



500 RIVERTON AVENUE

RIVER ELM (ELMWOOD) SCHOOL

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



500 RIVERTON AVENUE RIVER ELM (ELMWOOD) SCHOOL

Date of Construction: 1930

Building Permit: 3227/1930

Architect: Over and Munn

Contractor: Barker and Company

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Built for the growing area of Elmwood, this 1930 structure was one of only a handful completed during this decade in response to aging facilities and growing student populations in the Winnipeg School Division.

This two-storey, solid brick building features modest stone accenting, brick buttresses at its corners and large banks of windows on both the east and west sides with a pointed arch main entrance on its north façade. A large one-storey addition was built on its east side.

The school stands on its original location and appears to be in good structural condition. Two additions were made to the building in 1970 and 1976 that cover the ground floor of the original structure's east side.



Front (north) façade, 2009

The school is a reduced example of the Collegiate Gothic style. This style rose in popularity after 1900 as a reaction to the highly ornamented buildings of the earlier Gothic Revival style. The newer version opted for much simpler silhouettes and subdued ornamentation, in the words of one author, “a calm, disciplined monumentality.”¹

Flat surfaces were preferred; buildings were often long, low symmetrical masses embellished with crenellated towers and the distinctive pointed arch of the Gothic style. Construction material was monochromatic, usually brick or stone, again a departure from the multi-hued façades of the Gothic Revival style. Inspiration for the detailing of the new style was found in the English Perpendicular Gothic design of the 15th century. Because it found widespread expression on the campuses of many North American universities and then in the public school system, it became known as Collegiate Gothic.²



Front (north) and east façades, 2009

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Originally known as Elmwood School, it has been part of the Winnipeg School Division since construction and is now known as River Elm School.

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- one of the few 1930s-era public school buildings completed by the Winnipeg School Division;
- its associations- its long-term connections to public education in Elmwood;
- its design- a reduced example of the Collegiate Gothic style;
- its architect- Over and Munn were respected and important practitioners;
- its location- contributes greatly to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display some of their original elements and design.



Front (north) and east façades, 1995

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ L. Maitland et al., A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough: Broadview Press Ltd., 1992), p. 166.
- ² Ibid., p. 166; and Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, 1991), p. 20.