

**CENTRAL HEATING PLANT
(Canadian National Power House)
EAST YARD, WINNIPEG**

Date - 1947-48

Architect/Engineers - R.E. Taylor, Engineer of Buildings
Alan Beardshaw, General Superintendent, Motive Power and
Civil Engineering
Alfred S. Batho, Assistant Engineer (was responsible for
the design of this structure)

Original Cost - Unknown

Specifications - Solid brick and concrete "shell" structure housing a number of 394 horsepower Vickers-Keeler boilers taken from the (then) recently demolished Cordite Plant (munitions) in North Transcona. The front section of this building is the only portion which makes architectural pretensions, and features a "grand" entranceway with ornamental stone bands to give an "Art Moderne" touch. The two sections - administrative and powerhouse, though joined, are quite distinct in design, and one has no problem differentiating one from the other. The nearby reinforced concrete chimney is 120 feet tall, and was designed by the Rust Engineering Company (Canada) Ltd., of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

History - Upon the completion of the Union Station in 1910-11, the entity which has become known as the East Yard received its steam heat and power from a large plant in the basement of the station. Expansion of CNR's facilities by the mid-1940s and the aging of the powerplant dictated its replacement by a new facility. Accordingly, during 1946-47 plans were made for a new power house at the rear of the station in what is nearly the middle of the East Yard. The construction took place during 1947-48. Interestingly, the boilers for this facility were taken from the North Transcona Cordite (munitions and dynamite) Plant which was in the course of removal because of the structure's being a public danger. During World War II, enough explosive material had soaked into the wooden walls and floors to make the structure at the least, highly combustible. The plant was scrapped via the method of controlled arson in 1946, but not before the more useful parts such as the boilers, were removed. These boilers are still in place, though they are near the end of a long life.

Contemporary Examples - The power house has been the feature of many large scale Manitoba enterprises where a central power source is required. Thus, places such as the CPR's Weston Shops (1905-06) come to mind, along with the Agricultural Colleges at Tuxedo (1905-06) and Fort Garry (1911-13). Other operations such as Ogilvie's Mill (1881); the T. Eaton Company (1904-05) or the Manitoba Telephone System Plant (c.1950) all have powerhouses that are either contained within the main structure or are held separately in nearby buildings. Governments have also built such units - such as the Provincial Power House at Winnipeg (1915), which heats and powers the buildings in Manitoba's Legislative area. It is possible that there are similar structures to this elsewhere in Manitoba.

Significance/Context - The CNR Power House was probably the last major building to be erected in the East Yard prior to the development of the Symington Yard in South Transcona. The latter facility brought about the functional obsolescencies of the East Yard. By the time of the construction of this power house, the boom days of the Canadian Northern Railway built by Mackenzie and Mann were rapidly becoming a dim memory, having been replaced by the government-owned Canadian National Railways (1923) which united various diverse rail entities into a cohesive body. As such, this was the second major structure erected by Canadian National in the East Yard, the first being the National Cartage Building (Johnston Terminals) in 1928-30.

