

Heritage Planner's Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The Knox Church is located in the neighbourhood of Old Strathcona. It is adjacent to the designated Strathcona Public Library and Orange Hall, close to the designated Connaught Armoury, and near to the historic Whyte Avenue commercial district. The church is located on a street corner in an area of both residential and commercial structures. It is bordered on the north by the former C.P.R. Railway tracks.

Heritage Value

When this church was built in 1907 for the Presbyterians, the Gothic Revival style had long been the preferred choice for denominations of British extraction. The prototype for this style has its roots in the rural village churches of England, and for many new arrivals in Canada the style provided a physical as well as spiritual continuity with their homeland.

Designed by architects Magoon, Hopkins & James of Edmonton, this church has Gothic Revival style elements including pointed arches, steeply pitched roofs, battlements, buttresses, pinnacles, stained glass and gothic tracery. It has a cross-shaped plan with a small cupola at the intersection of the axes, and a handsome square bell tower with two Tudor-arched entrances at the base. In 1911, a large pipe organ was installed and then in 1949, an assembly hall was added at the rear of the church. Knox Church was one of a few large brick churches to be constructed in Edmonton before the boom period of 1911-1914. Today it is one of the oldest in Edmonton, and among the best preserved.

The Knox Church is the first brick Presbyterian Church built in South Edmonton and is similar to Edmonton's First Presbyterian Church. In 1925, the church was renamed Knox United with the union of Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Methodist denominations in Canada. In 1970, it became the Belgravia (Knox) Evangelical Free Church. Today, it is known as the Knox Evangelical Free Church of Edmonton.

Character Defining Elements

The character-defining elements as expressed in the form, scale, massing and materials of the Knox Church include:

Church Building Exterior

- mass, form and style;
- steeply sloped cross gable roof;
- polygonal cupola on the roof featuring roof ridged dentillation and crowning finial;
- red-brick façade with cast stone trim, sills, lintels, and keystones and metal vent details;

- brick voussoirs, pilasters, buttresses, and corbelling;
- corner crenellated tower with corbelling and pinnacles with finials;
- perpendicular style timber tracery to bell tower;
- corner entrance;
- fenestration pattern and style, including stained glass; and
- perpendicular style window tracery.

Church Building Interior

- gentle sloping of auditorium floor;
- serpentine-shaped balcony;
- plaster-ribbed arched dome over auditorium space;
- original seats and pews;
- original door frames, doors, trims, mouldings, light fixtures and staircases; and
- pipe organ.

Adjoining Hall Exterior (1949)

- mass, form and scale;
- red-brick exterior with corbelled brick pattern at parapet;
- fenestration pattern and style;
- cast stone sills and lintels; and
- barrel roof to gymnasium.

Adjoining Hall Interior

- hardwood gymnasium floor