591 PRITCHARD AVENUE

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

(a) This building was completed by 1919 and represents the need for modern cultural/political space for one of Winnipeg’s largest immigrant communities;

(b) It is associated with the Ukrainian community, influential in Winnipeg, Manitoba and throughout Canada;

(c) It features well-designed classically-based architectural detailing and was designed by local architect Robert Edgar Davies;

(d) Its brick and stone exterior walls are common materials for a public building of this age;

(e) The building stands on a busy intersection in Winnipeg’s North End; and

(f) The building’s exterior has suffered limited alteration.
Late in the 19th century, Canadian Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier’s government set in motion a number of comprehensive policies to populate the western prairies and grow its agriculture sector. It supported the construction of a vast network of regional and transcontinental railway lines and actively sought to attract large-scale European immigration with the promise of cheap (or free), farm land. This program was responsible for not only putting hundreds of thousands of newly arrived immigrants onto homesteads, but also swelled the population of many of the region’s urban centres and especially its primary city, Winnipeg.

The first documented immigration of pioneers from Ukraine to Canada was in 1891 – two decades later, there were approximately 170,000 Ukrainian-Canadians settled in the three prairie provinces. While many chose to homestead on the prairies, a large number of immigrants remained in Winnipeg to work and raise their families. They found jobs in the warehouses and factories operating on both sides of the Canadian Pacific Railway yards and chose to settle nearby, in the North End and Point Douglas, along with coworkers and their families from both similar and different cultural backgrounds.

This large group transplanted much of its culture from oversees. Winnipeg’s first Ukrainian Catholic church, St. Nicholas, was built on McGregor Street in 1901. In March 1910, the Ukrainian Voice, a Ukrainian-language weekly newspaper, joined three other local papers serving the Ukrainian community.

---

1 The two spellings, “Labour” and “Labor” are used to refer to the Temple as well as organization associated with it, throughout its history and in historical reports and other documents. This report will use the spelling “labour” except for published documents.


Because most of the population was labour-based and because of traditions at home, trade unions were prevalent in the Ukrainian community and indeed in Winnipeg in general. The Winnipeg Labor Temple, a four-storey brick structure was competed in 1906 at 165 James Avenue (Plate 1). It featured 17 meeting halls and committee rooms and was used by as many as 80 local unions and fraternal-benevolent societies. The Labour Temple was also the centre for labour’s involvement in social activities, political campaigns, strikes, and the organization of workers. It was demolished in 1966.5

In March 1918, representatives of the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party (USDP), the Volodymyr Vynnychenko Drama Circle and the weekly newspaper Robochyi narod6 agreed that a modern meeting hall was necessary for the growing Ukrainian community in Winnipeg and formed the Ukrainian Labour Temple Association (ULTA) to co-ordinate the hall’s construction.7 In spite of the limitations on capital and materials created by World War I, the ULTA was able to raise the necessary funds, approximately $40,000,8 through donations from Ukrainian workers.9

By June, work was well underway on the structure,10 built mainly by volunteer labour.11 The Ukrainian Labour Temple opened in early 1919, the first and largest Ukrainian labour hall built in Canada (Plates 2 and 3).

---

7 Ibid., pp. 3-4. Unlike the political USDP, which could not own property as a political party, the ULTA was created with a broader mandate to address cultural and educational issues for Winnipeg’s Ukrainians.
8 City of Winnipeg, Building Permit (below as BP), #835/1918. Note that there are reports that give the final cost of construction as $60,000 and $72,000.
10 Manitoba Free Press, June 14, 1918, p. 13.
STYLE
The Ukrainian Labour Temple is an excellent example of the Neo-Classical or Classical Revival style, which as the name suggests, was a redefinition and revisiting of classical architectural form and ornamentation. Popular from 1900 into the 1930s in North America, its designs included columns, capitals, pediments and Greek or Roman embellishments. Main façades were normally symmetrical with smooth cladding and rooflines flat. Windows and doors were placed in both lintelled and arched openings; the latter was especially prevalent in the most ornamentally complex variant of the style, Beaux-Arts Classicism.

Examples in Winnipeg are numerous and include the Thomas Scott Memorial Orange Lodge, 216 Princess Street (1903), Imperial Bank of Commerce, 441 Main Street (completed in 1906), the Bank of Nova Scotia, 254 Portage Avenue (1910) and the Bank of Montreal, 335 Main Street (1913). Government buildings also used the style extensively: Provincial Land Titles Building, 433 Broadway (1903-1904), Law Courts Building, 411 Broadway (1912-1916), the Legislative Building, 450 Broadway (1913-1920) and Powerhouse, 219 Memorial Boulevard (1914).

CONSTRUCTION
The Ukrainian Labour Temple building is a one-storey solid brick structure resting on a 55.9-centimetre stone foundation. Brick walls are 43.2 centimetres wide. In 1926, an addition was built on the west side of the building bringing the structure to its present size of approximately 20.1 x 34.6 metres (see Appendix I for more technical information).

---

13 BP #2366/1926. Cost of construction was listed as $36,000.
14 City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 14020791300.
DESIGN

The front (south) façade of the original Temple was symmetrical, the tan-coloured brick superstructure resting on a raised, smooth-cut limestone base (Plate 4). The recessed front entrance is set in a carved limestone frame topped by an entablature with elaborate sculptures – two hands reaching across the globe clasped in unity, laurel wreaths and flaming torches and the words “WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE” (Plates 5 and 6). Tall rectilinear window openings, which include raised basement openings, are embellished with limestone surrounds and oversized keystones (Plate 7). Paired brick pilasters with stone bases and heads lead to a stone belt course, topped by a metal cornice and a metre high brick parapet (Plate 8).

The east façade continues the architecture and cladding of the south façade and includes a plainer, stone framed entrance near the north end (Plate 9). The west façade is plain, with unadorned rectilinear window openings (Plate 10); the rear (north) façade is windowless and partially covered by a connected building (Plate 11).

Alterations to the main building include the large addition on the west side of the building in 1926, although it was careful to continue the design and materials of the original building on the front (south) façade, including a second entrance. In 1963, glass blocks were used to fill in the window openings (see Plate 3 for original design).15

The Temple is now physically connected, at its northwest corner, to a high-rise senior citizen’s residence named Ivan Franko Manor, 595 Pritchard Avenue (200 McGregor Street), built in 1984.

INTERIOR

Visitors entering the building found a modest lobby (Plate 12) with stairs at either end leading to the balcony space (Plate 13). The main hall of the Temple boasts 7.6-metre high beamed ceilings (Plate 14). The stage at the north end of the building features 13.4-metre high ceilings, a painted fire

15 Ibid.
curtain with pastoral scene and advertising and original on-stage floor lighting and other equipment (Plates 15-17). This space originally featured sloping floors which were leveled in 1948. According to a 1934 inspection, seating capacity in the hall was 650 and 200 in balcony. Two libraries, a printing plant and adult and children’s classrooms were part of the original building’s interior.

The 1926 addition to the west side of the building featured a new print shop in the basement (Plate 18), main floor classrooms and second-floor offices which now include a library and the Ivan Franko Museum.

The basement features a large open studio space (Plate 19) and the original, now unused restaurant (Plate 20). The Ivan Franko Museum is located on the second floor.

In 2019, major interior renovations were completed for universal access. The work included alterations to foyer, hall entrance, stage, the construction of an interior lift for access to main and basement floors and accessible washrooms on both floors.

**INTEGRITY**

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and its original design and most of its exterior elements are unchanged.

**STREETSCAPE**

This building is located on a busy intersection in Winnipeg’s North End and is an integral part of two important local streetscapes (Plate 21).

---

16 Ibid. Also in 1948, the basement was extended below the entire superstructure.
17 Ibid.
18 Grover/Kisiow, op. cit., p. 4.
ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

The City of Winnipeg, Building Permit names Robert Edgar Davies (Plate 22) as the designer of the Ukrainian Labour Temple. Davies was born in Nottingham, England in July 1882, studying architecture at the Nottingham School of Art & Design and immigrated to Canada after 1900. Once in Winnipeg, he joined as the office of Hugh McCowan as chief assistant, promoted to partner by 1905. In 1914, he is mentioned in a local paper as the Acting City Building Inspector and by 1918, he was listed as the City of Winnipeg’s architect. In this position was likely responsible for a number of projects, including the Nurses’ Residence at the Municipal Hospital, 1 Morley Avenue, built in 1921 (Plate 23). Davies retired in 1949 and died 10 years later.

One account has Davies in legal trouble with the Manitoba Association of Architects (MAA), which threatened legal action when Davies practiced as an architect without having met the standards of the Association, as per 1914 legislation. Davies was neither a member of the Association nor had he passed their tests when he designed the Ukrainian Labour Temple in 1918. According to the files of the MMA, Davies was not registered and had not “completed courses set for regular examination” and was “undertaking duties of an architect without holding necessary licence.”

PERSON/INSTITUTION

In the midst of world-wide political unrest that fostered the Russian Revolution in 1917 and socialist organizations forming all across Canada, the ULTA was incorporated and built the Labour Temple, opening in February 1919 mere months before the Winnipeg General Strike.

24 “Davies, R.E.,” files of the MAA.
25 Grover/Kisiow, op. cit., Background, p. 1. Three other, smaller Ukrainian Labour Temples were built in Winnipeg prior to 1922 in East Kildonan, Transcona and St. Boniface.
During the six weeks of the General Strike, the Ukrainian Labour Temple played an integral role, housing meetings and utilizing its print shop to produce pro-strike publications. The Labour Temple was raided by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police on June 17, 1919, the police seizing correspondence and other materials.

After the end of the Strike the Temple continued to be at the forefront of Ukrainian political and cultural life in Canada.26 ULTA leaders were involved in the establishment of the Workers Party of Canada (Communist Party) in 1921. A Women’s Section of the ULTA was created in 1922 and in 1924, the ULTA became a national organization and was renamed the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association to reflect the Association’s increased connection to rural workers.27

In 1919, the ULTA introduced activities for children. By 1922, a school was established in Ukrainian Labour Temple, called the Ukrainian Workers’ Children’s Schools, to “…foster class consciousness and working class solidarity…to sustain Ukrainian identity by combining instruction in Ukrainian language, reading and writing with some exposure to Ukrainian culture, particularly music, singing and dancing, and occasionally a smattering of history and geography.”28 By 1928, more than 400 students attended one of the three Ukrainian Labour Temple schools in Winnipeg.

The Labour Temple became a very popular venue for Ukrainian theatre and other live performances – the facility even boasted its own writer-in-residence, Myroslav Irchan, from 1923 to 1929.

---


28 Ibid.
The Workers’ Benevolent Association (WBA) was formed in 1922 to provide life and health insurance for its members. Cooperative associations to supply wood and coal, lumber, groceries and creamery products to members all grew from the Labour Temple.

In 1926, ULTA activist William Kolisnyk became the first Communist elected at any government level in North American, when he won a seat on City Council.

Today, there are 9 Association of United Ukrainian Canadians (AUUC) branches in Canada (which the ULTFA became in 1940) and is headquartered in Winnipeg. The AUUC, which owns the Ukrainian Labour Temple, continues to publish the Ukrainian Canadian Herald, a national progressive Ukrainian newspaper.

The Province of Manitoba designated the Ukrainian Labour Temple Provincial Heritage Site No. 91 in December 1995. The City of Winnipeg designed the structure in September 1997 and the Federal Government designated it a National Historic Site in April 2009. The Federal designation noted:

Ukrainian Labour Temple was designated a national historic site of Canada in 2008 because: as the centre of a socialist movement dedicated to improving the circumstances of Ukrainian workers and farmers, it was the headquarters for several national Ukrainian organizations that provided educational, mutual aid, charitable and other services, while seeking to forward the goals of socialism and organized labour through publications and meetings for left-wing instruction, debate and strategizing; it was a base for the expression of Ukrainian cultural traditions and identity from its construction until the end of the 1960s, and for the coordination and support of Ukrainian performing arts throughout Canada, in particular dramatic societies, choral, orchestral and mandolin music, and Ukrainian folk dance…the building is the grandest and largest labour temple constructed by an ethnocultural community in Canada, and physically embodies the ideals of Winnipeg’s progressive Ukrainian community; and, as a vital gathering place for strikers of

---

29 Ibid. The WBA owned and operated an orphanage and members’ retirement home in the 1930s.
30 AUUC@100.
31 Ibid.
32 AUUC website.
Ukrainian descent during the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, it is closely associated with a pivotal event in Canada’s history.\textsuperscript{33}

**EVENT**
This structure was intimately connected to the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 and many important events before, during and after this watershed moment in Canadian history occurred at the Labour Temple, including meetings, the printing of strike related material and police raids..

**CONTEXT**
On many levels, the Ukrainian Labour Temple is contextually important. It is a reminder of the evolution and maturation of the Ukrainian community in Winnipeg and throughout the region and country. Its use as a political, educational, media, artistic and cultural centre underlines this maturation as the community strove to find its place in the larger Canadian context.

It’s planning, funding and completion during the War is a clear indication of the importance placed on it by the community.

It remains a vibrant and essential facility in the city.

**LANDMARK**
Because of its scale, ornamentation, location and heightened public use, this structure is well-known in the neighbourhood and in the city.

APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Building Address: 591 Pritchard Avenue
Building Name: Ukrainian Labour Temple

Original Use: banquet/meeting hall
Current Use: banquet/meeting hall

Roll No. (Old): 14020791300 (3459)
R.S.N.: 178280

Municipality: 12 Ward: 3 Property or Occupancy Code: 47

Legal Description: 37 St. John, plan 17753, Lot 2 (Old: 37/38 St. John, Plan 3505, Part Lot 755: Lot 756)

Location: northwest corner McGregor Street

Date of Construction: 1918 Storeys: 1 + B Construction Type: Brick – masonry

HERITAGE STATUS: GRADE III (JANUARY 5, 1999)

Building Permits (Plans available: [CS] City Storage):
- 835/1918 [CS] $40,000 (original); 2366/1926 [CS] $36,000 (west side addition & alterations);
1536/1948 $25,000 (alterations); 3713/1959 $500 (repairs); 3996/1963 $800 (repairs); 2409/1969 $200
(alterations – cancelled); 4538/1997 [CS] $187,000 (exterior repairs); 101106/1998 [CS] $15,000 (interior
alterations); 172458/2000 $12,500 (interior alterations); 140909 & 191131/2019 $1,135,500 (exterior & interior
alterations)

Information:

- 65 x 61 x 39’+ = 303,861 cu. ft.; 22” stone foundation,
  17” brick superstructure walls

- 25’+ ceilings in hall, with raised stage (44’+ ceilings)
  & balcony

- 1948 work: sloping floor replace with level floor, basement
  enlarged to full

- 1963 work: glass block added to windows

- basement restaurant close by at least 1994

- 2019 work: #140909- new concrete exterior landing and ramp;
  #191131 (interior)- new washrooms, lift, stairs, ramp,
  storage spaces, renovate vestibule

- 1934 seating capacity- 650 in hall, 200 in balcony

---PRITCHARD AVENUE---
Plate 1 – Labor Temple, 165 James Avenue, 1965, one year before its demolition. (Archives of Manitoba, Uncatalogues Negative 65-743.)
Plate 2 – Undated postcard showing the architect’s rendering of the Ukrainian Labour Temple. (University of Alberta Libraries, Peel’s Prairie Provinces Collection, Postcard 966.)

Plate 3 – Undated postcard of the original Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue. (Winnipeg Public Library, Rob McInnes Collection.)
Plate 4 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, main (south) façade, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)
Plate 5 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, detail of main (south) entrance, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)
Plate 6 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, detail of main (south) entrance, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)
Plate 7 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, south façade fenestration, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)
Plate 8 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, southeast corner, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)

Plate 9 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, front (south) and east façades, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)
Plate 10 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, west façade, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)

Plate 11 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, east and rear (north) façades, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)
Plate 12 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, entrance lobby, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

Plate 13 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, hall looking south at balcony, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 14 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, hall ceiling, date unknown. (M. Peterson.)

Plate 15 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, stage with fire curtain, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 16 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, backstage, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 17 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, in-stage lighting, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 18 – Print shop, Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, ca.1929. (Ukrainian Labour Temple Collection, reproduced from Canadian Museum of History website, https://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/hist/phase2/mod3e.html.)
Plate 19 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, basement studio, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 20 – Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Avenue, basement restaurant, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 21 – Pritchard Avenue looking south, Ukrainian Labour Temple on the right, 2020. (M. Peterson, 2020.)
Plate 22 – Robert E. Davies, ca.1921. (Reproduced from The Winnipeg Tribune, February 26, 1921, p. 3.)
Plate 23 – Nurses’ Residence on the grounds of Municipal Hospital, 1 Morley Avenue, date unknown. (Archives of Manitoba, George Harris Fonds, Accession No. 1979-141, P7447, Album 1, Page 21.)