

Agenda – Riel Community Committee – April 7, 2014

REPORTS

Item No. 13 Heritage Designation of St. Vital Library, 6 Fermor Street (St. Vital Ward)

WINNIPEG PUBLIC SERVICE RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Council favourably consider the Historical Buildings Committee's recommendation that, based on the historical and architectural significance of the property, that St. Vital Library, 6 Fermor Avenue, be placed on the Buildings Conservation List as a Grade III structure with the following character-defining elements:

Exterior:

- The key-shaped massing, featuring two adjoining, double height circular sections on the east, and a lower, rectangular block to the west with a stepped back front façade, and flat roofs throughout.
- Cladding materials including dark brown brick throughout, contrasted by vertical metal reveals in regular intervals, and matching metal fascia in an undulating pattern.
- Large rectangular windows throughout, many with slanted heads to mimic the fascia, in singles or stacked in pairs, with simple mullions and spandrel panels.
- Main entrance centrally located.

Interior:

- The open plan
- The exposed glue-lam beams throughout, in intricate radiating or grid patterns, with plank wood ceilings.
- The circular sections featuring multiple mezzanines and stairs with original wood and metal handrails/guardrails, ocular skylights, and pendant light fixtures.
- Details including some original wooden book stacks, wood paneling, etc.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Heritage Designation of St. Vital Library, 6 Fermor Street

Critical Path: Riel Community Committee; Standing Policy Committee on Downtown Development, Heritage and Riverbank Management, EPC, Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
J. Kiernan	B. Thorgrimson	N/A	

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REASON FOR THE REPORT

The Area Councillor has championed this Listing, citing the structure's architectural and cultural significance to the City of Winnipeg. The City of Winnipeg Library Branch is also in support.

The Historical Buildings Committee has evaluated the structure to be of Grade III status and supports placing it on the Buildings Conservation List under the terms of the Historical Buildings By-law No. 1474/77.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- As a municipally designated heritage building:
 - A Historic Property Notice (caveat) will be filed against the title of the building with the Winnipeg Land Titles Office as per City of Winnipeg Charter Section 157.1(3) in order to notify the owner(s) and potential purchasers that the property is identified on the Buildings Conservation List, and as such is subject to the Historical Buildings By-law No. 1474/77.
 - All alterations to the Character-Defining Elements (above) will require approval under a Certificate of Suitability as per the Historical Buildings By-law No. 1474/77.
 - The building will not be able to be demolished without the approval of City Council.
 - The building will be eligible for grants under the Province of Manitoba's "Designated Heritage Buildings Grant" Program, and will be viewed favourably by other granting agencies.

HISTORY

At the request of the Area Councillor, the Historical Buildings Committee (HBC) evaluated the St. Vital Library on February 20, 2014. It was deemed to have merit attributed to being illustrative of key civic services required for maturing municipalities in the 1950/60s, and a good representative of the Modernist era in architecture.

Therefore, the Library received a recommendation for Grade III municipal heritage status by the HBC. Grade III buildings have been identified as moderately significant heritage examples worthy of listing. Suitable exterior and interior alterations may be permitted.

The City of Winnipeg has been diligent in conserving libraries. Of the 22 libraries constructed to date, three were built before 1930, 10 were built between 1930-1974, and the balance were built after 1975. All three facilities built before 1930 are now municipal heritage structures, including:

- former Carnegie Library (now Winnipeg Archives), 380 William Ave., Grade II
- St. John's Library, 500 Salter Street, Grade II
- Cornish Library, 20 West Gate, Grade II

While these constitute an excellent sample of Winnipeg's early libraries, the practice of providing quality civic facilities continued following WWII, as suburbs grew and building technologies evolved. Libraries continued to be seen as vital components for learning and recreation, and were commissioned with care by municipal governments. As the stylistic period

known as Modernism gained favour locally and internationally, public structures evolved from heavy ornamental structures to sleek boxes of glass and steel. New construction materials and techniques, particularly steel framing and reinforced concrete, meant heavy load bearing walls were replaced with sleek curtain walls. Modern buildings were typified by large expanses of plain surfaces, square or rectangular modules, and flat roofs.

The St. Vital Library is one such example, and would be the first Modern structure Listed by the City. It is noted for its unique key-shaped plan, circular and rectangular massing, flat roof, dark brick cladding and handsomely-detailed interior.

Many heritage designating authorities, including the Historical Buildings Committee, consider the benchmark of 40 years of age or older to be eligible for heritage designation.

***See Appendix A for a History of this library*

****See Appendix B for a list of Active Winnipeg Libraries*

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: **March 28, 2014**

Project Name:

Heritage Designation of St. Vital Library, 6 Fermor Ave.

COMMENTS:

The recommendation contained in this report is that City Council favourably consider the Historical Buildings Committee's recommendation that, There are no financial implications associated with this recommendation.

"Original Signed By"

Mike McGinn, CA
Manager of Finance

CONSULTATION

In preparing this report there was consultation with:

City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Planning, Property and Development
Division: Planning and Land Use
Prepared by: Jennifer Hansell
Date: April 1, 2014
File No.: O:\Reports Directive\Planning and Land Use\Heritage\2014\Heritage
Designation of St. Vital Library.doc

UD2014-037

Appendix A

St. Vital Library, 6 Fermor Ave.



St. Vital, incorporated as a city in 1962 with a population of approximately 27,000, had seen a growth in its library system since the first facility was opened in a converted retail space near the corner of St. Mary's Road and St. Anne's Road in 1953. The need for larger, more modern space was felt nearly immediately and a community group, the Friends of the St. Vital Library began to lobby the Library Board and municipal council for a new facility.

George A. Stewart to design a new library building. His unusual structure related directly to the site and Council approved the plans. The official sod turning occurred in 1962 and the formal opening of the new library took place on June 9, 1963.

Council purchased an oddly shaped, triangular piece of property on the south side of Fermor Avenue for one dollar and in late 1961 hired local architect

Often described as a "key" shape, the library runs east to west, the east end features two segmented circular areas, the smaller and shorter at the east end, the larger to the west and holds the main entrance. The west end boasts a stepped front (north) façade with large windows. The frame structure is clad in dark brick with exposed concrete columns and fascia clad in "enamelled steel sheeting". The rear (south) façade of the west end features high angular windows.

The structure's basement includes storage in the west end and work space and activity rooms in the east. The main floor holds the books and other materials, many on the original wood bookcases. The main desk is centrally located and the east end includes the mezzanines with original wood handrails and guardrails (although wire meshing has been added). The ceiling of this section is exposed glue-lam wood and skylights add natural light to the stacks. Skylights are also found in the ceiling of the west end of the building.

Both the interior and the exterior show a remarkable degree of retention of original design and layout and materials.

The library continues to be an important part of the City of Winnipeg's services in the south end of the city.

Appendix B

Active City of Winnipeg Libraries

Name	Address	Date of Construction	Style
1. Charleswood Library	5014 Roblin Boulevard	1966	
2. Henderson Library	1075 Henderson Highway	ca. 1983 (commercial mall)	
3. Munroe Library	489 London Avenue	ca. 1988 (commercial mall)	
4. Pembina Trail Library	2724 Pembina Highway	1987	
5. Fort Garry Library	1360 Pembina Highway	1960	Modern
6. Windsor Park Library	955 Cottonwood Road	1961	Modern
7. St. Boniface Library/Bibliothèque de Saint-Boniface	131 Provencher Boulevard	1987	
8. St. James-Assiniboia Library	1910 Portage Avenue	1958, 1970	Modern
9. Westwood Library	66 Allard Avenue	1967	Modern
10. St. Vital Library	6 Fermor Avenue	1963	Modern
11. Louis Riel Library	1168 Dakota Street	1989	
12. Transcona Library	111 Victoria Avenue W	1961, 1975	Modern
13. West Kildonan Library	365 Jefferson Avenue	1967	Modern
14. Osborne Library	625 Osborne Street	1982	
15. Cornish Library	20 West Gate	1915	
16. Millennium Library	251 Donald Street	1977, 2005	
17. River Heights Library	1520 Corydon Avenue	1961	Modern
18. West End Library	999 Sargent Ave.	2009	
19. St. John's Library	500 Salter Street	1915	
20. Sir William Stephenson Library	765 Keewatin Street	1997	

Former City of Winnipeg Libraries

823 Ellice Avenue	823 Ellice Avenue	1966	Modern
Former Carnegie Library (now City Archives)	380 William Avenue	1911	