

## Manitoba Guidelines

Writing and Editing Statements of  
Significance

**T**HE INFORMATION PRESENTED in this guide has been prepared to help Manitoba contractors and editors write and edit Statements of Significance (SoSs), that critical section of the Canadian Register of Historic Places that describes the reasons why historic places have been deemed important, why they are valued by Canadians and what must be identified for the creation of good conservation plans.

The first section of the document, **General Writing Guidelines**, has been reproduced from materials prepared by HPI over the past few years. It is imperative that contractors clearly understand the purpose for each section of the SoS (Description of Historic Place, Heritage Value of Historic Place and Character-defining Elements) and that the directions and hints provided there are frequently consulted during the preparation of an SoS. It is assumed that contractors have attended Alastair Kerr's SoS workshop on values-based management and that they are familiar with the theory and content provided in that exercise.

While the General SoS-writing Guidelines are critical for understanding the theory and practice of writing a Statement of Significance, they cannot anticipate the various challenges that arise during the actual creative process (and this is a creative process). And they do not establish the standards that will be applied in Manitoba. It is for this reason that this document has been prepared. The key elements that have been added to the "General Writing Guidelines" are:

- **Three Manitoba Examples**
- **Analysis of Three Manitoba Examples**
- **Review of Three First Drafts**
- **Workshop Proceedings**

The collection of information in these four sections highlights organizational processes and writing techniques that should help in the creation of good SoSs. The first section features finalized Statements of Significance that are then analyzed in considerable detail in the second section. The third section of the guide employs drafts prepared by Manitoba SoS contractors to examine a multitude of issues involved in writing an SoS, and suggests steps to create a final, approved Statement of Significance. The final section, Workshop Proceedings, contains information from an SoS-writing workshop held in May of 2004.

In addition to the technical dissections of the SoSs that are the main focus of this guide, writers and editors should also keep in mind a few general observations about the Statement of Significance. First, while it has to adhere to fairly strict HPI guidelines about what not to include (i.e., information in the wrong place, or information extraneous to the issue at hand), it must also be entertaining. The SoS is to be read by students, teachers, interested adults, experts, etc., and must therefore be appealing to a wide range of people. And because it will be accessed via the Web, where there are distinct expectations for clarity and especially brevity, the SoS will have to be informative and engaging. It also has to be clear, and clear of jargon.

Keep the SoS short – if the site is not the Legislative Building, Hotel Fort Garry, Walker Theatre (or some other major piece of architecture), the SoS should not be more than a page long. If yours is, go back and start pruning. Remember Alastair's observation – that the SoS is a summary of your research and writing. All the hard work should be hidden, and the result should be short, sharp and engaging. At the same time, we want variety in Manitoba's collection of SoSs — each building deserves it — so the Historic Resources Branch discourages the creation of rigid templates that will ultimately drain the joy out of the material.

Finally, while the seven Statements of Significance presented here are exemplary (they have been created with assistance from Victoria Angel, Canadian Registrar for the Canadian Register of Historic Places), they should be used for reference, not as short-cuts for pat phrases or standard presentation techniques. While they are important to review, the SoSs are only the final, visible product of a great deal of work. It is that pre-SoS work that this guide is really about, exploring various situations to establish a standard process for creating a high quality SoS. This standard process will allow contractors to confidently approach any building with the same set of organizational and communication techniques. But all buildings and situations are different, and while the process may be similar, each one calls for a different solution, and a unique Statement of Significance.

# General Writing Guidelines

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In the various materials prepared by the Historic Places Program since 2002, to introduce and describe Statements of Significance, there were clear and helpful directions for the writing of each of the three sections of the SoS. These are reproduced below and should be close at hand when writing the SoS.



## Description of Historic Place

The purpose of the Description is two-fold: it should paint a picture of the historic place in one or two sentences, and should describe very generally what the designation, or formal recognition, applies to. Guidelines for writing the 'Description':

- the Description should answer the question: “What was designated, or formally recognized?”
- it should identify the principal resources that make up the historic place
- it should describe the general *nature* of the historic place, without describing it in detail
- it should not exceed three sentences
- it is not a history of the historic place



## Heritage Value

'Heritage Value' is defined as: the aesthetic, historic, scientific, educational, cultural, social, or spiritual importance or significance for past, present or future generations. The *heritage value* of a historic place is embodied in the materials, forms, spatial configurations, uses, and cultural associations or meanings that together comprise the character defining elements. The Heritage Value section of the Statement of

Significance describes the core heritage values of the historic place on which the designation, or formal recognition, is based. Its purpose is to convey the heritage significance of the historic place to a broad audience, in a clear and easily understood manner. Its purpose is also to guide the identification of character-defining elements. Guidelines for describing 'Heritage Value':

- the Heritage Value section should answer the question: "Why is the historic place important/significant?"
- it should not be a statement of fact (i.e. 'the house was constructed by the Smith family in 1857..'), but rather, a statement of value (i.e. 'constructed in 1857 by the Smith family, it is historically/architecturally important as the...')
- it should reflect the heritage criteria used to evaluate the historic place
- the principal area of heritage value should be emphasized ('the site was designated primarily because of its historical association with...')
- if a historic place has been identified as having heritage value in more than one category (i.e. aesthetic and historic, social and spiritual, historic and educational, architectural and environmental/contextual, etc.), each should be addressed separately in the Heritage Value section ('the site was also noted for its architectural qualities/historical associations/spiritual value, etc...')
- the format for this section will be very flexible, reflecting the varied processes and criteria in place across Canada and at the local, provincial/territorial and federal levels
- it must be no longer than approximately 2-3 paragraphs (max. 4000 characters)

## Character-Defining Elements

The Character Defining Elements section identifies, in point form, the major materials, forms, spatial configurations, uses, and cultural associations or meanings that together comprise the heritage value of the historic place, and which must be retained in order to preserve its heritage value. The purpose of this section is, *in conjunction with existing policy documents, statements of significance or heritage character statements*, to provide guidance to property owners, planners, architects and others involved in the conservation or rehabilitation of a historic place. It should also serve as a guide for the preparation of a Conservation Plan, the first step in the Certification process for property owners seeking federal financial incentives. Guidelines for describing 'Character Defining Elements':

- the Character Defining Elements section should answer the question: "What are the key elements of the historic place that must be protected in order to preserve the heritage value of the site"
- all character defining elements identified in this section must relate directly to the heritage values identified in the previous section (i.e. if the historic place has historical value, which elements speak directly to that value: the materials, forms/style, spatial organization, uses, etc...?)
- this section is not a description of the historic place, but an analysis of what elements speak directly to its importance
- it should not be treated as an exhaustive list of building or site features to be protected, but rather as a guide to where value lies (i.e. the richness of the details and finishes, as illustrated by...; the high quality of the workmanship, evident in...; the formal layout of the grounds, etc.)
- this section should not include conservation advice (i.e. this should be retained/protected/replaced...); that advice is provided in the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*.
- the following questions provide a checklist that can be used to assist with the identification of character defining elements (keeping in mind that character
- defining elements must speak to, and derive from, the heritage values identified in the previous section):
  - does heritage value lie in the materials?
  - does heritage value lie in the formal qualities (i.e. the form/style) of the historic place?
  - does heritage value lie in the spatial configurations (i.e. layout or sequences of spaces)?
  - does heritage value lie in the traditional uses or activities associated with the historic place?
  - does heritage value lie in its cultural associations or meanings (i.e. oral histories, traditional rituals)?

# Three Manitoba Examples

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The three Statements of Significance that follow have been vetted and approved by Ottawa staff of the Historic Places Program. They are thus exemplary and can be used by contractors and editors for reference, and as examples of process and content.

The examples — Tamarisk United Church near Dauphin, Margaret Laurence House in Neepawa and Hotel Fort Garry in Winnipeg — have been selected because they offer a sense of the variety of situations that will arise in the creation of SoSs. Tamarisk United Church can be seen as a model for many designated sites in Manitoba, where architectural character is modest and fairly easily explained. The Margaret Laurence House has been included because it is an example where designation was based not on architectural claims but on the importance of a person; the SoS will provide direction for this kind of situation. The Hotel Fort Garry has been included because it is one of the province's most ambitious buildings, and the resulting SoS is rather more complicated than the other two; very few buildings will require this level of attention, and few will entail the creation of such a long Statement of Significance, but for those that do this will be the model.



## Tamarisk United Church



# Statement of Significance

## Tamarisk United Church

### Description of Historic Place

Tamarisk United Church, a small wooden country church built in 1907, is a provincially designated site. The church is set on a country road amidst a landscape of large open fields punctuated with small stands of dense bush. Adjacent to the church, on the east side, is the church cemetery, distinguished by large coniferous trees. The designation of the site applies to the church building, cemetery and grounds around the church.

### Heritage Value of Historic Place

Tamarisk United Church, originally a Methodist church, is one of Manitoba's best remaining examples that recall the simple forms, materials and details that characterized the pioneer religious experience, in particular that of Anglo-Ontarians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In its simple exterior form and then in its straightforward and completely intact interior, the church is an impressive testament to the unpretentious theological nature of Methodism and to the evocative spiritual power of simple forms and plain construction.

Source: Manitoba Heritage Council Minute, 17 October 1987

### Character-defining Elements

Key elements that define the site's heritage character include:

- placement of the building on an expanse of open field, facing the nearby country road

Key elements that define the building's external heritage character include:

- simple box-like form with gable roof and walls of wooden clapboard siding painted white, with trim elements like door and window casings and corner boards contrasted in a dark green colour and with a pointed Gothic entrance door and windows with basic tracery

Key internal elements that define the heritage character of the building include:

- an unobstructed interior, with an overall informal quality as expressed in the use of wooden chairs, and with glass lamps and stovepipes suspended from the ceiling
- an unpretentious material quality, expressed in varnished but unpainted tongue-and-groove siding on all floor, wall and ceiling surfaces and in the use of clear glass in the windows
- a playful decorative sense, expressed in the arrangement of wooden siding into sections of vertical, horizontal and diagonal patterns

## Margaret Laurence House



# Statement of Significance

## Margaret Laurence House

### Description of Historic Place

The Margaret Laurence House, a provincially designated site, is a two storey brick house in the Italianate style, constructed in 1894. It is situated in a residential area of Neepawa, on a well groomed yard with mature trees. The designation applies to the house and the yard on which it sits.

### Heritage Value of Historic Place

This house, a childhood home to acclaimed novelist Margaret Laurence (1926-1987) between 1935 and 1944, not only has significant connections to this important Canadian writer, but was also the focus for a great deal of fictional action in several of the so-called Manawaka novels. The town of Neepawa was recreated in many of Laurence's books as the fictional community of Manawaka, and this house appeared in powerful descriptive passages in several books. The house was built by Laurence's grandfather, John Simpson, who was likewise a major presence in several books. The house is an important representative example of a building type popular in Manitoba between 1890 and 1910 – the Italianate villa, in this case a modest version of the style.

Source: Manitoba Heritage Council Minute (date and year to be added)

### Character-defining Elements

Key elements that define the site's heritage character include:

- extent and layout of the yard, with a large grassed area outlined with low hedges and a straight sidewalk that reinforces the formal orientation of the house to the street

Key elements that define the building's heritage character include:

- modest Italianate vocabulary, evident in such configurations, features and details as the irregular plan and buff brick walls sheltered by an expansive roof with broad overhanging eaves, tall segmentally arched windows with limestone lintels and decorative brick caps and the verandah with wooden details painted white, etc.

Key internal elements that define the heritage character of the building include:

- on the main floor, a brightly lit set of rooms whose layout dates to the early 1900s, with the main parlour of particular interest, featuring such features and details as the standard early nineteenth-century wooden floor, window and door features and details, as well as an intricate wooden room divider, etc.
- second floor bedroom overlooking the street which was Margaret Laurence's bedroom during her tenure in the house, and which features an alcove in a dormer, similar woodwork evident on the main floor and a metal heating grate, etc.



# Hotel Fort Garry



# Statement of Significance

## Hotel Fort Garry

### Description of Historic Place

The Hotel Fort Garry, a large, palatial hotel, was built for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway between 1911 and 1913. The hotel is at the eastern end of Broadway, an important Winnipeg thoroughfare prized for its dignified tree-lined character and the location along its length of major institutional buildings. The municipal designation applies to the footprint of the building, and specifically to the following interior spaces: Palm Room, Provencher Room and seventh floor Ballroom, Banquet Room and Loggia.

### Heritage Value

The Hotel Fort Garry is unique in Manitoba, the last surviving grand hotel from an era when such buildings were at the pinnacle of architectural achievement. In its placement, a block west of Union Station, the hotel maintains its important historic and visual links to the building that not only supplied it with many of its guests but which also was the economic source for its existence. Designed by Montreal architects Ross and McFarlane, the hotel is the province's sole example of the Château Style, an architecture that came to be seen as a uniquely Canadian style, combining qualities of the French Gothic with a strong Canadian impulse for large, dramatic architectural gestures. In its grand and luxurious public spaces the Hotel Fort Garry still maintains high levels of integrity in the display of a variety of expensive features, elements, materials and finishes.

Source: City of Winnipeg By-law XX, date, etc.

### Character-defining Elements

Key elements that define the hotel's Château Style character include:

- bulky, 14-storey height, whose symmetrical composition defines the north, east and west facades, and which is carried out in large blocks of smooth-cut Indiana limestone
- steep copper roof, whose picturesque quality is defined by a multitude of small shed- and hip-roofed dormers, highly elaborate dormer facades, of stone, at the roof corners, a wealth of finials, a large and elaborate chimney, etc.
- variety of window shapes, including two-storey segmentally-arched examples, small rectangular examples and lancets, bay windows that run up the five intermediate floors, etc., and variety of window framing treatments, including heavily articulated examples in the two-storey windows, and simpler sash treatments on other windows
- rich detail treatment, especially the decorative stonework at the cornice and balcony rails atop the bay windows

Key elements that define the building's luxury hotel character are most apparent in the following configurations, areas and spaces:

- the orientation of the main façade and primary doors facing Broadway, with a broad driveway space separating the building from the street
- views to the building of the east and west facades but especially of the north facade
- main entrance, with its broad stairs, large decorated canopy supported by stout columns and set of heavy wood and glass doors
- main lobby, with its stately volume and wealth of stone and metal features and details, including the patterned marble floor, deeply recessed ceiling panels outlined with decorative plaster mouldings, square columns with foliated capitals, shallow arches with heavy keystones that define ancillary spaces, mezzanine floor encircled with bronze railings of delicate design, heavily decorated wood and marble reception desk, curving, white marble stairs with elaborate brass rail that leads to the mezzanine, etc.
- staircases with marble stairs and brass rails whose decorative patterns include stylized initials FG (Fort Garry)
- guest floors, with broad hallways and heavily articulated wood doors and door frames
- guest rooms, with their formal layout and modest decorative embellishments including simple cove mouldings, wood doors and casings, baseboards, etc., and especially the Vice Regal Room, with its grand and elegant layout, large windows with highly decorated surrounds and elaborately decorated wall surfaces, etc.

Key elements that define the building's luxury hotel character are also apparent in the following major public spaces, each with its own distinctive volume, ceiling and wall treatment, and carried out with exotic woods, decorative plaster and concrete and plaster in imitation of cut stone:

- Palm Room, with its elegant oval plan and generous volume, shallow curved ceiling with wealth of delicate plaster details of floral design, complex wall configurations defined by classical features and details, window wall with its distinctive tri-partite divisions, etc.
- Provencher Room, with its grand volume and its wealth of features and details, especially the heavily articulated ceiling, and complex wall configurations defined by a great variety of classical motifs, etc.
- Loggia Hall, with its impressive height and long, uninterrupted length, and wealth of Château-style features and details, including the heavy beamed ceiling, heavily articulated wall surfaces defined by tall and impressive round arches infilled with elaborate wooden screens and doors, heavy brass chandeliers, etc.
- Loggia Sitting Room, with its impressive height and long, uninterrupted lengths, tall windows, and wealth of Château-style features and details, including the cross-vaulted ceiling, heavy iron chandeliers; impressive fireplace, etc.
- Cigar Room, with its oak stairs, brass stair rail and heavily decorated cove moulding and large circular medallion

- Concert Hall, with its grand and stately volume, heavy beamed ceiling, tall windows, extremely rich and varied wall surfaces and entrances carried out in wood with classical elements like pilasters, columns, entablatures and pediments, thrust stage with a heavily decorated proscenium arch, decorative vent surrounds, elaborate brass chandeliers, etc.
- Banquet Hall, with its impressive volume and delicate decorative treatment as seen in the beamed ceiling, complex wall configurations, delicate cut glass chandeliers, etc.
- Club Room, with its low, heavily-beamed ceiling and complex wall surfaces, etc.



# Analysis of Three Manitoba Examples

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The three SoS examples, for Tamarisk United Church, Margaret Laurence House and Hotel Fort Garry, were the result of careful consultation with Historic Places Program staff, and those informative discussions form the basis for the following analysis. In this section of the guide, each of the three parts of the Statement of Significance (Description of Historic Place, Heritage Values and Character-defining Elements) has been isolated and the relevant texts from each SoS reproduced and then discussed in considerable detail.

The analysis of the SoSs presented here will allow contractors and editors to understand some of the processes, debates and writing/communication techniques that often characterize the creation of a good Statement of Significance.

## Analysis of the Description of Historic Place Sections

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The briefest section of the SoS is usually the Description of Historic Place. The examples here follow the HPI formula: they are generally three sentences long, paint a picture of the place, identify the resources that make up the place and identify what has been formally designated. The analysis that follows the examples refers to the content of each sentence and to the construction of the sentences.

## General Analysis

**Tamarisk United Church**, a small wooden country church built in 1907, is a provincially designated site. The church is set on a country road amidst a landscape of large open fields punctuated with small stands of dense bush. Adjacent to the church, on the east side, is the church cemetery, distinguished by large coniferous trees. The designation of the site applies to the church building, cemetery and grounds around the church.

The **Margaret Laurence House**, a provincially designated site, is a two storey brick house in the Italianate style, constructed in 1894. It is situated in a residential area of Neepawa, on a well groomed yard with mature trees. The designation applies to the house and the yard on which it sits.

- The first sentence from each of the examples contains the building name, date of construction and a few words that sum up the architectural character of the place. The first two examples also contain a reference to the level of designation; including that information in the last example would make the sentence too unwieldy and so that information has to be included elsewhere in the Description. Note that each building's architectural character is quickly summarized. Contractors are urged to search for these kinds of descriptions, and to avoid options like, "a twelve-storey hotel," which is technically accurate but does not conjure up an image by a reader.
- The inclusion of construction dates will be expected from readers, but often also helps them create an image of the architectural character – early twentieth century (along with the word "palatial") suggests a building with considerable architectural embellishment. A date of 1930 might suggest an Art Deco building, with smoother surfaces and a completely different architectural vocabulary. Inclusion of the date is also required by HPI – it is one of those facts that appears in another section of the documentation record and which thus has to be referenced in the SoS.
- The second sentence for each example then establishes the physical setting for the building. Contractors are urged to think about where the building is and what the surrounding "landscape" looks like (even if the landscape is urban). The physical setting must be described and where appropriate the socio-economic situation can also be implied. For example, in the sentence for the Hotel Fort Garry, the word "dignified" quickly suggests the character of the street, while the reference to "institutional buildings" suggests to readers a socio-economic context for the building. For Tamarisk United Church and Margaret Laurence House, the description moves from the general (neighbourhood character) to the specific (qualities of the site).
- The final sentence then states in rather clinical language the extent of the designation. Note that because the level of designation for the Hotel Fort Garry was not included in the opening sentence that it has to be included here, in the last sentence. Also note that the City of Winnipeg designation includes specific reference to rooms, elements and features and these are to be listed here.

- While it is tempting to create a single template for this section of each Statement of Significance, the Historic Resources Branch would prefer that contractors look for at least a handful of different ways to present this information. Remember that this is for a wide audience and that texts should be interesting. Each building that has been designated in Manitoba is special and is deserving of its own distinct introduction.

The **Hotel Fort Garry**, a large, palatial hotel, was built for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway between 1911 and 1913. The hotel is at the eastern end of Broadway, an important Winnipeg thoroughfare prized for its dignified tree-lined character and the location along its length of major institutional buildings. The municipal designation applies to the footprint of the building, and specifically to the following interior spaces: Palm Room, Provencher Room and seventh floor Ballroom, Banquet Room and Loggia.

## Analysis of the Heritage Values Sections

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The following discussion of the Heritage Value sections provides first an overview of content requirements, investigation processes and writing suggestions, under the title “General Analysis.” This is followed by a critique, “Detailed Analysis,” of the Heritage Value sections for the three buildings; values are underlined in the original sections for easier reference for the discussion that concludes this section of the guide.

## General Analysis

**Tamarisk United Church**, originally a Methodist church, is one of Manitoba's best remaining examples that recall the simple forms, materials and details that characterized the pioneer religious experience, in particular that of Anglo-Ontarians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In its simple exterior form and then in its straightforward and completely intact interior, the church is an impressive testament to the unpretentious theological nature of Methodism and to the evocative spiritual power of simple forms and plain construction.

Source: Manitoba Heritage Council Minute, 17 October 1987

- The Values section is the part of the SoS from which nearly all readers (general public, students, researchers, planners, Certification Agents) will refer for information about the site. It is thus imperative that this section receive adequate attention so that information is first correct and then presented in an interesting and informative fashion. The process for the creation of the Heritage Value section should be to identify all possible values, carefully consider their importance, select the core values, place the values in a hierarchy, and then present this information in a precise, concise, informative and interesting way.
- A good way to identify the values associated with a site is to set up the following sentence and then fill in the blank: "The So-and-So Building is important because: \_\_\_\_\_." Having established this simple equation greatly simplifies the search for values. Keep asking yourself: Is the supposed value actually important, or is it just interesting? And of course it will be necessary to consider whether the resulting list of values is actually the set of core values, and whether you need to trim the list.
- There are two levels of designation in Manitoba: provincial and municipal. There are thus two levels of importance that can be ascribed, and that should be made clear to readers of an individual building's Heritage Values section. Provincial sites will typically be described as the best of something (best of a certain style, best representative example of a certain tradition, etc.). Municipal sites, including those in Winnipeg, will be important to the community. This level of significance must be made clear.
- For most buildings in Manitoba the values will be a combination of architectural (style/tradition or material) and historical (either a connection to an important person/institution or to a historical theme). Be careful with those municipal sites that identify people – these will likely be the first inhabitants or occupants but generally will not have any lasting value for the building.
- Consider the function as an inherent part of the value. A place of worship, for example, will have certain attributes that are particular to its function. A church has specific liturgical requirements that establish its layout, placement of features and objects, etc. It will be necessary for contractors to understand these inherent functional requirements in order to adequately describe the building's values (for example, if the function of a Roman Catholic Church is not recognized as a key value, then elements like Stations of the Cross statuary, which may appear only to be minor decorative flourishes, but which are actually integral to the function, may be ignored in the CDE section, to the great detriment of the building).

## Detailed Analysis

This house, a childhood home to acclaimed novelist **Margaret Laurence** (1926-1987) between 1935 and 1944, not only has significant connections to this important Canadian writer, but was also the focus for a great deal of action in several of the so-called Manawaka novels. The town of Neepawa was recreated in many of Laurence's books as the fictional community of Manawaka, and this house appeared in powerful descriptive passages in several books. The house was built by Laurence's grandfather, John Simpson, who was likewise a major presence in several books. The house is an important representative example of a building type popular in Manitoba between 1890 and 1910 – the Italianate villa, in this case a modest version of the style.

Source: TBA

- The following review of the Values sections for the three buildings identifies the core values, discusses the hierarchy of values and then notes how the information is presented so that it is clear and interesting.
- For **Tamarisk United Church**, the values are identified in the first sentence (those that are architectural: simple forms, materials; and those that relate to the function: that characterized the pioneer religious experience). The second sentence has been added for emphasis and clarity, to help readers gain a fuller understanding of the values.
- For the **Margaret Laurence House**, the primary value lies in the associations with Margaret Laurence. But it is not merely that she lived here (after all, she lived many other places as well) – it is also the fact that the house is featured in several Manawaka novels that is of considerable import. Much of the text here amplifies on the core value. The mention of John Simpson is only appropriate as it ties back to Margaret Laurence and her books; otherwise he would not be mentioned – by himself he is not a core value. The final value of the house is as a representative building type. Note that there is a clear hierarchy of values, with the architectural style as less significant than Laurence or even her grandfather, the builder of the house.
- For the **Hotel Fort Garry**, there are four values noted: its status as a grand hotel, its proximate placement near Union Station, its Château Style and the high levels of integrity of the features, elements, materials and finishes. Note that much of the additional text is added to clarify and inform. For example, the first sentence includes the clause, “from an era when such buildings were at the pinnacle of architectural achievement,” in order for readers to grasp more clearly the building’s high level of importance.

The **Hotel Fort Garry** is unique in Manitoba, the last surviving grand hotel from an era when such buildings were at the pinnacle of architectural achievement. In its placement, a block west of Union Station, the hotel maintains its important historic and visual links to the building that not only supplied it with many of its guests but which also was the economic source of its existence. Designed by Montreal architects Ross and McFarlane, the hotel is the province's sole example of the Château Style, an architecture that came to be seen as a uniquely Canadian style, combining qualities of the French Gothic with a strong Canadian impulse for large, dramatic architectural gestures. In its grand and luxurious public spaces the Hotel Fort Garry still maintains high levels of integrity in the display of a variety of expensive features, elements, materials and finishes.

Source: TBA

- Finally, one small point about this section of the SoS. All Heritage Value sections must include a "Source" reference. Please note that this is not a footnote, and thus not a reference to the primary research paper that was used in the production of the SoS. The source refers to the "document" in which the designation is formally established; for Manitoba examples these will be the minutes of a Manitoba Heritage Council meeting or the municipal Bylaw that notes the specific reason for the designation.



## Analysis of the Character-defining Elements Section

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Like the analysis that was carried out for the Heritage Values section, the following review of the Character-defining Elements (CDEs) will explore the process for the creation of the CDE in general terms, and conclude with an examination of the three CDEs for Tamarisk United Church, Margaret Laurence House and Hotel Fort Garry. Because the original CDE text for the Hotel Fort Garry is so long, only fragments have been featured here.

## General Analysis

Key elements that define the heritage character [of **Tamarisk United Church**] site include:

- placement of the building on an expanse of open field, facing the nearby country road

Key elements that define the building's external heritage character include:

- simple box-like form with gable roof and walls of wooden clap-board siding painted white, with trim elements like door and window casings and corner boards contrasted in a dark green colour and with a pointed Gothic entrance door and windows with tracery

Key internal elements that define the heritage character of the building include:

- an unobstructed interior, with an overall informal quality as expressed in the use of wooden chairs, and with glass lamps and stovepipes suspended from the ceiling

- It is critical to understand that there are two perspectives that must be addressed in the creation of a successful CDE. One point of view follows a logical path describing features and details that relate back directly to the values – this is important for the public and for those involved in the day-to-day conservation of a building. The other point of view involves anticipating what a developer might do and what should be said to help direct (or even stop) certain interventions – this will be important for Certification Agents who will be reviewing proposed developments. Finding a balance between what is too much information, and what is too little, will be an interesting challenge for SoS writers. Contractors will also need to consider what valued parts of a building will be easy for a developer to change (windows, doors, porches and verandahs, additions, etc.) and which thus must be described in some detail, and then which things are unlikely to change (wall materials, roof shape, room configurations, major architectural details) and thus only need clear references (typically to materials, shapes, etc.).
- Because the needs of conservation staff and Certification Agents will need to be understood for this section to be successful, it will be necessary that SoS contractors understand the federal *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, and in particular “The Standards,” as outlined in Chapter 2 of that document. The Standards will be used in concert with the Statement of Significance, and SoS writers should be confident that a Certification Agent will bring another level of sensitivity to a conservation project.
- It is always good for an SoS writer to be continuously asking: What things (configurations, elements, features, details) can you absolutely not lose, for fear of completely losing the character. And what things are less important, and whose loss, while lamentable, would not severely impair an understanding of the values of the site. Also consider that you are describing the building as is, not as it was, or will be, or could be.
- Site visits are critical for the creation of a successful CDE. There is no substitute for actually moving through a building to understanding the connections between the values and the CDE. It will be this exploration of the building that will give concrete form to the values. It is imperative that in the site visit an SoS writer consider every possible character-defining element – some of these will not actually be included in the final CDE, but conservation people must be confident that features, elements, finishes, details, etc., that are been identified have been left out for a reason. The SoS will not be considered complete unless there is confirmation that a site visit has been undertaken, and a comprehensive examination of the building has been done.

- an unpretentious material quality, expressed in varnished but unpainted tongue-and-groove siding on all floor, wall and ceiling surfaces and in the use of clear glass in the windows
- a playful decorative sense, expressed in the arrangement of wooden siding into sections of vertical, horizontal and diagonal patterns
- A thorough knowledge of value-based management and a careful review of this document will be helpful in the preparation of any SoS. In addition, contractors should review the Website for the United States Parks Service (“Walk Through Historic Buildings: Learn To Identify the Visual Character of a Historic Building; address <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/walkthrough/index.htm>), which provides considerable clarity to the “reading” of buildings. These three sources must be consulted in the preparation of an SoS. To quickly summarize the United States Parks Service material, when looking at a building consider, in this order:
  - what kind of shape (box, cube, dome, etc.)
  - what kind of plan (rectangle, square, circle, oval, cruciform, irregular, etc.)
  - what kind of roof shape (gable, hip, gambrel, flat, dome, complex, etc.)
  - what kind of façade compositions (symmetrical, asymmetrical, informal, etc.)
  - what kind of materials (log, wood siding, stucco, brick, stone; plus anything special about surface texture and finishes, colour, contrasts, patterns, large-scale details, etc.)
  - what kind of fenestration patterns and shapes
  - what kind of windows and doors (think about the glass, framing, materials, colours – this is a key place where developers want to change things – what should they preserve – probably at minimum the shape, the operation (double-hung, casement, etc.)
  - what kind of features/elements (porches, verandahs, cupolas, stairs, chimneys, etc.)
  - what kind of additional details not addressed in the above
  - inside the building, what kind of room configurations
  - what kind of linking spaces
  - what kind of room volumes
  - what kind of floor, wall and ceiling materials and finishes
  - what kind of interior elements and features (staircases, fireplaces, doors, room dividers, etc.)
  - what kind of additional details not addressed in the above
- The typical process for the production of a CDE will be to list out each Heritage Value and then examine what specific CDEs attach to the value. It is not necessary that the CDEs mirror the hierarchy of values, especially if that presentation will be confusing to readers. Indeed, the mantra that can be used throughout this section should be: start with the large and work to the small, or, work from the general to the specific. This is not only applicable in moving imaginatively through the building, but also in presenting general concepts. For example, the subject of style would usually precede a discussion of materials because style is a more general concept.

- While the CDE should be written with all audiences in mind, it is important to note that this is the section of the SoS that provides the clearest direction to those involved in conservation practices. Whether they are building owners, on-site conservation staff or Certification Agents, this is the place they will look for direction on where value lies, and what specific parts of a building should have special attention and care.
- It is a good idea to characterize a collection of information in the CDE with a brief introductory phrase. This kind of presentation not only helps SoS writers formulate and organize thoughts, but will greatly aid readers – an introduction establishes for them a simple image that the following information builds on. Think about each general entry in the CDE as describing a palette of features, elements, finishes and details.
- It will occasionally be the case where material in a research paper does not contain sufficient information to create a good Statement of Significance. For example, interior spaces may not be adequately analyzed, and it will be necessary to conduct further research to ensure that the SoS is accurate.

Key elements that define the heritage character [of the **Margaret Laurence House**] include:

- extent and layout of the yard, with a large grassed area outlined with low hedges and a straight sidewalk that reinforces the formal orientation of the house to the street

Key elements that define the building's heritage character include:

- modest Italianate vocabulary, evident in such configurations, features and details as the irregular plan and buff brick walls sheltered by an expansive roof with broad overhanging eaves, tall segmentally arched windows with limestone lintels and decorative brick caps and the verandah with wooden details painted white, etc.

## Detailed Analysis

- The review of the CDE-writing process presented below follows a similar trajectory for each example. Because the process is fairly straightforward, issues that are dealt with in the first example (Tamarisk United) will only be referred to in passing in the other two examples.
- The values identified for **Tamarisk United** are its function (pioneer Methodist church) and its simple forms, materials and details. The function is linked to the forms, materials and details and so in the CDE it is not necessary to separate these. In this case, the CDE is set up to lead people from the large to the small (and also from the outside to the inside). The first bullet tells readers that the church site should remain as an open field and that the doors must face the road. This should suggest to those developing a conservation plan that other buildings should not be placed on the site, and that if the building had to be moved that the front doors should continue to face the road.
- The second bullet for Tamarisk United deals first with the overall form of the building, with the phrase “simple box-like form with gable roof” suggesting that any changes must still convey this simple form; that is, that if there is the need to make an addition that it likely will have to be small one (presumably at the back, as suggested in The Standards (Standard #10)), and that the roof will have to continue to be a gable shape. Note that the pitch of the roof shape is not prescribed, but the shape is. It may be necessary to clarify this with reference to its medium pitch and the cedar shingles that cover it. Further description of the wall materials and colour scheme will help direct conservation work. The

Key internal elements that define the heritage character of the building include:

- on the main floor, a brightly lit set of rooms whose layout dates to the early 1900s, with the main parlour of particular interest, featuring such features and details as the standard early nineteenth-century wooden floor, window and door features and details, as well as an intricate wooden room divider, etc.
- second floor bedroom overlooking the street which was Margaret Laurence's bedroom during her tenure in the house, and which features an alcove in a dormer, similar woodwork evident on the main floor and a metal heating grate, etc.

final reference, to the shape of doors and windows will allow them to be upgraded and even replaced if necessary, but tells readers (including Certification Agents) that the shape must be respected, and that the windows must feature “basic tracery.”

- The last set of bullets for Tamarisk moves inside the building, with opening phrases to each bullet establishing the setting for the information that follows. Thus, the first bullet opens with “an unobstructed interior,” which defines the space and also suggests that partition walls cannot be placed inside. The bullet then goes on to identify the interior’s “overall informal quality,” which allows for some interpretation, but not at the expense of the listed items: chairs, lamps and stovepipes suspended from the ceiling. The other bullets set up a parallel structure: a sense of the character (“unpretentious material quality,” “playful decorative sense”) which is then followed by those specific, major features or details that must be specifically attended to in a conservation plan. In plain language, what this is saying is that these overall things must be preserved, but that a development can tinker with the details.
- For the **Margaret Laurence House**, the primary Heritage Value lies in Margaret Laurence’s tenure in the house as a teenager and also in the fact that the house is a recurring presence in several of her Manawaka novels; the actual architectural value (Italianate style) is a minor one. The issue here then becomes one of determining how to express, or characterize, the connection between the values and a collection of CDEs. It will be necessary to know how Ms Laurence described the House (harshly, as it turns out: it is usually simply identified as the “Brick House,” “plain as the winter turnips in its root cellar, sparsely windowed as some crusader’s embattled fortress in a heathen wilderness, part dwelling place and part massive monument”). These characteristics are basically true (from a certain point of view) and describing the house using the modest Italianate style as the starting point does no disservice to Ms Laurence’s fictional interpretation of the place.
- Like Tamarisk United, the yard of the Laurence house is discussed first. Note how this establishes what a developer can do, and cannot do: no new flowerbeds, no trees that distract from the large grassed area, but that the hedge species can be changed and that the sidewalk material can be changed, but not its formal quality. The building’s style is presented next. Key Italianate attributes are mentioned, with an opening phrase to establish a sort of checklist (once again, from the general to the specific: configuration, features and details).
- The last collection of bullets refers to interior elements, and specifically to two areas of concern: the main floor and Margaret Laurence’s bedroom. The main floor is summarily characterized as brightly lit and notes that the layout from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century should be retained: note that there is no reference to any finishes and details, and so presumably a developer might undertake any number of changes. Current images of the building do not feature Ms Laurence’s bedroom, and so the text here is not as detailed as it should be – this is after all the primary space in the building, associated with the key value; it should be analyzed in more detail.

Key elements that define the **[Hotel Fort Garry's]** Château Style character include:

- bulky, 14-storey height, whose symmetrical composition defines the north, east and west facades, and which is carried out in large blocks of smooth-cut Indiana limestone
- steep copper roof, whose picturesque quality is defined by a multitude of small shed- and hip-roofed dormers, etc.
- variety of window shapes, etc.
- rich detail treatment, especially the decorative stonework at the cornice and balcony rails atop the bay windows

Key elements that define the building's luxury hotel character are most apparent in the following configurations, areas and spaces:

- the orientation of the main façade and primary doors facing Broadway, with a broad driveway space separating the building from the street
- views to the building of the east and west facades but especially of the north facade
- main entrance, with its broad stairs, large decorated canopy supported by stout columns and set of heavy wood and glass doors
- main lobby, with its stately volume and wealth of stone and metal features and details, etc.

- The Character-defining Elements section for the **Hotel Fort Garry** is very long; there will be very few CDEs in Manitoba that are this long. While the CDE appears more complicated than the two others analyzed here, the fact is that the process of organizing material and writing are very similar: the values lead the discussion, and thus forms the backbone of the CDE. Architectural style is presented first (even though it is presented third in the Heritage Value section) because it allows readers to follow a logical progression in appreciating the building. Style deals with more general character issues, while the hotel function investigates issues related to finishes and details. Thus in the large-to-small/general-to-specific mantra, style comes first. The four bullets that capture this information are devoted to the form, roof, windows and details. Each one of these may also contain additional necessary information (for example the bullet in the building form refers to materials (large blocks of smooth-cut Indiana limestone)).
- The next two groupings focus on the hotel's function (luxury hotel), placement and the high levels of integrity in the display of features, elements, materials and finishes. The final set of information presented here is the result of several editorial processes. In the first instance, all the information for each major room was presented separately, and the resulting CDE was about two pages long. A second version shortened the descriptions, but still resulted in a very long CDE. The final version split the descriptions into two sections – one for a variety of configurations, areas and spaces, and the other devoted exclusively to the major public spaces; while the CDE is still long, the information is easier to understand. The concluding CDE section also is introduced so that at least the commonalities about construction materials are not repeated in each bullet.
- For those interested in the time it took to produce the whole Statement of Significance for the Hotel Fort Garry, this number might be enlightening: 7 days. Actually, the time spent writing and rewriting did not consume 7 days, but the whole process did. To be more specific: from the time of the first site visit, to the dotting of "i's" in the final draft, the SoS for the Hotel Fort Garry sat on my desk for 7 days (along with several other draft SoSs). This process included two site visits (one guided by hotel staff), preparation of sketch plans and copious on-site notes for reference. It involved the creation of several drafts. And it still will be necessary to gain access to the Vice Regal Suite; the present CDE for this room is based only on the Desk Manager's descriptions – apparently the movie star occupying the suite does not welcome guests, even those representing HPI.

staircases with marble stairs and brass rails whose decorative patterns include stylized initials FG (Fort Garry)

- guest floors, with broad hallways and heavily articulated wood doors and door frames
- guest rooms, with their formal layout and modest decorative embellishments, etc.

Key elements that define the building's luxury hotel character are also apparent in the following major public spaces, each with its own distinctive volume, ceiling and wall treatment, etc.:

- Palm Room, with its elegant oval plan and volume, shallow ceiling, etc.
- Provencher Room, with its grand volume and its wealth of Classical-style features and details, etc.
- Loggia Hall, with its impressive height and long, uninterrupted length, and wealth of Chateau-style features, etc.
- Loggia Sitting Room, with its impressive height and long, uninterrupted length, and wealth of Chateau-style features and details, etc.
- Cigar Room, with its oak stairs, etc.
- Concert Hall, with its grand and stately volume, heavy beamed ceiling, etc.
- Banquet Hall, with its impressive volume and delicate decorative treatment, etc.
- Club Room, with its low, heavily-beamed ceiling, etc.

# Review of Three First Drafts

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The first SoS drafts prepared by provincial contractors are the basis for this section. These important initial efforts have many things right, and some things wrong. This situation allows for some interesting and informative analysis that will illuminate how to move from an initial draft to a more successful Statement of Significance.

For this section of the guide, each of the three sections of a Statement of Significance (Description, Heritage Values and Character-defining Elements) has been the subject of careful scrutiny, with the contractor's first draft followed by a discussion and then ending with a preferred version of that section. All of the preferred sections are then collected into a Proposed Statement of Significance for each building.



## Tergesen General Store



### Description of Historic Place

#### First Draft

Built as a hardware store in 1899 for Hans Pjetur Tergesen, The Tergesen General Store is a one-storey, tin-clad building, located in the Icelandic community of Gimli, Manitoba, and is situated in the business district, on the corner of First Avenue and Center Street.

#### Discussion

It would be better to open with the name of the building (the resource); as it is, the text opens like it is going to be a brief history of the store. Include a reference to the nature of the designation (provincial). The text that refers to the size and facing material is good, but instead of “one-storey” it is preferred that the building be described as “modest.” It is good to mention the Icelandic connection, but not necessary to mention Manitoba. The locational information should be presented in a separate sentence. Instead of a simple listing of the address, it is better to characterize the location.

#### Preferred Text

The Tergesen General Store, a designated provincial site, is a modest, tin-clad building constructed in 1899. The store is located at an important intersection in the commercial heart of the Icelandic community of Gimli. The designation applies to the building and the lot on which it sits.

## Heritage Value of Historic Place

### First Draft

A focal point in the community, The Tergesen General Store was designated a provincial historic site because it is the oldest store in the Eastern Interlake District, that is still owned and operated by the descendents of the original owner, Hans Pjetur Tergesen. Apparently the only remaining building of this type in Manitoba, with most of its original exterior and interior intact, the building is also an excellent example of the vernacular style of rural commercial buildings when constructed in 1899. The Store's heritage value lies in its architectural interest and its historic associations with Hans Pjetur Tergesen, and as a living illustration of a family operated business.

### Discussion

Phrases of the original text that appear to identify heritage values have been underlined. The concluding sentence is a summary of the values, and could be placed first, assuming that the three values presented there are correct ("architectural interest," "historic associations with Hans Pjetur Tergesen," and "living illustration of a family operated business"). A review of these three values confirms that the architecture is a core value, but that the association with Hans Tergesen is not a core value; it may be of historic interest, but it is not a core value. Value actually lies in the connection to the family, which has operated the store since its opening. Other underlined values are correct, and the draft just needs some reorganization. Some small points: Don't use the word "apparently;" if you are unsure of the building's claims, it would be better to describe it as "one of only a few . . ." Don't be tentative in your descriptions; seek out supportable claims and then describe those claims clearly and forcefully; readers will appreciate the clarity.

### Preferred Text

The Tergesen General Store is a rare surviving example in Manitoba of the kind of commercial establishments that served most small communities around the turn of the twentieth century. The store recalls the simple vernacular traditions, construction materials and interior layout, finishes and details that characterized this building type. The Tergesen General Store has been open since 1899, making it the oldest small commercial establishment in Manitoba. The store also has important connections to the Tergesen family, which has operated the store continuously for more than 100 years.

Source: Manitoba Heritage Council Minute, 31 July 1985

# Character-defining Elements

## First Draft

Significant character defining elements illustrating the continuous family-run business of Hans Pjetur Tergesen, and early vernacular style of commercial building for the period:

- the oldest extant store in the Eastern/Interlake District; the only business from the early settlement of Gimli that is still operated and owned by the descendants of the Tergesen family; constructed in 1899
- a two-storey wood frame structure, clad in pressed tin to resemble brick
- the building's original character remains intact except for an addition to the building, and relocation of the store entrance in 1912-13, and the removal of the second storey in the mid-nineteen twenties
- original interior with pressed tin ceilings and walls, hardwood floors, oak and glass shelving units and display cases
- family business objects still used, including a manual cash register with intricately designed brass plate that bears the name H.P. Tergesen
- as well as a commercial endeavour, the focus of various community activities including a classroom, community hall for plays, dances and other social events, and on different occasions, a travelling library brought from the extension service of the University of Manitoba
- located in the business district, and close proximity to the waterfront which is presently undergoing extensive development, the store is a focal point in the community
- is recognized by the citizens of Gimli as an important local heritage structure

## Discussion

The opening sentence combines too much information. Separate the values out into separate introductory pieces. Several of the elements presented here do not fit the definition of a CDE (they have to be things, not ideas or concepts or facts); these are underlined; if they are to be included in the SoS, their function has to be reconsidered; moreover, if you closely examine the text you will see that some of the information is repetitious. Other sections of this draft CDE are just right.

## Preferred Text

Key elements that define the site's heritage character include:

- prominent placement of the building at the southwest corner of the intersection of two of Gimli's main thoroughfares, First Avenue and Center Street

Key elements that define the building's simple vernacular commercial style include:

- basic square form of the building and modest one-storey height
- pressed tin cladding on the east and north faces of the building
- simple cornice with widely spaced shallow supporting brackets that runs along the roofline of the east and north faces of the building
- doors with flanking large display windows at the northeast corner and along the east and north faces of the building
- simple sign plate above the door along the north face, reading "H.P. TERGESEN. GENERAL MERCHANT." and in letters ("H.P. TERGESEN") set in the secondary cornice above the main entrance

Key elements that define the building's intact interior layout, finishes and details include:

- open, spacious quality of the interior, with all wall and ceiling surfaces painted white
- random placement of display tables throughout the store and placement against the walls of wood and glass shelving units and display cases
- exposed simple post and beam structural system and highly elaborate pressed tin ceiling
- main check-out desk with elaborate metal and wood cash register dating from 1899

## Proposed Statement of Significance Tergesen General Store

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### Description of Historic Place

The Tergesen General Store, a designated provincial site, is a modest, tin-clad building constructed in 1899. The store is located at an important intersection in the commercial heart of the Icelandic community of Gimli. The designation applies to the building and the lot on which it sits.



### Heritage Value of Historic Place

The Tergesen General Store is a rare surviving example in Manitoba of the kind of commercial establishments that served most small communities around the turn of the twentieth century. The store recalls the simple vernacular traditions, construction materials and interior layout, finishes and details that characterized this building type. The Tergesen General Store has been open since 1899, making it the oldest small commercial establishment in Manitoba. The store also has important connections to the Tergesen family, which has operated the store continuously for more than 100 years.

Source: Manitoba Heritage Council Minute, 31 July 1985

### Character-defining Elements

Key elements that define the site's heritage character include:

- prominent placement of the building at the southwest corner of the intersection of two of Gimli's main thoroughfares, First Avenue and Center Street

Key elements that define the building's simple vernacular commercial style include:

- basic square form of the building and modest one-storey height
- pressed tin cladding on the east and north faces of the building
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- random placement of display tables throughout the store and placement against the walls of wood and glass shelving units and display cases
- exposed simple post and beam structural system and highly elaborate pressed tin ceiling
- main check-out desk with elaborate metal and wood cash register dating from 1899

## Stonewall Post Office Building



### Description of Historic Place

#### First Draft

The Stonewall Post Office, built during 1914 – 1915, is a modest sized building constructed of the local limestone for which the town is known. The building distinguishes itself as a landmark with its prominent corner lot and strong horizontal lines. Both the interior and exterior are designated provincially.

#### Discussion

This is pretty good. The first sentence needs a phrase to characterize the building's architecture: something like "modestly-sized Prairie-style building." The reference to the origin of the stone is a nice touch. The name of the building should be exactly the same as the title name. Dates are to be written this way: 1914-15; an HRB convention. The locational information should be a bit more informative; presumably the site visit would clarify this.

#### Preferred Text

The Stonewall Post Office Building, built during 1914-15, is a modestly-sized Prairie-style building constructed of the local limestone for which the town is known. The building is located on a prominent corner lot along Stonewall's main commercial thoroughfare, Main Street, which is lined with a number of other stone buildings. The provincial designation applies to the building and lot on which it sits.

## Heritage Value of Historic Place

### First Draft

The Stonewall Post Office is Manitoba's foremost example of Prairie Style architecture and only surviving example of Prairie Style institutional architecture in Manitoba. It was designed by Francis Conroy Sullivan (1882 – 1929), who was one of Canada's pioneer practitioners of this style. Sullivan's work was largely informed by the practice of Frank Lloyd Wright (1869 – 1959), the renowned Chicago architect and originator of the Prairie Style. Sullivan, who practiced primarily in Ottawa, collaborated with Frank Lloyd Wright on several projects. With its low box-like design, balanced symmetrical façade, and projected cornice, the reference to buildings of antiquity is clear. This reference is enriched by the detailing of horizontal lines which speak to both the landscape of the prairie and Japanese building traditions – two primary ingredients which informed the Prairie Style. This combination of building traditions and landscape served to create a new style of architecture during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Discussion

Again, this is pretty good. Good introduction of values (underlined). What it could use is a constant refrain of “It is important because . . . .” this might make clear why the background historical material on Sullivan and Wright is unnecessary. The fragment that refers to “buildings of antiquity” is unclear; if you are going to include something like this it has to be more specific. The concluding references to the building are not values; they are CDEs. Prairie Style needs to be summarily described for the reader.

### Preferred Text

The Stonewall Post Office is Manitoba's foremost example of Prairie Style architecture, an early twentieth century style that revolutionized residential design, and which was characterized by horizontal massing, flat roofs and geometric decorative features. The building is the only provincial example of the style carried out on an institutional building. The Stonewall Post Office is important because of its association with Francis Conroy Sullivan, an Ottawa-based architect who designed the building, and who worked closely on several important projects with Frank Lloyd Wright, the originator of the Prairie Style. The building also has significance because of its rarity: it was one of six post office buildings constructed in small Manitoba communities before World War I.

Source: Manitoba Heritage Council Minute, date and year



## Character-defining Elements

### First Draft

Key elements that define the site's heritage character include:

- Prominent corner lot.
- Low box-like massing.
- Bands of horizontal detailing across façade.
- Windows which are vertically oriented and inset with geometric patterns between, as well as basement windows with masonry surround.
- Masonry porch and benches.
- Cornice, which is projected and corbelled.
- Details above main entrance, including transom window, masonry detailing and clock.

### Discussion

It would be preferable to group information, according to the distance you are from the building: birds-eye view, standing across the street, in front of an elevation, in the main space, etc. It would also be helpful to more clearly pull out the values and use them to group the CDEs; none of the CDEs listed are wrong, but they would benefit from amplification. A small thing: there are no periods at end of bullet phrases – these are not sentences.

### Preferred Text

Key elements that define the site's heritage character include:

- its placement on a prominent corner lot on the major commercial thoroughfare in Stonewall

Key elements that define the building's external Prairie Style architectural character include:

- low box-like massing with flat roof
- carefully composed facades, with horizontal delineation produced with banding elements, including dentilled cornice, upper level bands encircling the building and long sills under the various window openings
- banding elements that assume a decorative framing function, including those around the main façade clock, basement level windows and back (west) façade door and window openings
- extension of the building form into masonry staircases, platforms, planters and benches
- limestone construction, with wall surfaces rough-faced and quoins and banding elements smooth-cut
- tall, slim window openings, deeply recessed, with dark-coloured frames and sashes dividing lights into three sections

Key elements that define the building's intact Prairie Style interior volumes, finishes and details, and its post office function, include:

- dramatic main space, with light-coloured ceiling and wall panels contrasted with heavily articulated and dark-coloured wooden elements encircling the main space near the ceiling, and defining the two main window walls
- windows consisting of rough-faced glass with supporting framework of wood and lead carried out in delicate rectilinear patterns
- variety of features and details, including wooden staircase rails and balusters, doors with top panel window openings outlined in geometric shapes, door marked with words "Enquiry/Parcels," etc.

## Proposed Statement of Significance Stonewall Post Office Building

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### Description of Historic Place

The Stonewall Post Office Building, built during 1914-15, is a modestly-sized Prairie-style building constructed of the local limestone for which the town is known. The building is located on a prominent corner lot along Stonewall's main commercial thoroughfare, Main Street, which is lined with a number of other stone buildings. The provincial designation applies to the building and lot on which it sits.



### Heritage Value of Historic Place

The Stonewall Post Office is Manitoba's foremost example of Prairie Style architecture, an early twentieth century style that revolutionized residential design, and which was characterized by horizontal massing, flat roofs and geometric decorative features. The building is the only provincial example of the style carried out on an institutional building. The Stonewall Post Office is important because of its association with Francis Conroy Sullivan, an Ottawa-based architect who designed the building, and who worked closely on several important projects with Frank Lloyd Wright, the originator of the Prairie Style. The building also has significance because of its rarity: it was one of six post office buildings constructed in small Manitoba communities before World War I.

Source: Manitoba Heritage Council Minute, date and year

### Character-defining Elements

Key elements that define the site's heritage character include:  
its placement on a prominent corner lot on the major commercial thoroughfare in Stonewall

Key elements that define the building's external Prairie Style architectural character include:

- low box-like massing with flat roof
- carefully composed facades, with horizontal delineation produced with banding elements, including dentilled cornice, upper level bands encircling the building and long sills under the various window openings
- banding elements that assume a decorative framing function, including those around the main façade clock, basement level windows and back (west) façade door and window openings
- extension of the building form into masonry staircases, platforms, planters and benches
- limestone construction, with wall surfaces rough-faced and quoins and banding elements smooth-cut
- tall, slim window openings, deeply recessed, with dark-coloured frames and sashes dividing lights into three sections

Key elements that define the building's intact Prairie Style interior volumes, finishes and details, and its post office function, include:

- dramatic main space, with light-coloured ceiling and wall panels contrasted with heavily articulated and dark-coloured wooden elements encircling the main space near the ceiling, and defining the two main window walls
- windows consisting of rough-faced glass with supporting framework of wood and lead carried out in delicate rectilinear patterns
- variety of features and details, including wooden staircase rails and balusters, doors with top panel window openings outlined in geometric shapes, door marked with words "Enquiry/Parcels," etc.



## Portage la Prairie Land Titles Building



### Description of Historic Place

#### First Draft

The Portage La Prairie Land Titles Office is a one-story, brick, Neo-Classical building constructed in 1889, and added to in 1906. The formal designation applies to the footprint of the building and the lot upon which it sits in Portage La Prairie, Manitoba.

#### Discussion

This is good, with a few changes. Is it “Office” or “Building”? There is no need at this point to add information about additions, changes, etc. (It is understood that a site visit would be required to describe the context.) This is good because most of the information you need to work with is presented here – you just need to give it a quick edit.

#### Preferred Text

The Portage La Prairie Land Titles Building, a small and modest Neo-classical brick building constructed in 1889, is a provincially designated site. The building is placed in a residential area of Portage la Prairie, at the western end of Lorne Avenue East. The designation applies to the building and the small grassed lot on which it sits.

# Heritage Value of Historic Place

## First Draft

Architectural value of the Portage Land Titles Office lies in its representation of early government architecture in the Province of Manitoba. The original design, completed under local architect Edward F. Head, was modest in size and style. Seven years later, with the façade deemed ‘too plain’ and reoccurring flooding plaguing the building, an addition and renovation was undertaken. Provincial architect, Samuel Hooper, oversaw the work with the building being nearly doubled in size, and refronted. It was at this time that many of the Neo-Classical elements were added. The Neo-Classical style was the style considered most appropriate for government buildings of the era, and as a representative of the young province’s legal system, the Portage Land Titles Office was not exempt. The Portage Land Titles Office also holds value as being associated with some of the earliest exercises in legal-governmental systems within the Province of Manitoba, as well as a contributing factor to Portage La Prairie’s position as a regional hub. Court houses, post offices, and Land Titles Offices were amongst the first buildings needed to form a system of official land registry duties for the Manitoba Government in the latter decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fierce competition existed between communities vying for a Land Titles Office, and only those deemed large enough and strategically important enough were chosen.

## Discussion

It is interesting about the origins of the building, but this is not a value. This reads like a history; all the information is here – you just need to set it up as value-based statements. Presumably the primary value is the original function; the style is second; it is interesting about the changes – in other places this might be a value – and if it were, then that has implications for how the CDEs are put together. But in this instance the changes are not a core value. The information about court houses, etc., is interesting but should be edited to more clearly to focus on this building.

## Preferred Text

The Portage Land Titles Building is one of the best remaining examples recalling the kind of modest public building the provincial government constructed in selected small urban centres around the turn of the twentieth century. The building’s function, which was primarily to preserve the precious and delicate land titles documents for the area, is still apparent in many of the interior configurations, features and details. The Neo-classical-style façade, carried out in 1906, when the building was enlarged and refaced under the direction of architect Samuel Hooper, is a good representative example of the type, recalling the level of skill brought to bear on even small public buildings.

Source: Manitoba Heritage Council Minute, date and year

## Character-Defining Elements

### First Draft:

The following Character-Defining Elements of the Portage Land Titles Office relate to its Neo-Classical design and function as one of the earliest Land Titles Offices in the Province of Manitoba:

- Distinctive Neo-Classical elements include columns, pilasters and pediments arrayed across the symmetrically organized façade, a pedimented entrance, and a deep cornice supported by brick pilasters.
- Large, semi-circular arched windows on either side of taller segmental arch of the doorway further organize the façade.
- Hooper's addition of ornamental urns onto the brick parapet added an air of uniqueness.
- Doors, frames and windows of iron; floors of brick and concrete spoke of the strength of both the building and the government that built it.
- Interior layout consisting of a public waiting room, 3 large offices, and a vault system were instrumental to the functioning of the Office.

### Discussion

This is all quite good, but could benefit from a clearer organization and attention to shapes and materials. The introductory sentence mentions the two values, but also includes a reference to it being an early LTO – this is not necessary here; you have already mentioned it in the values. The various qualifiers that are attached to perfectly good CDEs (like how the construction “spoke of the strength of both the building and the government that built it”) is not necessary in the CDE; it could be reworked as part of a value.

### Preferred Text

Key elements that define the building's Land Titles Office function include:

- small boxy shape of buff brick construction with a flat roof
- configuration of the interior layout, consisting of a public waiting room, three large offices and a vault system (counters and storage cubicles still present? – site visit to confirm)
- use throughout the interior of heavy protective materials: iron for doors and on the frames for windows and doors; and brick and concrete on floors, walls and ceilings (site visit to confirm if brick vaults used), etc.

Key elements that define the building's modest neo-Classical style, apparent on the main façade, include:

- symmetrical composition of horizontal character
- projecting entrance bay with narrow double doors and tall segmentally-arched transom with simple pediment
- main wall with four bays outlined with pilasters and containing four large semi-circular arched windows
- deep and heavily articulated cornice and a parapet topped above the entrance with decorative urns

## Proposed Statement of Significance **Portage la Prairie Land Titles Office**

### **Description of Historic Place**

The Portage La Prairie Land Titles Building, a small and modest Neo-classical brick building constructed in 1889, is a provincially designated site. The building is placed in a residential area of Portage la Prairie, at the western end of Lorne Avenue East. The designation applies to the building and the small grassed lot on which it sits.



### **Heritage Value of Historic Place**

The Portage Land Titles Building is one of the best remaining examples recalling the kind of modest public building the provincial government constructed in selected small urban centres around the turn of the twentieth century. The building's function, which was primarily to preserve the precious and delicate land titles documents for the area, is still apparent in many of the interior configurations, features and details. The Neo-classical-style façade, carried out in 1906, when the building was enlarged and refaced under the direction of architect Samuel Hooper, is a good representative example of the type, recalling the level of skill brought to bear on even small public buildings.

Source: Manitoba Heritage Council Minute, date and year

### **Character-defining Elements**

Key elements that define the building's Land Titles Office function include:

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Key elements that define the building's modest neo-Classical style, apparent on the main façade, include:

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- deep and heavily articulated cornice and a parapet topped above the entrance with decorative urns

*I always do the first  
line well, but I have  
trouble doing the  
others.*

Molière

## Workshop Proceedings

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**T**HE FOLLOWING MATERIAL has been gathered from a day-long workshop held on 17 May 2004 in the offices of the Historic Resources Branch. The Branch is located in the Electric Railway Chambers, and the building was used as the subject for the creation of a Statement of Significance (SoS).

The following pages contain the discussion and results as the group worked to create the first draft for a Statement of Significance. The document is organized according to the three sections of the SoS: Heritage Values, Character-defining Elements; the Description of Historic Place was left for later in the day and while the group didn't get to it, a version has been created by David Butterfield for reference here.

### Workshop Participants

**Jennifer Hansell** (Provincial SoS Writer)  
**Lorne Thompson** (Provincial SoS Writer)  
**Murray Peterson** (City of Winnipeg SoS Writer)  
**Ken Storie** (City of Brandon SoS Writer)

**Shelley Bruce** (City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Officer)  
**Heather Ewasiuk** (City of Brandon Heritage Officer)  
**Olivier Beck** (Client Outreach Officer, Historic Places Initiative in Manitoba)  
**David Butterfield** (Manitoba Registrar, Canadian Register of Historic Places)

## Heritage Values

### Electric Railway Chambers

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The group began with the Heritage Values section of the SoS. Having reviewed the documentation provided in the City of Winnipeg research paper, the group listed potential values using the phrase "It is important because" as a way to focus the discussion.

- Connection with the Winnipeg Electric Railway Company (WERC), a major force in Wpg and suburbs for 60 years in streetcar and electrical service
- Carried 55 million passengers annually
- Wpg partly designed by railway configurations
- Public rallied against WERC – part of the debate about private/public ownership; the public won
- Issue of private responsibility (current issues, with utilities becoming private again)
- Community optimism'
- Chicago (School) Style
- One of Winnipeg's early skyscrapers (1912)
- Last word in office building construction
- Use of terra cotta (one of the city's finest examples of this)
- Romanesque/Italianate/Sullivanese
- Architects Pratt and Ross with Charles Sumner Frost
- Location – in commercial core
- Flagship for major company (WERC) and leasing out space
- Home for succeeding utility co.
- Integrity – facades; lights on facades; etc.
- People – Mackenzie and Mann and Ross – principals in WERC
- Office building function
- Built for speculation
- HRB in office now
- Intact main floor lobby and mezzanine

It was often noted during the production of the list that certain elements were clearly not going to be values, let alone core values. However, the group agreed that these should not be discarded in case they found a use as descriptive or explanatory phrases for the values that were selected.



The group then went through the list and identified the following four subjects as core values:

- ✓ **Connection with the WERC, a major force in WPG and suburbs for 60 years in streetcar and electrical**
- ✓ **Chicago (School) Style**
- ✓ **Location – in commercial core**
- ✓ **Integrity – facades; lights on facades; etc.**

Shelley Bruce noted at the conclusion of this part of the exercise that a formal evaluation had been carried out for this building in 1981, and that the evaluation ought to be consulted for what the City had deemed significant at that time. She noted the following evaluation criteria and scoring:

#### **Age**

Date of Construction	60/100
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#### **Architectural Interest**

Style	20/20
Construction	20/40
Design	60/60
Interior	40/40
Integrity	20/40
Streetscape	60/60

#### **Historical Interest**

Architect/Contractor	20/40
Person/Institution	20/40
Event	0/40
Context	20/40
Landmark	10/40

Shelley also noted that the City had produced a synopsis of the building's significance: "The Historical Buildings Committee recommends that this building be listed for the following reasons:

- 1) It is a rare and unique example of Chicago School Style;
- 2) The design, composition and craftsmanship of detail is excellent;
- 3) It is of particular importance contributing to the existing character of the warehouse district"

A comparison of these values with the ones produced by workshop participants reveals basic agreement. The one outstanding issue was the inclusion of the WERC, which was still deemed a core value.



There followed some discussion about prioritizing the list, with basic agreement that Style was the primary value, but with some debate about what would be numbers two, three and four. Some participants thought that location ought to come second, others that the WERC should come second. It was decided to proceed to craft a draft (presented at right) using location as the second value and to see whether that presentation of the values made sense.

Note that in this draft the subject of Location has yet to be dealt with. While it was understood that it was a core value, David noted that he continues to be unclear about how locational values are to be expressed and then linked to CDEs. He advised the group that he would confer with Victoria Angel (Canadian Registrar) for clarification. The results of that discussion are noted here, and the final sentence below has been included in the Second Draft of Heritage Values (on the following page).

**Initial Notes.** The building certainly appears to have value because of its location. It is in the Exchange District, a nationally recognized site, and also boasts a strategic location, making it visible from several important vantage points inside and outside the Exchange; because of its style and the use of thousands of light, it has value as a landmark. To put it more simply, if the building could be moved, it and the whole area would be seriously diminished by the dislocation.

**First Draft.** The WERC is in the Exchange District, a major national collection of buildings recalling Winnipeg's major position as a Canadian centre of finance and trade in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building's location at a strategic corner in the Exchange makes it a highly visible and notable part of this ensemble of buildings.

**Discussion.** The two issues are presented: its presence in the Exchange and its particular location (at the corner of Notre Dame Avenue and Albert Street), which makes it a highly visible building on the southern edge of the Exchange. The following draft reorders the information to create a single sentence.

**Final Draft.** The Chambers holds a strategic and highly visible location in the Exchange District, an important collection of more than 100 buildings recalling Winnipeg's major position as a Canadian centre of finance and trade in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Victoria Angel noted that this final draft is fine, that it clearly expresses the fact that the building contributes to and is part of a very important setting. She advised that the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office (FHBRO; on the Parks Canada Website) has some handy definitions for this subject, noted under "Environment." In this particular case the second criterion, "Setting" is most appropriate, with the following sentence focusing the issue: "What is the influence of the building on the present character of the area with which it is associated?" Victoria also noted that the CDEs related to this locational value, and presented on the following pages, are clearly articulated and related well to the identified value.

## First Draft of Heritage Values

"The Electric Railway Chambers' primary value lies in its Sullivanesque Chicago Style, a style characterized by its height, steel frame construction and wealth of ornamentation. [Locational value sentence to be drafted by David in consultation with Victoria Angel.] The building was constructed as the corporate head office of the Winnipeg Electric Railway Chambers, to designs by Charles Frost of Chicago and supervising Winnipeg architects Pratt and Ross. The Winnipeg Electric Railway Company was a major player in Winnipeg and surrounding municipalities in the provision of power and streetcar service from 1892 until 1953. The building is important because it has a very high level of architectural integrity in its exterior facades, intact office spaces and major interior public spaces."



There was some discussion about how the last three values (WERC, location in the Exchange and integrity of facades, etc.) might have broadly equal value, in which case the approach would be to set them up with the reader in mind. In that case the presentation of information would be approached so that the more general subjects appeared first: the WERC was deemed the most general; location was slightly more specific and integrity of the building was the most specific. This Second Draft (left) was how the group left off for the day, with the new locational value text added.

This is a good draft, with information well organized and clearly stated. At the same time, it is possible to polish this text one more time and create a more emphatic and broadly informative values statement. Following are some observations that occur on review of this second draft:

- Once the formula equating value and so has been used, it is preferred that references to “value” be dropped in the final draft; they begin to stick out like and read like internal reminders.
- Where possible, sentences should become more emphatic. The opening sentence is not quite a grabber yet. And we want something that grabs people’s attention.
- Be more general about the style – what did it mean to North American cities and Winnipeg in particular?
- Try to make the WERC claims for emphatic.
- The Integrity sentence seems fine as it is.

The results of this kind of approach are presented on the facing page. On the left-hand side an annotated version is presented, with new phrases and brief commentary added. On the right-hand side is the Final Draft.

## Second Draft

The Electric Railway Chambers’ primary value lies in its Sullivanesque Chicago style, a style characterized by its height, steel frame construction and wealth of ornamentation. The building was constructed as the corporate head office of the Winnipeg Electric Railway Chambers, to designs by Charles Frost of Chicago and supervising Winnipeg architects Pratt and Ross. The Winnipeg Electric Railway Company was a major player in Winnipeg and surrounding municipalities in the provision of power and streetcar service from 1892 until 1953. The Chambers holds a strategic and highly visible location in the Exchange District, an important collection of more than 100 buildings recalling Winnipeg’s major position as a Canadian centre of finance and trade in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building is also important because it has a very high level of architectural integrity in its exterior facades, intact office spaces and

major interior public spaces.”

### Final Draft – Annotated

“The Electric Railway Chambers is one of the province’s finest buildings, an exquisite example of the Sullivanesque Chicago Style, a style characterized by its height, steel frame construction and wealth of ornamentation, and which came to symbolize the wealth and sophistication of cities across North America. The building was built [formerly constructed, but the word is repetitious] as the corporate head office of the Winnipeg Electric Railway Chambers, to designs by Charles Frost of Chicago and supervising Winnipeg architects Pratt and Ross. The Winnipeg Electric Railway Company was a major force [not “player” – too colloquial] in Winnipeg and surrounding municipalities from 1892 until 1953 [note that this clause has been moved here from the end of the sentence] in the lucrative business of providing power and streetcar service. The Chambers holds a strategic and highly visible location in the Exchange District, an important collection of more than 100 buildings recalling Winnipeg’s major position as a Canadian centre of finance and trade in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building [“is important because it” – this section left out] has a very high level of architectural integrity in its exterior facades, intact office spaces and major interior public spaces.”

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### Final Draft – Clean

The Electric Railway Chambers is one of the province’s finest buildings, an exquisite example of the Sullivanesque Chicago Style, a style characterized by its height, steel frame construction and wealth of ornamentation, and which came to symbolize the wealth and sophistication of cities across North America. The building was built as the corporate head office of the Winnipeg Electric Railway Chambers, to designs by Charles Frost of Chicago and supervising Winnipeg architects Pratt and Ross. The Winnipeg Electric Railway Company was a major force in Winnipeg and surrounding municipalities from 1892 until 1953 in the lucrative business of providing power and streetcar service. The Chambers holds a strategic and highly visible location in the Exchange District, an important collection of more than 100 buildings recalling Winnipeg’s major position as a Canadian centre of finance and trade in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building has a very high level of architectural integrity in its exterior facades, intact office spaces and major interior public spaces.

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## Character-defining Elements

### Electric Railway Chambers

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The group then went to work on the Character-defining Elements (CDE) section of the SoS. Time unfortunately did not allow for the preferred approach, and so the two broad subjects that were to be explored in the creation of a CDE (organizational techniques and writing options) were not completely or explicitly described or discussed. And even review of the necessary connection between the Heritage Values and the creation of the CDE was not raised (although as the exercise progressed it was clear that the group understood this connection). Nevertheless, the results of the CDE-writing exercises were still very instructive, and presumably helpful.

To make the material produced here a fair reflection of the group's process, but also to address issues and ideas that did not receive adequate attention at the time, the following section contains the day's notes, annotated with editorial asides where required.

The afternoon session began with a tour of the building, starting on the tenth floor and working down to the ninth and finally to the main floor. David acted as guide and recorder for the various observations on each floor. The group did not have sufficient time to explore other floors in the building or to examine the old banking hall, mezzanine and boardroom that is now used for offices by the Historic Resources Branch. Given the good critical observations carried out elsewhere, however, there is no doubt that each member of the group would have been able to identify the resources appropriately; these spaces have been included in the final CDE, with text drafted by David. Finally, the group used a large archival photograph of the building to examine the building's external character. Following are the various points made at various junctures of the exercise.

The tenth and ninth floors are now used for various office functions, with only hallway configurations and some finishes left from the original WERC days. These were noted and discussed:

- The broad hallways; it was noted that currently there are dropped ceilings in the hallways and that an officially guided tour of the building would have to determine whether there was anything of interest above. Participants noted that the walls of the hallways are sheathed in polished white marble (someone thought they might be granite), with dark green marble baseboards. Original doors and hardware are no longer present but original door openings are still visible. Original doors and hardware are visible in the storage/washroom area of each floor. The presence of the original mail chute was noted.

The main floor lobby, which is a fairly complex and impressive space architecturally, still maintains high levels of integrity and these were noted:

- the lobby is tall, but someone observed that it might have to be defined as two-storeys to ensure that a developer does not misinterpret the word “tall”
- beams painted decoratively
- walls and floor are sheathed with marble
- decorative frieze or band is inlaid with small marble details – what are these called?
- brass directory board and mail chute noted
- the ceiling of the lobby was identified as having two distinct qualities – cross vaulting in the elevator lobby and beamed in the lobby proper
- decorative metal screens in staircase (arched) and above directory board
- staircase at the back of the lobby is of marble and nicely decorated
- lion atop newel post
- arches in cross vaults continue to floor as pilasters
- capitals are foliated

It is this kind of listing that can produce considerable confusion, and frustration, for SoS writers: How do you take this disparate collection of information and turn it into something clear and concise? One way to address this is to consider what are the big things and what are the small things. Thus the random order of information from above would be reconstituted at the right according to the headings: Big, Medium and Small.

Another approach is to consider the space or room in a systematic order of observation and description: the volume (tall); the surface qualities of the ceiling, walls and floor, and then onto features (like the staircase) and details. Of course where it is possible to link related information this will help the reader work through the particular CDE section with greater ease. The resulting section of the CDE referring to the lobby might be something like: “Key elements that define the lobby’s high levels of architectural integrity include:

- its two-storey height, cross-vaulted and beamed ceilings, walls and floor sheathed with marble and highlighted with decorative frieze with inlaid details, marble staircase with elaborate metal grille and decorative lion newel post, brass directory board and mail chute; decorative metal screens in the staircase wall and above the board; foliated capitals; arches in cross vaults, etc.

It is still possible to refine this CDE entry even further, by compressing and grouping information, and thus avoid the list quality that is apparent above:

- its two-storey height, cross-vaulted and beamed ceilings, use of marble and other expensive materials throughout, and wealth of exquisite finishes and details, like the decorative frieze, foliated capitals; elaborate metal grilles, decorative lion newel post, etc.

## **THE BIG**

- The lobby is tall, but someone observed that it might have to be defined as two-storeys to ensure that a developer does not misinterpret the word “tall”
- the ceiling of the lobby was identified as having two distinct qualities – cross vaulting in the elevator lobby and beamed in the lobby proper
- the lobby is shaped like a “T”

## **The Medium**

- walls and floor are sheathed with marble
- decorative metal screens in staircase (arched) and above directory board
- staircase at the back of the lobby is of marble and nicely decorated
- arches in cross vaults continue to floor as pilasters

## **the small**

- beams painted decoratively
- decorative frieze or band is inlaid with small marble details – what are these called?
- brass directory board and mail chute noted
- lion atop newel post
- capitals are foliated

After reviewing the lobby area, the group retired to the old board room and reviewed the exterior archival photograph. Two broad subjects were to be discussed — style and exterior materials and finishes — but it was consideration of the building's Sullivanesque Chicago style that consumed most of the time. After reference to our collection of style books, the following observations were noted to define this building's interpretation of the style:

- Tripartite organization of the facades into base, shaft and capital
- Regular grid-like fenestration
- Eleven-storey height with flat roof
- Clear expression of the structural system
- Piers and columns leading from the lower levels to round-headed arches at the top

Further exploration of the list suggested a re-ordering of the information, to take readers from the “big to the small,” and to group information where possible:

- Eleven-storey height with flat roof
- Tripartite organization of the facades into base, shaft and capital
- Piers and columns leading from the lower levels to round-headed arches at the top
- Regular grid-like fenestration and clear expression of the structural system

After this initial systematic approach, there then proceeded a small free-for-all as participants noted the following exterior features, details, materials and finishes:

- Large rectangular windows; heavily ornamented cornice; facing material like terra cotta made to resemble granite (confirmed in pinkish tone of building); granite on lower two levels; windows paired in upper levels; Sullivanesque ornamentation including sculptural lions, lights, shields, complex Gothic-like pier profiles, quatrefoils in spandrels, paired twisted columns separating paired windows, original awnings (now gone), light and dark bands encircling the building, etc.
- There was also a discussion about windows: It was noted that original opening characteristics (double-hung, with) were long gone, but that the heavy decorative framing features were still present. It was agreed that these must be clearly discussed in the CDE so that a developer would not tamper with these remaining qualities.

Again, time constraints meant that the anticipated review of process options and writing techniques could not be sufficiently explored. David's draft of this part of the CDE will have to suffice as a record of the discussion. The process noted above, in which items are reordered from large to small, and then further refined, was followed here. SoS writers will note how the lengthy lists created above are refined and condensed to create CDEs that are both interesting for a general readership and useful for conservation professionals.

Lorne noted that in some of the SoS samples provided in “Three Manitoba Examples” that CDEs were not explicitly introduced and organized according to values, but that they were for this exercise. This is very good point – for complex buildings like the Electric Railway Chambers, which has several core values, it is more helpful to group information according to the values. However, for those buildings with only one basic value (like Tamarisk United Church, reviewed earlier in this document), it is perfectly acceptable to assume that the core value is understood and to write the CDE without repeating the value; for such buildings the presentation of the whole CDE can thus proceed from an exploration of the site, to the building form and exterior qualities and then to the interior.

## Final Draft of Character-defining Elements Section

Key elements that define the building's strategic and important location include:

- west and south facades visible from various vantage points including from Portage Avenue, Notre Dame Avenue, Fort Street, etc.
- main entrance opening onto Notre Dame Avenue

Key elements that define the building's function as corporate headquarters of the Winnipeg Electric Railway Company include:

- thousands of white lights that illuminate the piers and arched sections at the top of the building's west and south facades
- main hallways of upper floors, which are spacious, sheathed with marble and maintain original openings into office spaces; and also featuring service and washroom walls with metal doors, marble walls, etc.

Key elements that define the building's Sullivan-esque Chicago style include:

- eleven-storey height with flat roof
- tripartite division of main south and west facades into base, column and capital
- piers and columns of complex profile leading from the ground floor to round-headed arches at the top of the building
- regular grid-like fenestration and clear expression of the structural system
- heavily projecting and elaborately decorated cornice
- facing materials like granite on the lower two levels and terra cotta made to resemble granite on all upper levels
- large main floor and smaller second floor windows with heavy and elaborately decorated framing and upper floor windows, paired and outlined with richly detailed spandrels and posts
- elaborate surface decoration throughout, including sculptural lions atop the piers, twisted columns at the upper level, etc.

Key elements that define the building's high levels of integrity in its materials and finishes in major interior public spaces include:

- lobby, with its two-storey height, cross-vaulted and beamed ceilings, use of marble and other expensive materials throughout, and wealth of exquisite finishes and details, like the decorative frieze, foliated capitals; elaborate metal grilles, decorative lion newel post, etc.
- banking hall, with its two-storey volume, coffered ceiling outlined with classically inspired edging, octagonally-shaped columns faced with polished marble and topped with foliated capitals, etc.
- main floor mezzanine with its bronze grille railing and boardroom with column capitals and ceiling edging as seen in the banking hall, etc.

## Description of Historic Place

### Electric Railway Chambers

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The group did not have time during the workshop to work on the Description section, and left it David to produce.



#### First Draft

The Electric Railway Chambers is a tall and elegant Chicago Style building constructed in 1912. The tower is located in Winnipeg's Exchange District, a national historic site renowned for its wealth of Romanesque-style warehouses, Chicago-style towers and classically styled banks. The building's strategic location at the southern edge of the District makes it highly visible landmark in the city. The footprint of the Electric Railway Chambers has been designated by the City of Winnipeg, with the following interior element to be preserved: main floor lobby including mezzanine and offices.

Note that the underlined sentence in the first draft is more properly a value, and because it has been addressed in the Heritage Values section it will be dropped from the final draft.

#### Final Draft

The Electric Railway Chambers is a tall and elegant Chicago Style building constructed in 1912. The tower is located in Winnipeg's Exchange District, a national historic site renowned for its wealth of Romanesque-style warehouses, Chicago-style towers and classically styled banks. The footprint of the Electric Railway Chambers has been designated by the City of Winnipeg, with the following interior element to be preserved: main floor lobby including mezzanine and offices.

## **Final Statement of Significance Electric Railway Chambers**

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### **Description of Historic Place**

The Electric Railway Chambers is a tall and elegant Chicago Style building constructed in 1912. The tower is located in Winnipeg's Exchange District, a national historic site renowned for its wealth of Romanesque-style ware-houses, Chicago-style towers and classically styled banks. The footprint of the Electric Railway Chambers has been designated by the City of Winnipeg, with the following interior element to be pre-served: main floor lobby including mezzanine and offices.

### **Heritage Value of Historic Place**

The Electric Railway Chambers is one of the province's finest buildings, an exquisite example of the Sullivan-esque Chicago Style, a style characterized by its height, steel frame construction and wealth of ornamentation, and which came to symbolize the wealth and sophistication of cities across North America. The building was built as the corporate head office of the Winnipeg Electric Railway Chambers, to designs by Charles Frost of Chicago and supervising Winnipeg architects Pratt and Ross. The Winnipeg Electric Railway Company was a major force in Winnipeg and surrounding municipalities from 1892 until 1953 in the lucrative business of providing power and streetcar service. The Chambers holds a strategic and highly visible location in the Exchange District, a nationally recognized collection of more than 100 buildings recalling Winnipeg's major position as a Canadian centre of finance and trade in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The building has a very high level of architectural integrity in its exterior facades, intact office spaces and major interior public spaces.

### **Character-defining Elements**

Key elements that define the building's strategic and important location include:

- west and south facades visible from various vantage points including from Portage Avenue, Notre Dame Avenue, Fort Street, etc.
- main entrance opening onto Notre Dame Avenue

Key elements that define the building's function as corporate headquarters of the Winnipeg Electric Railway Company include:

- thousands of white lights that illuminate the piers and arched sections at the top of the building's west and south facades
- main hallways of upper floors, which are spacious, sheathed with marble and maintain original openings into office spaces; and also featuring service and washroom walls with metal doors, marble walls, etc.

Key elements that define the building's Sullivan-esque Chicago style include:

- eleven-storey height with flat roof
- tripartite division of facades into base, column and capital
- piers and columns of complex profile leading from the ground floor to round-headed arches at the top of the building



- regular grid-like fenestration and clear expression of the structural system
- heavily projecting and elaborately decorated cornice
- facing materials like granite on the lower two levels and terra cotta made to resemble granite on all upper levels
- large main floor and smaller second floor windows with heavy and elaborately decorated framing and upper floor windows, paired and outlined with richly detailed spandrels and posts
- elaborate surface decoration throughout, including sculptural lions atop the piers, twisted columns at the upper level, etc.

Key elements that define the building's high levels of integrity in its materials and finishes in major interior public spaces include:

- lobby, its two-storey height, cross-vaulted and beamed ceilings, use of marble and other expensive materials throughout, and wealth of exquisite finishes and details, like the decorative frieze, foliated capitals; elaborate metal grilles, decorative lion newel post, etc.
- main floor banking hall, with its two-storey volume, coffered ceiling outlined with classically inspired edging, octagonally-shaped columns faced with polished marble and topped with foliated capitals, etc.
- main floor mezzanine with its bronze grille work banister and boardroom with column capitals and ceiling edging as seen in the banking hall

