

1055 DORCHESTER AVENUE – NO. 12 FIRE HALL
A. & W. Melville, 1911-12



With the rapid development of Winnipeg during the first decade of the twentieth century, the city was left racing to supply services to its new districts. Because fire protection was so critical to a city of predominantly wood-frame buildings heated by wood or coal burning furnaces, the Fire Department received more attention and resources than other municipal services. Between 1900 and 1914, thirteen new fire halls were constructed and in order to reduce costs, the same plans were used several times.

When No. 12 Fire Hall was constructed in 1911, the Crescentwood area was only sparsely settled and most of River Heights was non-existent. Development, however, was clearly spreading west, and within a few years the Fire Hall became centrally located.

Designed by architects Alexander and William Melville, this building was one of at least five identical fire halls constructed to specifications based on a prototypical design. It is two and a half stories of solid brick masonry resting on a stone foundation. The three vehicle doors opened

into a garage with a stable for eight horses at the rear. Bedrooms, a lavatory and a sitting room occupied the second floor, while the top storey was used for storage.

An Italianate hose-drying tower, curie-stepped gable with a paladin motif and an oriel window provide visual relief to an otherwise functional design. On the interior, a marble and iron stairway, pressed tin ceiling and white-glazed tiles on the main and second floors are elements that are particularly well preserved.

With the creation of Unicity, the fire hall was closed. It has recently been purchased and is to be converted into a single-family dwelling.