



259 CHURCH AVENUE
CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
November 2017

This building embodies the following heritage values as described in the *Historical Resources By-law, 55/2014* (consolidated update July 13, 2016):

- (a) It is one of the North End's older education buildings, opened in 1912 as part of an expansion of a higher learning institution that dates back to the very beginning of European settlement in the area;
- (b) It is associated with the Anglican Church and its educational institution, St. John's College, as well as the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada's St. Andrew's College and Canadian Nazarene College;
- (c) It was designed by local contractor and architect E.G. Sherwood and built by local contractors Worswick Brothers;
- (d) It is designed in the Neo-Classical or Classical Revival style, popular for large public buildings of the pre-World War I period;
- (e) It is a conspicuous building within its mainly-residential neighbourhood; and
- (f) The building's exterior has suffered little alteration.

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS

Church of England missionary Reverend John West (1778-1845) arrived at the Red River Settlement in October 1820 to fulfill Lord Selkirk's earlier promise to provide Protestant clergy to the new community.¹ He began a school in a log cabin in what is now West Kildonan a month later, part of the Church Missionary Society's plan to evangelize the area's indigenous population.

In July of 1822, he opened a schoolhouse and temporary church that provided residential space for indigenous children and day-school space for settlers' children, located near the southeast corner of the present-day St. John's Cathedral Cemetery (east of Mortimer Place).² Education for the local children, mostly Métis, was more concentrated on "civilizing" them and domestic skills for girls and horticulture for boys was taught.³ In 1833, Red River Academy (Plate 1) was opened by Reverend by West's successor, Reverend David Jones (ca.1796-1844).

By 1849, after a succession of headmasters, the school was taken over by Bishop David Anderson (1814-1885) with the goal of "educating and training of native teachers" and renamed St. John's Collegiate School, utilizing and expanding the original Academy buildings.⁴ It also had a seminary role which was often referred to as St. John's College, although one historian described the College as a "virtual" institution without "hard physical presence."⁵ The Collegiate and the virtual College closed in 1859 amid heavy financial losses.

Bishop Robert Machray (1831-1904) restarted St. John's College in 1866 after several months of restoration work on the old Academy buildings. It again concentrated on providing pre-university

¹ "West, John," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VII (1836-1850), online edition, © 1988–2017, University of Toronto/Université Laval.

² R.R. Rostecki, "64 St. Cross Street, Former Caretaker's House," report for the Historical Buildings Committee, 1994, p. 1.

³ J.M. Bumsted, St. John's College. Faith and Education in Western Canada (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2006, pp. 4-5.

⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

education – both theological and general – to the area’s youth and by the spring of 1867 had three senior theological students and 26 pupils (Plate 2).⁶ In 1871, the College was incorporated by the Province of Manitoba and continued to function and expand.

The next major event was the creation of the University of Manitoba in 1877, a federated institution comprised of autonomous denominational colleges – St. Boniface, St. John’s and Manitoba – meaning each of the colleges would pay for both the secular and theological education of its students, the University only testing and handing out degrees.⁷

In late 1880, the St. John’s College Ladies School was opened in a new building close to the cathedral (Plate 3) but lack of enrolment meant the school’s debt rose steadily.⁸ Despite this, the church and Bishop Machray moved forward with grandiose plans for a new college building, using money from land sales, inflated by the real estate boom of 1881-1882. Only a small portion of the original building was completed and opened in 1884 (Plates 4 and 5). So poorly was the new building designed – especially heating and drainage – that the younger students were forced to return to the old College building on the river.⁹ Many of the church land buyers reneged on their purchases, leaving the church with little endowment and facilities much larger than necessary.

The College continued to evolve and grow into the 20th century, including increased Arts and Science instruction, even as the University of Manitoba moved to create a modern campus in downtown Winnipeg and begin offering classes.¹⁰ Modern upgrades in 1900 allowed the old school building by the river to be abandoned but the College continued to suffer from financial problems.¹¹

Over the next decade, the University of Manitoba and its founding colleges were at the heart of a debate over where the University should be located (downtown Winnipeg, in Tuxedo and finally in

⁶ R.R. Rostecki, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

⁷ J.M. Bumsted, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-30.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-37; 43. In 1892, women were admitted for the first time into St. John’s College.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 45-55.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 48 and 59. Electrical lighting was not added to the building until 1904.

what became Fort Garry) and how it should operate. Each college council had its own opinion, as did the Provincial Government and many other interested people and organizations. But as these debates continued, the individual colleges continued to operate independently according to their own needs.

In the early 1910s, requests for an ice rink and gymnasium/drill hall were forwarded to the St. John's College's Council and both became part of the Main Street campus by 1912 (Plate 6). Also in 1912, the College decided to increase its size by building a three-storey structure just north across Church Avenue, supplying modern classroom and student residential space (Plate 7).

STYLE

This building is a fine example of the Neo-Classical or Classical Revival style, which as the name suggests, was a redefinition and revisiting of classical architecture form and ornamentation. Popular from 1900 into the 1930s in North America, its designs included columns, capitals, pediments and Greek or Roman embellishments.¹² Main façades were normally symmetrical, cladding smooth and rooflines flat. Windows and doors were placed in both lintelled and arched openings; the latter was especially prevalent in the most ornamentally complex variant of the style, Beaux-Arts Classicism.

Examples in Winnipeg are numerous and include the Thomas Scott Memorial Orange Lodge, 216 Princess Street (completed in 1903), Imperial Bank of Commerce, 441 Main Street (1906), the Bank of Nova Scotia, 254 Portage Avenue (1910) and the Bank of Montreal, 335 Main Street (1913). Government buildings also used the style extensively: Provincial Land Titles Building, 433 Broadway (1903-1904), Law Courts Building, 411 Broadway (1912-1916), the Legislative Building, 450 Broadway (1913-1920) and Powerhouse, 219 Memorial Boulevard (1914).

¹² Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, 1991), pp. 18-19.

CONSTRUCTION

This solid common red brick and reinforced concrete building stands three storeys tall on a raised stone foundation 50.8 centimetres wide (see Appendix I for technical information).¹³ The building measures approximately 29.3 x 13.4 metres and cost \$65,000 to complete in 1912.¹⁴

DESIGN

The front (south) façade is symmetrically, the dark red brick walls accented with light limestone resting on a raised, rough-cut stone clad foundation (Plate 8). The centrally-located main entrance is placed in a projecting section and is accessed by a short flight of stairs (Plate 9). Limestone is used around the arched and rectilinear window openings on all upper floors, as a belt course between the first and second floors and as bases and heads for the brick pilasters of the upper two storeys. Corbelled brick above the third storey windows leads to a stone-capped parapet with crenelation which has been altered with application of stucco (Plates 10 and 11).

The side elevations, east and west, continue the architectural vocabulary of the front façade and both include metal fire escapes (Plates 12 and 13) and boarded and brick-in window openings. The rear of the building is plain and includes a raised stone foundation wall, arched window openings on all levels and a stuccoed surface covering the original brick walls (Plate 14).

INTERIOR

The original plans for the building call for two floors, basement and ground floor, devoted mainly to classrooms, all off a wide central hallway.¹⁵ The basement held two classrooms, washrooms and a Day Students' Room in the west end with boiler room, caretaker's space and a large classroom that could be divided into two smaller spaces. On the ground floor, there were three classrooms as well as a library/reading room, Ladies' Parlour and Cloak Room, Master's Room, Warden's Office and

¹³ City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 420920-12-3, PC19. Below as AR.

¹⁴ City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #1402/1912.

¹⁵ Architect's Plans, #1402/1912.

four small bedrooms (Plate 15). The second and third floors each held a central washroom and 16 bedrooms of varying sizes. Two sets of stairs, centrally located, give access to the basement from the ground floor but only the south staircase gave access to the upper two floors.

This interior layout does not appear to have been significantly altered by subsequent occupants until 1968 when the building was converted into an apartment block. Plans describe a basement with a locker room in the northeast corner and two suites along the south side. The upper three floors were similarly arranged with four, 2-bedroom suites with living rooms and dining rooms on each level (Plate 16).¹⁶

According to City of Winnipeg records, the facility now holds 16 suites, 13 @ 1 bedroom and 3 @ 2 bedrooms.¹⁷ There are 3 suites in the basement, 4 each on the ground and second floors and 5 on the top floor. Nothing remains of the building's original layout or finishes (Plates 17-19).

INTEGRITY

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. Significant alterations to the exterior have not been made despite the change in occupancy and use over the years.

STREETSCAPE

This block stands on the north side of Church Avenue on the east corner of Charles Street and although the remainder of the nearby institutional structures have been demolished, its façades are visible and contribute to their streetscapes (Plate 20).

¹⁶ Architect's Plans, #2170/1968.

¹⁷ AR.

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

The Annex was designed by Edward George Sherwood (1863-1948), English born and trained carpenter who came to Manitoba in 1897 and worked in the offices of several Winnipeg architects before opening his own office in 1906 (see Appendix II for biographical information). This is the first Sherwood work evaluated by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

Contractors for the building were the local firm Worswick Brothers. James Worswick was born in England in 1878, coming to Canada in 1904 and living in Winnipeg by 1906.¹⁸ He worked as a contractor, stonemason and bricklayer and formed a partnership with his brother George, ca.1910. The last building permit taken out by the firm was in 1915, however, they brothers had also begun a lime quarry venture near Inwood, MB in 1913.¹⁹

Local work completed by the brothers includes:

- Norquay School addition, Euclid Street (1911) – demolished
- Canadian Oil Company Warehouse, Lewis Street (1910) – demolished
- City of Winnipeg Incinerator, Stadacona Street (1911) – demolished
- Lord Selkirk School No. 2, Brazier Street (1912) – demolished
- St. John's College Annex, 259 Church Street (1912)
- Gordon-King United Church (Elmwood Presbyterian Church), 127 Cobourg Avenue (1912)
- St. John's College Gymnasium, Main Street (1912) – demolished
- Winnipeg School Board Offices addition, William Avenue (1913) – demolished
- Metallic Roofing Company Warehouse, Winnipeg Avenue (1913)
- St. Alphonsus Roman Catholic Church, 341 Munroe Avenue (1914) – demolished
- George V School No. 1, 265 Gray Street (1915)
- Luxton School addition, 111 Polson Avenue (1915-1916)

PERSON/INSTITUTION

In 1913, the University of Manitoba agreed to accept the offer from the Government of Manitoba to relocate its campus from the Broadway site to its present location in Fort Garry. Soon after,

¹⁸ Canada Census, 1906.

¹⁹ "Worswick, James," Memorable Manitobans, Manitoba Historical Society website, 2017.

St. John's College's council accepted the University's offer of space in the new campus for a college building. This move, however, would not come quickly.²⁰

In 1922, St. John's College returned to its original male-only enrolment, only to re-admit female students a decade later. The College continued to suffer from financial problems caused by its operating deficit. Enrolment for the 1925-1926 year was 78 at the College, with 40 in residence and 237 at the school with 88 in residence.²¹

On the eve of the new school year in 1932, the College's chancellor and bursar and nephew of Archbishop Machray, John A. Machray, was arrested for embezzling money from the college, the diocese and the university.²² The College struggled on, but by the 1940s, with enrolment down, it looked to divest itself from the Main Street property. In late 1944, it sold it to the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada and moved to the corner of Broadway and Hargrave Street, the university's Music and Arts Building and originally the home of James H. Ashdown.²³

The new owners occupied the Annex on Church Avenue as St. Andrew's College, which had operated a seminary in Saskatchewan in 1918 and moved to Winnipeg in 1932. The creation of the actual college occurred with its incorporation in September 1946, offering degree programs (Faculty of Theology), regular high school (continued until 1953) and Ukrainian Cultural Summer Programs (continued until the 1980s)²⁴ from the former Annex building.²⁵ This College

²⁰ J.M. Bumsted, The University of Manitoba: An Illustrated History (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2001). The Manitoba Agriculture College moved from Tuxedo to Fort Garry beginning in the early 1910s and merged with the University of Manitoba in 1924. It took until 1950 for the University to completely vacate the Broadway site.

²¹ J.M. Bumsted, St. John's College. Faith and Education in Western Canada, op. cit., p. 104.

²² Ibid., pp. 109-114. It was estimated that the diocese and college lost nearly \$1 million.

²³ Ibid., pp. 130-133. It would be 1958 before St. John's College finally moved to the Fort Garry Campus.

²⁴ "St. Andrew's College," University of Manitoba website, www.umanitoba.ca/colleges/st_andrews/information.htm, no date. Below as St. Andrew's.

²⁵ R.R. Rostecki, op. cit. The original 1883-1884 building was demolished in 1950.

also vacated the Church Avenue building in favour of the University of Manitoba campus, becoming an associated college in 1962 and opening their new building in the spring of 1964.²⁶

The next occupant was the Canadian Nazarene College which had been founded in Calgary, AB in 1921 as the Calgary Bible Institute, associated with that city's First Church of the Nazarene. It relocated to Red Deer, AB in 1927 and then to Winnipeg in 1961 as the Canadian Nazarene College. It occupied the former Annex Building for only a short time; in 1965 it had an enrolment of 90 students and moved to new facilities in Fort Garry after the school year in 1966.²⁷ The institution ultimately returned to Calgary in 1994 and now operates as Ambrose University.²⁸

In 1968, the Church Avenue facility was converted into an apartment block.

EVENT

There is no known important historical event connected with this building.

CONTEXT

This structure, original a college and dormitory facility, was built during Winnipeg's pre-World War I boom period when dramatic population growth fuelled economic and social expansion throughout the City. The leaders of St. John's College, like so many others, were caught up in this era of optimism, believing the growth would continue for the foreseeable future. The coming of World War I and the opening of the Panama Canal, among other events, ended Winnipeg's role as premier city of Western Canada and the Annex, like other expansion projects, was found to be an overextension.

²⁶ St. Andrew's.

²⁷ AR.

²⁸ Ambrose University website, ambrose.edu/about/history-traditions, no date.

LANDMARK

This building is somewhat removed from Main Street but would be conspicuous in its neighbourhood.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Building Address: 259 Church Avenue

Building Name: Church Block Apartments

Original Use: education

Current Use: multi-tenant residential

Roll No. (Old): 420920 (7613)

RSN: 166013

Municipality: 12

Ward: 3

Property or Occupancy Code: 19

Legal Description: 43/44^W St. John, Plan 2264, Lot 33 (except east 8')

Location: northeast corner Charles Street

Date of Construction: 1912

Storeys: 3

Heritage Status: NOMINATED LIST

Construction Type: brick, reinforced concrete and stone foundation

Building Permits (Plans available: [CS] City Storage; [M] Microfilm):

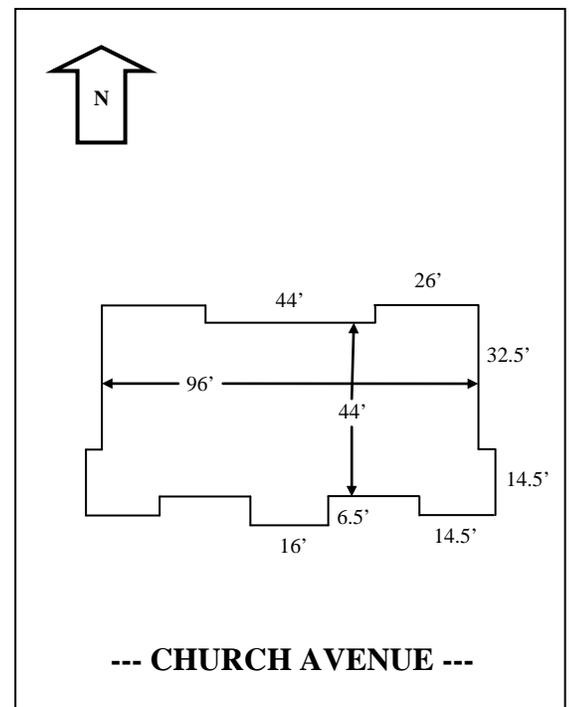
- 1402/1912 [CS] \$65,000 (original); 94/1943 \$300 (repairs); 4212/1945 \$2,500 (repairs); 2276/1961 \$3,000 (repairs); 2170/1968 [M143] \$20,000 (renovations); 7311/1978 \$600 (interior alterations); 117/1991 \$400 (fire upgrades)

Information:

- 45 x 96 x 40 + = 180,424 cu. ft.
- Walls- B- 20" stone; 1st- 17" common red brick; 2nd- 13" brick; 3rd- 9" brick
- Ceilings- B- 10'; 1st- 10½'; 2nd & 3rd- 9½'
- Permit 4212/1945- floors sanded, re-plastering
- Permit 2276/1961- convert to gas heat, new partitioning
- 16 suites, 13 @ 1 bedroom and 3 @ 2 bedrooms

ARCHITECT – SHERWOOD, EDWARD GEORGE

CONTRACTOR – WORSWICK BROTHERS



APPENDIX II

Edward George Sherwood

E.G. Sherwood was born in Wallisdowne (now part of the communities of Poole and Bournemouth), Hampshire, England in 1863, training and working as a carpenter (his father was a local contractor) before immigrating to Manitoba in 1897.¹

His son, Arthur, was born the following year, in the Parish of St. Paul, Manitoba but the family soon moved into Winnipeg, settling in the North End.² Sherwood worked for five years, 1901-1906, in the office of prominent local architect George C. Browne, and in this capacity supervised the construction of the Fort Garry Court Apartments, 160 Main Street, built 1902-1903.³ Sherwood opened his own architectural practice in 1906 and remained active until 1922, mostly designing modest single-family dwellings in many of the City's residential neighbourhoods.⁴ After his wife's death he moved to Victoria, BC. He died there on November 21, 1948.⁵

A list of his work would include:⁶

- St. John's Anglican Cathedral, chancel addition, 135 Anderson Avenue (1906-1907)
- Edgar Elford House, Cathedral Avenue East (1907)
- St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church, 196 McIntosh Avenue (1907) – demolished
- Archbishop of Rupertsland's Residence, St. Cross Street (1909)
- Polson School, Winterton Avenue (1910-1912 and 1911 and 1913 additions) – demolished

¹ "Sherwood, Edward George," Memorable Manitobans on Manitoba Historical Society website, www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/sherwood_eg.shtml, 2015 (below as Memorable Manitobans); and Canada Census, 1906.

² Memorable Manitobans; and Canada Census, 1906-1921. He and wife Jemima Caroline "Ima" (nee. Legge, 1867-1922) had two other children: Nora Doreen (1899-?) and Charles Hurl (1909-?). The family is listed as living at 317 St. Johns Avenue in 1906 and 364 College Avenue 1911-1921.

³ "Sherwood, Edward G.," in R.G. Hill (ed.), Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950, www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/1803 (below as Hill).

⁴ City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1926 (below as Ledgers).

⁵ Memorable Manitobans.

⁶ Ibid.; Hill; and Ledgers.

E.G. Sherwood designs (continued):

- St. John's College Skating Rink, Anderson Avenue (1910) – demolished
- Frank Moses House, Derby Street (1910) – demolished
- St. John's College Addition (gymnasium), Main Street (1912) – demolished
- St. John's College Annex, 259 Church Avenue (1912)
- School for the East Kildonan School Board, Polson Avenue (1913)
- Clark Brothers and Company Warehouse, Henry Avenue (1918) – not built
- St. John's College (small addition in 1919 and large additions in 1920 and 1921), Main Street – demolished
- St. Cuthbert's Anglican Church Rectory, 200 McIntosh Avenue (1921)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 1 – St. John’s Church (left), Red River Academy (middle, two structures connected by walkway) and Bishop’s Residence (right), Kildonan, ca.1852 as drawn by a student of the Academy. (Archives of Manitoba, “Red River Settlement- Schools- Red River Academy,” N17238.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 2 – St. John’s College, banks of the Red River opposite present-day Mortimer Place, ca.1883. This shows the 1873-1874 expansion of the Academy facility including the low tower on the east side roof used as the College’s observatory and meteorological station. (Archives of Manitoba, Herbert Swinford Collection #34.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS

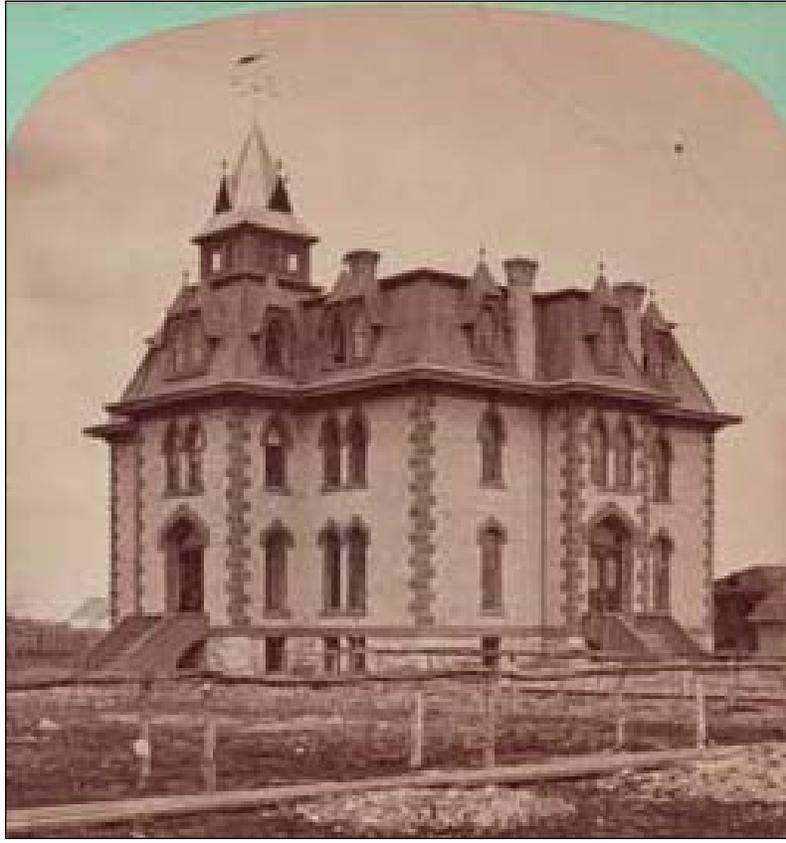


Plate 3 – St. John's College Ladies School, ca.1880. (Archives of Manitoba, "St. Johns Ladies College- 6".)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 4 – The original plan for St. John's College on Main Street, as drawn by architects C.A. and E.W. Barber. Only the smaller portions on the right side were ever built. (Archives of Manitoba.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS

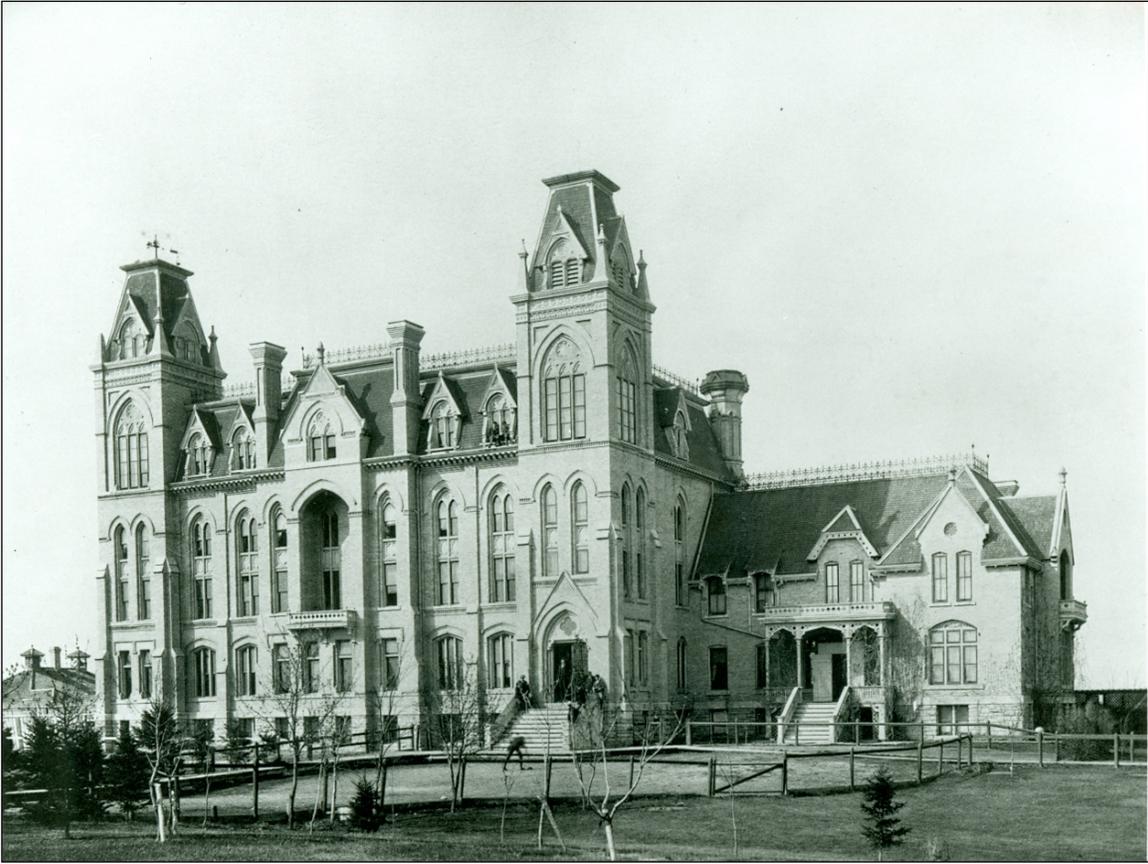


Plate 5 – St. John's College, southwest corner Main Street and Church Avenue, 1900. ([Archives of Manitoba, "St. John's College- 6," N10839.](#))

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS

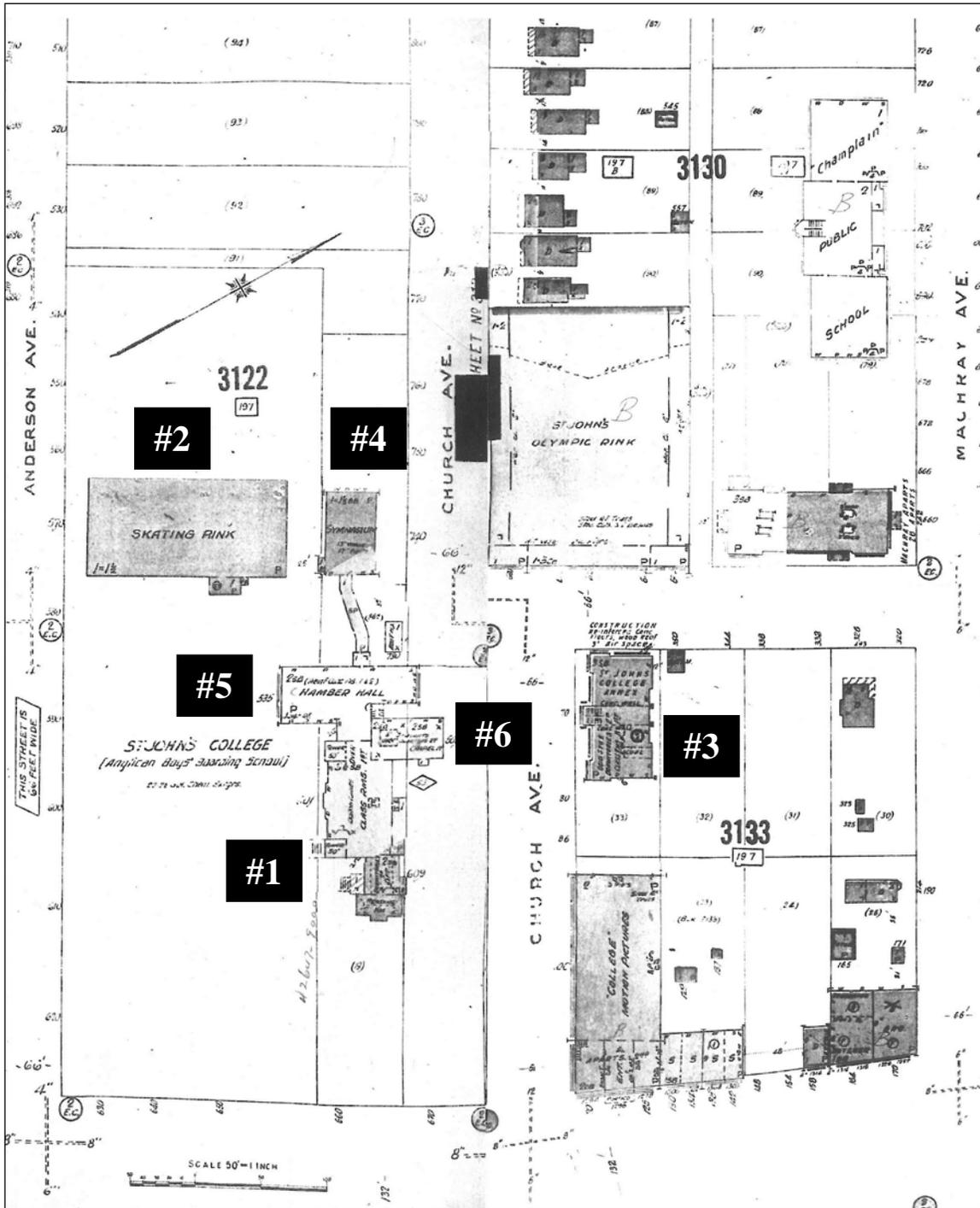


Plate 6 – St. John's College Campus, Main Street at Church Avenue, ca.1920. Building include: #1- Original structure (1883-1884); #2- Skating Rink (1910 via Building Permit [below as BP] #2411); #3- Annex (1912 via BP #1402); #4- Gymnasium (1912 via BP #2576); #5- Hamber Hall (1920 via BP #1524 and named after its benefactor); and #6- Chapel (2nd storey added 1919 via BP #891). (Fire Atlas, Vol. III, Sheets 312 and 313.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS

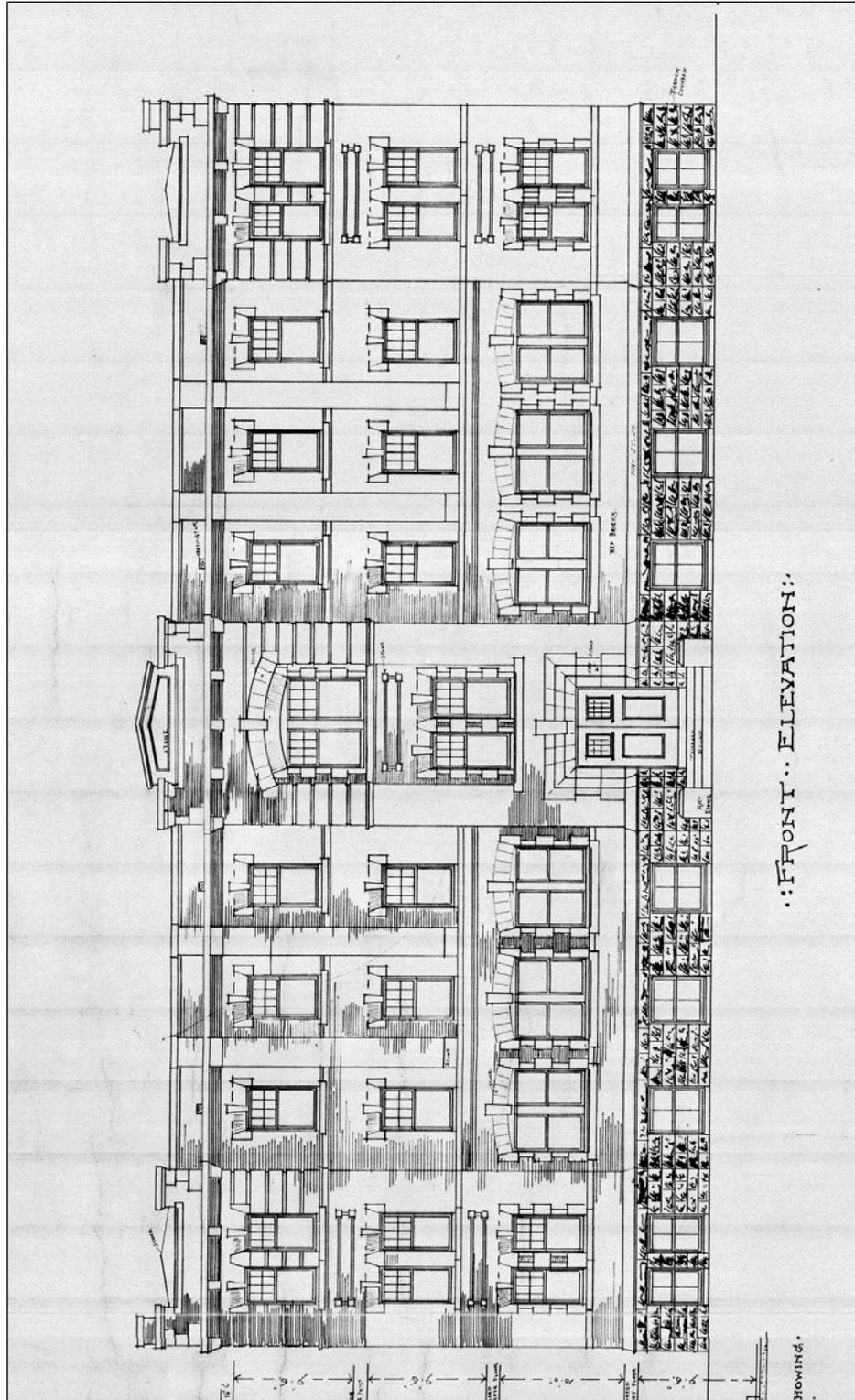


Plate 7 – St. John’s College Annex, Church Avenue, “Front Elevation,” 1912. (Architect’s Plans #1402/1912, City of Winnipeg.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 8 – Church Block Apartments, 259 Church Avenue, front (south) and west façades, 2017.
(M. Peterson, 2017.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 9 – Church Block Apartments, 259 Church Avenue, detail of front (south) façade, 2017.
(M. Peterson, 2017.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 10 – Church Block Apartments, 259 Church Avenue, parapet detail, front (south) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 11 – Church Block Apartments, 259 Church Avenue, southeast corner, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 12 – Church Block Apartments, 259 Church Avenue, east façade, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 13 – Church Block Apartments, 259 Church Avenue, west façade, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 14 – Church Block Apartments, 259 Church Avenue, rear (north) façade, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS

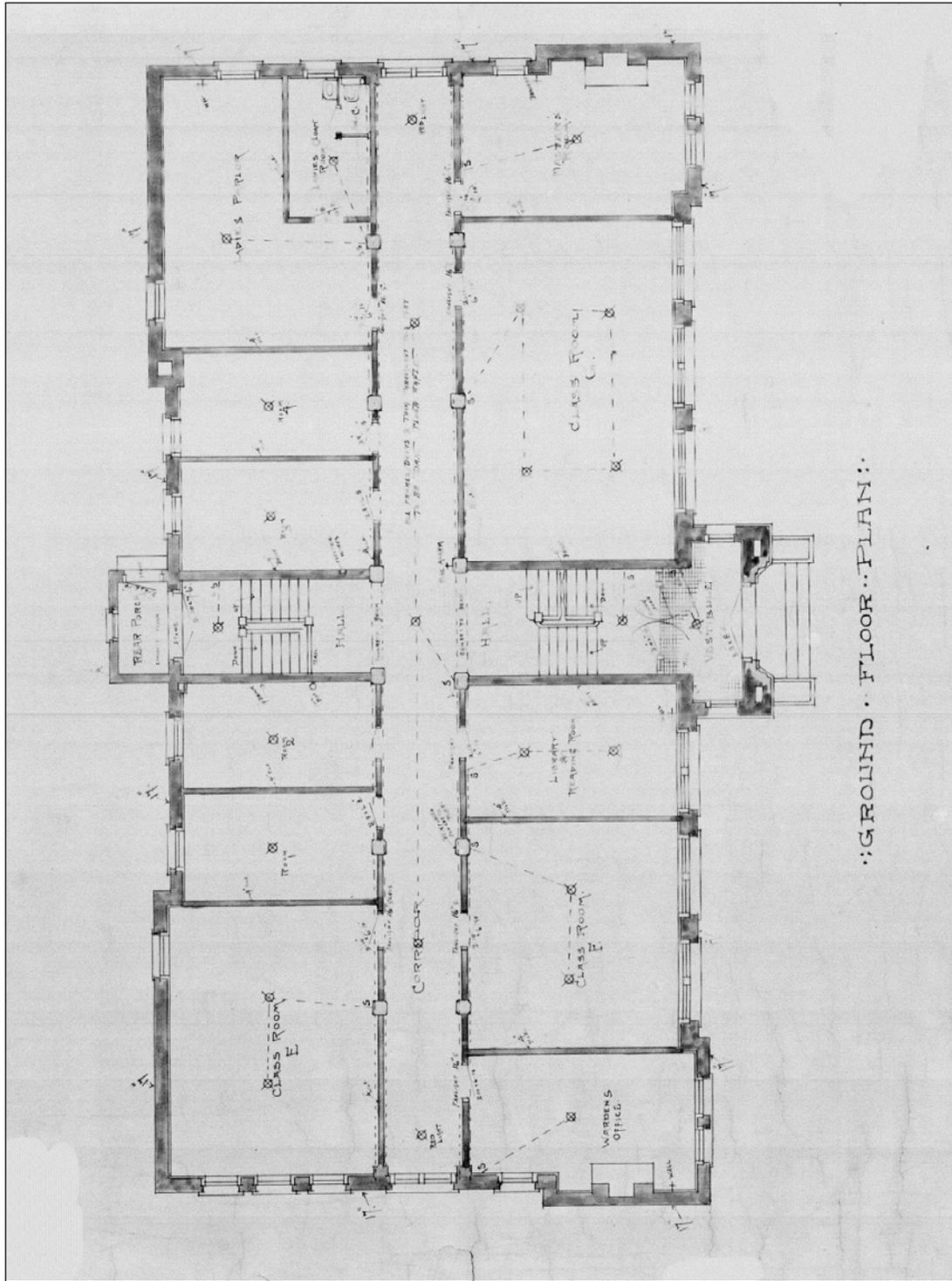


Plate 15 – St. John’s College Annex, Church Avenue, “Ground Floor Plan,” 1912. (Architect’s Plans #1402/1912, City of Winnipeg.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS

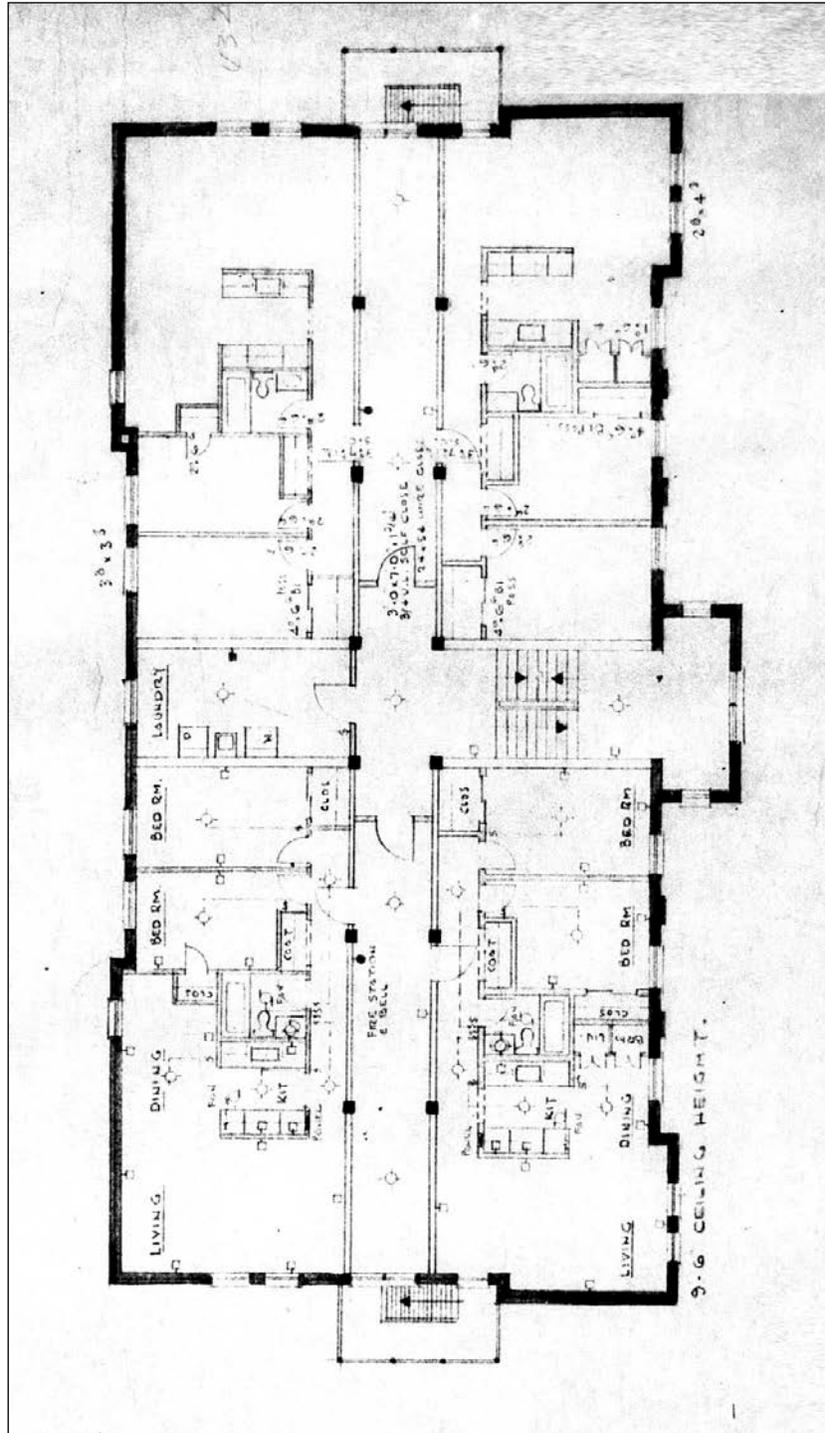


Plate 16 – St. John’s College Annex, Church Avenue, “Second Floor Plan,” 1968. (Architect’s Plans #2170/1968, City of Winnipeg.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 17 – Church Block Apartments, 259 Church Avenue, wooden bannister, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 18 – Church Block Apartments, 259 Church Avenue, main floor suite, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 19 – Church Block Apartments, 259 Church Avenue, hallway, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS



Plate 20 – Looking north along Charles Street from Church Avenue, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)