



**200 CHARLES STREET**

**NORTH END POLICE SUBSTATION**

City of Winnipeg  
Historical Buildings Committee  
May 1990

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Without doubt the Police Department is the most important branch of any city government. Upon it devolves the responsibility of reducing crime to a minimum, thus improving the citizenship of a community, and raising it to the highest point of perfection police force is a great moral power in the community. It uplifts and elevates the individual citizen with any weak traits in his character through watchfulness, primarily, observing the class of his particular associates, and warning the wayward of the danger which he may be running by continuing the acquaintance of such evil or undesirable companions...Conditions would be infinitely worse than they are, if the weak, or criminally inclined, did not know that an officer of the law, clothed in the regulation uniform of blue, was patrolling the beat in which they dwell, ready, with an eye ever keen in observing wrongdoing, to do his duty and prevent crime whenever possible.<sup>1</sup>

In late 1870 a group of 20 mounted men under Captain Villiers was organized as the Red River Settlement's first police force.<sup>2</sup> Over succeeding decades, large increases in Winnipeg's population, including high numbers of transients and substantial concentrations of immigrants, were of major concern to the City's leaders and led directly to the hiring of extra constables.

Spatial considerations also defined the force's growth and organization. As Winnipeg's residential districts moved further from the downtown region, the force's job became much harder. In particular, establishment of two major residential districts, the North End and Fort Rouge, required police to rethink their policy of centralization. As a result, a new decentralized service was created to patrol the entire city more effectively. The main component of this new policy, which remained operational until the opening of the Public Safety Building on May 6, 1966, was the substation.<sup>3</sup>

In 1911 the city was organized into three areas, each with its own station, police detachment and jail facilities. In the North End, the large numbers of immigrant workers and the area's perceived reputation as a less-than-stable environment hastened construction of one of two substations built

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<sup>1</sup> City of Winnipeg Police Department, 1920 (Winnipeg-1920), p. 12. Below as 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> A Century of Service (Winnipeg - 1974), p. 109. Below as 1974.

that year. Situated on the corner of Charles Street and Magnus Avenue, the station opened on the evening of May 23, 1911.<sup>4</sup>

## STYLE

This station can best be described as a modest example of the Edwardian Classicism school that remained popular in North America in the 1900-1930 period. As one author put it, this style "restored simplicity and order to domestic architecture."<sup>5</sup> Elements such as smooth brick surfaces, generous fenestration, balanced facades and stylized, exaggerated classic ornamentation were common features. This ornamentation often took the form of stone string courses, keystones and voussoirs. The roof often showed a pronounced cornice with classic elements.<sup>6</sup>

## CONSTRUCTION

The North End Police Station is a solid brick, two-storey building with stone accents at the southwest corner of Charles and Magnus. The original permit lists the construction cost at \$27,000. The structure measures 17.4 x 24.4m (57x80') and stands on a stone foundation.<sup>7</sup>

## DESIGN

The stone foundation rises above grade to meet red brick walls on all sides except for the yellow brick used on the south facade (see Plate 1). Bricks are laid in a garden wall pattern.

The front or east facade holds the three main entrances to the building. A large wooden garage door leads to the stable/garage area and a double door of similar design gives entry to an open area off the garage. The public entrance is found near the structure's northeast corner. One unadorned

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<sup>4</sup> Telegram, May 24, 1911, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> J. Blumenson, Ontario Architecture (1990), p. 166.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 166-7.

<sup>7</sup> Assessment Records, #200300, Ward 3, PC 57.

rectangular window is placed further north on the facade to add natural light to the offices within. Above these four openings and running the entire length of the facade are smooth cement panels crowned by a stone belt course (originally a modestly ornate all-stone element (see Plate 2).

The second floor of the east facade contains five single rectangular windows (now boarded) with radiating brick heads, stone keystones and plain stone lug sills. There are also eight one-storey brick pilasters with stone heads and bases. These pilasters act as supports for a second cement band along the entire top of the building (replacing the original stone cornice). The facade is topped by a stone-capped brick parapet.

The north and west have similar window treatments, pilasters, belt courses and cement bands. The north facade is symmetrical. On the west facade, only one door appears; some of the six windows have radiating brick on cement heads; others do not have heads. The south facade has two doors (one on each floor) and six windows topped by either cement or brick heads.

## **INTERIOR**

Obviously prod of the buildings and their furnishings, the police force circulated glowing descriptions of the new substations. The fact that keeping men on the force was no mean feat also may explain the actions of the police. Both substations were equipped with reading and recreation rooms, a number of offices for constables and officers, stables for horses, and room for patrol wagons. Probably the most striking improvements were made in the jail cells. Here the criminal could look forward to dust-free rooms and "perfect sanitation" due to the fact that each of the 11 cells had facilities.<sup>8</sup> They also were equipped with two folding bunks attached to the walls. A vault, search rooms and signal room were also part of the stations.<sup>9</sup>

At present, the interior of the North End station is in very poor condition. The deteriorated roof has

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<sup>8</sup> Telegram, May 24, 1911, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Original Plans, City of Winnipeg.

allowed water to pour into all areas, destroying much of the ceilings, walls and remaining office furniture. The cells, while rusted and wet, show how cramped it must have been for two detainees to be locked up together. Access to the second floor could not be gained because most of it has fallen to the first floor.

## **INTEGRITY**

The building stands on its original site, has suffered little in the way of alteration on the exterior and is structurally sound. Permits listed against the building include:<sup>10</sup>

750/1950 - underpinning (7 piles) -	\$2,000
2610/1955 - repairs -	\$1,800
2546/1956 - new heat plant -	\$ 100
1895/1965 - alterations -	\$3,000

## **STREETSCAPE**

Because it was situated in a mostly residential neighbourhood, this structure was modestly ornamented to blend into its surroundings. Schools, churches and small corner stores are in the immediate area, and this building contributes to the sense of community.

## **ARCHITECT**

The architect of design for the Charles Street and Jessie Avenue substations demolished (see Plate 3) was E.H. Rodgers (see Plate 4).<sup>11</sup> Rodgers became a member of the Winnipeg Fire Department in August 1880 but was asked to resign his position as Chief in August 1899 (see Appendix I for biography).<sup>12</sup> He remained as a City building inspector till 1925, however. This is the first Rodgers building to be evaluated by the Committee.

<sup>10</sup> Assessment Records, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Building Permits, #2399/1910 and 2400/1910.

<sup>12</sup> Tribune, August 18, 1899, p. 3.

## INSTITUTION

Winnipeg for years has been a clearing house for hundreds of thousands of immigrants from all countries of the world. This immigration, and the close proximity of the United States border, over which the criminals across the line are only too eager and anxious to cross when scenting or fearing trouble, shows the alertness which the Winnipeg Police Department must exert at all times among such a cosmopolitan and heterogeneous population.<sup>13</sup>

The two new police substations were opened at 7:00 p.m. on May 23, 1911. The station in Fort Rouge received a call at 7:30 p.m. about a domestic squabble while the North End station remained quiet.<sup>14</sup>

This development had come less than 40 years after the creation of Winnipeg's first police force. The group under Captain Villiers was headquartered in 1870 on what is now Lombard Avenue. One year later the station was moved onto Main street south of what later became the site of City Hall.<sup>15</sup> When Winnipeg was organized as a city in 1874, the mounted group was dismantled and replaced by a new civic force of three men whose jurisdiction was limited to the City's boundaries.

During the next twenty-five years, the force saw many changes. In the boom of the early 1880s, its complement reached 40 in number, but in 1885, during the subsequent bust, there were only 13 men on staff.<sup>16</sup> In 1884 the station was moved to James Street and after 1885 a steady rise in the number of officers and men ensued.

A look at regulations dealing with police behaviour offers insight into the demands placed on constables by superiors and society. These, along with working conditions, help explain why so many men left the force soon after joining (some lasting only a few days!).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> 1920, p. 14.

<sup>14</sup> Telegram, May 24, 1911, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> 1920, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> 1974, p. 32.

For example:

No constable will be promoted who cannot write a good official letter or report, no matter how exemplary his conduct may be...A constable is to see every part of his beat in a given time, walking at the rate of two-and-a-half English miles per hour...If at any time he requires immediate assistance, and cannot obtain it any other way, he must sound his whistle; but this is to be done as seldom as possible, such alarm often creating the inconvenience it is intended to prevent, by assembling a crowd...,

Handkerchiefs around the heads or necks are not to be worn on duty...Constables are not to use their fingers instead of a pocket handkerchief.

Demands on the constables were plentiful and varied and working conditions were slow to improve.

In 1905 a Winnipeg policeman worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week, and earned \$77 a month (only \$12 more than in 1900). Requests in 1905 for a day off each month were refused until 1908. That year the 108-man force still worked seven days a week, 12 hours per shift (9 spent on patrol) and salaries had risen to \$80 per month. It was not until 1912 that police were given one day off per week.<sup>18</sup> The year 1908 also saw completion of new headquarters for the force at the corner of Rupert Avenue and Martha Street.<sup>19</sup>

By 1910 the proposal for two substations had moved to the construction phase and the entire city was divided into three areas of jurisdiction. Number 1 or 'A' Division, served by the Rupert Avenue station, was bounded by the Assiniboine River to the south and the C.P.R. tracks to the north. South of the river, Number 2 or 'B' Division worked out of the Fort Rouge substation on Jessie Avenue. The third substation was the North End, Number 5 or 'E' Division, with jurisdiction over the area north of the C.P.R. tracks.<sup>20</sup> The numbering and lettering system left two divisions for expansion purposes, likely eastern and western divisions.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> 1920, p. 16.

As one contemporary study observed,

Provision has been made by far-seeing Boards of Police Commissioners who have purchased sites in various parts of the City for extension of the Department when it is found necessary to do so.<sup>21</sup>

The openings of the two stations were attended by dignitaries, city politicians, newsmen and citizens interested in buildings reported to be "the most modern in Canada."<sup>22</sup> Cells for both male and female prisoners (each with sinks and toilets), and reading and recreation rooms for constables were included in the facilities.<sup>23</sup>

By 1920 both stations were in full swing. Division 'E' was comprised of an inspector, three sergeants and 45 men of varying rank. Division 'B' had an inspector, a sergeant and 18 men.<sup>24</sup> A list of duties performed over the year 1920 offers an interesting comparison between the two areas of the city:<sup>25</sup>

<b>DUTIES</b>	<b>DIVISION 'E'</b>	<b>DIVISION 'B'</b>
Crimes reported	683	xxx
General occurrences	6,029	4,136
Number of persons arrested	591	59
Number of persons arrested (1918)	688	279

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Telegram, May 24, 1911, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> 1920, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

Between 1920 and 1965, both the City of Winnipeg and its police force continued to grow. It soon became obvious that the department's buildings and general organization were outdated. On May 6, 1966 the Public Safety Building was opened, thus reintroducing a centralized police force to the city. On June 30, 1967, both 'B' and 'E' substations were closed.<sup>26</sup> The Charles Street substation was purchased by George Halayko a short time later. He planned to turn the building into a three or four suite residential block but his plans were abandoned (as was the structure).<sup>27</sup>

## **EVENT**

There is no known significant event connected with this building.

## **CONTEXT**

As mentioned previously, this substation and its twin in Fort Rouge were built in response to the growth and needs of the city as well as the latest theories in crime prevention. Placing the police in the midst of new residential areas increased reaction times and gave the force a higher local profile.

Acknowledgement of basic, prisoners' rights also moved the force to create more liveable 'accommodations' for those in their custody. As well, it was hoped that a more comfortable environment for officers and constables would alleviate the chronic problem of keeping men on the force.

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<sup>26</sup> 1974, pp. 35, 109.

<sup>27</sup> Assessment Records, op. cit.

**LANDMARK**

At the community level, the old North End Police Station would have been conspicuous and likely well used. Subsequent closure for over two decades has decreased this conspicuousness but the building nonetheless is still familiar to many in the area.

THANKS TO B. SANDISON AND THE WINNIPEG FIRE FIGHTERS'  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOR INFORMATION AND PICTURES

## APPENDIX I -

### Edward Herbert Rodgers

E.H. Rodgers was born January 19, 1857 in Orillia, Ontario but moved with his Irish mother and English father to Toronto in 1858. It was here that Rodgers received his public education and at age 14 took his first job in a lawyer's office. Three years later after his parents' deaths, he became an apprentice to Thomas Rickard, carpenter, joiner and builder. In 1878 Rodgers qualified as a journeyman and continued on at the same firm for another year, working on such buildings as the Walker Hotel and the Mutual Street Baptist Church.<sup>28</sup>

In April 1879, with a lack of meaningful prospects in Toronto, Rodgers arrived in Winnipeg ready to seek his fortune. So complete were his credentials that he was able to find work within hours of this arrival. One April 5 he began a three-year stint as foreman for the construction firm of Patterson and McComb. During this period he supervised the construction of Manitoba College, the Duffin Block and the Dundee Block.<sup>29</sup>

Rodgers became a volunteer fire fighter in 1880. The brigade at that time was a small-scale operation, divided into three companies: the hose, salvage, and hood and ladder teams. Rodgers was lieutenant of the last team in 1882 when the city organized a paid fire department following several major fires.<sup>30</sup>

Relying on the Counsel of Montreal fire expert W.O. McRobie, the new department was organized in mid-1882 with three fire halls and a modest amount of men and supplies. Central Fire Hall or #1 was located at 345 William Avenue.<sup>31</sup> South Hall or #1 was situated at the northwest corner of York Avenue and Smith Street. The third station, North Hall, was temporarily located in a wooden shack (see Plate #5) at the northeast corner of Maple Street and Fonseca Avenue (now Higgins). In April

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<sup>28</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, August 27, 1910, p. 1.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Henderson's Directory, 1896.

1883<sup>32</sup> this was replaced by a large brick edifice (see Plate #6) which, in turn, was replaced in 1904 by the present Fire Hall #2 at 56 Maple Street.

Rodgers was hired on as Foreman (later known as Captain) of Fire Hall #3, a position he retained for 13 years. In 1883 this fire hall was comprised of a Chief Assistant, Engineer, Foreman Rodgers, a stoker and five firemen.<sup>33</sup>

In 1895 a series of fires that got out of control and destroyed entire buildings, including the new Mulvey School, cost Fire Chief William Code his job. A contemporary account noted that because of a lack of water, firemen "were forced to walk about with their hands in their pockets"<sup>34</sup> at Mulvey School. The next day, a spokesman for the waterworks company stated that the firemen did not have water because the Chief could not read a map and locate hydrants. Even though Chief Code replied that the maps were not trustworthy, enough doubt had been created over his ability to lead the department. The Fire, Water and Light Committee asked for his resignation. On June 11, E.H. Rodgers replaced William Code as Chief; Code replaced Rodgers at Fire Hall #3.<sup>35</sup>

The circumstances that conspired to promote Rodgers to the rank of Chief ultimately forced his own resignation. This time, the incident involved destruction of the Manitoba Hotel in a February 1899 fire and subsequent public criticism of the fire department's organization and equipment. A popular opinion of the day was that "once fire was started in a building in Winnipeg it was practically never stopped."<sup>36</sup> Citing a lack of discipline and reports from brigade members of favouritism, Rodgers resigned on August 18, 1899 and was replaced by John E. Buckanan.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with B. Sandison, Treasurer, Winnipeg Fire Fighter's Historical Society.

<sup>33</sup> Henderson's Directory, 1883.

<sup>34</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, April 10, 1895, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, April 11, 1895, p. 1; and Tribune, June 11, 1895, p. 5.

<sup>36</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, February 9, 1899, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, August 18, 1899, p. 3; and Henderson's Directory, 1899.

After his resignation and failure to land a job as Toronto's Fire Chief,<sup>38</sup> Rodgers was able to devote all his energy to being a City building inspector. Given his expertise in the building trade, he had been appointed as one of the City's first inspectors in 1895, the same year he had become Fire Chief.<sup>39</sup> It was a position he held until 1925, becoming Chief Inspector and working along side his son, George, an assistant inspector.<sup>40</sup>

During his tenure, Rodgers was able to introduce many by-laws improving his job and increasing the power of inspectors. One of his more important by-laws introduced a charge for building permits. Due to the large number of structures being built, this fee turned out to be a financial windfall for the city.<sup>41</sup>

In addition to the two police substations, it appears that Rodgers was responsible for one other Winnipeg building. He was the architect of design for a police department patrol and signal station on the south side of Rupert Avenue in 1911<sup>42</sup>

Unfortunately, the end of the Rodgers story is incomplete. The Henderson's Directory after 1925 does not list him as a resident, no record of a pension from the City of Winnipeg exists, and no information on his death is available at the Manitoba Genealogical Society or area funeral homes.

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<sup>38</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, October 31, 1899, p. 5.

<sup>39</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, August 27, 1910, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Henderson's Directory, 1899-1930.

<sup>41</sup> Winnipeg Tribune, August 27, 1910, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> Building Permit, #204/1911.

**200 CHARLES STREET – NORTH END POLICE SUBSTATION**



Plate 1 – 200 Charles Street, former North End Police Substation. (M. Peterson, 1990.)

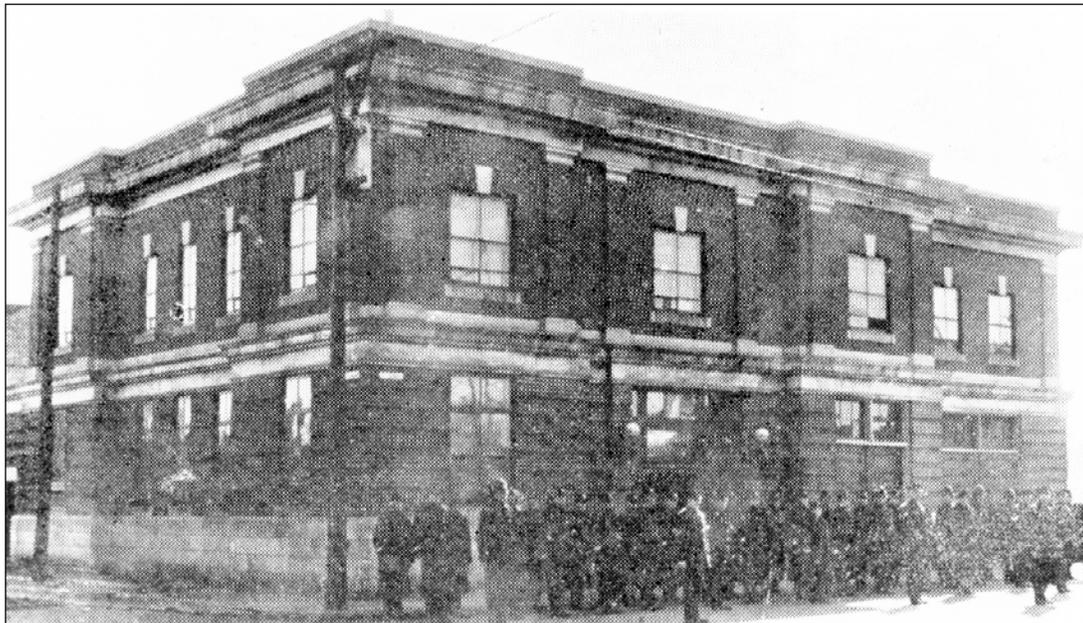


Plate 2 – 200 Charles Street, North End Police Substation, n.d. Negative has been reversed.  
(Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)

**200 CHARLES STREET – NORTH END POLICE SUBSTATION**



Plate 3 – Jessie Avenue, Fort Rouge Substation, n.d., now demolished. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)



Plate 4 – E.H. Rodgers, ca.1894. (Courtesy of the Winnipeg Fire Fighters Historical Society.)

**200 CHARLES STREET – NORTH END POLICE SUBSTATION**



Plate 5 – Temporary Fire Hall No. 3, Maple Street, ca.1882. (Courtesy of the Winnipeg Fire Fighters Historical Society.)



Plate 6 – Fire Hall No. 3, 57 Maple Street, ca.1904. (Courtesy of the Winnipeg Fire Fighters Historical Society.)