



## 546 PORTAGE AVENUE

### ST. STEPHEN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (ELIM CHAPEL)

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



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**546 PORTAGE AVENUE  
ST. STEPHEN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (ELIM CHAPEL)**

**Date of Construction:** 1902

**Building Permit:** 603/1902

**Architect:** Cadham, James H.

**Contractor:** Saul and Irish and C.H. Simpson

**ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:**

Sitting on a busy downtown intersection, Elim Chapel has continuously served the religious needs of Winnipeggers for over 100 years.

The church features a number of outstanding architectural elements including its crenellated towers, the northeast and northwest towers flanking the central gabled portion, the large, central entrance with its wide stone steps, pair of wood doors set in a modest entrance vestibule. The rough-cut stone cladding over all the building and the pointed arched openings both windows and doors on all levels.

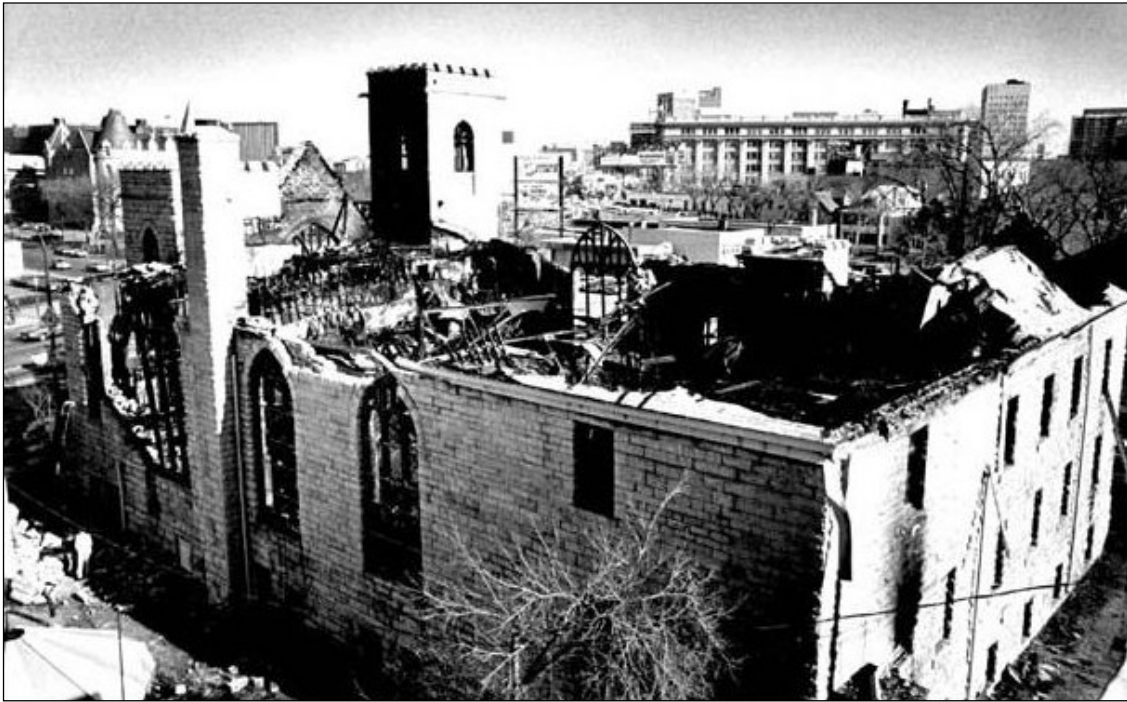
The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. Although completely gutted by fire in 1974, the building was rebuilt as it was originally designed. A large addition is attached to the rear of the building.



East façade, 2009

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Building designer James H. Cadham was one of the self-trained architects who learned his profession from years in the building trade. He was born in London, Canada West (Ontario) in 1850 and trained as a carpenter. As a young man, he came to Winnipeg in 1870 and joined Wolseley's historic Red River Expedition in the confrontation with Louis Riel. He remained in the city, where he worked for over twenty years as a contractor. After 1895, he worked almost exclusively as an architect, primarily on the construction of large warehouses and stores. He died in 1907. Among his more well known works, many of which are designated by the City of Winnipeg, are the W.F. Alloway Building, 179 McDermot Avenue, (1898, Grade III), Merchants (George D. Woods) Building, 250 McDermot Avenue (1898), Whitla Building, 70 Arthur Street (1899), Daylite Building, 296 McDermot Avenue, (1899, Grade II), Imperial Dry Goods Building, 91 Albert Street (1900, Grade III), G.F. Stephens Warehouse, 176 Market Avenue (1901, demolished), Moss (Kantor) House, 218 Roslyn Road (1901), Anne (Blue Ribbon Company) Building, 87 King Street (1901, Grade III), St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church (now Elim Chapel), 546 Portage Avenue (1902), Gregg Building, 52 Albert Street (1903, Grade III), Galt Building Annex, 92 Arthur Street (1903, Grade II), Bedford (Stobart) Building, 275 McDermot Avenue (1903, Grade III) and Frost and Wood Warehouse, 230 Princess Street (1907, Grade III). He has received 20 points from the Historic Buildings Committee.



Elim Chapel after the fire, October 28, 1974 (Winnipeg Tribune Collection, University of Manitoba Archives, PC18/2133/18-2133-005)

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#### HISTORICAL INTEREST:

The church, opened by the Presbyterian congregation of St. Stephens, joined the United Church in 1925. In 1927, it was bought by grain broker Sidney T. Smith who was one of the founders of the non-denominational Ellice Avenue Mission (Elim Chapel) in 1910.<sup>1</sup> The Portage Avenue facility was reopened as the new Elim Chapel and has operated ever since.

#### RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- an important religious facility that has served the downtown for over 100 years;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early Presbyterian and United church congregations and as a non-denominational church;
- its design- an reduced example of the Gothic Revival style;
- its architect- J.H. Cadham was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- defines an important intersection and contributes greatly to the historic streetscape of two major arteries in the downtown; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (north) and east façades, 1978

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ENDNOTES:

- <sup>1</sup> D. Bruce Hindmarsh, "The Winnipeg Fundamentalist Network, 1910-1940: The Roots of Transdenominational Evangelicalism in Manitoba and Saskatchewan," in G.A. Rawlyk (ed.), Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience (Montreal, PQ: McGill-Queens University Press, 1997).