



ST. JOACHIM CHURCH

9924 - 110 STREET NW

CITY OF EDMONTON HISTORIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Edmonton

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL PLACE

St. Joachim Church is a red-brick church situated on a portion of two lots in what is now known as the Wihkwêntôwin neighbourhood. Completed in 1899, the building manifests the strong influence of late nineteenth century French-Canadian church architecture. Prominent features of the red-brick church include a symmetrical front facade, gable roof, projecting central tower flanked by shorter corner towers, round-arched windows and stone keystones, stringcourses and sills. St. Joachim Church was designated as a Provincial Historic Resource in 1978.

HERITAGE VALUE

The heritage value of St. Joachim Church lies in its association with the establishment and development of the Catholic community in Edmonton and in its excellent representation of late nineteenth-century French-Canadian ecclesiastical architecture.

In the 1850s, members of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate established St. Joachim's mission at Fort Edmonton and began serving the post's Catholic community in a modest house-chapel. Over the succeeding decades, the parish congregation relocated twice: in 1877 to a church constructed near present-day Stony Plain Road and 122 Street, and in 1886 to a new place of worship erected just north of the current St. Joachim's. The church built in 1886 was situated within a block of land purchased by Bishop Vital-Justin Grandin three years earlier as the foundation for a Catholic religious district that came to include two hospitals as well as a rectory, convent, seminary, school, and church.

By the late 1890s, the growth of St. Joachim's congregation necessitated the construction of a new church. The basic structure of the new church was completed in 1899, though several elements - including the steeple and the stained glass windows - were added shortly after. The new St. Joachim Church was the heart of the Catholic neighbourhood in Wihkwêntôwin and the institutional base for the francophone Catholic community in Edmonton. Prior to the completion of St. Joseph's Cathedral in 1925, St. Joachim also served the growing anglophone Catholic community in central Edmonton, offering liturgies in both languages and maintaining both English and French-speaking clergy. As a direct descendent of the earliest parish community in Edmonton, and as the oldest existing Roman Catholic Church in the city, St. Joachim Church strongly represents the rich history of Roman Catholicism in Edmonton.

St. Joachim Church exemplifies late nineteenth-century French-Canadian ecclesiastical architecture. Traditional French-Canadian church architecture had represented a marriage of medieval ecclesiastical design with seventeenth century baroque influences. In the first half of the nineteenth century, architects like Thomas Baillarge introduced a new accent into French-Canadian church design by incorporating eighteenth-century French and British classicist influences into their plans. The Baroque sensibility of French-Canadian architecture is reflected in St. Joachim's exterior through the contrasting voussiors and keystones, the projecting central entrance, and the oeil-de-boeuf window, while the ideals of classicism are evident in the round-arched windows, building proportions, and symmetrical facade with a three-tower scheme. Though locally-based, the





architect of the church, Francis X. Deggendorfer, was clearly aware of contemporary developments in late nineteenth century French-Canadian architecture, including the movement towards the incorporation of High Victorian Gothic details into church designs. This trend is reflected in St. Joachim's four great pinnacles, one on each corner of the base of the belfry, as well as the church's non-structural buttressing and the corbelling under the cornice. The interior of the church is defined by a strong Baroque aesthetic, evident in the beautiful woodwork, elegant painted glass windows, and simile-marble altar. As one of the earliest and most impressive Roman Catholic churches in Alberta, St. Joachim Church served as a model for several subsequent places of worship.

Designated as a Municipal Historic Resource through Bylaw 18208 in January 2018.

Designated as a Provincial Historic Resource in September 1978.



CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

The character-defining elements of St. Joachim Church include:

Exterior:

- + mass, form, scale, and style;
- + red brick construction with stone stringcourses, keystones, and trim;
- + tall central tower with a double lantern belfry featuring four large corner pinnacles and surmounted by a galvanized steel steeple;
- + two smaller side towers crowned by smaller spires;
- + non-structural buttressing between the round-arched aisle windows;
- + corbelling under the cornice; and
- + fenestration pattern and style, including oeil-de-boeuf window on the front facade, round-arched windows, and painted glass windows.

Interior

- + window tracery;
- + segmented nave barrel vault sheathed with wood panelling and tracery;
- + semi-circular nave arcading;
- + perimeter wainscot and window trim;
- + elaborate wood stair to choir loft;
- + one-storey brick vestry on building's north-west corner with lancet windows and east entry door; and
- + original interior details, including central altar, painting above altar, lateral altars, lectern with a wineglass shape, organ, Stations of the Cross, pews, statuary, original doors, and vestry cabinet.

