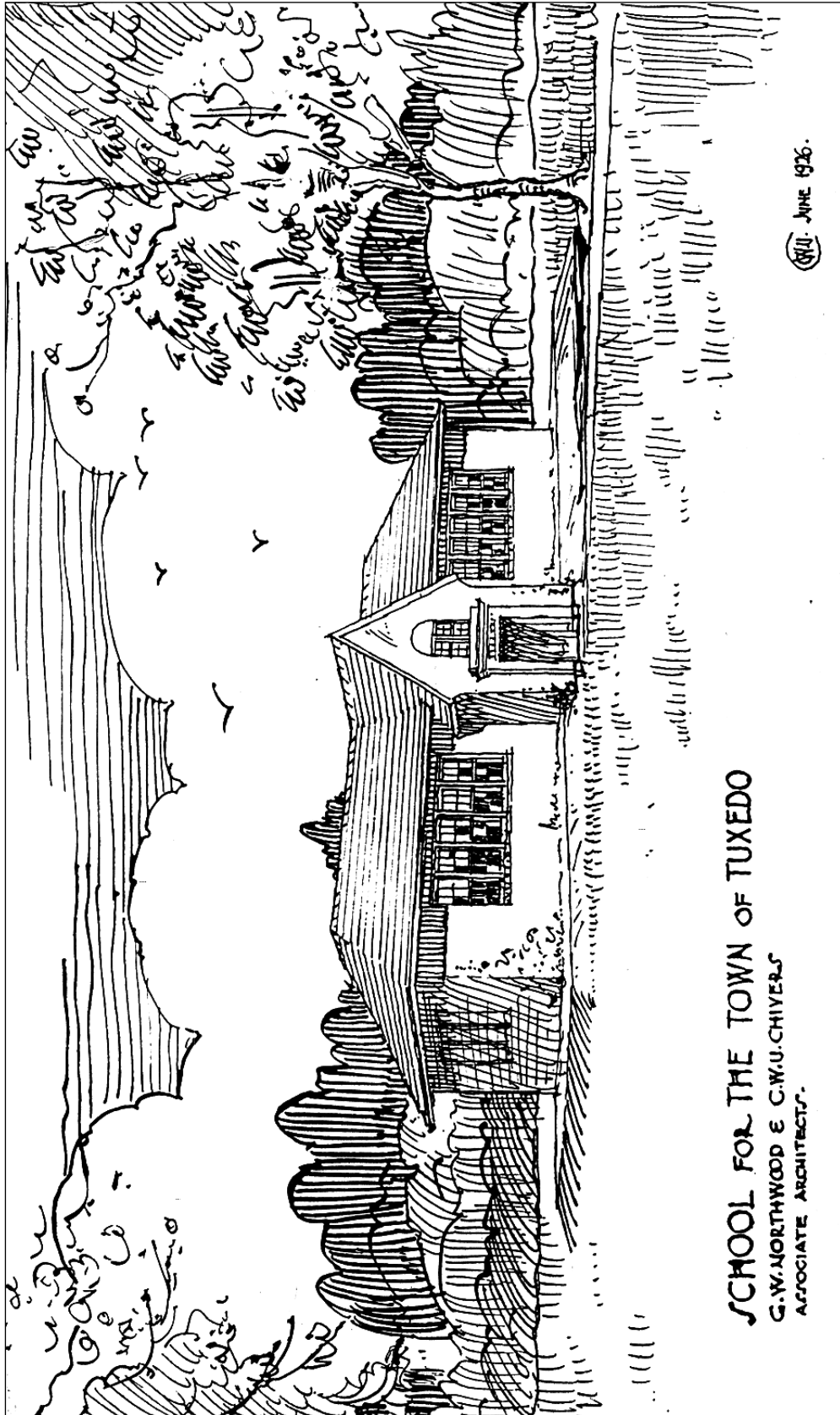


Plate 1 – Architect’s sketch of Tuxedo School, dated June 1926. (Courtesy of Tuxedo School, D. Fabas-Pirie, Principal.)

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Plate 2 – Front (north) entrance of original Tuxedo School, 2300 Corydon Avenue. (M. Peterson, 1998.)

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Plate 3 – Tuxedo Public School No. 2, 1939. Notice the large, multi-paned windows on the front and side elevations. (Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Peter McAdam Collection, #341.)

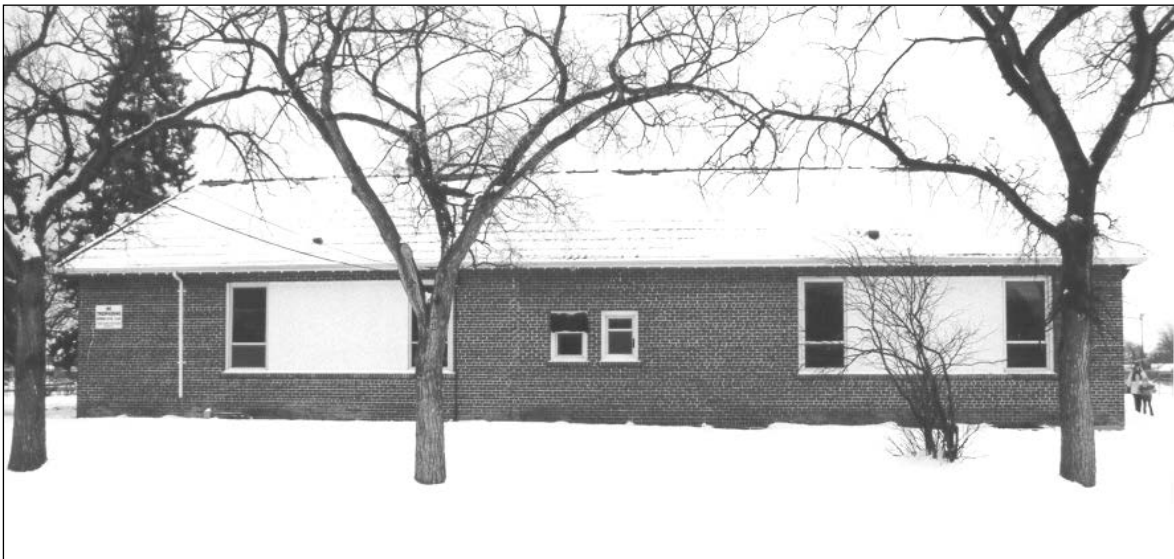


Plate 4 – Tuxedo School, west side. (M. Peterson, 1998.)

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Plate 5 – Tuxedo School, 1957 and 1959 additions. (M. Peterson, 1998.)



Plate 6 – Tuxedo School, original classroom space. (M. Peterson, 1998.)

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Plate 7 – Tuxedo School, interior hallway and staircase. (M. Peterson, 1998.)



Plate 8 – Tuxedo School, cloakroom at front (north) of building. (M. Peterson, 1998.)



CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Date: 18 February 1998

Assessment Record

Prepared By: M. Peterson

Building Address: 2300 Corydon Avenue

Building Name: Tuxedo School

Original Use: elementary school

Current Use: elementary school

Roll No. (Old): 30850 (---)

Municipality: 10

Ward: ---

Property or Occupancy Code: 83

Legal Description: ---

Location: south side between Grenfell and Lamont

Date of Construction: 1926-32 and 1957-59

Storeys: 1

Construction Type: brick veneer on concrete foundation (1926-32), brick on concrete block on concrete foundation (1957-59)

Building Permits (Plans available: [A] Archives; [M] Microfilm; [V] Vault):

- 1766/1972 \$7,500 (stairs - 30 x 5 addition at rear); 6098/1986 \$1,700 (enclose rear stairs); 4831/1981 \$8,000 (alterations to newer part)

Information:

- 1926-32 section 45 x 87 x 24 + = 96,648 cu. ft.

- 1957-59 section 96 x 108 x 18 + = 191,552 cu. ft.