

141 RIVER AVENUE - LUDLOW COURT APARTMENTS
Norman McNabb Moffat, 1906



The combination of a harsh winter climate, favourable economic growth, a large mobile population and many other factors combined after 1905 to create the perfect environment in Winnipeg for the construction of a new building form – the apartment block. So favourable were these factors that between 1905 and 1915 hundreds of these multi-tenant structures were built in Manitoba's capital, more than anywhere else in Canada during this time.

Completed in 1906, the Ludlow Court Apartments were an early example of a luxury block, built in Winnipeg's rapidly growing Fort Rouge district, which had become Ward One in the City of Winnipeg in 1882. The block was designed in the Classical Revival style, important in Canadian architecture after 1900 and popular until the 1930s. Based on the historical Roman and Greek precedents, Classical Revival structures symmetrical

in layout and 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 main (south) façade of the Ludlow Court is symmetrically designed, with two bays of windows on either side of the block's dominant design feature, a centrally located three-storey wooden veranda. The veranda features a spiral metal staircase connecting the second and third floors. The block has many interior design features underlining its luxurious nature. Most obvious is the quality and quantity of wood finishes, utilizing both oak and walnut, from delicately carved doors and staircases to dark-hued beam ceilings, plate rails, flooring and fireplace mantles. A skylight lights the main staircase.

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. The Ludlow Court was designed by architect Norman McNabb Moffat, born and trained in Ontario. Moffat, who also worked in New York, came to Winnipeg in 1903 and became the prairie region architect for the Union Bank of Canada from 1919-25. He became Manitoba District architect for the Royal Bank of Canada when it absorbed the Union Bank in 1925. Moffat died in Ontario in 1970.

The block was built by contractor A.B. Anderson for local lumber dealer James Harkness Ludlow. Ludlow owned the block until his death in 1935, but ownership remained in the family until 1979. The Ludlow family also occupied one of the ground-floor suites in the block continuously until the 1970s. Early lists of tenants include managers, grain brokers, vice-presidents, architects, bookkeepers, and government employees.