

3180 PORTAGE AVENUE – ASSINIBOIA MUNICIPAL HALL
Hooper & Hooper, 1911



The Rural Municipality of Assiniboia, occupying all of what today is west Winnipeg, was incorporated in 1880. Subsequent reorganizations reduced the size of the Municipality but its population grew steadily in the first decade of the 20th century. The modernization of its government and the expansion of its services necessitated the construction of a modern municipal headquarters, one that could house Council and a public space for citizens to access these new services. Completed in 1911, the Municipal Hall became a central structure in the people's daily lives.

This solid brick, Classical Revival Style structure features a wealth of attractive architectural details including an asymmetrical front (north) façade with a raised entrance set in a shallow porch with square columns and small windows framing the doorway, squared window openings on the ground floor (with lug sills and radiating brick heads), the northwest corner tower with its

ornamental brickwork, stone accenting, small windows and unique pedimented domed roof with flag pole, a concrete belt course runs above the ground floor window openings and the hipped roof with heavy overhanging eaves, interrupted on all four sides by pedimented dormers above rectangular window openings with concrete lug sill and modest brackets. The rear (south) façade includes a unique metal tube fire escape from the second floor. Many of the smaller, upper windows are divided into small, pie-shaped panes – the upper pane opens in to allow for air circulation. Few alterations have been completed to the original exterior.

Changes, however, have been made to the interior finish of the building to allow for its present use, although the layout of the first and second floors has not been significantly altered. The basement includes a brick vault and the ground floor includes a second vault as well as a newer storeroom and small office in the southeast corner. Stairs on the west side of the building give access to the open second floor.

Costing an estimated \$12,000 and almost identical to the St. Vital Municipal Hall completed on St. Mary's Road at Lennox Avenue in 1911 (demolished 1957), the Assiniboia Municipal Hall was officially opening on January 9, 1912. The Hall, which originally would have stood virtually alone on Portage Avenue, was soon part of a busy region that included residential, commercial and industrial properties. This growth and expansion increased dramatically after World War II, with new residential neighbourhoods developing throughout west Winnipeg. The Municipal Hall was used until the 1970s when it was occupied by the St. James-Assiniboia Water Department. It was then converted into a Museum and Art Gallery.

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

Exterior:

- The north facing structure located at the southeast corner of Portage Avenue and Banting Drive;
- The dark brick superstructure resting on a raised stone and concrete foundation (interrupted by basement windows) and concrete belt course encircling the building above the ground floor windows;
- The front (north) façade with its raised entrance set in a shallow porch with square wood columns and small windows framing the door;

- The northwest corner tower with ornamental brickwork, stone accenting, squared window openings and pedimented domed roof with flag pole;
- The rectangular windows with concrete lug sills (ground floor) and concrete lug sills with modest brackets (second floor) that include hinged top panes divided into pieszaped sections;
- The hipped roof with heavy overhanging eaves, interrupted on all four slopes by pedimented dormers;
- The east and west façades with rectangular window openings on the ground floor and pair openings on the second floor; and
- The rear (south) façade with its metal tube fire escape from the second floor.

Interior:

- Volume of space on the ground floor with its attached columns on the south wall and examples of the original burlap wall coverings on the north wall; and
- Volume of space on the second floor.