

72 LENORE STREET – BELLCREST APARTMENTS
B. Taylor, 1928



During the 1920s, Manitoba limestone was actively promoted as a building finish. Prominence was given to its use in large government and commercial projects. But, as the Bellcrest Apartments in West Winnipeg attest, this material also enabled designers to distinguish the appearance of otherwise modest structures.

Located on two lots at the northwest corner of Lenore street and Wolseley Avenue, the Bellcrest is a three-storey, solid brick building on a concrete foundation. To that extent, it is much like the city's other pre-1930 apartment blocks. Its two main facades, however, are clothed with monochromatic rough- and smooth-cut stone instead of the more common red, brown or light brick with stone trim.

The Bellcrest was a late addition to the Wolseley district, an affluent area of large single-family houses and substantial apartment buildings established primarily in the decade prior to World War I. The block was designed and built by Bently Taylor, a local contractor, at a cost of \$75,000. No

records have been found to indicate that Taylor had professional architectural training or was widely employed as a designer.

Perhaps in part for those reasons, the Bellcrest lacks any ornamental detailing indicative of a particular style. Also absent are the kinds of features incorporated in earlier blocks to improve tenant access to natural light and air circulation) features such as interior courtyards, balconies and porches.

Instead, the Bellcrest has a flat, boxy appearance. Its symmetrical front (east) elevation has a high basement, a rough stone face set in a broken-course pattern, smooth stone quoins, and a stone-capped parapet which rises in the centre and at the corners. Numerous rectangular wood-framed windows are outlined by smooth stone lug sills, lintels and a quoin-like pattern along their sides. A stone band forms a continuous lintel over the basement openings, while additional belt courses double as sills and lintels for the third-storey lights. Ornamental ironwork also appears on this facing. The main entrance consists of double wooden and glass doors held in a smooth stone surround that extends up to the second floor.

The Wolseley (south) facade, which overlooks Laura Secord School, is similarly designed and includes a second entrance. The block's other two walls are finished with plain sand-lime brick. They also contain recesses to accommodate exterior wooden staircases. A penthouse sits on the flat tar and gravel roof.

Interior finishes include green floor tiles and egg and dart staircase moulding. A skylight provides extra fenestration to the main stairwell. The building originally was divided into 19 one-bedroom suites, four in the basement and five on each of the upper floors. Many units included eat-in kitchens, dining-rooms and large living-rooms. They were located off central hallways and, in some cases, equipped with service doors to the fire escape on the building's west side.

Contractor Taylor began working as a carpenter in Winnipeg in c.1905. By the 1920s, he was manager of the Bently G. Taylor Construction Co., a firm that continued until the mid-1950s. His name disappeared from local directories by 1963. In addition to his trade, it appears he invested in

speculative and rental properties, including houses on Lenore (#81-83) and nearby Home Street (#143).

The Bellcrest originally was owned by Sidney T. Jones, secretary-treasurer of the Empire Loan Co. of Winnipeg. That firm was established in c/1905 by Charles Myson Simpson, manager of the Riverview Realty Co., and William Brydon, a builder and property appraiser. By 1933, Empire Loan had taken over the block. Subsequent owners included lawyer Malick D. Spivak, Share Enterprises and, from 1962 to 1986, William H. and Molly Pitch.