

Save Haultain School

RPSB: Tuesday, 7 pm. 13 December, 2011



1. (Haultain sign) The Heritage Architecture of Public Schools is a vital asset to the history and beauty of Regina, because architecture and sense of place connect us to our city. Destructive changes harm our psyches and our communities, and disrupt civic urban planning. I am here to speak against the closures of Haultain and Dieppe schools, and today I will speak about Haultain.

Haultain School, built in 1920, was designed by James H. Puntin, who also designed Regina College, Connaught and Lakeview and many other schools, some now long gone, and the Albert Memorial Bridge!! Haultain School is named after Sir Frederick Haultain, the 1st premier of the North-West Territories. M. J. Coldwell was an early principal, before becoming leader of the provincial CCF, and later, the national CCF Party.

Note the red brick, look at the elegant tyndalstone trim, and the cornices, yes, in need of paint, but still there. These are all quality materials, which add visual texture to our daily lives. We can no longer afford the manual labour needed to build a brick building, nor the real materials, from the earth, from our geographical region. To destroy this school would be a great historical loss.

2. (long shot) This school is solidly built, but it is its solidity in this neighbourhood which is so precious! This school IS the heart of Eastview, it keeps everyone active and engaged. This IS the solid centre of the neighbourhood. I was especially moved by the spirit of this close-knit community, where 4 generations spoke of their love for this school. Cut off by tracks and industrial lands, Eastview has retained its unique small town vibe. Children feel safe to play outside, and parents feel safe to let them, because they know that other parents will watch out for all the kids - everyone knows each other. "Eyes on the street" keep a neighbourhood safe and civil.

Generation after generation return to buy houses and to raise families here. One friend told me: *In 1959, my grandparents, with 700 dollars, moved into the City and started building a house on the 1200 block of Lindsay (paycheque to paycheque). My mom and her two brothers went to Haultain and I went to preschool there!* Another family told us about moving back from Calgary, recently and into Harbour Landing, but found it... lacking ... so moved 'home' to Eastview, because there is a great community, and a school – so far!



3. (sky, cornice) I know that love is not enough, nor a beautiful solid building, nor the pleas from the 4 generations who are begging you to keep the school open. We have seen schools close, and it is heart-breaking, every single time.

We have to examine what makes sustainable and economic sense, we all want the best education for our children – because this is how we build a successful city. We have to look at the big picture -- a holistic vision of Regina. The Regina Public School Board, while independent, must work with Regina's urban planning. If not, we waste money and resources and time and energy, as we stride off purposefully in 2 absolutely different directions.

4. (Tyndalstone trim, corner, sky) Design Regina discussed complete communities -- sustainable, walkable, cyclable, dynamic, beautiful, with all services and amenities, with a sense of community and with *its own identity*. Cathedral was held up as a model neighbourhood– but Eastview, too, has all this, AND its own unique character and charm. In Eastview, the community model does not need to be re-invented: it still exists, solidly and steadfastly, generation after generation.

5. (stairs, subway tiles) In fact, I believe that Eastview is ahead of the curve! Eastview was built, in the early 20th century, so that people could walk to work at the GM plant. Double-sized lots for vegetable gardens allowed each family to have fresh produce. Ideal! Now, with urban renewal and density in mind, houses are being built on these empty lots. Bill Grey told us that there are now 75 new houses, 21 newly renovated houses, and 32 new condominiums. The City, too, has taken a pro-active role, by offering a 5 year tax exemption on new houses. Density within an existing infrastructure is the greenest way to live within our means, because it uses what is already there, what we have already paid for. (5 minutes)

Regina Urban Ecology tells us that, according to the last census, Eastview has the second-highest proportion of children under 5. Last year had no kindergarten class; this year, 17 children are in Kindergarten. RealRenewal tells us that enrollment is up by 20%.



6. CU green dado rail, white tiles) A housing boom and a baby boom in a neighbourhood which has grown within its existing footprint, without new infrastructure, is a great example of fiscally and ecologically-responsible urban renewal.

Why would the Regina Public School Board close a school just as this neighbourhood, with the City's help, is renewing itself?? If City Planning and the School Board are not having the same discussion, we will never achieve a goal of a compact beautiful successful city; we will be forever subsidizing urban sprawl.

Design Regina, and the Wow Project before it, discussed walking to work as one aspect of a great quality of life. This should also apply to children. Councillor Mike O'Donnell, while introducing a Design Regina keynote speaker, spoke of children walking to school as a desired ideal. Indeed! (8 minutes)

7. (Corner, basement) Walking to school has many benefits: exercise in fresh air and unstructured time with friends, but! a walk to school can also be a poetic space, a chance to daydream, to observe nature, to watch the changing of the seasons, to note the colour of the sky - within one's own neighbourhood. Walking stimulates visual and creative thinking. Walking allows us time to fall in love with place! That love was profoundly evident in the voices heard at the consultations: people love this neighbourhood, and they believe that a school is vital to their well-being, health, happiness and continuity.

8. (stairs, tile) **Now, if Haultain kids must take the bus one hour each way to school, why are two mega-schools, Arcola and Douglas Park, being built within 7 blocks of each other, for \$34 million?**

I am happy to hear that 'Earth-friendly design features' will be used in these buildings to 'maximize southern daylight,' children need windows. Every new building should, of course, be as green as possible, but this should not mean that existing schools should be closed.

9. (bannister) Ecology implies wisdom, frugality and practicality: being green means using what we have, for as long as possible. The greenest buildings are those already built, because of the energy embodied in their materials. A 50 year lifespan for a building is irresponsible! It is a waste of materials, and a squandering of energy, labour, time and money – AND we lose the cultural memory that unites us as communities: we lose our identity and our sense of place.

10. (Sir Frederick Haultain) Eastview is VERY isolated, but it is a complete neighbourhood. We should not really expect children to traverse 8 blocks of light industrial lands, and the cross the Ring Road to get to school.... either on foot or on bike. Nor should we expect children to sit on a bus for one hour each way to school. This takes away play time, exercise time, day-dream time, and! pity the poor child who is car-sick – and recovering from nausea each day upon arrival - not teachable moments.

11. (Haultain School in Saskatoon, renewed in 1995 as a French language school, École Canadienne Française) More vehicles on the roads have a huge cost to the city, too, and money paid for bus and drivers means less money for actual education. Please practice fiscal

responsibility: please learn to use what we have already built, what we have already paid for.

Thank you.

