

HERITAGE CHARACTER STATEMENT

Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue Church

Batoche National Historic Site
Batoche, Saskatchewan

The Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue Church was erected by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1883. The design for the church was initiated by Father Moulin and built by Ludger Gareau. The building is now part of Batoche National Historic Park and is the property of Environment Canada Parks Service. See FHBRO Building Report 88-1 60.

Reasons for Designation

The Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue Church was designated Classified because of its historical association, its architectural significance and its environmental value.

The Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue Church and Rectory are symbols of the cultural heritage of the Métis population. They represent two historical themes: the early activities and influence of the Oblate order - the dominant Roman Catholic order in the Northwest; and the clash of Métis and white cultures which resulted in the 1885 Rebellion. The buildings are directly associated with people such as Louis Riel and his Métis council, and Major/General Frederick Middleton and the Northwest Field Force, who played significant parts in the Battle of Batoche.

The church is an example of Red River frame construction. This technique consists of logs laid horizontally, pièce sur pièce, and slotted into grooved vertical timbers at each end. The church was restored by the Canadian Parks Service to its 1896-1897 appearance.

The Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue Church and Rectory dominate their surroundings and set the tone for the Batoche National Historic Site.

Character Defining Elements

The heritage character of the church resides in the 1896-1897 restored building, its simple massing and proportions, its construction technique and materials, and in its interior layout and finishes.

The Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue Church is a modest, clapboard structure with a slender steeple rising above its roofline. Its arched, Gothic doorway and windows, front tower and simple gable roof with returned eaves, make it typical of 19th century, rural churches across the country. The simple pleasing lines of the church, its fine proportions and balanced composition should not be compromised.

The church is designed according to a hall plan with six Gothic-style windows along

each side wall of the nave, and a balcony at the back of the nave supported by posts and reached by a single-flight stairway. The interior walls are plastered and painted white, the wood-panelled ceiling of the sanctuary is blue and wood trim (cornice, balcony balustrade and communion rail) is varnished. The restored interior with its period furnishings (wooden pews) should be carefully maintained.

The Red River framing technique, which was particularly well suited to structures such as churches which required long, open, interior spaces, is a characteristic of the church which should be maintained.

All maintenance activities and any new work should respect the spirit of the 1896-1897 restored building.

The site of the church, also restored to its 1896-1897 appearance, should be carefully preserved. Any new secondary building on the site should not detract from the historic setting.

For further guidance, please refer to the *FHBRO Code of Practice*.

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