936

Emmanuel & St. Chad Chapel
1. Statement of Significance

The Chapel of St. Chad, as it was originally known, was designed by Webster, Forrester and Scott of Saskatoon and constructed between 1965 and 1966. The Emmanuel and St. Chad Chapel is no longer used as a church; however, its form and style still commemorate this previous role with a high degree of integrity. The building carries heritage value due to its historic use and its affiliation with the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad. It has architectural value due to its highly successful marriage of the Modern and Gothic styles, representing a contemporary interpretation of both the traditional architectural style of the University of Saskatchewan campus and of the historical forms and conventions of ecclesiastical architecture.
2. Character - Defining Elements

2.1 Materials

The defining material feature on the exterior of the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad Chapel is the standing seam copper roof of the nave. This roof takes the form of two intersecting pointed vaults, which reach 40 feet in height, such that the copper roof is the building’s most dominant architectural element. In Saskatoon, copper does not turn green as is typical in many other locations, but rather loses its sheen in the clean, dry prairie air and deepens to a dark brown patina. The copper roofing is shown in Figure 1.

The primary material of the exterior walls is rough-faced ‘greystone.’ This stone is significant as it was chosen as the signature material for university buildings at the outset of campus construction. Cut Tyndall stone is used for window surrounds and accents. The ground floor and basement windows are grouped into a series of vertical slots framed by Tyndall stone. Tyndall stone detailing is also used around copper drainage spouts. The use of greystone on the Emmanuel and St. Chad Chapel signifies its affiliation with both the university and the other theological colleges. Tyndall stone is also considered a character-defining element of later university buildings as it was the accepted replacement for sandstone and Indiana limestone. Greystone and Tyndall stone are shown in Figure 2. (For further information on building stones used at the U of S, refer to ‘Appendix: Stone’.)
The stained glass used in this building is another character-defining element. At the head of the chapel nave stands a window 30 feet in height and 10 feet in width. The window depicts the creative works of God and man. Two windows flank this principle window in the transept; one devoted to the College of Emmanuel and one to St. Chad. These windows measure 33 feet high by 4 feet wide. Some windows depict intricate figurative scenes while others are abstract. The windows lend a range of color to the chapel, defining in particular the character of the nave. Because stained glass is a material associated particularly with Christian churches, the windows also reflect the chapel’s history as a theological institution. The stained glass has been well maintained and fully retains its commemorative integrity.

Exposed fir glue-laminated arches extend from the floor to the roof of the nave. Between these ribs, fir roof decking is exposed, as shown in Figure 4.

The entrance foyer is fully glazed, with floor to ceiling aluminum framed curtain wall. The foyer floor features terrazzo that also faces the stairs between the ground and basement floors. Oak paneling accompanies the terrazzo stairs as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 6. The forms used to compose the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad Chapel.

Figure 7. The zigzag roof bisects the arched form of the nave contrasting heavy stone with light glazing.

Figure 8. Building elevations. Retrieved from Facilities Management Division Asset Record System, File EC-24-T.
2.2 Form & Style

This building is modern in its form and detail, but it pays clear tribute to both the Collegiate Gothic context of the university and its mediaeval Gothic antecedents in the Christian architectural tradition. The roof of the nave, which creates the dominant form of the building, is composed of two pointed vaults intersecting in plan to form a cruciform, a device common to most Christian churches of the Middle Ages. The chapel has a broader vault running east-west, intersected by a narrower north-south vault. Figure 6 shows the intersection of the two volumes. This church differs from standard Gothic precedent in that its nave faces west rather than east. A smaller zigzag concrete slab makes up the roof of the entrance vestibule at the east end of the building. Its zigzag roof line extends across the north and south elevations of the main body of the chapel, forming the eaves of the copper roof (Figure 7). The extension of material planes and forms into one another is a common characteristic of Modern architecture. Although the building is predominantly symmetrical in form, a subtle asymmetry exists in the relationship between the lower entrance vestibule volume and the main volume of the chapel. Figure 8 shows this asymmetry in elevation. The form of the building, a hybrid between the modern and gothic styles, is a character-defining element that has fully maintained its commemorative integrity.

The chapel is characteristic of the modern period in its simplified ornamentation. In the case of this building, form is often used as ornament; the zigzag vestibule roof is an example. The building form itself consists of two exaggerated intersecting pointed vaults. The pointed arch is a Gothic element, but its application is Modern. Here, the traditional Gothic ribbed vault takes the Modern form of a series of glue-laminated wood arches. The vaults are punctuated only by windows and their structural ribs, and feature no decorative details. Notably, the windows of the nave feature triangular arches; a Modern interpretation of the Gothic arched window. These windows are shown in Figure 9.

In these ways, this Modern chapel pays tribute to both its Collegiate Gothic context at the University of Saskatchewan and its Gothic predecessors of Christian tradition. Its inventive mixture of Modern and Gothic, its use of exaggerated form as ornamentation and its rich material qualities mark it as an important work of architecture.

Figure 9. This window is modern in style but its peak pays tribute to the gothic style.

Figure 10. The nave features lancet windows and gothic arches formed by exposed decorative ribs.
2.3 Location

The chapel is located east of the Wiggins Avenue entrance to the University of Saskatchewan’s main campus. The nave of the building faces directly west. The chapel is also located adjacent to other Emmanuel and St. Chad College buildings. Figure 11 shows the location of the building in green creating an outdoor quadrangle between the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad Building and McLean Hall. Rugby Chapel is located near the southeast corner of the Emmanuel and St. Chad Chapel.

Through proximity, this location signifies an affiliation with the other former Emmanuel and St. Chad buildings.

Figure 11. The location of the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad Chapel is indicated in green on this contemporary campus map. McLean Hall, Rugby chapel and the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad are all located nearby.

Figure 12. The floor plan of the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad Chapel. North is to the left. Retrieved from Facilities Management Division Asset Record System, File EC-32-T.
2.4 Spatial Configuration

The spatial configuration of the chapel has been largely maintained. The layout is a character-defining element as the floor plan and defines the building’s identity as a Christian chapel. Figure 12 shows the building’s floor plan; the primary space on the ground floor is the nave. The high, arched ceiling allows the choir loft to overlook the open nave. The spacious nave has largely maintained its commemorative integrity through the maintenance of its vaulted ceiling.

The altar and stage at the head of the nave has now been replaced with a small servery. To accommodate the use of the building as the Graduate Students Association Commons, two offices have been added flanking the entrance to the nave. Figure 14 shows the floor plan of the building’s main space as it now exists.

2.5 Systems

The exterior walls of the chapel consist of cast in place concrete faced in stone. The vaulted roof of the chapel, seen under construction in Figure 15, is supported by large wooden glue-laminated arched beams which are exposed on the interior. These arched beams support fir roof decking which is similarly exposed on the interior. The glue laminated arches carry the load of the building down to its concrete foundation walls. The structural system holds heritage and architectural value because of the vaulted form it creates and because of the aesthetic qualities of its exposed materials.
Figure 16 shows the structural system supporting the entrance vestibule roof. The zigzag roof is composed of a concrete slab supported at its peaks and valleys by tubular steel columns. The glass foyer is enclosed by an aluminum-framed glazing system. The ground floor is a structural concrete slab and the building itself rests on cast in place concrete foundation walls and footings.

2.6 Use(s)

Prior to 1966, Rugby Chapel had served as the main chapel for Emmanuel College. The Colleges of Emmanuel and St. Chad amalgamated in 1964 and with the opening of the Emmanuel and St. Chad Chapel in 1966, the role of the Rugby Chapel was reduced. Emmanuel and St. Chad Chapel provided a 120-seat chapel, a reading room, library and offices for a university chaplain and two faculty members. The Anglican chapel was used as a meeting place and a place of worship. Births, graduations, weddings and funerals were held there. The Emmanuel and St. Chad Chapel was used in its original capacity until June 14, 2006 when a service to ‘deconsecrate’ the space was held.

The Emmanuel and St. Chad College Chapel remains defined as a chapel only through its form and style. The theological function of the building is no longer carried out and the space now functions as an office and social lounge for the University of Saskatchewan Graduate Students’ Association. The nave of the chapel is now a large open lounge with tables and chairs (Figure 14). The choir loft is an unused space and the basement accommodates washrooms and storage. The current use of the building thus does not carry any heritage value, but the building’s character-defining form is a reminder of its former use. Figure 17 depicts the space in its current configuration and use.
2.7 Cultural & Chronological Associations

The chapel still carries association with the Colleges of Emmanuel and St. Chad despite their discontinued use of the building. The stained glass windows in particular are character-defining elements associating the building with the theological colleges (Figures 17-20). The windows have heritage value and commemorative integrity. The two large stained glass windows on either side of the nave display the names of the Colleges, shown in Figures 18 and 19.

The central stained glass window overlooking the nave from the head of the space chronologically associates the building with the Modern era. The principle window depicts steamships and airplanes as well as wheat being harvested by scythe. The construction of the servery at the head of the nave has obscured some of this imagery. Figure 20 shows the largest stained glass panel located above the former location of the altar.

The most obvious cultural association that this building holds is its affiliation as a religious institution. Elements that define the building as Christian saturate the building: stained glass panels depicting biblical scenes and symbols, light fixtures with Christian symbolism, the arched form of the building and its spatial configuration with a nave and a choir loft all classify the building as a church. The central stained window also depicts scenes of divine creation and human industry. The window illustrates the heavens, planets and plant life as examples of God’s creations. Human creations are represented through steamships, and airplanes. Agricultural scenes represent the shared efforts of God and humanity.

Despite the change in use it has undergone, the commemorative integrity has been maintained to a high degree through the maintenance of these numerous character-defining elements. Some of these elements are displayed in Figures 20 and 21.

Figure 19. Emmanuel College is commemorated in the south facing window.

Figure 20. The central stained glass window depicts the creative works of man and God.

Figure 21. Christian references are still found in many elements that define the character of the interior.
3. Associated Objects

N/A

4. Supporting Documents


Facilities Management Division (2011). Asset Resource Database [Data File]. Retrieved from \usask\fmddfs\files\iis\IIS_Public\ARS


5. Summary of Character - Defining Elements

Materials
- standing seam copper roof
- ‘greystone’ walls
- tyndall stone trim
- stained glass windows
- fir (glue-laminated arches, decking)
- oak paneling
- terrazzo floors

Form & Style
- intersecting pointed vaults
- zigzag concrete slab roof
- triangular arched windows

Location
- adjacent to other Emmanuel and St. Chad College buildings
- creation of outdoor quadrangle between the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad buildings

Spatial Configuration
- choir loft
- high vaulted nave ceiling

Systems
- arched glue-laminated beams

Uses
- theological education
- worship
- lounge

Cultural & Chronological Associations
- Emmanuel College stained glass window
- St. Chad College stained glass window
- central stained glass window
- Christian symbols (Christ symbol on windows, Christian symbols on large windows)