

The history of education in the St. James area dates back to the planning of a one-room log school in 1860 near what is now Tylehurst St. The St. James School Division # 7 was founded in 1917. It decided three years after its inception to build a school in the east end of the division for elementary students who, at the time, were attending school in a veteran's hall and the basement of a Methodist church. A contest was held to name the building and Assiniboine School was completed in 1922.



The building's elongated one-story plan was similar to two other schools built around the same time: Wolseley School, on Clifton St., and Sir Sam Steele School, on Chester St. The model was popular due to the rising cost of materials and the expense of building multi-story structures. Assiniboine School's facade features brick and stucco. The central section is two stories high and is topped with a metal spire. The second story was designed to be used as an auditorium, though for a brief time was used as a gymnasium. Unfortunately, this caused ceilings and walls to shake, and plaster to fall from the ceiling. By the 1930's, physical education was banned from the upper level. In 1946, an architect discovered that supposedly reinforced support beams were actually hollow, leaving the entire second story to be supported by two-by-fours. Steel girders were installed and the shaking stopped.

A new section was added to the south end of the school in 1968. It added seven new classrooms, a gymnasium and two washrooms. The lower level of the main building now houses the Assiniboine Children's Centre daycare. The Children's Centre also runs a nursery school out of two classrooms on the main floor and occupies most of the second floor in the new wing.

Source: Landmarks

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