



141 RIVER AVENUE

LUDLOW COURT APARTMENTS

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings Committee
April 2005

141 RIVER AVENUE – LUDLOW COURT APARTMENTS

This structure represents a very early example of a luxury apartment block built in Winnipeg between 1905 and 1915, a period of time when hundreds of multi-tenant structures were erected (see Table 1). More blocks were built in Manitoba's capital than anywhere else in Canada during this time. There were many reasons for the popularity of this building form.

Winnipeg after 1900 saw a great influx of people moving to the city to find work, many coming with little capital. Increasingly, the apartment block was an easy way to get comfortable lodgings without the expense of purchasing a home. Many of these new citizens were hired as commercial travellers, salesmen with large territories to service. Apartment suites were much easier to maintain for people with hectic travel schedules. As attractive was the fact that many of the pre-1915 blocks were located only a few kilometres from downtown or on major transportation routes, making it easier for tenants to utilize public transportation or otherwise get to jobs and other activities.¹

Another important aspect was Winnipeg's financial environment. The city's economic growth led to a rise in personal wealth. Many successful businessmen and professionals sought safe, steady investment opportunities – exactly the type of return provided by the apartment block. Many investment syndicates, contractors and individuals financed the construction of blocks throughout the city, reselling the completed blocks immediately or owning them for decades.²

For Winnipeg's elite community, the luxury apartment was also popular. Found in these blocks were retired couples, widows, widowers and professionals who chose apartment living because it provided many of the amenities associated with the finest mansions, including servants' quarters, dens, luxuriously appointed interiors, and in some cases, even private entrances. The suites also offered a respite from the cost and effort of some of the chores related to maintaining a private dwelling – snow clearing, lawn maintenance, heating and general repairs.

¹ M. Peterson, "The Rise of Apartments and Apartment Dwellers in Winnipeg (1900-1914) and a Comparative Study with Toronto," in Prairie Forum, Vol. 18, No. 2 (Fall 1993), pp. 159-60.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 161-62.

**TABLE 1 – COMPARISON OF NEW APARTMENT BLOCKS
BUILT IN WINNIPEG, 1899-1912**

YEAR	# OF PERMITS	TOTAL AMOUNT
1899	0	\$0
1900	0	\$0
1901	0	\$0
1902	1	\$2,000
1903	3	\$51,000
1904	10	\$216,500
1905	17	\$450,250
1906	15	\$497,000
1907	7	\$246,700
1908	13	\$629,000
1909	29	\$1,336,000
1910	40	\$2,423,000
1911	39	\$1,808,000
1912	56	\$3,000,000

Having said this, however, apartment blocks were not seen as an appropriate form of residential structure in North America until after 1905. The construction of cheap, crowded tenements in poorer neighbourhoods led to the opinion that apartment blocks were dangerous and disease-ridden. In neighbourhoods everywhere, single-family house owners banded together to block the construction of these large structures that they argued brought down property values and ruined established communities. In Winnipeg, this opposition never reached the stage where it overcame the aforementioned positive aspects of the building type. In fact, many of Winnipeg's surrounding communities publicized the construction of apartment blocks as evidence of their modern development.

Fort Rouge, because of the Main Street and Osborne Street bridges, grew quickly, attracting many of Winnipeg's wealthy families to its wide, tree-lined streets. Later, much of the open land was subdivided into residential lots. Blocks of single-family dwellings were built prior to World War I, as were numerous apartment blocks of various sizes and designs.

The Ludlow Court Apartments were completed in 1906 and took their place amongst Winnipeg finer multi-tenant blocks.

STYLE

The Ludlow Court Apartments are designed in the Classical Revival style, important in Canadian architecture after 1900 and popular until the 1930s.³ Based on the historical Roman and Greek precedents, Classical Revival style designs were a reaction to the picturesque styles that held sway in the later stages of the 19th century. Symmetrical in layout, these structures used a combination of common elements such as columns, pediments, capitals and porticos. Most often the façades featured smooth surfaces with flat, unadorned rooflines and squared rather than arched window and door openings. The style was used on a variety of building types, from small single-family dwellings to massive public structures such as train stations, banks and government offices.⁴

CONSTRUCTION

This three-storey block sits on a raised stone foundation 50.8 centimetres (20") thick. It measures approximately 17.1 x 15.9 x 12.2 metres (56 x 52 x 40 feet) or over 3,300 cubic metres (118,560 cubic feet) of interior space.⁵ The solid brick exterior walls of the superstructure are 33.0 centimetres (13") thick on the ground floor and 22.9 centimetres (9") thick on the upper two

³ Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, 1991), pp. 18-19.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 18-19.

⁵ City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 322890-12-1 (below as AR).

levels and are accented with stone. The block cost \$22,000 to complete⁶ and ceiling heights range from 2.5 metres (8' 3") in the basement to 2.9 metres (9'5") on the ground floor, 2.9 metres on the second floor (9'6") and 2.8 metres (9'2") on the third floor.⁷ Cost of construction per suite was \$2,444 (see Appendix II for a list of designated apartment blocks and their cost per suite).

DESIGN

The main (south) façade of the Ludlow Court Apartments is symmetrically designed, with two bays of windows on either side of the centrally located three-storey wooden veranda (Plate 1). All windows, including those interrupting the raised stone foundation walls, are square-headed, the openings on the upper three floors are embellished with rough-cut stone lug sills and smooth cut lintels with modest keystones. Fashioned in red brick, the brick in the corners of the front façade are raised to mimic quoins.

The dominant feature is the large wooden veranda (Plate 2). It is supported in the front corners by triple Composite columns – unfluted with voluted capitals. The columns at the rear of the veranda are squared and attached with similar capitals and are connected to the front columns by means of a wooden balustrade. Delicate dentils accent the cornice on all levels. Another unusual feature is the spiral metal staircase connecting the second and third floors (Plate 2).

The façade is finished with a heavy overhanging metal cornice topped by a stone topped brick parapet. This cornice runs the entire length of the south, east and west façades and wraps around a short distance on the rear (north) elevation.

The side elevations (east and west) are similarly designed, utilizing common clay brick rather than the reddish brick of the main façade (Plates 3 and 4). Each floor holds three arched windows with rough-cut stone lug sills and radiating brick heads.

⁶ City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #562/1906.

⁷ AR.

The rear of the block features similar window openings to the side elevations, as well as a centrally placed three-storey wood veranda. Stairs connecting each level allow the porch to function as a fire escape (Plate 5).

INTERIOR

Designed originally with just nine suites (eight for tenants and a basement caretaker suite), the Ludlow Court Apartments features many interior elements underlining its luxurious nature. The building was designed with storage/boiler room and caretaker's suite in the basement, although a second suite was built in this area in 1943.⁸ The ground floor was occupied by two large, six room suites (each approximately 140 square metres, 1,500 square feet in size) and featured built-in china cabinets and other amenities (Plates 6 and 7). The suite on the east side was divided into two in 1941.⁹ The second and third floors were designed alike, each with two four-room suites and one three-room suite per floor.

Most obvious is the quality and quantity of wood finishes, utilizing both oak and walnut,¹⁰ from delicately carved doors, staircases and accenting (Plates 8 and 9) to dark-hued beam ceilings, plate rails, flooring, fireplace mantles and door and window mouldings (Plates 10 and 11). A skylight lights the main staircase (Plate 12).

INTEGRITY

The Ludlow Court Apartments occupy its original location and has suffered little alteration. The block appears to be in good structural condition, although some of the exposed outer elements, especially the main veranda, are experiencing significant aging and weathering.

⁸ BP #2640/1943.

⁹ BP #509/1941; and Architect's Plans, #509/1941, courtesy of the City of Winnipeg Archives.

¹⁰ AR.

STREETSCAPE

This building is located on the north side of River Avenue between Harkness and Main streets. Barricades, closures and one-way streets have affected the traffic flow of many of the roads in this neighbourhood – this block of River Avenue is no longer a through street. Once an area full of large houses and apartment blocks dating from the 1900-15 era, modern structures, including high-rise apartments, retail structures and institutional buildings are now also part of this area's building stock.

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR

According to the original City of Winnipeg Building Permit, Norman McNabb Moffat is the architect responsible for the design of this building. Moffat was born on November 12, 1873, in Ontario, taking one year of architecture at the University of Toronto before working under Toronto-area architect Henry Simpson for four years.¹¹ In 1885, an accident caused him to lose the fingers on his right hand, however, he continued his career, working in New York before returning to Toronto in 1900. He moved to Winnipeg in 1903 and became draftsman for J.H.G. Russell. His name appears only infrequently in the Building Permit Ledger Books for the 1903-1911 period, he is listed as a partner with D.W.F. Nichols (1881-1951) in 1910, the pair designing a house on Furby Street and the clubhouse for the Assiniboine Bowling Club on Wolseley Avenue. In 1911-12 he was draftsman for local construction firm Carter-Halls-Aldinger Limited.

During World War I, Moffat farmed with a brother in Saskatchewan and from 1919-25 was employed as the prairie province architect for the Union Bank of Canada. He took the position of Manitoba District architect for the Royal Bank of Canada when it absorbed the Union Bank in 1925. In 1933, Moffat moved to Renfrew, Ontario, where he maintained an active practice for many years. He died in 1970. This is the first Moffat work evaluated by the Committee.

The builder of the block was A.B. Anderson.

¹¹ Biographical information from National Archives of Canada.

PERSON/INSTITUTION

James Harkness Ludlow was born in Britain¹² and came to Winnipeg ca.1889.¹³ He is listed as a carpenter by trade, but by 1898 he is listed as part of McCormack (Daniel) and Ludlow, builders, with offices on Mill Street. In earlier lists, Daniel and brother Donald were listed as McCormack Brothers, contractors.¹⁴ By 1900, the listing is for McCormack (Donald) and Ludlow but now described as lumber manufacturers with their mill and yards on Mill Street. Ludlow lived in a house on Mill Street during this period and by 1906, the company is operating a “sash and door factory mill” as well.¹⁵ Although he is not specifically listed in any City of Winnipeg Building Permit in the 1899-1912 Ledger Books, his grandson states that he helped with the construction of many large buildings, including Augustine Presbyterian (United) Church, 1903-04 and Westminster Presbyterian (United) Church, 1910-11.

It appears that Ludlow sold his interest in the lumber company ca.1907, by 1908 there is no listing for McCormack and Ludlow and by 1910 D. McCormack Company Ltd. Is operating a lumber and building materials yard in St. Boniface. It could be that Ludlow used the capital, in part, to build this apartment block. Ludlow owned the block until his death in 1935, his estate then his widow Frances L. Ludlow assuming ownership until its sale to son J.H. Ludlow, mechanic, in 1940. J.H. Ludlow’s estate is listed as the owner in 1959, in 1970 his wife Pearl G. Ludlow is listed as the owner and in 1978, her estate, c/o her son Harry J.L. Ludlow is the owner. In 1979, the property was finally sold out of the Ludlow family.¹⁶ The Ludlow family also occupied one of the ground-floor suites in the block continuously until the 1970s.¹⁷

As for tenancy, early lists include managers, grain brokers, vice-presidents, architects, bookkeepers, and government employees.¹⁸

¹² Grandson H.J.L. and Mrs. Ludlow, in conversation with the author, April 29, 2005. It was suggested that James’ middle name, Harkness, was used to name the avenue just west of this block.

¹³ Henderson Directories, 1876-1900.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 1896.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1900-1910.

¹⁶ ARo, 1906-1997.

¹⁷ Henderson’s Directory, 1906-80.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 1910-15.

EVENT

There is no known significant event connected with this building.

CONTEXT

The Ludlow Court Apartments fit into the early modern development of Fort Rouge, an area that saw tremendous growth before and after 1900. What had been a scattered settlement of French-speaking families in the 1870s became Ward One in the City of Winnipeg in 1882. Properties close to the Assiniboine River attracted wealthy businessmen and public figures that liked the area's proximity to the downtown combined with its quasi-rural character. Numerous mansions, situated on extensive, well-manicured grounds, were built during this period. After 1900, less exclusive housing districts also were developed, as well as apartment blocks and other multi-family structures.¹⁹

This block is also illustrative of the type of investment popular in the city prior to World War I. Apartment blocks were advertised as a safe, relatively uncomplicated investment that would yield steady, though not spectacular returns. Businessmen, contractors and entrepreneurs all became involved in these investments, some holding on to the property for many years, others simply completing the blocks and selling them.

LANDMARK

This building is conspicuous within the context of the neighbourhood given its unique main façade and other exterior features.

¹⁹ M. Peterson, "36 Roslyn Road – J.C. Falls House," report for the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee, January 1994, p. 1.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report Assessment Record

Building Address: 141 River Avenue

Building Name: Ludlow Court Apartments

Original Use: residential

Current Use: residential

Roll No. (Old): 322890 (7290)

RSN: 195943

Municipality: 12

Ward: 1

Property or Occupancy Code: 19

Legal Description: 41 St. Boniface, Plan 334, Lot 7

Location: north side between Harkness Avenue and Main Street

Date of Construction: 1906

Storeys: 3 and basement

Heritage Status: NONE

Construction Type: Brick and stone and stone foundation

Building Permits (Plans available: [A] Archives; [M] Microfilm; [4th] 4th floor, 65 Garry Street):

- 562/1906 \$22,000 (original); 509/1941 [A] \$500 (alterations); 2640/1943 \$800 (construct suite in basement); 10189/1976 \$6,000 (interior alterations and fire upgrades); 5880/1980 \$1,000 (electrical upgrades); 151/1983 \$2,000 (fire upgrades); 324059/2003 \$4,000 (fire repairs to main floor balcony and rear stairs)

Information:

-56 x 52 x 40 + = 118,560 cu. ft.

- Plan- 2,964 sq. ft.; Basement- 2,964 sq. ft.; Above ground- 8,892 sq. ft.; Gross floor- 11,856 sq. ft.

- walls finished in walnut and oak, oak-beamed ceilings in major rooms, walnut dado in places

- originally 9 suites, 11 by 1945 (Basement- 1 @ 3 rms., 1 @ 4; 1st- 2 @ 3, 1 @ 6; 2nd & 3rd- 2 @ 4, 1 @ 3

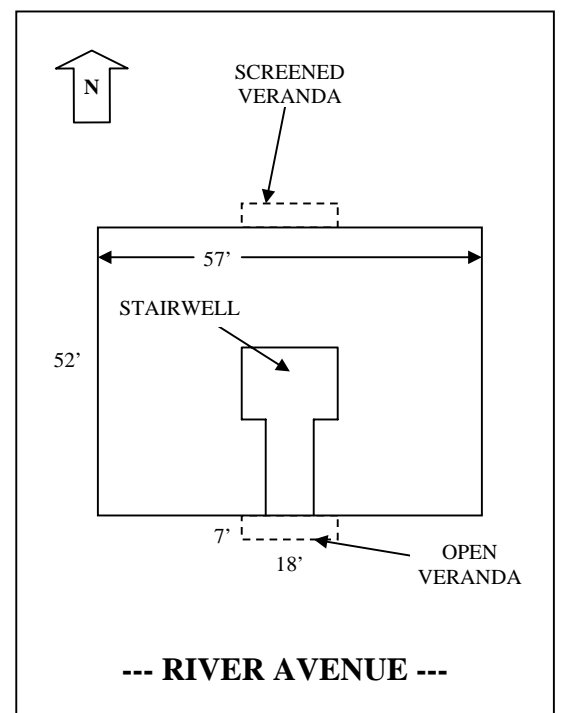
- flood damage in 1950, rear of building jacked up, basement walls repointed and general repairs

- 1960 Assessment- "good general condition"; 1976- "fair condition"

- ceilings- Basement- 8'3"; 1st- 9'5"; 2nd- 9'6"; 3rd- 9'2"

ARCHITECT: N.M. MOFFAT

CONTRACTOR: A.B. ANDERSON



APPENDIX II

WINNIPEG APARTMENT BLOCKS DESIGNATED BY THE CITY OF WINNIPEG

ADDRESS	NAME	YEAR BUILT	GRADE	COST PER SUITE
Broadway, 314	Princeton Apartments	1909	II	\$3,636
Hargrave Street, 55	Tremblay Apartments	1906	III	N/A*
Hargrave Street, 379	Ambassador Apartments	1909	III	\$3,925
Home Street, 272	Thelma Apartments	1914	III	\$3,333
Hugo Street, 220	Pasadena Apartments	1912	III	\$2,708
Lenore Street, 72	Bellcrest Apartments	1928	II	\$3,947
McMillan Avenue, 758	Anvers Apartments	1912	II	\$4,400
Osborne Street, 40	Roslyn Court Apartments	1909	II	\$5,903
Preston Avenue, 828	Rothsay Apartments	1912	III	\$2,778
Qu'Appelle Avenue, 366	Warwick Apartments	1908	II	\$2,206
River Avenue, 300	Congress Apartments	1910	II	\$3,103
Roslyn Road, 6	Lilly Apartments	1913	III	N/A**
Vaughan Street, 340	Raleigh Apartments	1931	III	\$2,703
Wardlaw Avenue, 554	Wardlaw (Wardlow) Apts.	1905	II	\$4,167
Wardlaw Avenue, 626	DeBary (Highgate) Apts.	1912	II	\$3,667

*- Originally a single-family dwelling

** - Originally a duplex

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Plate 1 – 141 River Avenue, Ludlow Court Apartments, front (south) façade, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)



Plate 2 – Two views of the front veranda, 2005. The arrow on the right points to the curved metal staircase linking the second and third floor balconies. (M. Peterson, 2005.)

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Plate 3 – Rear (north) and west side, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)



Plate 4 – Front (south) and east side, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)

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Plate 5 – Rear (north) façade, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)



Plate 6 – Ornate wood detailing in the hallway of Suite 2, ground floor, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)

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Plate 7 – Built-in china cabinet in the dining room, Suite 2, ground floor, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)



Plate 8 – Detail of main (south) door, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)

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Plate 9 – Newel post of main staircase, ground floor, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)



Plate 10 – Detail of woodwork around fireplace, third-floor suite, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)

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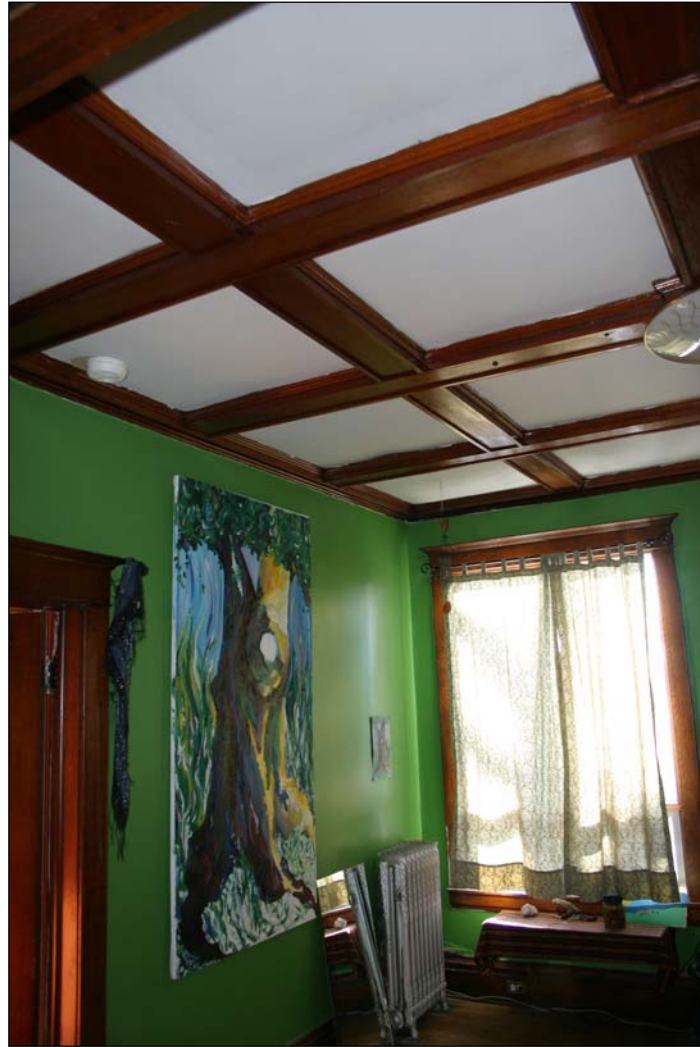


Plate 11 – Ceiling in third-floor suite, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)

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Plate 12 – Staircase skylight, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)