

**227 BOULEVARD PROVENCHER – ST. BONIFACE
POLICE STATION/JAIL/COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

Étienne Gaboury, principal, Gaboury and Associates (1963-1964)



By the late 1950s, the City of St. Boniface was booming. Its economy was growing quickly, as was its population. This resulted in an increased demand for civic services and City officials began assessing their facilities. The need for expanded and modern space was particularly acute for the police and health departments. Commissioning local architect Étienne Gaboury, the City planned to construct two buildings – a health care unit and a combination police station/jail/county courthouse. It would form part of a new civic complex that would include the 1905-built City Hall, the 1907-built Fire Station and a large open greenspace on Provencher Boulevard. The health unit building, 233 Provencher Boulevard, as opened in 1963, the Police Station/Courthouse, 227 Provencher Boulevard, in November 1964.

The Police Station/Jail/County Courthouse and the neighbouring St. Boniface Health Unit Building, are excellent examples of the Brutalist Style. Developed in the post-World War II period, the style is often seen as a conscious move away from the lightness of the International Style in its use of glass and steel in favour of a heavier, masonry-base architecture, its complex and irregular massing, rough concrete finishes, deeply inset fenestration and linear patterning. Architect Gaboury was

inspired by European examples of the style but his focus on light and shadow gave the building its own unique, Prairie Regionalism. The building stands as one of a handful of Brutalist buildings, the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, 174 Market Avenue (1970, Waisman Ross Blankstein Coop Gillmor Hanna, architects) is one of only two buildings in Canada federally designated as examples of the Style.

The one-storey, C-shaped building sits on reinforced concrete piles, the steel superstructure is built of pre-cast concrete panels with exposed limestone aggregate with deep reveals, matching the cladding of the neighbouring Health Unit Building. The building features a unique grouping of sections with varied fenestration and detailing: raised and recessed main entrances facing south into the courtyard and north onto Rue Dumoulin with deeply inset rectilinear window openings; smaller, less ornamented projecting west façade and unornamented east façade entrances; unmatched, deep set rectilinear window openings with heavy pre-cast concrete surrounds; wide ramp at the northeast corner into the basement garage with offices above; and the flat roof with two raised sections with shed-sloped metal roofs, originally copper clad, that translate to high ceilings and sunlit spaces on the interior.

The building's interior was divided into three separate but connected sections. East of the lobby was a centrally-located courtroom with small offices around the exterior of the building. Projecting south from this area of the building was the eight jail cells for male, female and juvenile detainees. To the west of the lobby was a second courtroom, occupying much of the south end of the building. Only the east section included a basement which held the large squad room, interrogation rooms, mechanical rooms and along the east side, the garage for automobiles and motorcycles.

At present, the vacant building has many original spaces and finishes- the west end courtroom on the main floor features a wood-clad ceiling, skylights and the original judge's bench and the main lobby includes stone accented entrance and skylights.

The St. Boniface Police Station/Jail/County Courthouse, along with the neighbouring Health Unit Building and open plaza space, were designed by internationally renowned and award-winning Manitoba-born architect Étienne Gaboury (1930-).

The list of his major local works would include:

St. Louis le Roi, 610 Rue Laflèche (1961)
St. Boniface Health Unit Building, 233 Boulevard Provencher (1962)
Church of the Canadian Holy Martyrs, 289 Avenue Dussault (1963)
St. Boniface Police Station and Law Courts, 227 Boulevard Provencher (1964) – Manitoba Association of Architects award winning design
Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic Church, 710 Roanoke Street (1966)
Precious Blood Roman Catholic Church, 200 Kenny Street (1967)
Messiah Lutheran Church, 400 Rouge Road (1968)
Gaboury House, 90 River Road (1968)
Metro Plaza, Corydon Avenue at Osborne Street, 1969 (demolished)
Fire Station Number 3, 337 Des Meurons (1969)
Fire Station Number 15, Autumnwood Drive (1969)
Fire Station Number 2, 55 Watt Street (1970)
Riel Statue, Legislative Grounds, 1970 (moved to St. Boniface College, 1995)
St. Boniface Cathedral, 190 Avenue de la Cathédrale (1971-1972) – List of Historical Resources
Chez Nous, 187 Avenue de la Cathédrale (1973)
Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain, 340 Provencher Boulevard (1974)
Royal Canadian Mint, 520 Lagimodière Boulevard (1978)
Louis Riel Library, 1168 Dakota Street, 1990
Provincial Remand Centre, 141 Kennedy Street (1992)
PhysHealth Centre, Health Sciences Complex (1992)
Provincial Remand Centre, 141 Kennedy Street (1994)
St. Boniface University College Student Centre, 200 Avenue de la Cathédrale (2002)
Esplanade Riel Pedestrian Bridge & Provencher Bridge, Provencher Boulevard (2003)
Nuns' Residence, 210 Rue Masson (date unknown)

Contractors for the building were Crosier Kilgour & Partners Ltd., structural engineers and T.B.J. Kruse and Associates, mechanical and electrical engineers.

This facility played an important role in St. Boniface for many years. After Unicity brought St. Boniface into the City of Winnipeg, the facility operated as the headquarters for Police District 5 while the Provincial court offered proceedings in both languages. In 2007, the City of Winnipeg declared the building surplus, although the provincial court continued to operate out of the building until 2014 when the building was vacated after being sold.

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

1. Site:
 - a. The yard setbacks along the north, east, and west; and
 - b. The open area to the south that faces onto the adjacent property with an open courtyard site.

2. Exterior:
 - a. The one-storey, C-shaped, steel and pre-cast concrete clad building with inset foundation walls, irregular massing and predominately flat roofs with metal parapet flashing, accented with two raised and shed-sloped metal roofs above the north and south entrances, its main (south) façade facing towards Boulevard Provencher, the rear (north) façade facing Rue Dumoulin, the east façade facing Rue Langevin and the west façade facing the former St. Boniface Fire Hall and City Hall;
 - b. All exterior walls clad in pre-cast concrete panels with exposed limestone aggregate and deep reveals and with punched, rectilinear window openings with defined pre-cast concrete surrounds;
 - c. The south and north walls each featuring a recessed and raised main entry wall with deeply inset punched windows and a projecting entrance with a sloped metal roof above and with lower walls to the east and west that flank the raised entry wall.
 - d. The north wall with exterior concrete stairs, landings, and guardrail walls and bollards and with a secondary entrance with a masonry canopy above;
 - e. The west wall with its projecting entrance;
 - f. The east wall with vehicular ramp to basement garage doors each with a masonry canopy;
 - g. The lower one-storey jail portion at the south east corner of the property with sloped walls and regularly spaced, small punched window openings on the east and west façades; and
 - h. Two raised skylights above the courtroom areas.

3. Interior:
 - a. Volume of space and limestone door accents of the entrance foyer; and
 - b. Volume of space and wood ceiling that frames the skylight in the west end courtroom.