181 BANNATYNE AVENUE

KILGOUR BLOCK (KELLY BUILDING)

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
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Winnipeg's early warehouse district was dispersed throughout what is now downtown Winnipeg, some businesses locating on the east side of Main Street, taking advantage of river transport, and some west of the Main Street. Pockets of development were also found along the Canadian Pacific Railway main line in Point Douglas by the early 1880s. A decade later, with activity increasing, the Winnipeg Transfer Railway (WTR) was built to serve the wholesale community, guaranteeing businesses easy shipping and handling for the increasing number of goods flowing westward through the city. This early line and the spur lines that followed, crisscrossed the area, their curves often defining the shape of neighbouring buildings.[1]

One of the main catalysts for the development of the area east of Main Street occurred in 1895 when influential merchant/wholesaler James H. Ashdown successfully negotiated with the WTR for the construction of a spur line east of Main Street. The line ran between Bannatyne and Market avenues and shortly after it was completed Ashdown opened his mammoth warehouse on the northwest corner of Bannatyne Avenue and Rorie Street (Plates 1-3).[2]

Soon, all the streets east of Main were filling with large warehouses, most of which were occupied by their owners. In 1904, Joseph Maw and Thomas Kelly moved to develop property they owned in the area. Maw was an Ontario businessman who had come west in the early 1880s and built a famous automobile garage on King Street.[3] Thomas Kelly was an early Winnipeg contractor who rose to prominence in the local building trade only to be embarrassed

1   Thanks to D. Lyon for additional information.

2   L.K. Eaton, "Winnipeg: The Northern Anchor of the Wholesale Trade," Urban History Review, Vol. XI, No. 2 (October 1982), p. 28; and Winnipeg Tribune, October 12, 1895.

3   The Year Past, 1979 (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, Historical Buildings Committee, 1979), p. 15.

and ultimately jailed for his part in the Legislative Building scandal.[4] A <u>City of Winnipeg Building Permit</u> was taken out in October of that year describing a six-storey warehouse which was completed the next year and called the Kelly Building.

STYLE

This warehouse is a reduced example of the Romanesque Revival style. In the 1880s, the style was influenced by American architect H.H. Richardson (1838-86) and was often referred to as Richardsonian Romanesque.[5] The buildings designed by Richardson and his many followers were most often brick resting on a raised basement finished in rusticated stone. This roughly textured material would often be found elsewhere on the façade – around windows and doors and at roof level. Other elements include towers flanking the main façade, quoins, belt courses, corbelled brick panels and chevrons. The most obvious feature of these structures was the use of arches atop windows and doors. Often, straight-topped windows located on the middle storeys were grouped under large arches on the upper floors.[6]

In North America, the style was used for private residences and on large public buildings (Plate 4), where architects created fanciful structures. In Winnipeg, however, it was almost exclusively used in the warehouse district, where the designs were somewhat more subdued (Plate 5). The massiveness and sturdiness of the style appealed to wholesalers looking to promote their businesses and portray the stability of their firms through the design of the structures they occupied.

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[4]   R.R. Rostecki, "Legislative Building – 450 Broadway, Winnipeg, Manitoba," report for the Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, Historic Resources Branch, August 1986, pp. 8-9.

[5]   L. Maitland, et al., <u>A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles</u> (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1992), p. 84.

[6]   Ibid., p. 84; and <u>Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba</u> (Winnipeg: Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, 1991), p. 14.

CONSTRUCTION

The Kelly Building was built of solid brick walls with an internal system of square timber beams and posts with heavy wooden floors,[7] all resting on a raised concrete and brick foundation. This style, known as mill construction, was common throughout the warehouse district until later in the first decade of the 1900s when reinforced concrete and then steel rose in popularity as construction materials. The building measures 15.9 x 41.2 x 27.8 metres (52 x 135 x 91 feet), and its east and west walls are shared with the Codville and Company and McClary warehouses, respectively.[8] Stone accents are found throughout the main (south) and rear (north) façades. The building cost $56,000 to complete.[9]

DESIGN

The Bannatyne Avenue façade of the Kilgour Block begins with a rusticated base, rising above grade and interrupted by two basement windows, common features of many Exchange District warehouses (Plates 6 and 7). At the east end of this elevation is the main entrance – a metal and glass element not original to the structure. The west end features a 3.1-metre (10-foot)-wide covered driveway running the entire length of the building (Plate 8).

Attached columns run from the rusticated base to the arches of the top floor, dividing the main façade into four bays. Within each bay are the five windows of the upper floors, all squared except for the arched windows of the top floor. The arches are embellished with smooth-cut stone keystones. All window openings are finished with a variety of smooth-cut stone sills and heads. Stone panels in the attached columns create continuous heads above the fourth-floor windows. Above the arched windows of the sixth floor is a band of ornamental brick below the metal entablature (Plate 9).

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[7] "Architect's Plans #457/1911" at the City of Winnipeg Archives. The floors were 15.2 centimetres (6 inches) thick, covered with maple flooring.

[8] City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 627720-12-2 (PC-50). Below as AR.

[9] City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #1533/1904.

The rear of the building features numerous arched windows with rough-cut stone lug sills and two large loading bays on the ground floor (Plate 10). A 5.5 x 6.1-metre (18 x 20-foot) platform is located near these doors.

The building is not one of the Exchange District's more complex designs. Its simple ornamentation and organization are not uncommon elsewhere in the district.

INTERIOR

The interior of this building remains in remarkably original shape. The ground floor, as is usually the case in these warehouses, contains some ornate finishes, suggesting an office and showroom were located on this level. Some of this finish, including dark wood panelling and tin ceilings, is still evident (Plate 11). The basement and upper floors all feature the familiar wood beam/post support system and heavy wooden flooring (Plate 12). Fluorescent lighting, cheaply added ca.1951, is the only significant change to the interior.[10]

Undoubtedly the most unusual aspect of the interior is a metal cage elevator and encircling wooden staircase at the front of the building (Plate 13). A freight elevator is located at the rear of the building.

INTEGRITY

The building stands in its original location. An assessor's notes in the late 1940s suggest that the building suffered from shifting and plaster was badly cracked in some areas.[11] The building also suffered serious damage from a January 14, 1911 fire. Breaking out just before midnight on the third floor, flames soon engulfed much of the building as well as the neighbouring McClary Building. In -40°C weather, a tremendous amount of ice coated everything, eventually breaking

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[10]   AR.

[11]   Ibid.

a 25.9-metre (85-foot) aerial ladder (Plate 14).[12] Loss of stock totalled approximately $400,000,[13] repairs to the building cost $30,000.[14] These repairs were based on the original plans and did not represent significant changes to the design. Today, the building appears to be in good structural condition and has suffered few alterations.

STREETSCAPE

This building stands on one of the main arteries in Winnipeg's warehouse district, a nationally designated heritage site (Plate 15). The Historical Buildings Committee has awarded 60 points to other Exchange District warehouses in recognition of the importance of each building within this area.

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR

Charles H. Walker was responsible for the design of the Kelly Building. He was born in Canada West (Ontario) on March 12, 1855,[15] coming to Winnipeg ca.1883. He worked as a carpenter until ca.1888 when he is listed as a contractor.[16] In the 1898 listing, he is working as a draughtsman, apparently for Hugh McCowan, a well-known architect, as well as on his own. City of Winnipeg Building Permits, 1900-06 show Walker designed mainly small homes throughout the city and the Kelly Building.[17] The working relationship with McCowan lasted until ca.1906[18] when Walker joined with Samuel Hooper, then the Provincial Architect, to form

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[12]   V. Leah, Alarm of Fire (Winnipeg: Firefighters Burn Fund, 1982), pp. 79-80.

[13]   Manitoba Free Press, January 16, 1911, p. 1; and Winnipeg Tribune, January 16, 1911, p. 1.

[14]   BP #457/1911.

[15]   Biographical information courtesy of R.G. Hill, The Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950.

[16]   Henderson's Directory, 1880-97.

[17]   Ibid., 1898-1905. Walker worked at an office at 490 Main Street, the same as McCowan.

[18]   During this period, McCowan is credited with the design of several major works, including the Scandin-avian Mission Church, 268 Ellen Street (1897) – Grade III; Victoria/Central School No. 1 (addition), Ellen Street (1899); and Brandon College (1900).

Hooper and Walker. Hooper was one of the city's best-known designers. The partnership lasted only three years, likely due to Hooper's ever-increasing government-related workload. Besides a number of small residential contracts, the pair designed:

> Addition (veranda) to the Winnipeg General Hospital, Bannatyne Avenue (1905)
> Marshall-Wells Warehouse, 136 Market Avenue (1905) – Grade III
> Icelandic Good Templars Lodge, 635 McGee Street (1906)
> St. Joseph's Orphanage, Portage Avenue (1906) - DEMOLISHED
> Sherwin, Williams Warehouse, Catharine Avenue (1906)
> Central Police Station, Rupert Avenue (1906) - DEMOLISHED
> St. Jude's Church, Wellington Avenue (1906) – DEMOLISHED
> Black Warehouse, Lombard Avenue (1907)
> Hon. Robert Rogers House, Roslyn Road (1908)
> George Maxwell House, McMillan Avenue (1908)
> Addition to Carnegie Library, 380 William Avenue (1908)

Walker would again practice on his own by early 1909, while Hooper took on his son Samuel Lawrence Hooper as a partner. The last permit taken out by Walker is dated April 11, 1910 for an addition to a hotel on Main Street.[19] Walker left the city ca.1911 and moved to Victoria, B.C.

The partnership of Hooper and Walker has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.

The contractor of the building was one of its original owners, Thomas Kelly.

PERSON

The original owners of the warehouse were Joseph Maw and Thomas Kelly. Maw was only connected with the structure until its completion, when it became the property of Thomas Kelly.[20] Kelly was born in Ireland in 1855, went to the United States at the age of nine and got his early education in New York State. He came to Winnipeg in 1878, taking a job as a foreman for a local contractor. He joined with his brother Michael to form Kelly Brothers in 1880,

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[19]   BP #588/1910.

[20]   City of Winnipeg Assessment Roll, Roll No. 627720-12-2. Below as ARo.

becoming pioneers in the brick-manufacturing sector from their St. Boniface factory. The firm changed to Kelly Brothers and Company in 1884 when another brother, Martin, joined.[21] This enterprise became the Manitoba Construction Company from 1903 to 1905 when it was dissolved and Kelly Brothers and Mitchell was organized in its stead.

In 1908, Thomas Kelly joined with sons Robert Emmett and Charles B. to create Thomas Kelly and Sons (Plate 16). A third son, Lawrence C., joined in 1912. Thomas Kelly, as one of the most prominent contractors in Western Canada, was involved in a significant number of projects from Winnipeg to Vancouver, B.C. Local contracts included the Clarendon Hotel,[22] Portage Avenue (1883), both Grain Exchange Buildings, Princess Street (#164 – 1892; #160 – 1898), Isbister School, 310 Vaughan Street (1898), the St. Andrews Locks (1900-05) and the Provincial Normal School, 442 William Avenue (1905). The firm was also credited with laying down Winnipeg's first asphalt surface (on McDermot Avenue).

Of course, the Kelly family's largest and most prestigious contract came in 1912 for the construction of the new Legislative Building. As work progressed, rumours of questionable activities surfaced and when it was reported that the builder had received over $800,000 in over-payments, a royal commission was struck. Thomas Kelly fled to the United States to avoid prosecution. He was arrested in Chicago on October 1, 1915 and extradited for "perjury, obtaining money by false pretences, larceny or embezzlement and the obtaining of money, knowing the same to have been embezzled, stolen or fraudulently obtained."[23]

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[21]   Biographical information on Thomas Kelly and his brothers compiled from F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba (Winnipeg: S.J. Clarke Publishing, 1913), Vol. III, pp. 135-36; G. Bryce, The History of Manitoba (Toronto: The Canada History Company, 1906), p. 407; Manitoba Free Press, January 30, 1923, p. 2; Winnipeg Tribune, January 30, 1923, p. 1; Manitoba Free Press, August 3, 1925, p. 1; Winnipeg Tribune, August 3, 1925, p. 1; Winnipeg Free Press, March 21, 1939, p. 1; and Winnipeg Tribune, March 21, 1939, p. 3.

[22]   F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba (Winnipeg: S.J. Clarke Publishing, 1913), Vol. III, p. 135. It was said that Kelly discovered an excellent deposit of clay when excavating the foundation for the hotel. He set up a temporary kiln and produced brick for the superstructure on site.

[23]   "Application re: Extradition of Thomas Kelly," JX RBC, Manitoba Legislative Library, quoted in N. Einarson, "88 Adelaide Avenue," report for the Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch (January 1979), p. 5.

After a series of inquiries and court cases, a criminal trial found Thomas Kelly guilty and sentenced him to a 2½-year term in Stony Mountain Penitentiary. After his sentence, Kelly moved to the United States, settling in California. He died on March 13, 1939.[24]

Ownership of the Kelly Building[25] rested with Thomas Kelly during the early years (1906-14) as well as the three Kelly brothers (1916), Thomas Kelly and Sons (1924) and representatives of Michael Kelly (1925-26). In 1927, barrister Edwin Loftus became the owner of the building. None of the various Kelly businesses ever occupied the building. Original tenants included Samuel D.R. Fernie, wholesale clothier, the Souris Coal Mining Company, shippers, H.R. Ives and Company, iron and brass bed manufacturers, and W.V. Dawson, wholesale stationer.[26]

Another of the original tenants was the printing and paper manufacturer Kilgour Brothers. Little is known about the company, which does not appear to have been formed locally and was not connected with J.J. Kilgour, one of the founders of Kilgour, Rimer, boots and shoes.[27] The company would occupy the ground floor of the building for many decades, and owned it from 1930-61.[28] Kilgour Limited was purchased by Domtar Packaging Company ca.1963 and renamed the Bell-Kilgour Division. The building stood empty after this firm vacated the premises in the late 1970s. The Knitting Mill began its occupancy in the early 1980s, using the ground floor for display and the upper floors for storage. Rice Sportswear occupied the top floor during the 1980s as well.[29]

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[24]   Manitoba Free Press, January 30, 1923, p. 2; Winnipeg Tribune, January 30, 1923, p. 1; Manitoba Free Press, August 3, 1925, p. 1; and Winnipeg Tribune, August 3, 1925, p. 1. Michael Kelly died on January 29, 1923 and Martin Kelly died on August 2, 1925.

[25]   ARo, 1904-present.

[26]   Henderson's Directory, 1906.

[27]   Ibid., 1906.

[28]   ARo, 1925-65; and Henderson's Directory, 1906-present. Another long-time tenant was W.J. Gage and Company, wholesale stationers, who occupied space in the building from the late 1910s to the 1960s.

[29]   Henderson's Directory, 1960-present.

EVENT

There is no known significant event connected with this building.

CONTEXT

This building is representative of the development within the Exchange District after 1900. Large warehouses were built, most often to be occupied by the owner, to facilitate the movement of food and manufactured goods travelling from Eastern Canada to the growing western markets. The construction of spur lines aided in this movement and many warehouses took full advantage of the lines. The Kilgour Block was not originally occupied by its owner, whose personal and professional finances allowed him to build rental property such as this building. It was yet another facet of the building sector in Winnipeg during its pre-World War I expansion phase.

The Kilgour Block is another important reminder of Winnipeg's term as Western Canada's pre-eminent city.

LANDMARK

The Kilgour Block, located next to the massive Ashdown Warehouse and ornamentally understated, does not garner a great deal of attention on this block of Bannatyne Avenue. It is, however, conspicuous within the neighbourhood.

It is also an essential part of one of the Warehouse District's most complete blocks, the north side of Bannatyne Avenue from Rorie Street to Main Street is filled with buildings from the 1895-1911 period.

Date: January 1999

Assessment Record

Prepared By: M. Peterson

Building Address: 181 Bannatyne Avenue

Building Name: Kilgour Block (Kelly Building)

Original Use: warehouse

Current Use: warehouse

Roll No. (Old): 627720 (11172)

Municipality: 12   Ward: 2   Property or Occupancy Code: 50

Legal Description: 7/8 St. John, Plan 29002, Lots 6/7

Location: north side between Main and Rorie streets

Date of Construction: 1904   Storeys: 6 + basement

Construction Type: brick and stone foundation

Heritage Status: ON INVENTORY

Building Permits (Plans available: **[A]** Archives; **[M]** Microfilm; **[V]** Vault):
    - 1533/1904 $56,000 (original); 457/1911 **[A]** $30,000 (6 storeys rebuilt);

Information:

- #181-83 Bannatyne Avenue

- 52 x 135 x 91 = 638,820 cu. ft.

- 1941 – "general condition is good"

- 1948 – plaster badly cracked throughout and bad crack on
        east and west exterior walls

- acoustic tile ceiling added ca.1947, fluorescent lights ca.1951

---BANNATYNE AVENUE---
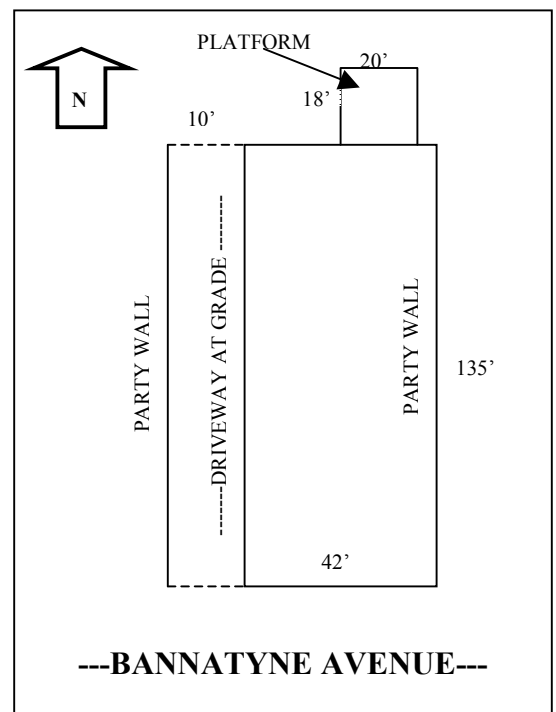
Assessment Roll

YEAR	INFORMATION
1904	Vacant land owned by Thomas Kelly and Joseph Maw
1905	Unfinished building owned by Kelly and Maw
1906	Thomas Kelly, owner/non-resident. Tenants are R.M. Elliott, agent, H.R. Ives and Company, foundry, and S.D.R. Fernie, agent.
1908-14	Kelly Brothers, owners/non-residents
1916	Thomas, Michael and Martin Kelly, owners/non-residents
1924-26	Thomas Kelly and Sons, Representatives of Michael Kelly and Detroit Holding Company, owners/non-residents
1927-29	Edwin Loftus, barrister, owner/non-resident
1930-61	Kilgour Limited, owner/resident.
1965-69	Dominion Tar and Chemical Company, owner/resident (Legal is 7&8^E St. John, Plan S.P. 1, Lot 18)
1979	(Roll No. 627990) – Kenneth Alfred Sellick Enterprises (1/3), Walter C. Fletcher (1/3) and Charles S. Fletcher (1/3), all owners/non-residents
1989	(Roll No. 627985) – Rice Sportswear, owner/non-resident
1993	176654 Canada Limited, owner/non-resident

181 BANNATYNE AVENUE – KILGOUR BLOCK (KELLY BUILDING)

Plate 1 – Bannatyne Avenue looking west from Rorie Street. Ashdown's Warehouse is in the foreground. The arrow indicates the location of the soon-to-be-built Kelly Building. (M. Peterson Collection, ca.1904.)
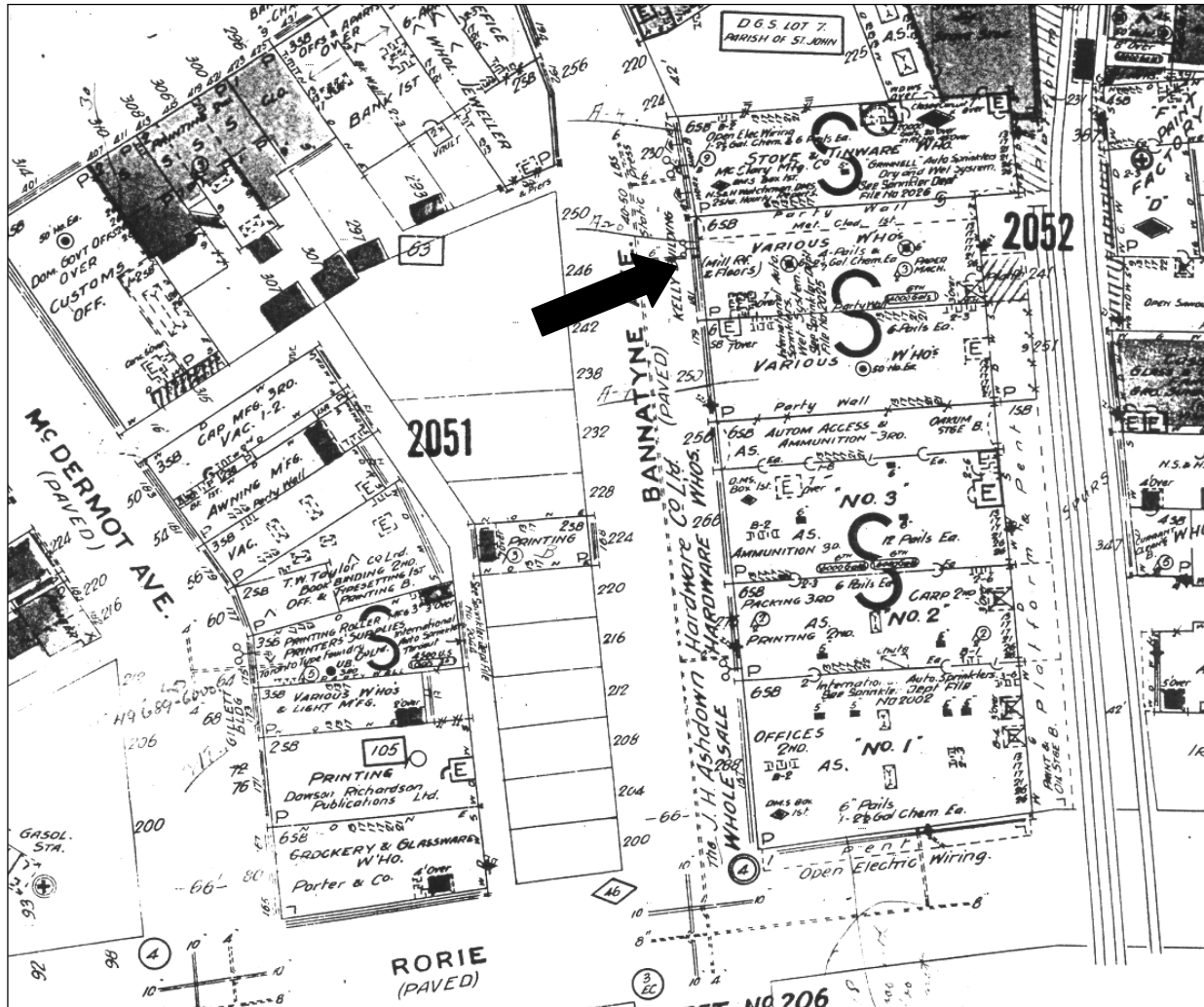
Plate 2 - Part of the north side of Bannatyne Avenue between Main and Rorie streets, 1923; the Kelly Building, 181 Bannatyne Avenue, at arrow. Note the spur tracks behind the buildings. (Reproduced from Winnipeg Fire Atlas, Vol. II, Sheet 205.)

181 BANNATYNE AVENUE – KILGOUR BLOCK (KELLY BUILDING)

Plate 3 – North side of Bannatyne Avenue east of Main Street, 1900. The small building stands where the Kelly Building would be built. It is interesting to note that all three warehouses pictured on this block would have additional storeys built. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)
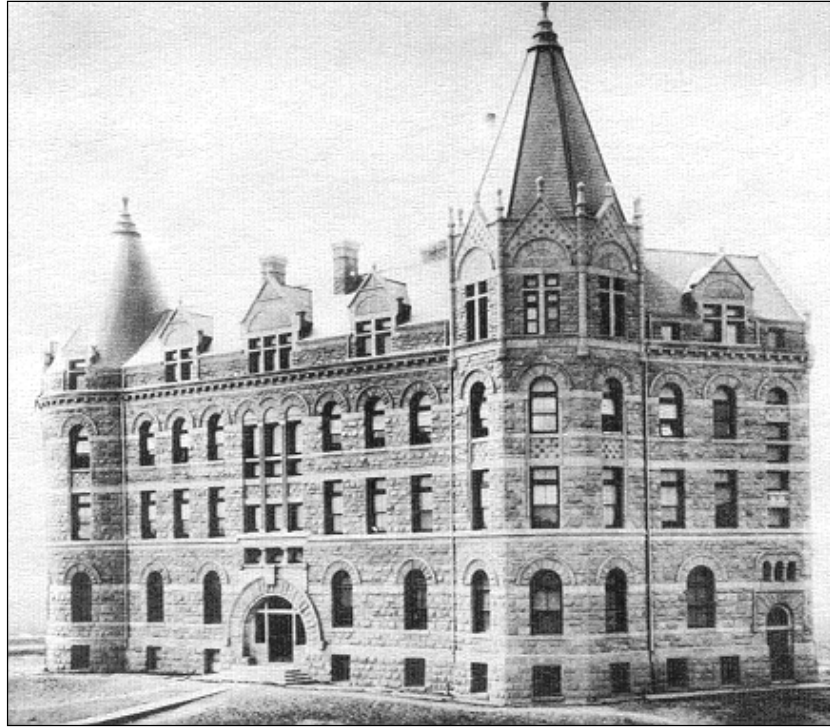
Plate 4 – Wesley College (now University of Winnipeg), 1900. Built in 1896, it remains one of the city's finest examples of Romanesque Revival architecture. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)

Plate 5 – Gault Building, 92-104 Arthur Street, built in 1900. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)

Plate 6 – Kilgour Block, 181 Bannatyne Avenue, front (south) façade. (M. Peterson, 1998.)

Plate 7 – Kilgour Block, 181 Bannatyne Avenue, front (south) façade. (M. Peterson, 1999.)
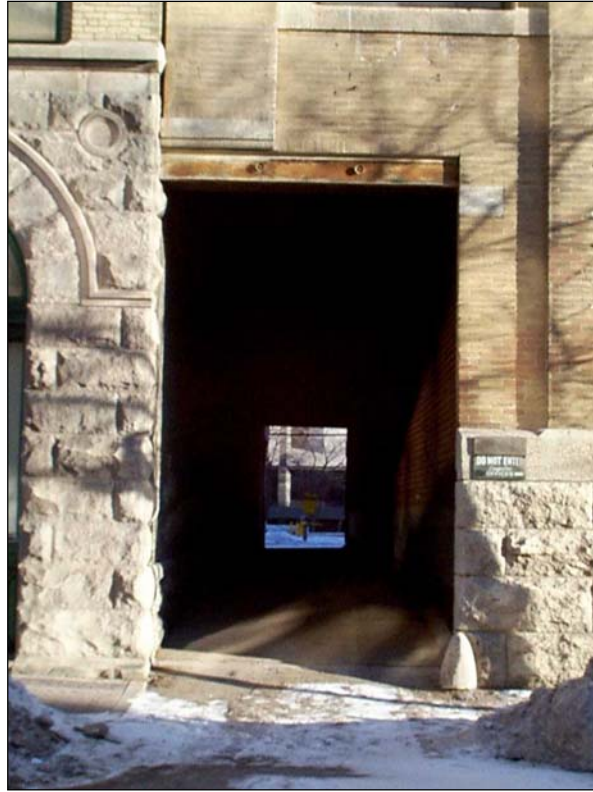
Plate 8 – Kilgour Block, 181 Bannatyne Avenue, covered driveway. (M. Peterson, 1999.)

Plate 9 – Kilgour Block, 181 Bannatyne Avenue, sixth-floor windows and entablature. (M. Peterson, 1999.)

Plate 10 – Kilgour Block, 181 Bannatyne Avenue, rear (north) façade. (<u>M. Peterson, 1999</u>.)

Plate 11 – Kilgour Block, 181 Bannatyne Avenue, ground floor. (M. Peterson, 1999.)

Plate 12 – Kilgour Block, 181 Bannatyne Avenue, third floor. (M. Peterson, 1999.)

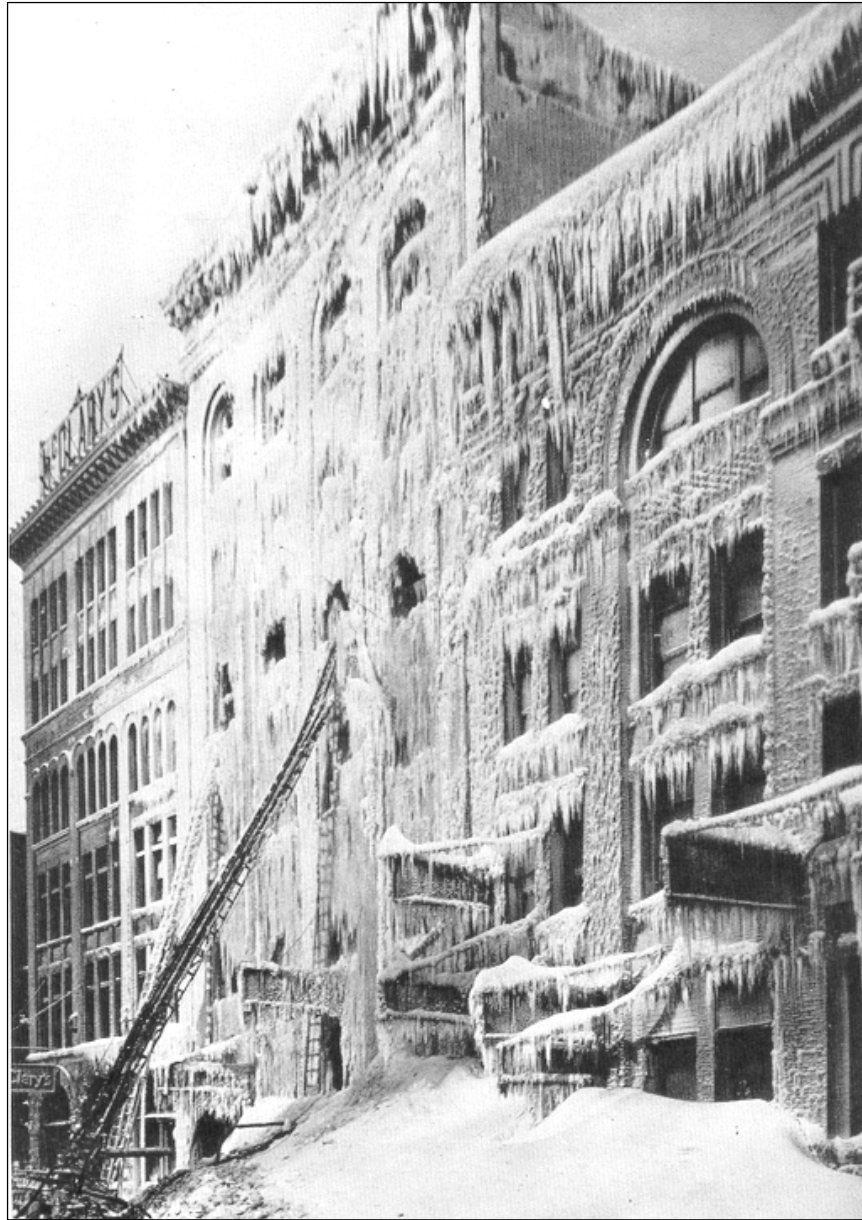Plate 13 – Kilgour Block, 181 Bannatyne Avenue, elevator/staircase. (M. Peterson, 1999.)

Plate 14 – Kelly Building and neighbouring structures coated with ice after January 14, 1911 fire.   (Reproduced from V. Leah, Alarm of Fire [Winnipeg: Firefighters Burn Fund, 1982], p. 80.)

Plate 15 – North side of Bannatyne Avenue west of Rorie Street, ca.1920. Kelly Building at arrow. (Courtesy of the City of Winnipeg.)

Plate 16 – Thomas Kelly and Sons, Contractors, 1911 letterhead. (City Archives, Architect's Plan #457/1911.)