



# HERITAGE WINNIPEG News & Views Special Edition Airport Terminal

heritagewinnipeg.com \* virtual.heritagewinnipeg.com \* September 2011



*Photo donated by photographer Bryan Scott  
[http://www.winnipeglovehate.com/2009/12/winnipeg-international-airport\\_24.html](http://www.winnipeglovehate.com/2009/12/winnipeg-international-airport_24.html)*

## 1964 WINNIPEG AIRPORT

### TERMINAL: TO BE DEMOLISHED!

We will soon have a brand new terminal opening at James Armstrong Richardson International Airport. But with this good news comes bad: the 1964 terminal which so many of us have grown to love is slated for demolition. Heritage Winnipeg (HW) has been working with the Manitoba Historical Society (MHS) to prevent the wasteful and unnecessary destruction of a classic of modernist architecture and an important piece of our history.

#### Architecture & History

The terminal was built between 1961 and 1964 at a cost of \$18 million. Architects Green, Blankstein, Russell and Associates were graduates of the School of Architecture at the University of Manitoba. The building was commissioned as part of an iconic group of art-filled, architecturally significant air terminals. It is one of the purest examples of the International Style in Canada, inspired by Mies van der Rohe and the architecture schools in Toronto and Manitoba. It is a minimalist, rectilinear, 400,000 sq. foot steel-and-glass structure featuring highly sophisticated detailing. In 2008, the Heritage Canada Foundation put the terminal on their list of the 10 most endangered buildings in Canada. It is one of only two terminals of its era remaining intact and it is a key element of Canada's aviation and architectural history.



*Photo by Henry Kalen  
(as above right, Item 5)*

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Heritage Winnipeg's article on the airport:

<http://www.heritagewinnipeg.com/blog.html?item=71>

See the story in the Metro, August 30:

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/metro/>

See the story in La Liberté coming soon:

<http://journaux.apf.ca/laliberte/>

Check out the book *Winnipeg Modern* by University of Winnipeg architectural historian **Serena Keshavjee**



*Photo donated from the Henry Kalen fonds,  
University of Manitoba Archives & Special Collections  
(Collection 219, A05-100, Box 4, Folder 28, Item 3)*

#### The Value of the Terminal

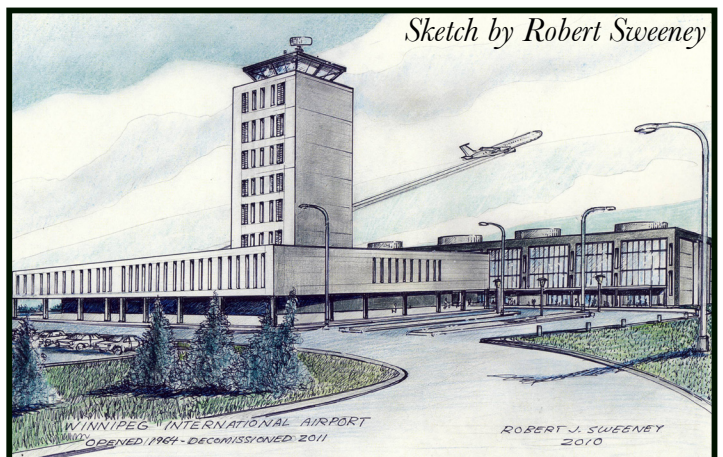
Harold Kalman, PhD, architectural historian and Canada's first heritage consultant, believes it provides an excellent opportunity for rehabilitation and re-use. The 1964 terminal is, he says, "a stellar half-century-old building that is an asset and not a liability. All it takes is the will and creativity to find the best new use for the structure."

#### The Threat to the Airport Terminal

Unfortunately, the Winnipeg Airports Authority (WAA) say they will demolish this outstanding building. Shelter Canadian and Huntingdon Real Estate were working on a plan for re-development with the Western Canada Aviation Museum (WCAM). Yet in June 2007 it was rejected by a letter indicating it was not what the WAA were looking for. No viable expressions of interest in reusing the building have materialized, says Christine Alongi of the WAA in the Metro (Aug 30, 2011). They intend to demolish when the new terminal opens and the WCAM plans to build on the site.

#### Getting Involved

We at HW and the MHS believe strongly that the building is too important to conclude that it cannot be redeveloped. Contact your local MP if you wish to express your support for re-use of the historic terminal. It is now time for Winnipeggers, Manitobans, and Canadians to appreciate the value and contribution of modernist architecture.



*Sketch by Robert Sweeney*