This building embodies the following heritage values as described in the *Historical Resources By-law, 55/2014* (consolidated update July 13, 2016):

(a) The expansion of library services and the creation of modern spaces for these services, was a theme for post-World War II Winnipeg and the surrounding municipalities, towns and cities, including the City of West Kildonan, where this library was completed in 1967.

(b) Library services are an important civic responsibility that required building replacement or significant building upgrades as technology changed and use increased. The West Kildonan Branch remains an important part of Winnipeg’s library system.

(c) The building was designed by noted local architecture George A. Stewart who also designed the Fort Garry Library, 1360 Pembina Highway (1959) and the St. Vital Library at 6 Fermor Avenue (1963). John Miller and Sons Limited built the structure.

(d) The structure is an excellent example of the International Style of modern architecture, with its lack of attached ornamentation, angular lines, flat roofline, slender clerestory windows and projecting mullions.

(e) West Kildonan is one of the earliest areas in what became Winnipeg to be settled permanently by non-First Nations peoples and it has played an important role in Manitoba’s history.

(f) The main façades and the interior do not appear to have suffered significant alteration.
The area known today as West Kildonan is the earliest European permanent, agrarian settlement in Western Canada, begun in 1812 with the arrival of the Selkirk Settlers, a small group of families brought over from the British Isles by Hudson’s Bay Company major stock holder Lord Selkirk. After enduring the arduous trip from Hudson Bay, they were met by environmental setbacks – floods, grasshoppers, hail and drought – and by the hostility of many of the local inhabitants who rightly saw the settlement as an attempt to end a way of life that had developed over centuries and generations. The daily challenges of breaking the soil, planting crops, tending livestock and building homes combined to make life extremely trying. The family names of many of these settlers have become familiar to all Winnipeggers - Gunn, Bannerman, MacBeth, Polson, Matheson, McKay, McLeod, Sutherland, Ross, Flett and Inkster - and have been used to name streets throughout East and West Kildonan.

The Settlement survived these early years mainly because of the kindness and support of the area’s Indigenous population and Chief Peguis. It evolved and developed and in 1876, the entire area was organized politically into the Municipality of Kildonan, named after the parish in Scotland where many of the original settlers had come from. The area would continue its slow growth, as some of the larger parcels of land were subdivided to give offspring enough land to make a living.

In 1914, the Municipality was split into east and west of the Red River, the east side becoming the East Kildonan, the west became West Kildonan. Both municipalities included more urbanized sections in the south, where subdivision and city-like residential development had taken place, and rural areas in the north. After 1900, the City of Winnipeg also began to expand in all directions and in the north, pushed its border along Main Street from Aberdeen Avenue to Inkster Boulevard (1900) and then to McAdam Avenue in 1906. In 1921, this basic difference between the north and south regions necessitated the creation of the Municipality of Old Kildonan (north) and the Municipality of West Kildonan (south), with Templeton Avenue the approximate boundary (Plate 1).
West Kildonan continued to develop into a modern centre, incorporating as a City in 1961, with new developments like Garden City in the 1950s and 1960s, The Maples (beginning in the late 1960s) and Garden Park (beginning in the late 1970s).

On July 27, 1971, the City of Winnipeg Act received Royal assent, incorporating the rural municipalities of Charleswood, Fort Garry, North Kildonan and Old Kildonan, Town of Tuxedo, and the cities of East Kildonan, West Kildonan, St. Vital, Transcona, St. Boniface, St. James-Assiniboine, Winnipeg and the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg into a unified City of Winnipeg, known as Unicity. The new City came into legal existence on January 1st, 1972.

Like many of the old municipalities, the 1950s and 1960s were marked by wide-spread expansion and growth in West Kildonan and civic services also expanded. Libraries became an important part of these expanding services and with support of the residents, the City of West Kildonan organized its first public library in the Kildonan Shopping Centre on Main Street, opened in 1962. But it soon became obvious that this facility could not keep up with the rapidly growing demand for books.

In January of 1965, Council met with Provincial Secretary Maitland Steinkopf regarding its centennial projects. By-Law 33/65/B was passed on May 27, 1965 supporting the construction of a “Library and Cultural Centre” as West Kildonan’s major Centennial Project.

With the financial support from a federal-provincial centennial grants initiative, West Kildonan’s Public Library and Cultural Centre was opened on June 24, 1967 (Plates 2-4).

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1 “365 Jefferson Street,” Winnipeg Architectural Foundation website, no date.
3 The author wished to thank D. Guenther for his support and research on the Library.
STYLE

The Modern era was…considered to encompass the years from about 1930 to about 1975; that is, from the period when a faith in a better future independent of the past began to take hold and find expression in a significant number of buildings, to the period when Canadians’ faith in a better future untethered to the past began to fade, replaced by the rooted architecture of the heritage conservation and post-Modernist movements.5

The West Kildonan Library stands as an excellent example of the International Style, a modern architectural movement of the post-World War II era that lasted into the late 1960s. The style is seen as a reaction to the historically based styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The age of machines created a desire for a new aesthetic, one that fully utilized the new construction materials and technologies, especially steel framing and reinforced concrete.6 Architects could design buildings without the need for load-bearing exterior walls – these elements became “curtains” covering the steel/concrete structural system and could be constructed almost entirely of glass if desired. Through its use of hard, angular edges, severely plain surfaces, large areas of glass and square or rectangular modules, the style stressed material and proportionality over ornamentation.

There are a number of excellent, internationally recognized and award-winning examples of the style in Winnipeg due to the city’s place at the forefront of the post-1950 International Style movement through the University of Manitoba’s School of Architecture. The City of Winnipeg has placed a number of these outstanding examples on the List of Historical Resources, including: Monarch Life Building, 333 Broadway (Plate 5); J.A. Russell Building (Architecture) - University of Manitoba, 83 Dafoe Road (Plate 6); St. Vital Library, 6 Fermor Avenue (Plate 7); and Winnipeg City Hall, 510 Main Street (Plate 8).

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As well, many of the surrounding municipalities built modernist style libraries in the 1960s, including three in St. Boniface (Plates 9-11), and one each in St. Vital (Plate 7) and Fort Garry (Plate 12).

**CONSTRUCTION**

City Council asked its newly hired architect to assist in choosing the location for the library as well as designing the structure. Stewart chose the corner of Powers Street and Jefferson Avenue (Plate 13) over several City-owned property on Main Street and elsewhere.\(^7\) It was close to Victory Public School and a neighbour of another modernist style structure, the Seven Oaks School Board Offices, which Council had to obtain land from for the new library.

The one-storey building is supported by steel I-beams, reinforced concrete columns; the superstructure is constructed of 10.2 centimetres concrete block clad in Tyndall stone, 10.2 centimetres thick.\(^8\) The main portion of the building measures 9.5 x 29.6 x 7.3 metres, the entire building totals 4,677.7 cubic metres of interior space and rests on a reinforced concrete foundation 25.4 centimetres thick. Cost of construction on the original permit was $180,000\(^9\) and the final cost was $185,816.00.\(^10\)

In 1998, an elevator shaft was added to the west facade.\(^11\)

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\(^7\) City of West Kildonan Council Minutes, 1965, courtesy of D. Guenther.

\(^8\) City of Winnipeg, Assessment Record, Roll No. 200700, West Kildonan, PC 80. Below as AR.

\(^9\) City of Winnipeg, Building Permit (below as BP), #4185/1966; and AR- according to correspondence, the final cost was $187,841.07.


DESIGN
The building’s main (south) façade faces Jefferson Avenue and includes a raised entrance, deeply set under the overhang created by the flat roof (Plate 14). This entrance rested on concrete slabs.12 Below the roof is a set of slender clerestory windows that encircle the entire structure. To the east of the main entrance is an entrance ramp (Plate 15), to the west, an exit door and a large window opening divided by heavy projecting mullions. According to early photographs, this ramp was always part of the library (Plate 16), although the original element has been replaced.

Facing Powers Avenue, the east façade includes two mullioned windows and a large rectilinear window opening (Plate 17). The rear (north) façade faces a parking lot and the Seven Oaks School Division No. 10 offices, features a central raised entrance flanked by two exit doors (Plate 18). The west side of the structure was built in a depression, to allow for rectilinear basement window openings (Plate 19). Exit doors, mullioned window openings are also present; the central window opening, similar to the east façade element, has been closed in (Plate 20). Basement stairs were located near the north end of the west façade (Plate 21) but are now closed in.

INTERIOR
According to the City of West Kildonan Pamphlet, the main floor of the library held the stacks, in adult, youth and children’s sections, a reference section, research alcoves and study tables and offices and work rooms for staff. The finished portion of the basement (east) held a 200-person assembly hall for meetings, film viewing, Senior Citizens’ Recreation and other community events.13

12 “Main Floor Framing Plan,” Architect’s Plans #4185/1966, courtesy of City of Winnipeg, Records Management.
13 Winnipeg Public Library, Millennium Branch, Vertical File, “West Kildonan.”
The west portion of the basement was completed by separate Building Permit,\textsuperscript{14} providing space for the School Board (Plate 22). Cost of this work totalled $15,844.67.\textsuperscript{15} By 1977, this area had been converted into children and youth space.

In 1999, basement alterations included a new meeting and staff room.\textsuperscript{16}

The finishes and layout of the front foyer and front and rear stairs to the basement appear to be in original condition, including the limestone walls that continue from the exterior (Plates 23 and 24). The wood finishes above the main desk are original (the main desk has been replaced) and many of the original book cases still line the walls of the main floor space. The main floor and basement have undergone alteration to layout and finishes (Plates 24-29).

**INTEGRITY**

The structure stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. The major alteration to the exterior was the addition of an elevator to the west façade to improve access (Plate 30). Unfortunately, the stucco finish of the addition does not match well with the original cladding.

Interior alterations have been mostly changes in use within the original spaces and have not resulted in a serious loss of original finishes or layout.

**STREETSCAPE**

The building stands on a busy corner and is highly visible. It is an integral part of the streetscape of both Jefferson Avenue and Powers Street (Plate 31).

\textsuperscript{14} BP #6244/1967.

\textsuperscript{15} AR, correspondence from Seven Oaks School Board #10 to contractor John Miller and Sons, Ltd., dated November 16, 1967.

\textsuperscript{16} AR; and BP #137128/1999.
In a letter discussing the building, Mira “Mimi” Locher, Dean, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba said,

The West Kildonan Public Library is an important example of place-based modernist architecture, as it incorporates local Tyndall stone and is designed to fit its particular site within a neighborhood featuring many modernist houses. While many modernist buildings of the 1960s and 70s were built in a style and with materials that were not tied to a specific place, the West Kildonan Public Library very much is connected to its locale. The building invites visitors with its overhanging canopy, which reaches out toward the street to indicate the entry and provide welcoming shelter. In whole, the building is designed and detailed to function at the human scale and to be an unpretentious component of the fabric of the community – a good neighbor. We have come to equate pretention with good design, but we must realize that it is often the well-designed unassuming buildings, like this one, that provide the most comfortable and hospitable spaces for us.17

The building was also designed to match neighbouring buildings, especially the West Kildonan Municipal Health Building, 375 Jefferson Avenue, built in 1961, now the Seven Oaks School Division’s Ben Zaidman Educational Resource Centre (Plate 32).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

West Kildonan City Council met with representatives of six local firms regarding the new library building: Waisman, Ross, Blankstein, Coop; Duncan, Rattray, Peters, Searle; Kurnarsky & Faurer; Green, Blankstein, Russell & Associates; George A. Stewart; and Herman & St. Lawrence.18 In the end, council chose George A. Stewart (Plate 33 and 34).

Stewart was a University of Manitoba Architecture graduate (see Appendix II for biographical information) who also designed the St. Vital and Fort Garry libraries. He has received 10 points from the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

17 M. Locher letter to the City of Winnipeg, dated July 7, 2022.
18 City of West Kildonan Minutes, 1965, courtesy of D. Guenther.
General contractors were John Miller and Sons Limited. This local firm was organized in the mid-1940s. Sons Jack and Ephram Miller (1925-2007)\textsuperscript{19} were part of the firm, Ephram was listed as the vice-president in 1955.\textsuperscript{20} The firm is known to have built the following structures:\textsuperscript{21}

- Clark Leatherdale Building, 232 Kennedy Street (1953) – demolished
- Bata Shoe Store, 400 Portage Avenue (1954) – demolished
- Northwest Bakery Building, 1466 Arlington Street (1956 remodelling)
- Assiniboine Gordon Motor Inn, 1975 Portage Avenue (1961 addition and renovations)
- West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue (1967)
- Dalhousie Elementary School, 262 Dalhousie Drive (1969)

The alteration of the west portion of the basement was completed in 1967, designed by Ward, Macdonald and Partners and completed by contractors John Miller and Sons Limited.\textsuperscript{22}

**PERSON/INSTITUTION**

The City of West Kildonan incorporated in 1961, sought to improve its civic services, wanting to increase its libraries beyond the bookmobile that had been operating since the 1950s.\textsuperscript{23}

The first step, a money bylaw for library development, was passed in the early 1960s.\textsuperscript{24} The West Kildonan Public Library Board, while it was seeking a permanent home, opened a branch in the Garden City Collegiate in January 1965.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{19} Winnipeg Free Press, March 22, 2007.
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Henderson’s Directory, 1955.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Compiled from Winnipeg Free Press (various); and Winnipeg Architecture Foundation.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #6244/1967.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} E. Dutton and K. Williams, More Than Books. The History of the Winnipeg Public Library (Winnipeg, MB: Winnipeg Public Library, 2017), p. 133. Bookmobiles would be an important part of the Winnipeg-area library system until the early 1990s.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} Winnipeg Free Press, October 15, 1960, p. 3.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Winnipeg Public Library, West Kildonan Branch, 50th Anniversary Binder.
\end{itemize}
An architect was hired, George Stewart, who was given the responsibility of not only designing the new library but also choosing its location.\textsuperscript{26} He choose a central location on the corner of two main thoroughfares and by June of 1967, the library/cultural centre was officially open. Attempting to make the facility as flexible as possible, the basement was designed with an assembly hall for meetings, film screens, etc. while the west portion of the space was to be used as School Board Offices.

As with all libraries in Winnipeg, the West Kildonan Branch has had to change its programming as the needs of Winnipeggers has changed and the branch continues to serve its community.

**EVENT**
There is no known significant historic event connected with this building.

**CONTEXT**
The planning and construction of the West Kildonan Library is part of expansion of services that occurred in the late 1950s and 1960s in Winnipeg and the surrounding municipalities and cities. Civic services required modernization as population grew and the economy expanded. Modern libraries, arenas, administration offices and many other facilities were the result and many of them still serve the communities in which they were built.

**LANDMARK**
West Kildonan Library is well-known in the neighbourhood.

\textsuperscript{26} Information provided by D. Guenther.
APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report
Assessment Record

Building Address: 365 Jefferson Avenue   Building Name: West Kildonan Public Library
Original Use: public library   Current Use: public library
Roll No. (Old): 11020070000 (200700)   RSN: 183281
Municipality: WK   Ward: ---   Property or Occupancy Code: 80
Legal Description: 7/8 Kildonan, Plan 2266, Block 29, Lots 19/22
Location: northwest corner Powers Street
Date of Construction: 1967   Storeys: 1+B   Heritage Status: NONE
Construction Type: masonry

- 4185/1966 [M-314] $180,000 (original); 6244/1967 $5,000 (basement alteration); 6038/1998 [PPD] (addition - elevator); 137128/1999 $22,000 (interior alterations to basement for new meeting & staff rooms); 133625/2009 $50,000 (interior alterations)

Information:
- 31 x 97 x 24 + = 165,192 cu. ft.
- occupied by May 1, 1967
- BP #6244/1967- west portion of basement completed by Dec. 31, 1967 (Seven Oaks School Division No. 10 Educational Resource Centre) - designed by Ward, Macdonald and Partners, architects, built by John Miller & Sons Ltd. – converted to children & youth area by 1977
- 4” Tyndall stone cladding over 4” concrete block

ARCHITECT – GEORGE A. STEWART
CONTRACTOR – JOHN MILLER & SONS LIMITED

--- JEFFERSON AVENUE ---
APPENDIX II

George A. Stewart\(^1\)

George Stewart was born in Boissevain, Manitoba in 1922 and graduated with a B.Arch from the University of Manitoba in 1948. He was awarded, among other prizes, the Manitoba Association of Architects (MAA) Scholarship and the Ralph Hamm Memorial Scholarship. After graduation, he established his own practice which operated until 1970.

From 1970-1982, Stewart worked as the Director of the University of Manitoba, Physical Planning and Design Office. During this time, he designed the Ellis Building, renovated the Buller Biological Laboratories and oversaw several the design and construction of several new buildings. He stayed on at the University until his retirement in 1987.\(^2\)

He served on the MAA Council and was MAA President in 1958, as well as serving on numerous committees of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC). He was appointed as a Fellow of the RAIC in 1966. In 1965, he was appointed to the Winnipeg Better Housing Commission. He passed away in 1994.

A list of his local projects would include:\(^3\)

- Southwood Golf Club Clubhouse, 101 Markham Road (1950)
- Harrow United Church, 955 Mulvey Avenue (1953)
- Fort Garry Public Library, 1360 Pembina Highway (1959 and 2 additional wings, 1967)
- Middlechurch Home for the Aged, West St. Paul, MB (1961)
- Ebenezer Home for the Aged, Altona, MB (1961-1962)
- Fort Garry United Church addition, 800 Point Road (1961)
- St. Vital Public Library, 6 Fermor Avenue (1963) – List of Historical Resources
- Manitoba Motor League Building addition, 175 Carlton St. (2\(^{nd}\) storey, 1965 – demolished)
- Charleswood Bethel Mennonite Church, 699 Haney Street (1965)
- Ellis Building, 13 Freedman Cres., University of Manitoba (1966 & 1969, 2\(^{nd}\) storey & addition)
- West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, 1967

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\(^1\) Winnipeg Architecture Foundation, Inc., 2013; and Manitoba Association of Architects (MAA), Architect files.

\(^2\) MAA, Architect files.

Plate 1 – Map showing the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg and surrounding cities, towns and rural municipalities, 1924. (City of Winnipeg.)
Plate 2 – Architect’s rendering of the new West Kildonan Public Library, 1967. (West Kildonan Public Library History Binder.)
Plate 3 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, shortly after opening, 1968. (City of Winnipeg, Planning, Property and Development Department.)
Plate 4 – Official Opening Ceremony Program (top) and Library Pamphlet (bottom), West Kildonan Library and Cultural Centre, 365 Jefferson Avenue, 1967. (Courtesy of Winnipeg Public Library, West Kildonan Branch, Vertical Files.)
Plate 5 – Monarch Life Building, 333 Broadway, south façade, built 1961, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

Plate 6 – John A. Russell Building (Architecture) - University of Manitoba, 83 Dafoe Road, north façade, built 1959, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)
Plate 7 – St. Vital Public Library, 6 Fermor Avenue, north façade, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)

Plate 8 – Winnipeg City Hall Complex, 510 Main Street, built 1962-1964, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)
Plate 9 – St. Boniface Public Library, Windsor Park Branch, 955 Cottonwood Avenue, built 1961, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)

Plate 11 – St. Boniface Public Library, Provencher Park Branch, 255 Avenue de la Cathédrale, built 1961, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)

Plate 12 – Fort Garry Public Library, 1360 Pembina Highway, built 1959-1960, 2022. (M. Peterson, 2022.)
Plate 13 – Fire Atlas sheet showing existing residential properties on the location of the West Kildonan Library, date unknown. (Courtesy of D. Guenther.)
Plate 14 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, front (south) façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)

Plate 15 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, front (south) façade entrance ramp, 2022. (M. Peterson, 2022.)
Plate 16 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, front (south) façade, 1968, showing the original entrance and ramp. (City of Winnipeg, Planning, Property and Development Department.)
Plate 17 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, east façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)

Plate 18 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, rear (north) and west façades, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 19 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, front (south) and west façades, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)

Plate 20 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, west façade detail including 1998 elevator shaft, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 21 – “Main Floor Framing Plan,” Architect’s Plans #4185/1966. (City of Winnipeg, Records Management.)
Plate 22 – West portion of the basement of West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, “Educational Resource Centre, Seven Oaks School Division No. 10, 1967. (City of Winnipeg, Assessment Record, Roll No. 200700, WK, PC 80.)
Plate 23 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, front foyer, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 24 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, front foyer, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 25 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, rear staircase to basement, 2022. (M. Peterson, 2022.)
Plate 26 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, main floor stacks, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)

Plate 27 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, main floor stacks, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 28 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, basement, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)

Plate 29 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, basement, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 30 – “West Elevation” and “South Elevation,” Architect’s Plans #6038/1998. (City of Winnipeg, Records Management.)
Plate 31 – West Kildonan Public Library, 365 Jefferson Avenue, front (south) and east façades, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 33 – George A. Stewart, ca.1966. (Reproduced from Architecture Canada, Vol. 43, No. 7 [July 1966], p. 9.)
Plate 34 – Initial concept drawing of the West Kildonan Library, George A. Stewart, architect. (Archives of Manitoba.)