



1350 GROSVENOR AVENUE

RIVER HEIGHTS SCHOOL

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



1350 GROSVENOR AVENUE RIVER HEIGHTS SCHOOL

Date of Construction: 1947

Building Permit: 1570/1947

Architect: Unknown

Contractor: Unknown

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

One of the new, modern post-World War II schools built in Winnipeg using a new stylistic approach rejecting historic styles and reflecting an international modernism.

The 1947 building was one-storey in height, built of tapestry brick with stone accenting on a concrete foundation. Large banks of rectangular windows are placed rhythmically along the front (west) façade which includes curved corners at the both ends. Two entrances are also located on this elevation, located in tall rounded stone towers, both with the school's name carved in. The south end was added to in 1951 although some of the original school building is still visible. To the north end, a two-storey addition and an auditorium were completed in 1954. A one-storey addition to the east side of the building was completed in 1967 to house a theatre and library.¹



South façade, 2009

This school stands as one of Winnipeg's best and a rare example of the Art Moderne style, popular throughout the world in the 1935-1950 period. Growing out of a rejection by architects to the historic architectural styles, Art Moderne designers sought to reflect the industrial era and the age of machines through the streamlining of elevations, the rounding of corners, horizontal emphasis of windows and decorative bands and smooth wall surfaces and flat roofs. Glass block, aluminium and stainless steel, all modern materials of the day, were frequently incorporated into the designs.² Tec Voc High School, 1555 Wall Street (built in 1948) would be considered Winnipeg's best example of the style utilized on an educational structure.

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and despite several additions, its detailing and design of the original building has not been significantly altered.



Rear (east) and north façades, 2008

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

River Heights School opened in 1947 as an elementary school but switched to a Junior High School in 1953, switching roles with nearby Robert H. Smith School. It now functions as a Middle School for Grade 7 and 8 French Immersion students.

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- one of a handful of 1940s-era school buildings constructed by the Winnipeg School Division;
- its associations- its long-term connections to River Heights and the Winnipeg School Division;
- its design- an excellent example of the Art Moderne style;
- its architect- N/A;
- its location- contributes to its neighbourhood streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



North façade, no date

ENDNOTES:

- 1 Building information from the River Heights School website (www.wsd1.org/RiverHeights/history.htm), no date.
- 2 Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, 1991), p. 66.