

Quinson Elementary School

Address: 251 South Ogilvie Street

Date of Construction: 1962-1965

Architect: T. A. Morrow

Builder: H. Erickson & Sons

Adopted by the Heritage Commission:
December 14, 2017

Last Updated: December 14, 2017



Description

The location of Quinson Elementary School is in a neighbourhood which expanded rapidly west of Central Street (Highway 97) as part of the 1953 city boundary expansion program. The school building is on the south-west corner of 2nd Avenue and Ogilvie Street, with the whole site surrounded by residential development occurring circa 1960. The site is isolated by three streets and a lane which divides the block.

Heritage Value

The heritage value of Quinson rests with the school being the first departure in Prince George from the standard classroom plans issued by the Department of Education. By 1960, the buoyant provincial economy and overall optimism saw a loosening of purse strings by the government which allowed educational innovations.

A re-assessment of teaching methods in this same time period produced differing classroom plans which now contribute to heritage values in the community. Superintendent David Todd was interested in providing flexible space in the classroom to allow small groups for instructional purposes. The pentagonal shaped classroom was born with the idea of allowing new student-teacher relationships during periods of instruction.

Heritage values lie also in the facilities for expanded activity programs of the 1960s, which would be undertaken with a commodious gymnasium. The hexagonal-shaped gymnasium resulted, Ample floor space with student crush space at each end of the playing surface was provided, a large stage facility, and space for several storage and food service rooms were included.

In our heritage value repertoire, Quinson Elementary School stands as the singular attempt to cater to innovation within an individual classroom environment.

Character-Defining Elements:

Classrooms & Gymnasium 1970



Courtesy of Trelle Morrow (1965)

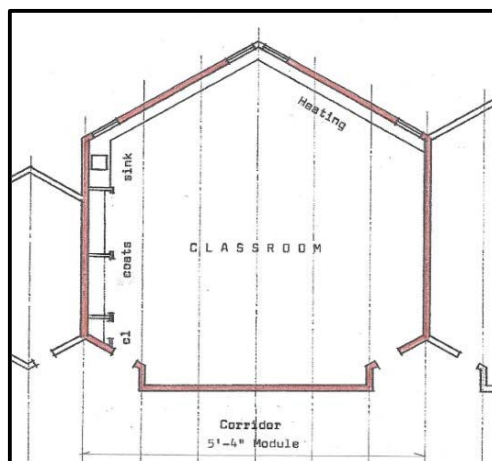
Classroom Wing 1965



Courtesy of Trelle Morrow (1965)

- The resulting classroom shape is pentagonal, with the fifth corner of the room designated as an independent activity area. Corridor indents provided for doors leading into the classrooms.
- Space allocation for sink facilities in the classroom was required, another need was for small independent seating for special education and small group activity, a third was the option for differing seating orientation. Coat space was a need in classrooms.

Quinson Pentagonal Classroom

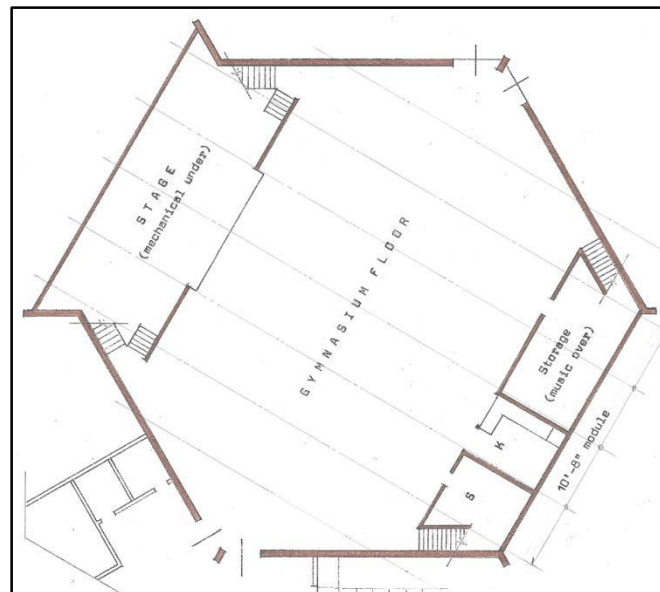


Courtesy of Trelle Morrow

- Window patterns provide daylighting in three of the five corners.
- Interior finish throughout the classrooms is exposed wood decking on glued laminated beams.

- The gymnasium included a spacious stage facility on one side of the principle playing area, and storage areas, equipment rooms, and small food dispensing area on the opposite side of the main floor area. A mezzanine area over these storage facilities provided space for music or other special needs. Out of these requirements, a hexagonal floor plan evolved which was integrated with the classroom and administrative block.

Quinson Hexagonal Gymnasium



Courtesy of Trelle Morrow

- The gymnasium has concrete block walls, whereas the two classroom wings are wood frames construction. The massing of the building has remained, no structural changes have occurred.
- The exterior finish on the Classroom blocks has lost the distinctive wood application integrated into the design originally. Stucco has been applied to the exterior and the colour scheme has been altered.

References:

- Morrow, Trelle A. (2012) Exploring Education. In *Heritage Perspectives*, 1950 – 1970
- Perkins, Lawrence B. (1957) *Workplace for Learning*. Reinhold Publishing, New York.