



**277 RIVER AVENUE**  
**ROYAL OAK COURT APARTMENTS**

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



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## 277 RIVER AVENUE ROYAL OAK COURT APARTMENTS

**Date of Construction:** 1928

**Building Permit:** 2135/1928 (Plans at City Storage)

**Architect:** Unknown

**Contractor:** Unknown

### ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Another of Winnipeg's well-built and modestly treated three-storey apartment blocks found in every neighbourhood in the city.

The front (south) is faced in dark brick with limestone accenting at grade, as an ornamental frame for the centrally-placed main entrance, as continuous sills for the ground floor windows, as sills for upper floor windows and accenting for the pilasters, as continuous heads for the third storey windows and as capping for the stepped and arched parapet. A stone panel with the words "ROYAL OAK COURT" is located above the arched main entrance.

The three remaining elevations are a continuation of the cladding and basic design of the front, with large windows to increase the amount of light and ventilation for the suites. To



Front (south) and west façades, 2009

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the rear of the block, near the river, a former single-family dwelling has been converted into apartment space known as the Royal Oak Court Annex, 277A River Avenue.

The buildings stand on their original sites, appear to be in good structural condition and do not appear to have suffered major exterior alteration.

This block is a reduced example of the Classical Revival style. Popular in North America from 1900-30, the style ranged from simple, small-scale neo-classical structures, such as this building, to Beaux-Arts Classicism with its grand scale and heavy ornamentation, for example the Legislative Building.<sup>1</sup> Elements of the classical revival style include columns, pediments, flat, unadorned roof lines, symmetrical facades, and Greek or Roman orders. Door and window openings are often lintelled rather than arched, although both spanning methods can be present.<sup>2</sup>

The use of classical elements, especially for public buildings, became a popular ornamental device for banks, other financial institutions, railway stations, commercial buildings and office blocks. Because of Winnipeg's importance in the early growth of western Canada's economy, the city became the headquarters of many firms doing business throughout the West. These firms often chose classically-inspired ornamentation to portray an image of respectability and stability. Many excellent examples of the style, representing both early and late phases of its popularity, adorn a wide range of structures.



Rear (north) and east façades, 2009

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HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Mutual Mortgage Company is listed as the original owner of the block, maintaining control until 1948. The block has been owned by several individuals and companies since that time. Residency has also been varied.<sup>3</sup>

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

Under the Historical Buildings By-law, this building meets a number of important criteria:

- its historical importance- a good example of the type of modestly built multi-tenant block built in Winnipeg to meet the demand for modern apartment space in the late 1920s;
- its associations- N/A;
- its design- an excellent example of the Classical Revival style;
- its architect- N/A;
- its location- contributes to the historic streetscape of its neighbourhood; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Royal Oak Court Annex, 277A River Avenue, 1978

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ENDNOTES:

- 1 Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, n.d.), p. 18.
- 2 Ibid., p. 18.
- 3 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12032390000, 1930-1990; and Henderson's Directory, 1930-1990.