

22 MOSTYN PLACE – GRANITE CURLING CLUB
James Chisholm and Son, 1912; Smith, Carter, Searle and Associates, 1959



Development of curling as one of Winnipeg's earliest organized team sports owed much to the Granite, the city's first curling club and home base for several provincial, national and world champions.

Early curling enthusiasts, mainly Scots, played informal matches using improvised facilities and equipment. The sport became more organized during the 1870s, leading to the Granite's formation in 1880 and its first season of play in the following year.

The club built an indoor rink in 1892 at Hargrave Street and Ellice Avenue but, by 1911, selected the Mostyn Place site for new, expanded facilities. This location, on the north bank of the Assiniboine River between Balmoral and Osborne streets, provided the option of access to river water for ice-making.

Design and construction were undertaken by two active members. Architect James Chisholm, a long-time member of the Granite's executive, came to Winnipeg from Ontario in 1877. His

practice, with his son C.C. Chisholm, was prairie-wide and included design of the Sterling Bank Building, Odd Fellows Temple, Zion and Young Methodist churches, and the original Marlborough Hotel in Winnipeg. Builder Thomas Kelly, a Granite skip, headed one of the city's largest contracting firms but soon was to be disgraced for his role in a scandal over the 1913-14 construction of the Manitoba Legislative Building.

Completed in 1913, the new Granite facilities featured a three-storey, Tudor-framed clubhouse and an arching, 1½-storey rink with nine sheets of ice. The project cost \$140,000, nearly double original estimates.

The rink is stud-framed with trusses carried to the ground on steel columns faced with brick. The wooden walls are covered with corrugated metal. Each corner had square towers of brick and rough cast; the two western towers subsequently were flattened. Low-shed dormers in the original roof also have been removed. Wooden platforms border the ice on all sides to permit maximum viewing at rink level. Gas and electric heaters, suspended from the ceiling, keep air temperature just above freezing. The Granite led the way in Winnipeg with the installation of artificial ice in 1953.

The clubhouse, designed for year-round use, is entered through a formal pedestrian gateway and a gabled porch lit by two carriage lanterns. The gate's two oversized pillars are joined by a wrought-iron arch inscribed with the club's name. The building has a deep brown brick facing on the ground level with half-timbering and rough cast on the upper storeys. The roof has two large gables with dormer windows. A large chimney rises at the rear. A wooden veranda originally opened onto the river from the building's south side.

The interior includes large windows for spectator viewing on the first and second floors. The main clubroom originally was on the second level, with a beamed ceiling, oak paneling and upholstered seating casually grouped around the large brick fireplace. A games room remains on the third floor.

In 1959, a two-storey addition replacing the veranda with kitchen and bar facilities was designed by Smith, Carter, Searle and Associates and built by Bird Construction. Other alterations have included conversion of the clubroom to a dining room, modernization of locker and shower facilities, and installation of a snack bar on the main floor.

Along with its years of expansion and popularity, the Granite has faced adversity including damage from the 1950 flood and financial problems which forced the club to sell its property to the City in 1975 for a cash settlement and lease-back arrangement. However, as Winnipeg's 'mother club', the Granite has encouraged development of quality competitive play and has been a showcase for curling, given its large facilities and impressive lineage of winners. Club teams held the Macdonald Provincial Bonspiel championship so often that, upon its retirement, the tankard trophy was given to the Granite.