

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

The Saskatchewan Association of Architects Celebrates Its Centennial

PART 1: IN THE BEGINNING – Pre 1912 (First of a Four Part Series for Worth magazine)

In 1896, noted American architect Louis Sullivan coined a phrase that had been a fundamental tenet of architecture for more than a century. In its simplified version, Sullivan stated: “Form follows Function”.

INDEED, a review of structures erected in Saskatchewan since the beginning of human settlement confirms that indeed, this is one of the truths of design for all structures, regardless of how basic or elaborate their design.

From the simple but extremely functional teepees of First Nation peoples to the elaborate edifice of the provincial government – the Legislative Building – Saskatchewan architecture follows the rule.

This year, 2011, the Saskatchewan Association of Architects (SAA) celebrates a century of architecture and architects, recognizing the achievements of both design and designers.

By 1911, Saskatchewan had already experienced numerous finely designed and constructed buildings, some of which remain today as his-



The Davin Fairview Methodist Church.

toric milestones in the evolution of Saskatchewanian and Canadian architecture.

Some of these buildings have been formally designated as heritage sites by all three levels of government and rank among the architectural treasures of Canada.

However, before the SAA was created by an Act of the provincial legislature, architects, engineers, contractors, carpenters, stonemasons, bricklayers and anyone else who cared to do so, designed and built any structure they wanted without any minimal standards or controls.

If it withstood the test of gravity and the elements, it was a bona fide building.

Some were obviously of superior or inferior quality, and often this difference was directly reflective of the degree of formal training that the person achieved.

For those who considered themselves to be professional architects, this training was achieved either through studies at an accredited architectural school or through the apprenticeship program with an established architect.

Both required many years of study and practical application.

For example, one of Saskatchewan's earliest resident architects was Septimus Alfred Clark, who came to Regina from England in 1882.

Clark was an architect who was





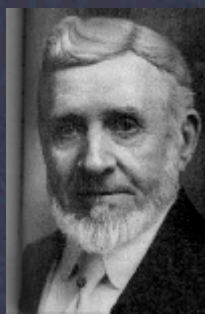
S.A. Clark

trained in the profession in England, and worked on such well-known sites as Warwick Castle. He advertised himself as an architect or as a contractor.

He homesteaded just north of Regina, but also designed and built small buildings, including churches and hotels.

As with many early architects, work was not always easy to find, and so Clark supplemented his income by serving as a supervising architect for buildings designed by others.

By tradition, both architects claimed the building within their portfolios. This tradition has led to considerable confusion in later years, because many early construction records have been lost and those that have survived are not always clear on specific roles and responsibilities.



William Henderson

This informal approach to building design was perhaps acceptable for simpler structures, but it became problematic as structures increased in complexity of design and building material.

But not all of Clark's colleagues were equally well-trained.

As more and more "architects" flocked into the developing west during the boom years of agricultural settlement at the turn of the 20th century, the need for some form of standardization and control over who could and could not claim the formal title of "architect" became a serious issue across western Canada.

Architect-designed buildings not only benefited from professional design capabilities, but the owners of these struc-

W.G. Van Egmond Saskatchewan's Most Prolific Architect

W.G. Van Egmond was Regina's most prolific architect during the 1920 – 1945 time period.

He was capable of designing the foundation system, the heating and plumbing and also included the electrical systems on his architectural drawings.

In his earlier stage of practice there was no blue printing service in Regina. Contractors who wanted to bid on his work would visit his office in the McCallum Hill building and take their quantities off the original tracing paper, which was the primary control drawing for the project. This was risky practice for the contracting industry.

When blue printing using the wet process was available in Regina Van Egmond and the other two local architects used the service.

There were no structural or mechanical engineers based in Regina during those years. Structural design was either provided by Dominion Bridge in Winnipeg or the Cowan Company who sold steel for concrete and included structural engineering as a free service.

Mechanical engineering during the 1940s was also provided to the architects as free service by Trane Company Designers.

Van Egmond did most of his architectural drafting on the smaller scale buildings. On larger projects such as the Balfour Technical School or the General Hospital, he had the help of very talented architectural draftsmen.

The original architectural firm was established as Storey and Van Egmond.

When Storey Sr. died in 1913, his son Stan Storey became the junior



partner and the firm name was changed to Van Egmond and Storey.

It was in the late 1940s when I first met Van Egmond. He was a dominant competitive businessman.

I remember when my mentor, Francis Portnall was awarded a commission, Van Egmond

phoned the chairman of the building committee and gave him a tongue lashing asking " ... what right do you have, not selecting me?"

I've seen Van Egmond drawings for six-storey hotel in downtown Regina which were produced single-handedly in six working days, including structural, mechanical and all the architectural details.

He was the "fastest pencil in the west."

After expending his energy in a burst of design and production, nearly exhausted, the word was

that he would buy a case full of liquor and not emerge from his hideaway in a South Railway

Street hotel room until he had consumed the entire twelve bottles. That was one way in which he rewarded himself for his efforts.

I believe Van Egmond is responsible for the design of over 200 buildings in the City of Regina. Included in his work were residences, commercial buildings and hospitals.

Van Egmond works stand as a monument to a dynamic and talented Saskatchewan based architect whose work was the primary focus of his adult life.

• By Joseph Pettick, FRAIC,



As more and more “architects” flocked into the developing west during the boom years of agricultural settlement at the turn of the 20th century, the need for some form of standardization and control over who could and could not claim the formal title of “architect” became a serious issue across western Canada.



Regina City Hall (above), St. Peter's Anglican Church in Qu'Appelle (top right), Central School in Ft. Qu'Appelle (middle) and the Balfour Apartments in Regina.

tures also relied on the buildings to be structurally sound.

Architects, in collaboration with engineers, certified and guaranteed the quality of their work. Unaccredited local building designers generally did not.

It was within this environment that professional architects met on several occasions between 1908 and 1911 to urge the formation of an association that would regulate the profession of architecture in Saskatchewan, as similar associations did elsewhere around the country and the world.

Just as the true pioneer era was coming to an end, so the time for making-do in order to erect a structure as quickly as possible to meet pioneer

needs was also quickly coming to its end.

Saskatchewan architects worked with the provincial government to draft the necessary legislation, which was introduced in November 1909, but not assented to until March 23, 1911.

The Saskatchewan Architects Act came into force on July 31, 1912 and all those wishing to

continue to practice the profession were henceforth required to formally register with the Saskatchewan Association of Architects.

Application Forms included the name of the architect, place of birth, age, place of residence, level of education, and a listing of the buildings designed by the applicant.

Members of the Association executive reviewed the applications and ruled on eligibility. In only a few instances were applications rejected, and applicants were encouraged to upgrade their credentials.

Some complied, others did not, and the latter generally left the practice.

However, records of the SAA, now housed with the Saskatchewan Archives Board, revealed that on sev-



eral occasions throughout the history of the Association, persons claiming to be “architects” were formally notified that they much cease to do so, or suffer the consequences outlined in the legislation. W

•By Frank Korvemaker, S.A.A. (Hon.)

UPCOMING 2011 SAA FEATURES

Part 2: The Early Years: 1912 to 1945 will be published in the summer edition of *Worth* and discuss developing the new province and the impact of the Great Depression.

Part 3: Post War Regeneration: 1945 to 1965 will be published in the autumn edition of *Worth* and focus on new building materials and development of suburbs.

Part 4: The Evolution to Modern Scale and Design: 1965 to 2011 will be published in the winter edition of *Worth* and examine introduction of the high rise office tower and urban renewal.



May 14 – 18, 1955: A Busy Week For Saskatchewan Architecture

During a five-day period in May of 1955, Saskatchewan Premier T.C. Douglas attended official opening ceremonies for three major construction projects commissioned by the province to help celebrate the Jubilee Year.

All totalled, these visionary projects cost in excess of \$22 million – approximately \$183 million in 2005 dollars.

May 14, 1955 - University Hospital, Saskatoon

The 550-bed University Hospital dominated the campus of the University of Saskatchewan and transformed the nursing profession in Saskatchewan.

The Hospital took eight years to complete and cost in excess of \$13 million – almost \$108 million today.

Over 16,000 tons of Saskatchewan limestone was used to face the building.

The University Hospital became the primary teaching and training base for the Colleges of Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy, as well as in a number of health care technologies.

The Hospital was designed to train a new breed of nurses, ready to supervise staff, run wards in urban and rural settings and take over an expanding role in health care.

The hospital was designed by Webster and Gilbert of Saskatoon. A major addition and renovation completed in 1979 transformed the original structure.

Right from top: Ted McCudden, the museum's architect.

The Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

The Wascana Mermaid adds a touch of humanity to the creatures on the north façade of the museum.



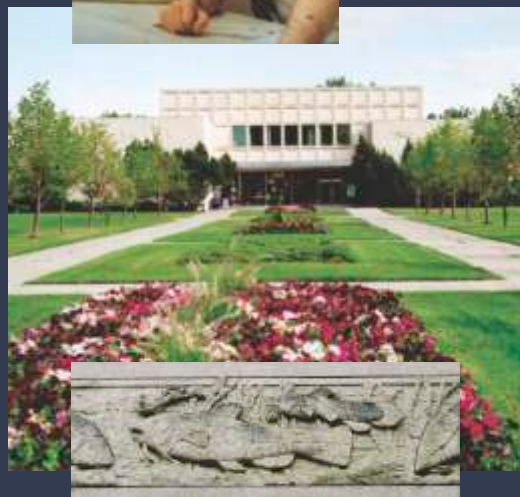
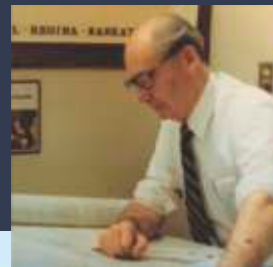
Main entrance to Royal University Hospital.

Saskatoon architect David Webster (left) supervised the design of the hospital.

May 16, 1955 - Museum of Natural History, Regina

The Museum of Natural History (since renamed the Royal Saskatchewan Museum) was designed by Regina architect E.J. McCudden of McCudden & Robbins.

McCudden had been Saskatchewan's last Provincial Architect and designed many well-known landmarks including the Wal-



ter Scott Building, the former head of office of the Saskatchewan Telephone Company at the corner of Albert Street and College Avenue as well as the new SaskTel head office on Saskatchewan Drive.

McCudden put a lot of thought into the positioning and massing of the Museum; its subdued, elegant presence relates well to the Legislative Building across the lake and the rest of Wascana Centre. McCudden's design ensured that there was no secondary aspect; he didn't want visitors to get a sense that there was back door and a front door to the Museum.

Although fifty years of shrubbery growth has reduced the effect of the original design, the stark façade is still softened by 325 individual sculptures, carved in relief from buff Tyndall stone.

The sculptor, Hubert Garnier from Winnipeg, was insistent that a whimsical note be included. McCudden (and the client) were insistent that only living, breathing Saskatchewan wildlife be depicted.

In the end a compromise was

achieved, and a small carving of the Wascana Mermaid proudly took her place amongst the lake trout, perch and pickerel – she's now all but hidden on the building's north-east façade.

May 18, 1955 - The Saskatchewan Training School, Moose Jaw

Douglas had made a number of commitments to provide universal health services.

Care for the province's mentally retarded (as intellectually disabled people were referred to at that time) was near the top of the list.

Regina architect H.K. Black began design work on the new \$8 million (approximately \$70 million today) training school in 1949.

Major contracts were awarded in early 1950. The official sod turning occurred October 17, 1950 on land previously occupied by the Wild Animal Park.

The transformation of an 800-acre stretch of prairie into an entirely self-sufficient community for 1200 intellectually disabled citizens was one of the largest single construction projects yet to be undertaken by the provincial government.

Speaking at the School's official opening ceremonies, Douglas said:

The Saskatchewan Training School is a monument which will tell our children and our children's children that the people of Saskatchewan in 1955 had a great concern for those less fortunate than themselves ... we have done a little to lead the lonely and bewildered out of the darkness



An aerial view of the immense project, taken in 1955.
The administration/hospital building at Valley View Centre.
H.K. Black, architect for the Saskatchewan Training School.



into the light.

A prime design objective for the new school was protection from the elements for residents and staff.

Douglas well-remembered the tragic loss of two residents of the school who attempted to walk between buildings at the school's temporary location at the air base in Estevan during the blizzard of 1947.

The new school's buildings were connected by a mile-long network of tunnels. In addition to sheltering residents and staff, these tunnels carried steam lines, light, power, water, plumbing and telephone services.

The Training School was virtually self-sufficient. There was a concrete water reservoir which held 250,000 gallons and a large pumping unit to deliver extra pressure should there be a fire. A 100-bed hospital was attached to the administration building. The hospital included complete laboratory facilities, x-ray equipment, a pharmacy, a dental clinic, isolation wards and a separate paediatrics ward.

The Training School had its own kitchen, bakery, butcher shop, training department, shoe shop, clothing store, barber shop, beauty salon, paint shop, industrial laundry, theatre, school and a full maintenance department. A heated

swimming pool was added in 1966.

A large irrigated garden gave it the capacity to be self-sufficient for vegetables.

There was steam heating plant with two 15,000 pound boilers and a stand-alone 300 kw power supply. The Training School even had the capability to pasteurize its own milk.

During the 1950s and 1960s, approximately 1,200 residents were housed at the Training School. By 1957, there was a waiting list of 500.

In 1965, the Training School was the second biggest industry in Moose Jaw – only the air base was bigger.

Society's view of how best to provide the best quality of life for intellectually challenged adults and children began to change in the 1970s. It was felt that integration into the wider community would be the more beneficial than living in a separate institution such as Valley View.

As more and more of Valley View's residents moved into the community, the Centre's population began to decline and by 1973 there were 980 residents.

In 2010, there were just over 230 residents. Many of the residential cottages have been demolished and other buildings sit empty, populated by pigeons. W

• *By Don Black*

