

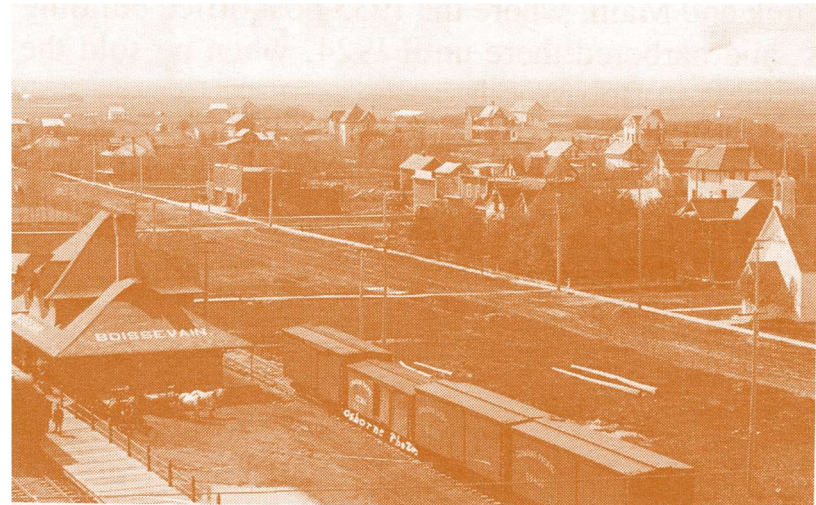
# Landmarks

## Boissevain's Significant Heritage Buildings

The Boissevain Special Places project was inaugurated in 2008-09, with the first major component being a comprehensive and detailed inventory of 65 buildings and sites. Through rigorous analysis and assessment processes suggested to us by the province's Historic Resources Branch, we have identified a handful of buildings that most effectively define and illustrate key aspects of our history and heritage. The following list of 11 buildings and sites constitutes the Boissevain Heritage Group's recommendations and reminders to the community about those places that have major claims for heritage significance.

- Town Hall
- Land Titles Office
- Former Post Office
- St. Paul's United Church
- St Matthew's Anglican Church
- Welch Block
- Elliot House
- Halladay House
- Joyce House

- Large Stone House
- Dr. Shaffner House



Archival view of Boissevain, ca. 1900.

As noted, the development of this short list of significant sites was the result of careful and studied deliberations using standard heritage evaluation criteria, processes and scoring regimes. This work was carried out by the Boissevain Heritage Group with assistance from staff of the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection. We are grateful to the branch for their generous support and patient attention in this endeavour.

As a collection, these 11 buildings define many aspects and themes from Boissevain's past, and do so through places that are at once significant, but also interesting and attractive. The selections reveal some important qualities that help make Boissevain a distinct community in terms of its architectural legacy. We still boast extant buildings that define the three levels of government that occasionally were present in small communities, and which are mainly gone in other Manitoba places – our Town Hall (civic), Land Titles Office (provincial) and Post Office (federal) are all handsome and dignified pieces of architectural design, and lend our community a real grandeur. Boissevain also has an enviable collection of stone buildings, with that material cast into many and varied effects, in churches and houses especially.

These buildings remind us of past glories, but also suggest an enduring sense of community, and are a beacon for our future. These buildings are presented on following pages with an accompanying Heritage Value Statement that elucidates each building's key heritage attributes.

## Town Hall



Archival view of downtown Boissevain, ca. 1890.

Cook Street



### **Heritage Value Statement**

The impressive Boissevain Town Hall is a well-maintained example of a community venture conceived and realized as a growing town set its course for the future in rural Manitoba's pre-World War I boom. Its ambitious design served the purposes of the day while exhibiting confidence in the future. Its generous dimensions allowed for use as a fire hall, courtroom, jail and civic offices while providing an upper-floor public hall of a style that only more affluent communities could afford. The highly visible structure features distinctive second-floor windows and decorative stone- and brickwork and leans on elements of Classical Revival styling with its pediment pilasters, shallow front pavilion and formal entrance.

# Land Titles Office

North Railway



## Heritage Value Statement

The Boissevain Land Titles Office, built in 1903-04, is the primary local symbol of Provincial activity in the community. Carried out in a refined classical vocabulary, typical for most government buildings of the day, to designs by architect W.R. Lait, the building is a good illustration of the kind of small public facilities that the provincial government constructed in selected smaller communities in the early 1900s. The building also has important value because of its original function, as a land titles office, an activity that is still apparent in many of the interior configurations (even though land titles functions vacated the community in 1984). The Boissevain Land Titles Office also has minor heritage value because of its location, a noticeable presence in the north side of the commercial core of the town.

# Former Post Office

400 South Railway



## Heritage Value Statement

The Former Post Office is a major reminder of the importance conferred on Boissevain by the Federal Government in its decision to locate a large post office here in 1935. Along with other government buildings (the Province's Land Titles Office and Manitoba Telephone Building and the Municipality's Town Hall), the Post Office gives Boissevain a notable air of being a major hub of civic activity. Likely devised as a Depression-era public works project, the building has major claims for its architecture, a stunning small-town example of the Neo-Gothic. With its sophisticated wall treatments—elegant and complex brickwork, detailed stonework and animated roofline—the building is apparently unique in Manitoba, where Classical Revival was the style of choice for most small-town post offices.

# St. Paul's United Church

590 Johnson Street



## Heritage Value Statement

St. Paul's United Church, originally a Methodist facility, is one of Manitoba's foremost examples of fieldstone construction and a fine expression of the substantial church-building traditions established by Methodist congregations in southwestern Manitoba in the late 19th century. Designed by Winnipeg architect Edward Lowery, and built by Mr. Johnson, the church exemplifies the Gothic Revival style, one of the most enduring and influential architectural movements of the period. Its interior also is noted for its excellent auditorium plan. The well-built and largely unaltered structure, which was erected by volunteers using mainly local materials, is still used for regular services and is a landmark within Boissevain's historic streetscape.

# St Matthew's Anglican Church

Stephens Street



## Heritage Value Statement

St. Matthew's Anglican Church is one of Boissevain's three historic churches, a handsome and dignified building, and also an important reflection of the Anglo-Ontario cultural roots of its original congregation. Carefully maintained over its more than 100 years—it was built in 1889-90—the church is an excellent example of the architectural traditions that defined most ambitious small-town church building of the day – Gothic Revival. With its rugged and evocative stone walls, delicate steeple, steep roof and wealth of pointed arches employed in windows and doors, the building is a textbook example of the type. Inside, the church is also a glory, with much coloured glass and finely crafted wooden features and details still intact.

# Welch Block

410 South Railway



## Heritage Value Statement

The Welch Block, with its traditional storefront facade, grey stone walls and recessed centre entrance, stands as a determined link to Boissevain's past. The building carries a strong association with pioneer entrepreneur and stalwart public servant Alexander R. Welch, who opened his first Boissevain business in 1894 and later moved into these premises. The Welch name was a presence in Boissevain's business district until 1961 and the Welch Block has been home to a succession of retail operations for over a century. Although the use of fieldstone for the construction of commercial buildings was not widespread in southwestern Manitoba, Boissevain's main street boasted several such structures, of which the Welch Block is the sole visible example.

# Elliot House

Corner of Ducker and Stephen



## **Heritage Value Statement**

The Elliot House is a significant example of residential architecture. Built in 1895 for the J.T. Elliot family, the house is a now-rare and impressively intact example of the kind of abode that provided stylish comfort for a small family in the late 19th century. Carried out in the then-popular Second Empire style, defined here by the mansard roof and tall dormer windows, the house also exhibits exquisite stonework, an attribute that once defined many other Boissevain houses. That so much of the exterior materials, features and details (including wooden roof shingles) are intact is also of note, strong reminders of the craftsmanship once apparent in many Boissevain buildings. Besides its connection to original owner J.T. Elliot, a liveryman and auctioneer, the house has also been owned by William Gordon (a Scottish settler who established a furniture business in town) and Mrs. Ellen Knittel of the Queen's Hotel.

# Halladay House

710 Broadway



## Heritage Value Statement

The Halladay House is a powerful architectural expression recalling the kind of ambitions that could be realized once a community like Boissevain had attained a level of economic security in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Built in 1897, the house was commissioned by Benjamin Halladay, a farmer and later insurance salesman, and even at the time must have been seen as one of the community's mansions. Large, and with fine brick walls, variety of shapes of window openings and wealth of stone, the house is an exceptional example of the Queen Anne style (the most popular and sophisticated domestic architecture of the day). With its high levels of physical integrity, it is also a clear expression of the high levels of craftsmanship from Boissevain's builders. For many in the community the house also has important connections to Lily Gertrude Halladay (1890-1969), a Nursing Sister who served overseas in World War I; and who operated a "nursing home" for expectant mothers from this house.

# Joyce House

542 Broadway



## **Heritage Value Statement**

Commissioned in 1903 by Thomas Joyce and built by James McLachlan, the Joyce House is treasured as one of Boissevain's finest stone houses. Like its neighbour—the Elliot House—the Joyce House is a now-rare and intact example of the once-popular Second Empire style, defined by its mansard roof and dormer windows. The claims for high levels of craftsmanship exhibited in the stonework are immediately apparent on close inspection, but receive another level of interest when it is noted that the stone apparently came from a single giant boulder. Reports recall that Mr. McLachlan found the stone on NE13-2-20W, about two kilometres from town, and spent many weeks blasting, drilling, cutting and finishing the stone, and then hauling 29 wagon-loads of material to the building site.

# Large Stone House

529 Broadway



## Heritage Value Statement

Boissevain has always been noted for its wealth of stone buildings, and given the loss of some of the larger examples, the grand stone house at 529 Broadway assumes even more significance. Stylistically the house is notable as a typical and subdued version of the popular Queen Anne style used on so many Manitoba houses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Its real importance lies in its materials – after St. Paul’s United and St. Matthew’s Anglican churches the largest stone building in town. While not exhibiting the same level of craftsmanship seen in other local stone buildings, in fact this house is more typical in the way that the rough fieldstone has been laid, with the many sizes of stones heavily mortared for stability. Situated on a steep slope on Broadway, the house is a noted community landmark.

# Dr. Schaffner House

544 Cook



## **Heritage Value Statement**

The Dr. Schaffner House is a major Boissevain house, with primary heritage significance gained through its association with Dr. Frederick Laurence Schaffner (1855-35). Dr. Schaffner was a member of the Manitoba Board of Health, a coroner, and Health Officer of the municipalities of Morton and Boissevain. He was also a city councillor, Mayor of Boissevain, was elected to the Canadian House of Commons for the constituency of Souris (1904, 1908 and 1911). and served as a Senator of Canada until his death in 1935. Dr. Schaffner's house, built around 1890, is an old one in Boissevain, and is also a very good example of the kind of large (and heavily ornamented) Victorian manor that the wealthy of the day preferred.