

**80 LOMBARD AVENUE – THOMAS BLACK BUILDING**  
*Unknown, 1896; Unknown, 1898; Hooper & Walker, 1907*



Built in three sections and now functioning as one building, the Thomas Black Building is located at the east end of Lombard Avenue in the northeast corner of Winnipeg's famous warehouse district that developed and expanded on both sides of Main Street.

It was originally home to the Union Shoe and Leather Company, which built the small, two-storey brick warehouse (measuring 9.2 metres wide by 19.5 metres long) now located in the northeast corner of the structure in 1896. The south portion of the building, originally three-storeys tall, was built two years later with an upper storey addition built at an unknown date. A 22.9-centimetre interior fire wall divides this south building from the original structure. In 1907, the new owner of the building, Thomas Black (1856-1914) built the final portion (northwest corner); a solid brick building on a raised rubblestone foundation includes stone accenting and

measuring 18.9 metres wide and 18.8 metres deep. It was much more ornate than the earlier structures, Black intending on using the entire building as rental property.

Black was one of many flourishing businessmen in Winnipeg in the 1890-1915 era who had arrived in the city, learned a trade and then launched his own venture (hardware manufacturers' wholesaler in 1894), found early success and invested profit into the lucrative real estate sector. It was a story told many times in the city and at the time of his death in August 1914, his estate was worth nearly \$½ million.

All three portions of this warehouse were built using the most common construction method of the time – the mill system – a square timber beam and post support network with beams attached to the solid brick exterior walls and covered by wood plank flooring. This was a very popular system in warehouse districts throughout North America because of its sturdiness, the ease of adding additional storeys and its ability to suffer fire damage and not collapse.

Stylistically, the pre-1900 buildings are not highly ornamented, while the 1907 addition features extensive classical detailing, possibly to make the building more attractive from the curb to potential tenants.

The original 1896 warehouse is an unadorned, modest warehouse – the front (north) façade has a rough cut stone base, ornamental brick work around window and door openings and a brick cornice with raised central area, corbelling and open geometric shapes. The building's east side is a continuation of the basic design.

The south building is also plainly designed with large rectilinear window openings with brick accenting. The south elevation of this section boasts three raised loading entrances at the level of rail cars on the spur line. The west side of the south portion continues this design.

The northwest building of 1907 is the most ornate, with rough and smooth cut stone accenting, a heavily embellished central main entrance on the main (north) façade and stone cladding to the second storey with a smooth cornice leading to the brick walls above. Windows on the upper

floors are rectilinear and a modest cornice divides the third and fourth floors. This upper storey includes attached, unfluted brick columns with modest capitals. A heavy overhanging metal cornice finished the block but it has since been removed.

Alterations to the exterior have been minimal, painted advertisement is prominent on the building's west and south walls.

The interior of the building features areas with extremely high ceilings, some with ornamental tin cladding, open warehouse space with heavy wood beams and posts and original metal-clad fire doors to prevent fire from spreading.

Tenancy of the Thomas Black Building has been extremely varied, with wholesalers, manufacturers and agents occupying space in the building. The most recent tenant of the structure, the Scott-Bathgate Company, took over the building in ca.1945.

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

#### Exterior-

- Three- and four-storey brick and stone building with flat roof located on the south side of Lombard Avenue, its main façade facing north onto Lombard Avenue, its east and rear (south) facing back lanes and its west façade facing a parking lot;
- West end of the north façade with its rough stone main floor cladding, metal grated raised basement windows, centrally-placed main entrance with its smooth stone pedimented frame, windows in arched openings with keystones, modest stone cornice, upper floors with windows in rectilinear openings, cornice dividing the third and fourth floors and top storey with attached, unfluted brick columns with modest capitals and a flat roof;
- The east end of the north façade with rough cut stone base, ornamental brick work around main floor openings, stone lug sills, radiating brick heads above the rectilinear window openings and brick cornice with raised central area, corbelling and open geometric shapes;
- Windows and doorways in arched and rectilinear openings on the east, south and west façades; and
- Painted signage on the south and west façades.

#### Interior-

- Heavy timber mill structural system;
- Original metal-clad sliding fire doors; and
- Ornamental tin ceiling.