

WHAT MAKES A BUILDING HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT?

HISTORY

Who were the original occupants and what did they do for a living?



*Daly House Museum
Home of Brandon's 1st Mayor
Thomas Mayne Daly*

Heritage buildings usually have greater potential for interpretation and telling interesting stories if the original occupants were well known in the community. Were any of the original or later occupants people who made a notable contribution to the community in terms of economic, political, social or cultural activities? Were they leaders in those endeavors?

Did an event of historical importance occur in the building?

An event of historical importance will include things like the formal signing of a significant document, a famous trial, or a meeting between important people. It will be a rare building that will be able to make any claim in this regard.



*Former Brandon Court House
The only woman hanged in Manitoba,
Emily Blake was put to death in 1899*

Can the building be said to illustrate a historical issue?

Some buildings are associated with or illustrative of an important or enduring historical development, such as local agriculture (old barns) or the community political life (house of the first mayor).

ARCHITECTURE

When was the building constructed?

Buildings constructed between 1870 and 1900 recall the waves of pioneer settlers from Ontario, the United States, the United Kingdom, and eastern Europe who filled up the southern part of the province. There are still many examples of the modest buildings that characterized this period.



*Villa Louise
Built in 1888 for pioneer physician
Dr. Alexander Fleming and his family*

Many of the significant buildings constructed between 1900 and 1920 are more ambitious in size and detail than earlier ones. Some of these buildings remain and have considerable architectural merit by the quality of their architecture, materials, and craftsmanship.

Who designed and/or constructed the building?



*W. A. Elliott
Prominent architect responsible for
the design of many of Brandon's
noteworthy buildings.*

The designer and builder of a structure may have brought a great knowledge of building history (design and knowledge of materials and construction techniques) to the subject. Most buildings were designed without an architect. However, where a building was designed by a trained architect, it may be possible to discuss the architectural style used and even compare this building with others designed by that individual.

The carpenters, masons, and craftspeople who made the province's early buildings were skilled individuals. It might be possible to discuss the quality of their work at a particular site and also to compare the work with that of other buildings in the community.

Did the designer use a style or tradition to create the design?

The design of many buildings is very simple, often a box with a gable roof. There are some buildings, though, where a particular architectural style or tradition was used. These will typically be public buildings or substantial private buildings.

What materials were used in the construction of the building?

Most historic buildings that remain in the province were constructed of light wood frame and were covered with horizontal wood siding. The use of other materials (heavy wood frame, brick, stone, metal) and different building technologies will make a building more unusual by comparison.



*Shillinglaw Residence
Built in 1882, it was the first home
in Brandon to use a stone foundation.*

INTEGRITY

Have there been changes made to the building?

Few historic buildings have survived the years without some change. Roof shingles will have likely been replaced. Paint will have been applied. These changes are minor and do not necessarily adversely affect the historic character of a building. It will be those significant changes made outside (for instance, an addition, new window openings, removal of original materials and details) that may most affect an appreciation of a building's original appearance.

Has the building always fulfilled its present function?



*Nurse's Residence -BMHC
Once used to house nursing staff,
this building currently sits vacant.*

Over the years many buildings have seen change to their original function. In some cases, this is the nature of the building and will not detract from its character; for example, commercial structures are expected to accept many different tenants. Other buildings, however, will suffer in terms of their historic character when different functions are introduced. A one room school that is closed, then used as a community hall, then a store, and then a garage, will likely have been so altered that its original character is erased.

ENVIRONMENT

Does the building look like any others in the community?

Generally we regard buildings with a unique appearance as special and important. These will be structures like town halls, churches, schools, and large and ornate houses. However, more modest buildings in our communities should not be overlooked. In these cases it will be necessary to identify and to select structures that can be said to best represent those more typical examples.

Is the building a landmark?

Public buildings such as town halls, schools, and churches are often the best known local buildings. Some privately owned buildings may also be well known either for their architecture (a big, ornate house) or their occupant (the home of a well known citizen).



*Central Fire Station #1
Constructed in 1911*