



320 ST. CHARLES STREET

ST. CHARLES ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



320 ST. CHARLES STREET ST. CHARLES ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Date of Construction: 1928

Building Permit: N/A

Architect: Hooper and Walker¹

Contractor: Unknown

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This large, beautifully detailed church building has been an active part of the community on the western outskirts of Winnipeg for over 80 years.

The cream coloured brick church rests on a raised stone foundation. The front (east) façade includes a projecting central section with the main entrance, arched with a semi-circular transom and rounded hood for protection from the weather. This section is finished with the building's most dominant architectural feature, the delicate wooden spire with arched openings, pediments, finials and a cross. The front elevation also includes rounded windows on either side of the door. The remainder of the main building, north and south façades, feature more large rounded windows, the largest designed to mimic Palladian designs. The west end of the building features two large projecting areas creating a "T"



Front (east) and south façades, 2009

shaped building and to the rear another plainer tower with two tall, thin arched windows framing a window designed in the shape of a cross.

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. There does not appear to have been any major exterior alterations to affect the original design/materials.

This structure represents the rebuilding of the 1905 church that was destroyed by fire in 1928. The 1905 plans were drawn by Hooper and Walker, a successful partnership of Samuel Hooper (1851-1911) and Charles H. Walker. Hooper had come from England in 1869 and rose to prominence in Winnipeg as an architect, being named Manitoba's first provincial architect in 1904 although he maintained a very successful private practice as well. The partnership with Walker lasted from 1905 to 1908 and produced many fine structures including R.C. McDonald House, 26 Amherst (now Avonherst) St. (1905), considered to be the first house built in the new subdivision of Crescentwood², and the Marshall-Wells Warehouse, 136 Market Ave. (1905-1906) – Grade III



Front (east) and north façades, 2009

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Along with St. Charles Academy (built in 1906), the St. Charles Congregation has been an important institution in west Winnipeg for over 100 years. The church building continues to serve a large, active congregation.

The parish was founded in the early 1850s, one of the earliest in Manitoba, to serve the approximately 50 Métis families settled in the area.³ The first mission was built near the confluence of Sturgeon Creek and the Assiniboine River but was soon moved west to its present location and a small log chapel was built. In 1855, the Hudson's Bay Company granted land to the Church and in 1866, a frame church was built on the land near the original chapel (it was destroyed in a wind storm in 1884). St. Charles was officially created as a parish in 1876 and it became part of the newly created Archdiocese of Winnipeg in 1917.

A new church, designed by Winnipeg architects Hooper and Walker,⁴ was blessed on Christmas Eve, 1905. It was destroyed by fire on New Years Eve, 1928 and was quickly rebuilt. A line drawing published in 1905 is very similar to the existing structure, suggesting the rebuilt church may have been based on the 1905 plans. A large addition, more than doubling the size of the original structure, was completed in 1988.⁵



Rear (west) façade, 2009

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 institution in west Winnipeg and representative of the type of church building constructed by an established congregation in the 20th century, leaning on traditional styles and layouts;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early Roman Catholic congregation of St. Charles;
- its design- an excellent example of the classically-based Roman Catholic church
- its architect- Hooper and Walker were a well-known architectural partnership in Winnipeg;
- its location- this church, combined with the school to the east, forms a important streetscape at the south end of St. Charles Street; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (east) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 Church rebuilt after a 1928 fire and may have been based on their 1905 plans.
- 2 R.R. Rostecki, Crescentwood. A History (Winnipeg: Crescentwood Home Owners Association, 1993), p. 113.
- 3 Irene Ternier Gordon, "History of the St. Charles Parish," found at <http://www.saintcharles.ca/home/about-st-charles/our-history-2>.
- 4 Manitoba Free Press, April 29, 1905, p. 17.
- 5 I.T. Gordon, op. cit.