

Knox United Church

Address: 1448 – 5th Avenue

Date of Construction: 1922

Other Names: Knox Church

Adopted by the Heritage Commission: November 23, 2017

Last Updated: December 14, 2017



Courtesy of Trelle Morrow, 2017

Description

In November, 1922, a new Knox Church, with basement, vestry, balcony, entrance lobby, and office was officially opened at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Brunswick Street in downtown Prince George. This site was chosen to serve as a focal point due to population shifts from the earlier communities of South Fort George and Central Fort George into the City of Prince George.

Heritage Value

The heritage value of this building rests as the only remaining Gothic Revival design in the City of Prince George. There were earlier examples of Gothic Revival design for churches in the city, but these have long disappeared.

Heritage value also exists with the building being only one of two known structures remaining in the city designed by Architect, Henry Wilson, who had established an office in South Fort George in 1913.

Heritage value can be noted in the floor plan of the building which demonstrates a tower/nave relationship originating with Protestant churches dating back to Early English Village churches in the Middle Ages, and becoming prominent in the 1800s in North America through the medium of wood construction. The entrance to the church is through the tower which is a transition zone between the secular world outside and the sacred atmosphere of the nave.

Over the past 90 years, the downtown church has been a focal point, both for worship services and community functions. Today, the building is no longer used for regular congregational services, but attracts numerous community activities on a daily basis, including a childcare operations.

Heritage value lies with trees still existing on the perimeter of the site from a 1933 landscaping upgrading of the site. The value of evergreen trees in the city core is appreciated by not only parishioners, but by the community at large.

Character-Defining Elements

- Salient features of the church design include a crenellated bell tower and Gothic Revival window patterns. Gaps, or "crenels", are traditional in defensive structures, but today the crenels are decorative only.
- The pointed arch incorporated into the window design is likely the most readily recognized Gothic Revival motif in Canada from the early 19th century and into the 20th century. Revival motifs are strictly decorative.
- The main entrance to the church is through the tower. The plan reveals an entrance lobby, coat room and stairs leading to the balcony and the basement. Such an entry provides a transitional space between the outer world and the sacred world of the nave which is seen as a feature of early English Village churches.
- The form of the building has not been compromised in any way since the date of construction, although modest interior changes have been made throughout.

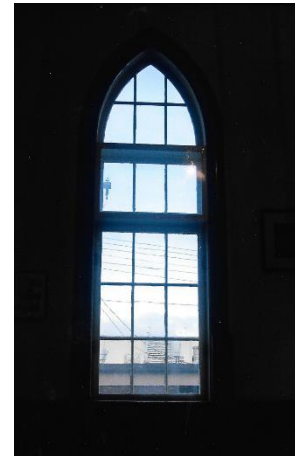
Images

2015 Photo of Knox United Church



Courtesy of Trelle Morrow (2016)

Gothic Revival



Courtesy of Trelle Morrow (2016)

Sources:

Researched and prepared by Trelle Morrow (Prince George Heritage Commission), 2016.

Runnalls, F.E. *The History of Knox United Church*. Prince George Printers Ltd., Prince George, B.C., 1945

Stemp, R. *Secret Language of Churches & Cathedrals*. Duncan Baird Publishers, London, UK., 2010