

CONSERVATION BULLETIN SERIES

Doors & Entrances



The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation (SHF) is an agency of the Crown established by provincial legislation in 1991 to support heritage projects at the provincial and community level that seek to conserve, research, interpret, develop and promote Saskatchewan's diverse heritage resources.

The Heritage Conservation Branch (HCB) of the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport facilitates the protection and conservation of heritage resources in Saskatchewan under *The Heritage Property Act*.

The Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (the “Standards & Guidelines”) represents nationally-adopted guidance on how to best conserve Canada’s irreplaceable heritage resources. The Standards & Guidelines have been adopted by the SHF and the HCB.

Doors and Entrances - This Conservation Bulletin is a resource guide for some of the most common issues surrounding approaches (also referred to as “Treatments”) involving historic doors and entrances in Saskatchewan. These guidelines provide information to anyone planning, designing and/or undertaking any type of work on doors and entrances that have been identified as character-defining elements. These guidelines also discuss examples from sites throughout Saskatchewan with a view towards raising awareness of the potential impact of change on heritage values when doors and entrances are altered.



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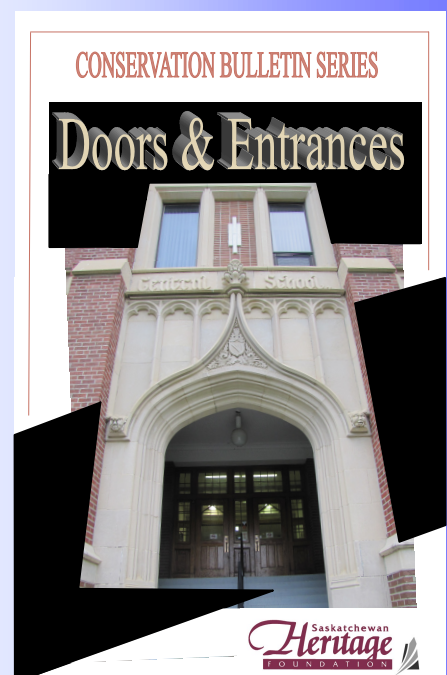
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1. INTRODUCTION

Why are doors and entrances important character-defining elements?

The pattern of openings on a building can establish its fundamental character. This includes aspects of doors and entrances such as their spacing, proportions and basic characteristics.

Doors and entrances may simply be functional but they also may have symbolic or cultural importance. They often serve as a focal point for the structure and form an integral part of the heritage character of the place.

In this regard, doors and entrances are clearly one of the most conspicuous character-defining elements of a historic building, yet they also can be the most vulnerable to wear, alteration and change of use.

The Court of Queen's Bench building in Saskatoon (see Figs. 1 and 2) illustrates the impact that alteration of the principal entrance on Spadina Avenue will have on the appearance of this historic court house. The main entrance has been relocated to a new addition on the west side of this building and the original principal entrance has been removed.

This bulletin illustrates a variety of doors and entrances throughout Saskatchewan that reflect function and compatibility with their surroundings. This bulleting also examines design changes to doors and entrances and the degree to which those changes may impact the heritage character of the place.



Fig. 1— Court of Queen's Bench, Saskatoon
(Photo: M.G. Miller, 2010)

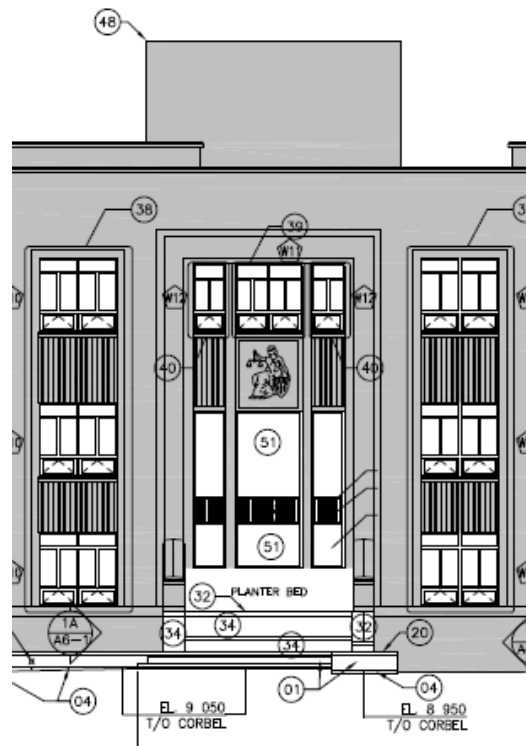


Fig. 2— Court of Queen's Bench, Saskatoon
(Source: H. D. H. Architects, 2011)

2. THE STANDARDS & GUIDELINES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC PLACES IN CANADA

Conserving doors and entrances at historic places in Saskatchewan?

Any significant change to a historic place in Saskatchewan must satisfy the *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Buildings*. This compliance enables appropriate authorities to issue permits and it enables the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation to consider financial incentives for eligible conservation work.

Conservation is a general term for protecting the heritage values of historic places and may include *preservation, restoration or rehabilitation*. Preservation is about the present and involves protecting, maintaining or stabilizing the existing materials, form or integrity of an historic place. Restoration refers to protecting the heritage value of a building during a particular period in its history. In this bulletin, the emphasis will be on *rehabilitation*, which is the process of repairing or replacing building materials to extend the useful life of a building.

3. CELEBRATING THE POINT OF ENTRY

The Approach to an Entrance

The design of an approach leading to an entrance may be an important character-defining element of that building.



Fig. 3 —former Normal School, Saskatoon
(M. G. Miller, 2011)

Those aspects of the forecourt, which may include prominent vistas, symmetry and a concentration of architectural detailing, are part of the heritage value of the place that make up the setting. Entrance settings are particularly important to retain, as much as the doors themselves.

For example, the principal entrance to the former Normal School in Saskatoon (Fig. 3) is defined by the layout of its forecourt and a

setting which clearly establishes the importance of this entrance compared to other secondary entrances.

Similarly, the ascending stairs of Prince Albert's Court House (Figs. 4, 5 and 6), which are symmetrically and centrally located, provide a focal point from Central Avenue.



Fig. 4 —Prince Albert
Court House, Prince Al-
bert



Fig. 5 —Prince Albert Court House,
Prince Albert (M. G. Miller, 2011)

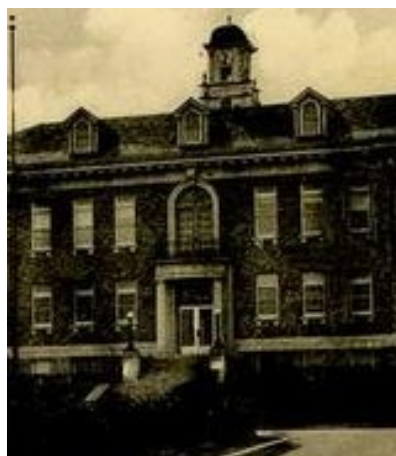


Fig. 6 —Prince
Albert Court
House,
Prince Albert
(Photogelatine
Engraving Co.
Ltd. (Ottawa,
Ontario))

In the case of the former Saskatoon Normal School, the doors are compatible with the character of the historic place. In contrast, both the doors and windows of the Prince Albert Court House are replacement units that result in a distinct change to the heritage character of the building.

Doors and entrances that are highly compatible with the original intent are evident in the Assiniboia Court House, where Fig. 7 reflects the 2011 condition and Fig. 8 illustrates one of the original drawings prepared by architect Maurice Sharon.

Not all entrances are prominent. The original entrance of the Michael Hall building at St. Peter's College near Muenster is a good example of a modest entrance characterized by vertical alignment of character-defining window openings terminated by a cupola (Fig. 9).

The simple elegance of Michael Hall, which is typical of ecclesiastical school buildings in the province, is an important character-defining element of this historic place. Such elements should be retained and conserved in any contemplation of future changes.



Fig. 7 — Assiniboia Court House

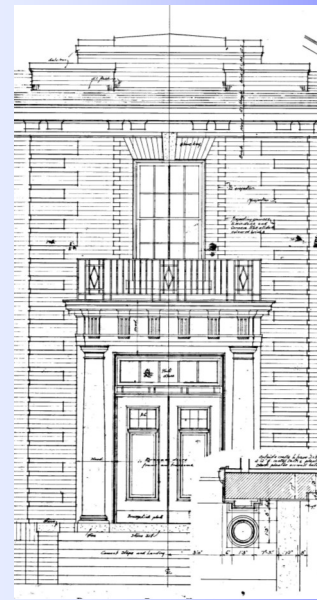


Fig. 8 — Assiniboia Court House (Original elevation drawing: Maurice Sharon Architect, 1930)

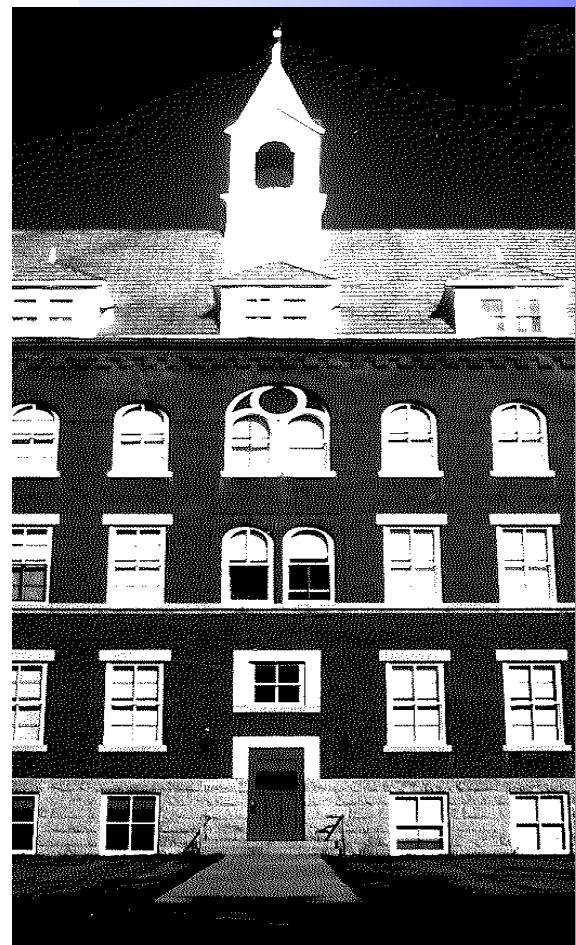


Fig. 9 — St. Peter's College, Muenster (Saskatchewan Archives Board)

4. PRESERVATION

Preservation involves protecting, maintaining and stabilizing the existing form, material and integrity of an historic place or individual component, while protecting its heritage value.

The Standards and Guidelines associated with doors and entrances recommends retaining sound and repairable doors, including their functional and decorative elements.

Many historic doors are replaced prematurely in the interests of energy efficiency or to change their appearance. It should be noted, however, that replacements for original or historic doors are often less durable and often come with a much shorter useful life than the doors they replaced.

The recommended approach to dealing with weathering is preservation. During the repair work, if it is found that specific components have deteriorated beyond practical repair, it would be appropriate to selectively replace deteriorated elements in kind using the evidence of the original fabric to ensure correctness.



Fig. 10 — Melville City Hall, Melville
(M. G. Miller, 2011)

The type of detail associated with intricate doors and entrances can only be found in original drawings. Unfortunately in many cases, locating the original drawings for a historic place, if they exist at all, can be a challenge.

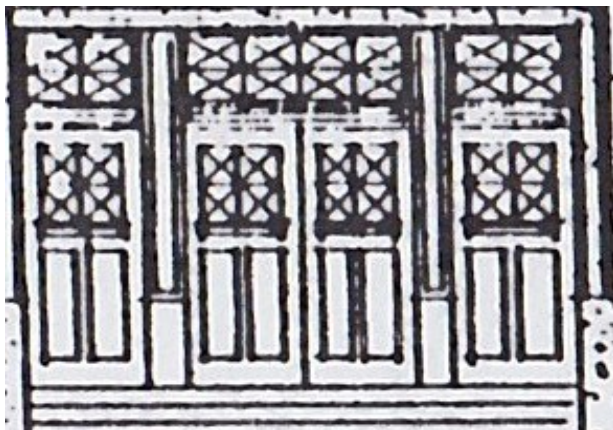
As an example, since the original secondary doors at the Melville City Hall (Figs. 10, 11 and 12) still remain on the property, the appropriate work to be undertaken would start from preservation of the character-defining form and features of these doors. The addition of weather stripping, adjusting hardware and sealing cracks and joints in the doors are important and energy-efficient preservation measures.

The secondary double doors at the McNaughton Stores building in Moosimin (Fig. 13) appear sufficiently sound to warrant the installation of weather stripping, limited paint removal, cleaning, adjustment of hardware and sealing of cracks and joints. Such work can contribute significantly to the physical integrity and energy efficiency of historic timber doors.



Fig. 11 — Melville City Hall, original character-defining doors and entrance
(M. G. Miller, 2012)

Doors that evoke their function through their shape can be particularly important character-defining elements, such as the simple pointed-arch vertical board door of the Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Stanley Mission (Fig. 14). As the oldest existing mission and the oldest building in the province, the ongoing preservation of the historic fabric is exceptionally important.



*Fig. 12 — Melville City Hall, partial original drawing of Storey and Van Egmond Architects, 1912
(Drawing: The Heritage Conservation Branch files)*



Fig. 14 — Raised-panel timber-frame doors with multi-light transom, McNaughton Stores building (1890) (Photo: M. G. Miller, 2011)

5. RESTORATION

Restoration involves accurately revealing, recovering or representing the state of an historic place or individual component as it appeared at a particular period in its history, while protecting its heritage value.

Restoration relies on evidence of an earlier appearance of an historic place and enough physical material remaining to begin the process. In circumstances where insufficient evidence exists, it is recommended that a restoration not be considered the primary treatment. Without evidence, contemplating what might have existed previously would require guesswork.

In relation to the McNaughton Stores building in Moosomin, the re-creation of the northern storefront (Fig. 15) can draw from the existing physical evidence in the southern storefront (Fig. 16) in order to reinstate the post 1890 appearance of the northern entrance.



Fig. 15 — McNaughton Stores (1890 addition)

If it were determined that the original 1890 storefront was of greater significance than the post 1890 condition that partially remains, one could elect to restore the storefront to its original appearance, which would require the removal of the flush entrance system that presently exists (Fig. 16) in favour of the recessed entrance that existed in 1890 and to a certain extent, still remains on the property today.

If no physical evidence exists, yet the plans from the restoration period exist, the wholesale reinstatement of the form and fabric would be described as being *reconstruction*. The Standards and Guidelines do not recognize reconstruction as a conservation treatment and therefore, the “recreation” of missing features must be limited to a portion of the whole property in order to avoid reconstruction.

The situation of the Weyburn Court House raises different issues. Here, there is no physical evidence that would guide the restoration of the front doors. The existing replacement entrance is materially, architec-



Fig. 16 — McNaughton Stores (1890 addition)

turally and functionally incompatible with the historic character of the place.

However, the original plans are available, which show more clearly the design intent for the doors and entrance. The original entrance consisted of a double raised-panel timber door with narrow sidelights and slender columns in between.

The proposed design would create a double-door entrance system without sidelights and with additional flanking columns which did not exist previously. The squat appearance of the proposed doors along with the elimination of proportionate sidelights and the introduction of reorganized elements would alter the character and appearance of the entrance system considerably. In this case, both the existing (Fig. 19) and the proposed entrance system (Fig. 17) would not meet the Standards and Guidelines.

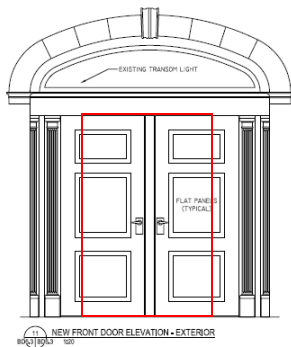


Fig. 17 — Weyburn Court House—proposed entrance doors prepared by Alton Tangedal Architect Ltd. & Walker Projects Inc., (2011)

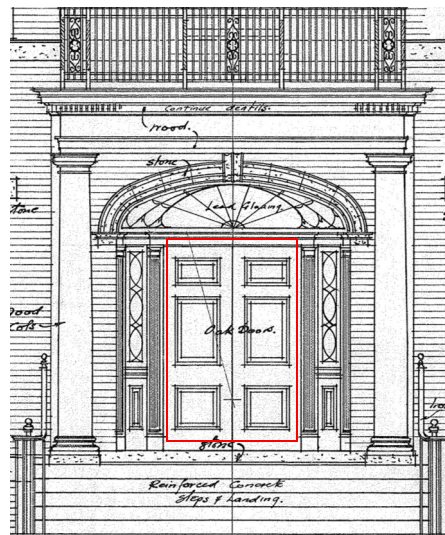


Fig. 18 — Weyburn Court House—partial original elevation prepared by M. W. Sharon Architects (1927)



Fig. 19 — Weyburn Court House (above) —partial existing elevation showing front entrance (M. G. Miller, 2011)

6. REHABILITATION

Rehabilitation involves the sensitive adaptation of an historic place or individual component for a continuing or compatible contemporary use, while protecting its heritage value.

The front entrance of the Assiniboia Court House, flanked by Doric columns and a modest porch with a metal railing, is recognized as a character-defining element of the Colonial Revival structure.

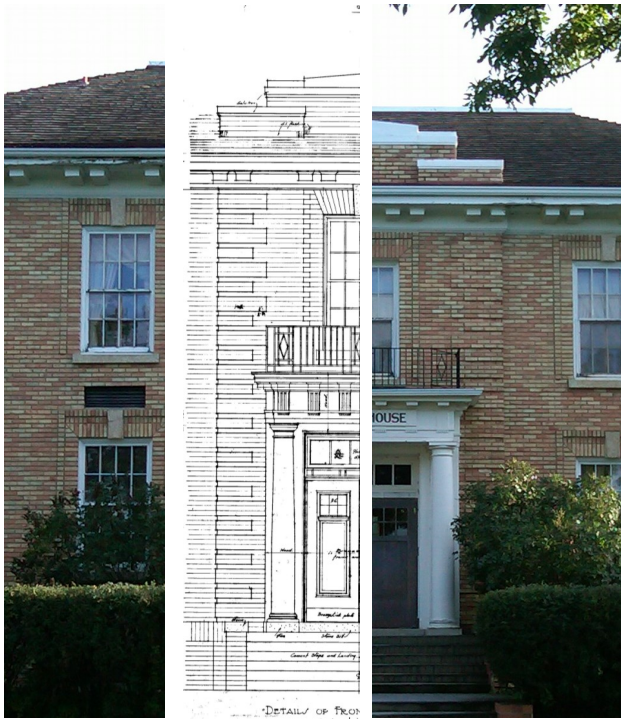


Fig. 20 — Assiniboia Court House (centre) —partial original elevation, prepared by M. W. Sharon Architect (1930)

Fig. 21 — Assiniboia Court House (right portion of photograph above)—existing front entrance (M. G. Miller, 2011)



Fig. 22 — Assiniboia Court House—interior door (M. G. Miller, 2011)

Preservation of the existing doors and entrance system would result in the least intervention. However, when preservation is considered an inadequate treatment of a contemporary use, the next level of treatment may be restoration or rehabilitation.

Thus, as long as the original entrance system is repairable, its replacement, even if based on physical or documentary evidence (in the case of restoration) or based on a compatible contemporary design (in the case of rehabilitation), would not satisfy the criteria for undertaking a replacement design.

Most of the doors and entrances depicted in this bulletin are exterior systems but there are also historic places whose interior doors are character-defining elements (Fig. 22).

For the Ackerman Building Regina, the requirement for increased security has introduced a design element that may add interest to an aluminum-framed replacement door set within a timber frame. While the security grill can be said in this instance to be “reversible”, the aluminum door remains architecturally, materially and visually out of character of the place (Fig.23).



Fig. 23 — Ackerman Building, Regina, replacement entrance door

Security is also required at the Melville City Hall, where its front doors, (Fig. 25) while not original, are replacement doors that are architecturally compatible with the historic character of the place (Fig. 24).

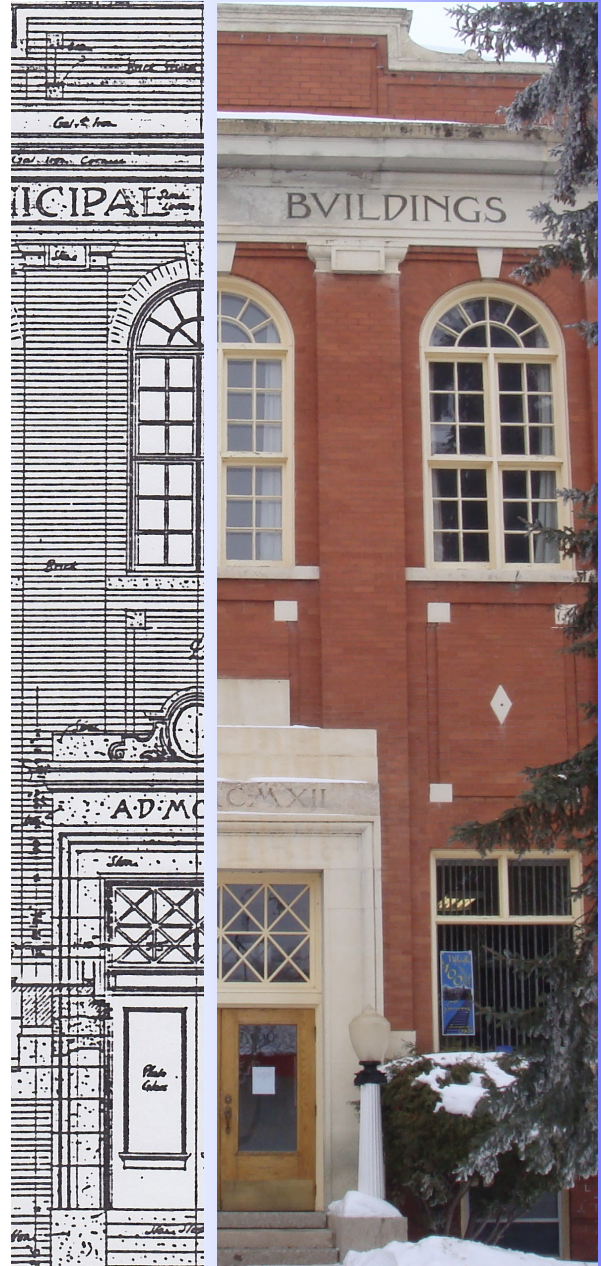


Fig. 24 (above centre) - Partial original elevation, Storey & Van Egmond Architects (1912)

Fig. 25 (above right) — Melville City Hall—front entrance

7. INCOMPATIBLE REPLACEMENTS

Replacement doors, especially with contemporary products that are materially, dimensionally and architecturally incompatible with the historic character of the place are common in Saskatchewan.

The windows, doors and proportion of openings of a building, while potentially character-defining elements in their own right, often make a significant contribution to the overall character of a place. That they are individually and collectively of such importance, warrants some discussion regarding the appropriate treatment of historic doors and entrances in Saskatchewan.

The Standards and Guidelines offer some guidance as to what criteria ought to be met before the replacement approach is considered. However, the criteria of “economic feasibility” and “compatible substitute material” introduce considerable opportunity for varied interpretations.



Fig. 26 — Moose Mountain Chalet, Kenosee Lake, Moose Mountain Provincial Park
(M. G. Miller, 2011)

In relation to the Moose Mountain Chalet, for example, the total replacement of the original wood by PVC windows would not be an acceptable substitute material. Further, selecting the least expensive, readily available product often results in inferior materials that have a lower initial cost but a much shorter life-span.

The prominent double doors that once faced the lake at the Moose Mountain Chalet (Fig. 27) were replaced by a single door and flanking sidelights (Fig. 26) that has fundamentally altered the character of the entrance system.

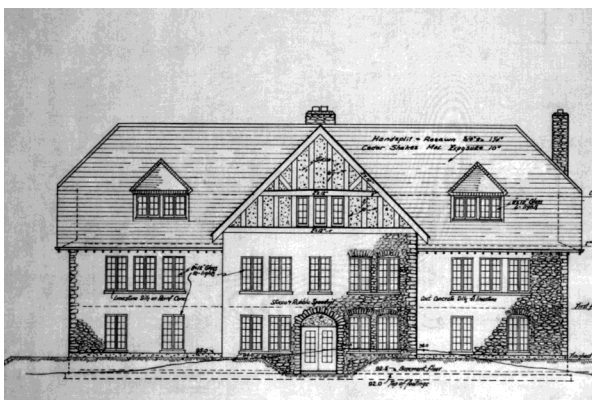


Fig. 27 — Moose Mountain Chalet, Kenosee Lake, Moose Mountain Provincial Park
(M. G. Miller, 2011)

From courthouses to schools, the introduction of replacement elements at the highly prominent part of building that makes up the ‘point of entry’ requires exceptional care. In the absence of care, evidence has shown that significant departures from a compatible design, such as that depicted in Figure. 29, typically produces visual effects that ultimately degrade the integrity of the historic place.

The replacement doors that were installed at the Bank of Commerce in Nokomis also erodes the historic character of this landmark institution (Fig.28).



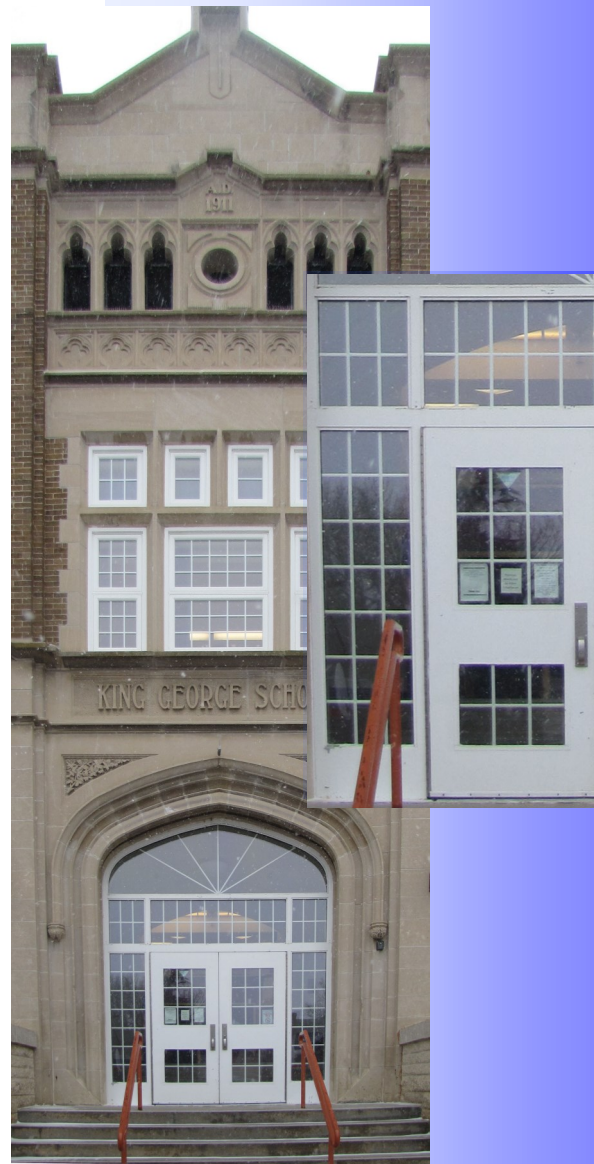
Fig. 29 — Prominent landmark, Prince Albert

In many cases, recent installations of doors (and windows) that are markedly inconsistent with the Standards and Guidelines,



*Fig.28 — Bank of Commerce, Nokomis
(M. G. Miller, 2011)*

such as those at King George School in Moose Jaw, may be considered as being “compatible” and sensitive to the historic character of the place (Fig. 30). However, the frames, trim and muntins of PVC products can be much wider than those that contributed to the building’s heritage character. The cumulative effect of these design considerations alone produce a significantly different character, and correspondingly, a visual impact that departs from the spirit and intent of the Standards and Guidelines.



*Fig. 30 —King George School, Moose Jaw
(M. G. Miller, 2011)*

Why should I resist the temptation to replace my historic door?

The removal of old doors can significantly diminish the character and authenticity of a historic place. Existing doors can be frequently replaced and, if necessary, upgraded for better security or draft-proofing.

The decision to replace a historic door should be based on a conservation condition assessment. A condition assessment involving historic material should only be under

taken by a specialist in the repair of historic fabric. Care is warranted if a condition assessment originates from an agent whose area of expertise is the sale of replacement doors.

Replacement is a last resort, and should be ‘in kind’ in terms of style and materials. A common occurrence is to attempt to fit mass-produced ‘period-style’ doors that are out of keeping with the historic character of the property. Examples of this appear to include the front doors of St. Paul’s Bergheim Lutheran Church (Fig. 32); Estevan Court House (Fig. 34); and Wynyard Court House (Fig. 31).



Fig. 32 — St. Paul’s Bergheim Lutheran Church (M. G. Miller)



Fig. 33 — St. Walburg Museum (M. G. Miller)



Fig. 34 — Estevan Court House (M. G. Miller)



Fig. 31 — Wynyard Court House (M. G. Miller, 2011)

Historically, these doors would have been constructed of timber, thus the use of timber in any replacement door is essentially the baseline condition that should be met. This is reflected in the Standards and Guidelines by the frequent use of the terms “in kind” when referring to the manner in which replacement elements should relate to the original fabric.

The Northern Crown Bank (Fig. 35) is the oldest commercial building in Regina's central business district whose character-defining street façade was historically comprised of entrances that flanked the central projecting frontispiece within the two central glazed openings. All of the doors and windows have been altered from their original appearance with the tall flanking double doors converted from entrances to windows and the central windows largely infilled by visually 'heavy' construction (Fig. 36).

exterior appearance in a way that would not satisfy the Standards and Guidelines. The Standards and Guidelines require that any change, whether that be preservation, restoration or rehabilitation, shall not diminish or adversely affect heritage values.



Fig.35 — Northern Crown Bank (1910), Regina (Saskatchewan Archives Board, Album, p.5, Cat # 2488)

Fig.36 — NCB (M. G. Miller, 2011)

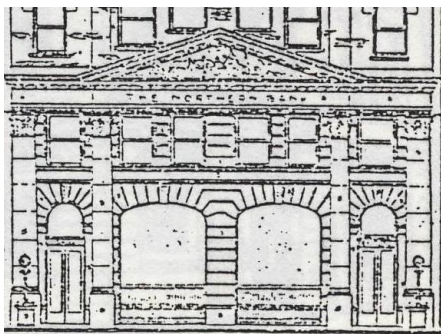


Fig.37 — Northern Crown Bank (1906) (SAB)

Entrances are often altered to accommodate a different use internally. The original entrance at Harding House (Fig. 39) is another example of an original doorway that was removed to allow the installation of a window. Converting a doorway to a window opening alters both the interior arrangement and the



Fig. 38 — Jasper Centre, Maple Creek (M. G. Miller, 2011)



Fig. 39— Harding House, Regina (M. G. Miller, 2011)



Fig. 40— Jasper Centre (Jasper Cultural & Historical Centre inventory, original source and date unknown)

8. FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

The American architect Louis Sullivan coined the phrase "**form (ever) follows function**" in his article *The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered* in 1896. While Sullivan's phrase became a battle-cry of Modernist architects after the 1930s, there are pre-1930 examples (where form might be said to follow function) that can be considered in the context of this concept. The scope of this bulletin, however, is not intended to cover such broad themes of design.

In relation to the subject of this bulletin and for illustrative purposes only, it may be said that occasionally, an entrance will speak clearly about the interior organization or the function of the place. Consider for example, the entrance at the old Central School in Fort Qu'Appelle (Fig. 41).

In this instance, the first two-storey, four-room school designed by renowned Regina architects Edgar Storey & William Van Egmond featured a symmetrical plan with back-to-back staircases divided to reflect the division of girls from boys at the time. This demarcation of use and/or gender is further expressed on the exterior at the main entrance where two connected arches frame deeply recessed doorways that are accessed by common and separate stairs.

The architectural expression of function at the entrance can therefore be said to reflect a "form follows function" design and at this heritage property, it can be said to constitute a character-defining feature of the place.



Fig. 41 — Old Central School, Fort Qu'Appelle
(M. G. Miller, 2011)

9. ADVICE

If we consider the *Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, we can turn to Standard 8, which is as follows:

Standard 8 — Maintain *character-defining elements* on an ongoing basis.

This standard introduces the basic hierarchy of interventions. Maintain first, then repair rather than replace the deteriorated parts of character-defining elements. This Standard promotes the ongoing maintenance of an historic place, an essential but often undervalued aspect of conservation.

Maintaining character-defining doors and entrances is an important aspect of maintaining the integrity of a historic place. The cost differential, between undertaking an intervention that meets the Standards and Guidelines versus an unnecessary or inappropriate intervention is worth considering carefully. This is partly because the effort to “un-do” certain interventions in the future may be impractical given the other ongoing requirements of maintaining your heritage property.

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The Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation is an agency that may provide financial support to owners of Municipal or Provincial Heritage Property in Saskatchewan.

Grant assistance of up to 50% (or 75% for projects north of the 54th) of “eligible” project costs may be offered by the SHF for the conservation of your heritage property, depending on the demand for and the availability of funds.

Visit our website for details:
www.pcs.gov.sk.ca/SHF

Eligible work should be consistent with the Standards & Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.



(306) 787-2105

Main Floor
3211 Albert Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 5W6

