

WINNIPEG REAL ESTATE NEWS

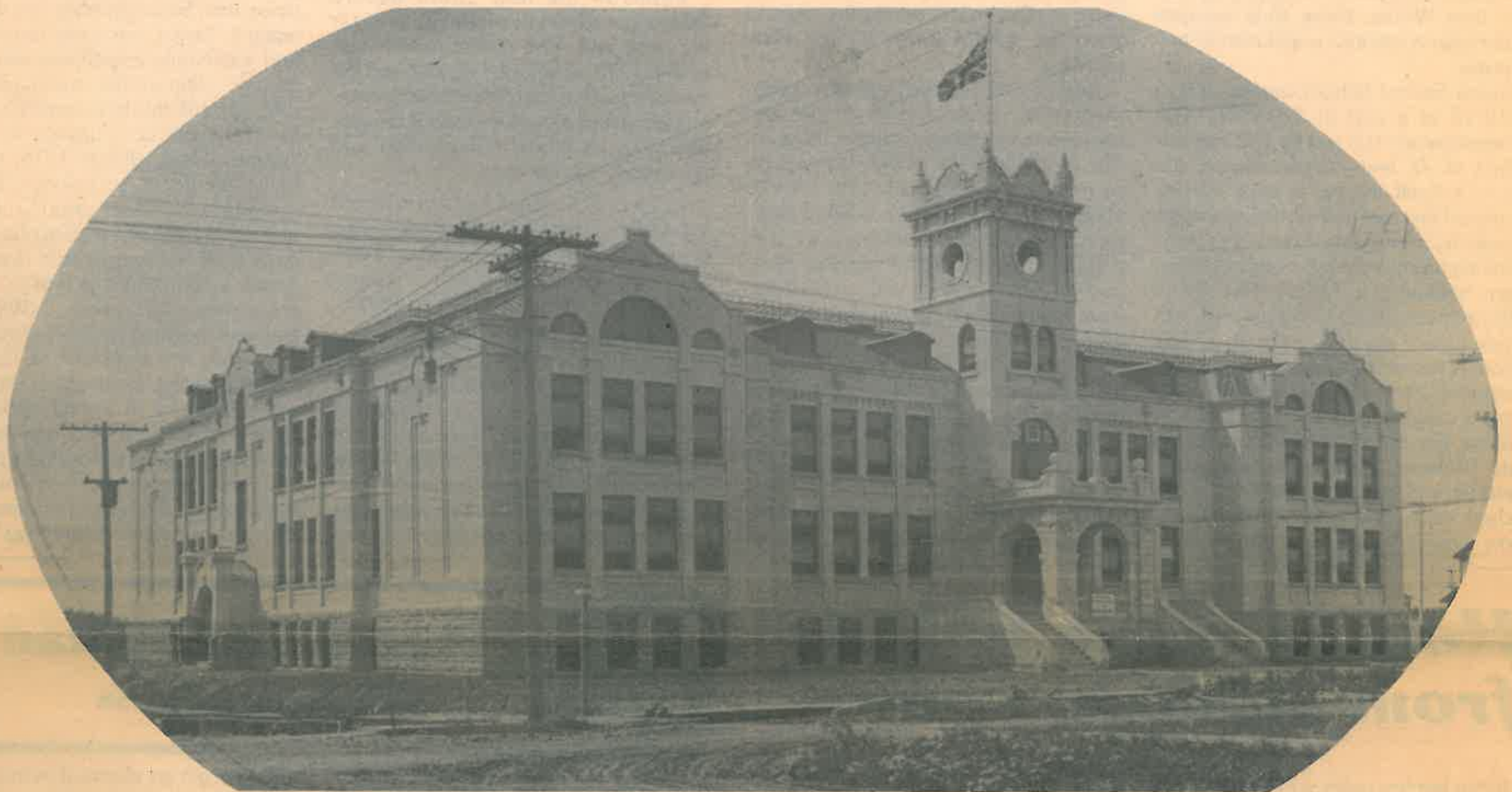
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FREE

YOUR GUIDE TO
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The fight has just begun to save Laura Secord School

A dispute is simmering over the fate of one of Winnipeg's classic school buildings — Laura Secord.

The Winnipeg School Board has plans to replace the 73-year-old structure with a "cardboard box" school, say those who want the old building to remain. They insist there is nothing structurally

wrong with Laura Secord, although admitting some expensive work — possibly \$3 million — is required to renovate the present school.

The Manitoba Historical Society is one of the leaders in the move to protect Laura Secord. It is urging citizens who wish to preserve the school to speak to provincial and city politicians and school board members. It wants people to get posters from the society and put them up to encourage others to get behind the society. It is urging citizens to attend meetings of city environment committee — the last was Oct. 28 — to fight the demolition plan. And it is asking for donations to support its campaign.

The years 1890 to 1914 saw explosive growth in the Canadian west and in the City of Winnipeg in particular. Thousands of new immigrants flooded what could still be viewed as a pioneer society, not yet fully gelled, and sometimes overwhelmed by the changing conditions. Yet, despite the pressures of growth and uncertainties of change, it was a progressive society, capable of creative responses carried forward by a buoyant economy.

Serving the Winnipeg Public School Board as superintendent from 1885 to 1929, Dr. Daniel McIntyre spent his

career pushing for reform of the public school system. Under his intelligent direction, education became a priority for Winnipeg taxpayers because it came to be seen as the best long-range solution for society's ills.

McIntyre viewed education as more than curriculum and classrooms. He believed children should be given the finest opportunities for knowledge in an environment free from any conditions that prevented the fullest development of the individual. Included in this was the provision of proper nutrition (a hot lunch program), proper medical and dental care (regular inspection and treatment of the students), special education for handicapped children and a well-rounded and progressive curriculum that included practical training. Such corollaries as night school, English as a second language and community use of the school buildings were also in his scope. Awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Manitoba in 1912 and the Order of the British Empire in 1935, Daniel McIntyre was a shaper of educational policy in Manitoba and a leader in educational thought and practice in Canada.

In J.B. Mitchell, McIntyre found someone to give physical form for his ideas.

Mitchell served as the commissioner of school buildings for the Winnipeg School Board from 1892 to 1928. In this capacity, he designed and supervised the construction of 48 school buildings at a value of \$8 million. Nothing was too good for Canada's children in his view, and furthermore: "... it should be known, appreciated and remembered by every parent in this Dominion that education is more important than good streets ... and more public money should be spent to thoroughly equip the children for the battle of life, than is now being devoted for that purpose."

His designs for various schools include the old St. John's and Kelvin high schools; Strathcona (1904); Luxton (1907); Lord Selkirk No. 1 and No. 2 (1909 and 1912); La Verendrye (1909); Earl Grey (1914); and Laura Secord (1912). These schools vary in exterior architectural detailing while using a common plan. Following a tragic school fire in Collingwood, Ontario, the elementary schools were two storeys in height for fire safety. The corridors were wide, 14 to 18 feet with metallic ceilings throughout. Exits front, back and side were well separated from each other. In the interests of fire safety, the schools were constructed

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