



1 ROSLYN ROAD
LOCARNO APARTMENTS

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: Murray Peterson
April 2018

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

- (a) This apartment block was built in 1929, at the end of a period of redevelopment along Roslyn Road and in Fort Rouge;
- (b) It is associated with the redevelopment of the east end of Roslyn Road from an area filled with large properties and single-family mansions to multi-storey apartment blocks;
- (c) Original owner, local contractor Alexander Pollock designed the building in a reduced style;
- (d) Built of brick on a concrete foundation, it is representative of contemporary construction methods;
- (e) It is a conspicuous building at one end of Roslyn Road; and
- (f) The building's exterior façades have suffered little alteration.

1 ROSLYN ROAD - LOCARNO APARTMENTS

By the early 1900s, Winnipeg was in the midst of the most far-reaching and sustained period of growth in its history. The effects on the physical landscape of the community were enormous.

In the city's downtown, for example, infill construction, the demolition of older structures and erection of larger, more permanent buildings greatly increased the density of development. Much of this activity followed spatial patterns established before the turn-of-the-century which had created specific banking, warehouse and commercial districts.¹ Similarly, empty lots along streets in older residential neighbourhoods began to fill as the demand for housing increased.

Beyond the central core, these same pressures led to the creation of new residential, commercial and industrial precincts or the expansion of established districts. This necessitated a constant redefinition of the city's boundaries by civic officials and leaders.

One area that witnessed tremendous growth before and after 1900 was Fort Rouge. What had been a scattered settlement of French-speaking, agriculturally-based families in the 1870s became the City of Winnipeg's Ward One in 1882. Properties close to the Assiniboine River attracted wealthy businessmen and public figures who sought the quasi-rural lifestyle offered by the area combined with its proximity to the downtown.

Numerous mansions, situated on extensive, well-manicured grounds, were built during this period. One such residence belonged to Albert Clements Killam (1849-1908), who chose a large piece of river property at the eastern end of one of the district's most exclusive thoroughfares - Roslyn Road (Plate 1).

Killam (Plate 2) was born in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia and obtained a law degree in Toronto. After practising in Windsor, Ontario, he moved to Winnipeg in 1879. He was elected to the provincial

¹ M. Peterson, "36 Roslyn Road - J.C. Falls House," report for the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee, January 1994, p. 1.

legislature in 1883; appointed Queen's Counsel a year later and then in 1885 resigned his seat to sit on Manitoba's Court of Queen's Bench. He became its chief justice on April 12, 1899 and on August 7, 1903 was named western Canada's first representative on the Supreme Court. Two years later, however, he was convinced to leave the high court and take the position of chief commissioner of the Board of Railway Commissioners.²

Killam built his home in Fort Rouge in ca.1892.³ Although he later moved east, he continued to own the home, numbered 15 Roslyn Road, until his death on March 1, 1908.⁴ Succeeding owners maintained the property as a one-family dwelling until the late 1920s when it was purchased by a contractor who demolished the house and built the Locarno Apartments, a two-block complex (Plate 3).⁵

STYLE

Similar to many other blocks built during this period, the Locarno Apartments were designed with few ornamental or stylistic embellishments. This reduction in ornamentation was partially a result of a shift in tenant populations in Winnipeg. The blocks of the 1900-1920 era were often built to attract prestigious tenants. Appealing to this type of clientele entailed grand designs and varied and extensive exterior detailing. Examples of this type of "luxury" apartment block are found throughout Fort Rouge and the rest of Winnipeg. Even the simpler, less exclusive versions tended to include decorative elements.

By the 1920s, apartment block design had taken on a more streamline and less ornate approach. This was partially due to the more modest lifestyles of the growing tenant population as well as economic realities which reduced investment in this type of building. These austere structures, which also can be found across the city, nonetheless offered tenants good, sturdy buildings with

² Dictionary of Canadian Biography (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1994), Vol. XIII, pp. 542-543.

³ City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 324500, Ward 1. Below as ARo.

⁴ Dictionary of Canadian Biography, op. cit., p. 543.

⁵ City of Winnipeg Assessment Records, Roll No. 324500, Ward 1, PC 19.

conveniently laid-out suites and modest interior finishes. Durability, efficiency and practicality were most important.

CONSTRUCTION

The two buildings of the Locarno Apartments consist of solid, 33.0-centimetre Fort William tapestry brick walls resting on 33.0-centimetre concrete foundations.⁶ The larger, more easterly building (“Building B”) measures approximately 42.6 x 11.0 metres, while the smaller block (“Building A”) measures 23.8 x 11.0 metres. A large, L-shaped frame garage is located in the southwest corner of the property (see Appendix I). Raised basements allowed for large windows and the inclusion of several basement suites in these blocks.

DESIGN

The larger Building B is a four-storey, symmetrically designed structure (Plate 4). The centre area of its front (west) façade is emphasized by brick pilasters, several of which run from grade to slightly above the concrete-capped parapet (Plate 5). A 4.3 x 9.2-metre section of the northwest and southwest ends of the building end at the third floor (Plate 6).⁷ Small geometric shapes of concrete and ornamental brick are placed on the façade between each floor. Other decorative elements include a raised brick belt course between the basement and first-floor windows and brick lug sills. The two main entrances feature decorative overhanging hoods fixed to the main building by chains and framed by ornate metal lights (Plates 7 and 8). Windows in rectilinear openings are found on all levels and the parapet rises to points at various areas of the roof.

The sides and rear of Building B continue the ornamental patterns of the west elevation, including geometric shapes, patterned brickwork, lug sills and a plain parapet (Plate 9).

Building A was designed to complement the larger block. A three-storey structure, it also features

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

common brick bond walls, ornamental shapes, a brick belt course, brick lug sills and a concrete-capped parapet which is raised in the centre of the south and west elevations (Plate 10). Entrances are located on both the east and west façades and include hoods similar to those found on Building B.

The property on which this complex is located includes a small parking lot between the buildings and the riverbank and an ornamental iron and concrete fence along its west side.

INTERIOR

There are a total of 37 suites, 11 in Building A and 26 in Building B. The hallways and main staircases feature ornamental tile and terrazzo flooring and metal bannister with wood accenting (Plate 11). Suites in both buildings have various layouts, although all feature hardwood floors. The two-bedroom suite on the top floor of Building B features a living room/dining room and a long interior hallway (Plates 12-14).

INTEGRITY

The Locarno Apartments occupy their original site, appear to be in good structural condition for their age and have not suffered major exterior alterations. City of Winnipeg Building Permits listed against the address include minor repairs in 1941, the demolition of a barn in 1954 (replaced by the present garage the same year), and \$10,000 worth of fire alarm upgrading completed in 1980.⁸

STREETSCAPE

Roslyn Road, once lined with luxurious mansions, has undergone considerable change in the 20th century. Initially, development entailed infill housing and apartment block construction as some of the larger pieces of property were subdivided. Later in the century, many of the older homes, having been passed down or purchased from the original owners, were demolished to make room

⁸ Ibid. The building's heating oil tank was replaced in 1953 via Permit #8354/1953.

for large, high-rise apartment blocks. The Locarno Apartments are the third oldest multi-tenant block on Roslyn Road after the Roslyn Court Apartments, 40 Osborne Street (built 1908-1909), and the Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road (1927) – see Appendix II for list of area apartment blocks.

Today, the east end of Roslyn Road is filled with a variety of structures (Plates 15 and 16).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR

The original building permit for the complex lists the owner, contractor Alexander Pollock, as architect and builder.⁹ Pollock is listed in the Henderson's Directory as a carpenter in the employ of Brown and Rutherford Lumber Yards. In 1912, however, it appears that he went into business for himself out of a West Kildonan office. That year, his name appears in the City of Winnipeg Building Permit Book as the owner, architect and contractor for two houses costing under \$7,500 built near the city's border with West Kildonan. In 1913, several other houses were built by Pollock, the largest was a \$10,000 house on Montrose Street owned by a Mr. Bailey. This house was designed by an architect named Pearse, making it the only structure in the Building Permit Books, 1910-1931, that Pollock is not listed as both contractor and architect.

Although his name appears infrequently for work within the City of Winnipeg, it seems reasonable to assume that the bulk of Pollock's work during this period was concentrated in West Kildonan. In the mid-1920s, Pollock opened Pollock Hardware at 1407 Main Street, a business that continues to serve the area to present-day as Pollock's Hardware Co-Op.¹⁰

This is the first A. Pollock building evaluated by the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

⁹ City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #1054/1929.

¹⁰ Pollock Hardware employee, in conversation with the author, September 10, 1996. Alexander Pollock ran the store for only the first few years, after which he hired a manager to see to the day-to-day operations.

PERSON

The original owner, Alexander Pollock, continued to own the Locarno Apartments until 1954. Pollock was born in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1882,¹¹ coming to Winnipeg in 1904. He sold the property, having never lived in them, to an ownership group called the Locarno Apartments Limited in 1954 and died in 1957.¹²

The background and employment of the residents of the blocks have been diverse since their construction and remain so today.

EVENT

There is no known significant historic event connected with this complex.

CONTEXT

The Locarno Apartments were built at the beginning of the Great Depression of the 1930s, a period of little or no economic growth on the prairies. For Winnipeg, the severe downturn in the agricultural sector, always an important component of the economy, halted new development, especially the construction of new buildings. The Locarno, therefore, represents one of the last large private development projects undertaken prior to the Great Depression.

In the local context, the Locarno represents the further evolution of Roslyn Road. This exclusive residential thoroughfare's early development resulted in the construction of large mansions on extensive grounds. This was slowly transformed in the mid-20th century into a multi-suite apartment neighbourhood. The roadway was lined with large blocks, three to five storeys in height and more recently, as construction techniques allowed, high-rise blocks holding hundreds of tenants.

¹¹ Census of Canada, 1906.

¹² ARO; and Winnipeg Free Press, November 4, 1957, p. 7.

LANDMARK

Their modest ornamentation and isolated location at the end of Roslyn Road limit the conspicuousness of the Locarno Apartments. It is doubtful that many people other than former and present tenants could identify their location.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Assessment Record

Building Address: 1 Roslyn Road

Building Name: Locarno Apartments

Original Use: apartment block

Current Use: apartment block

Roll No. (Old): 324500 (7369)

RSN: 143149

Legal Description: 41 St. Boniface, Plan 27423, Lots 13/14

Location: East end of Roslyn Road near Fort Rouge Park

Date of Construction: 1929

Storeys: 3 and 4 & basements

Heritage Status: **ON NOMINATED LIST**

Construction Type: brick and concrete on concrete foundation

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

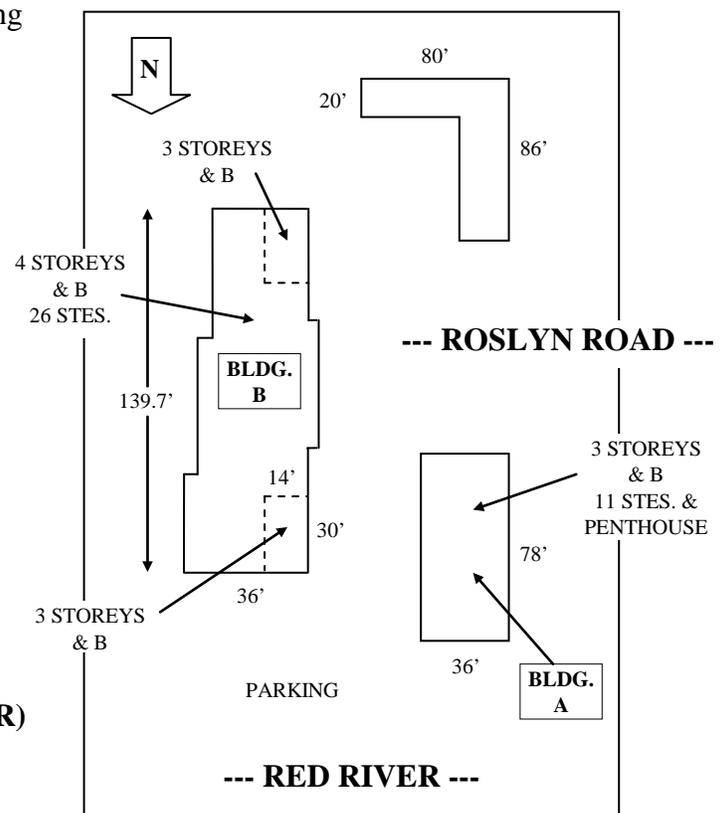
- 1054/1929 \$300,000 (original); 3709/1941 \$1,800 (repairs); 8354/1953 \$1,000 (oil tank); 4034/1954 (demolish barn); 6323/1954 [CS] (new garage); 3874/1980 \$10,000 (interior alterations); 6957/1981 \$570 (fire repairs);

Information:

- 36 x 78 x 40 (Building A) and 35½ x 73½ x 50 + (Building B) + = 368,156 cu. ft.
- 13" concrete walls; 13" brick walls on all floors
- 37 suites in two buildings
- minor garage fire in October 1984
- Permit 3874/1980- fire alarm upgrades
- Fort William tapestry brick on concrete foundation, brick sills & heads throughout, cement parapet

ARCHITECT: ALEXANDER POLLOCK (OWNER)

CONTRACTOR: ALEXANDER POLLOCK (OWNER)



**APPENDIX II
ROSLYN ROAD APARTMENT BLOCKS**

NUMBER	NAME	AGE	NO. OF STOREYS	NO. OF SUITES	COST
#1	Locarno Apartments	1929	3 & 4	37	\$300,000
6	Lilly Apartments (house conversion)	1914	2.5	19	\$20,000
7	Gannon Apartments	1957	3	30	\$150,000
16	The Shelldrake	1958	3	20	\$100,000
21	Twenty-One Roslyn Road Apartments	1979	12	112	\$1,600,000
26	Marquis Apartments	1958	3	21	\$125,000
29	Roslyn on the River	1988	8	23	Unknown
43	Blair House	1957	5	40	\$300,000
50	Riverborne-Roslyn Place	1992	4	40	Unknown
51	Saigon Apartments	1952	3	25	\$115,000
71	Penthouse Towers	1960	10	99	\$1,000,000
80	Rossmore Apartments	1929	3	25	\$100,000
81	Shorecrest Plaza	1959	3	60	\$320,000
90	The Terraces of 90 Roslyn	1985	3.5	14	\$560,000
99	Roslyn Manor	1958	3	66	\$225,000
100	Blackstone Apartments	1927	3	18	\$45,000
139	London Towers	1965	8	31	\$310,000
151	Dorset House	1965	7	24	\$237,000
176	Manor Apartments (house conversion)	1909	2.5	6	\$18,000
188	Nassau House	1966	10	34	\$350,000
230	Sussex House	1965	14	111	\$1,100,000
246	Imperial Place	1968	12	117	\$1,038,000
270	Canterbury House	1967	12	142	\$1,400,000
300	Fountain House	1963	13	180	\$1,800,000

OTHER AREA APARTMENT BLOCKS

ADDRESS	NAME	AGE	NO. OF STOREYS	NO. OF SUITES	COST
40 Osborne Street	Roslyn Apartments	1908-09	5	36	\$208,000
1 Evergreen Place	No. One Evergreen Place	1970	29	221	\$2,962,000
7 Evergreen Place	Evergreen Towers	1981	26	183	\$7,760,000
11 Evergreen Place	(originally Hycroft Towers)	1984	26	185	\$5,740,000

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS

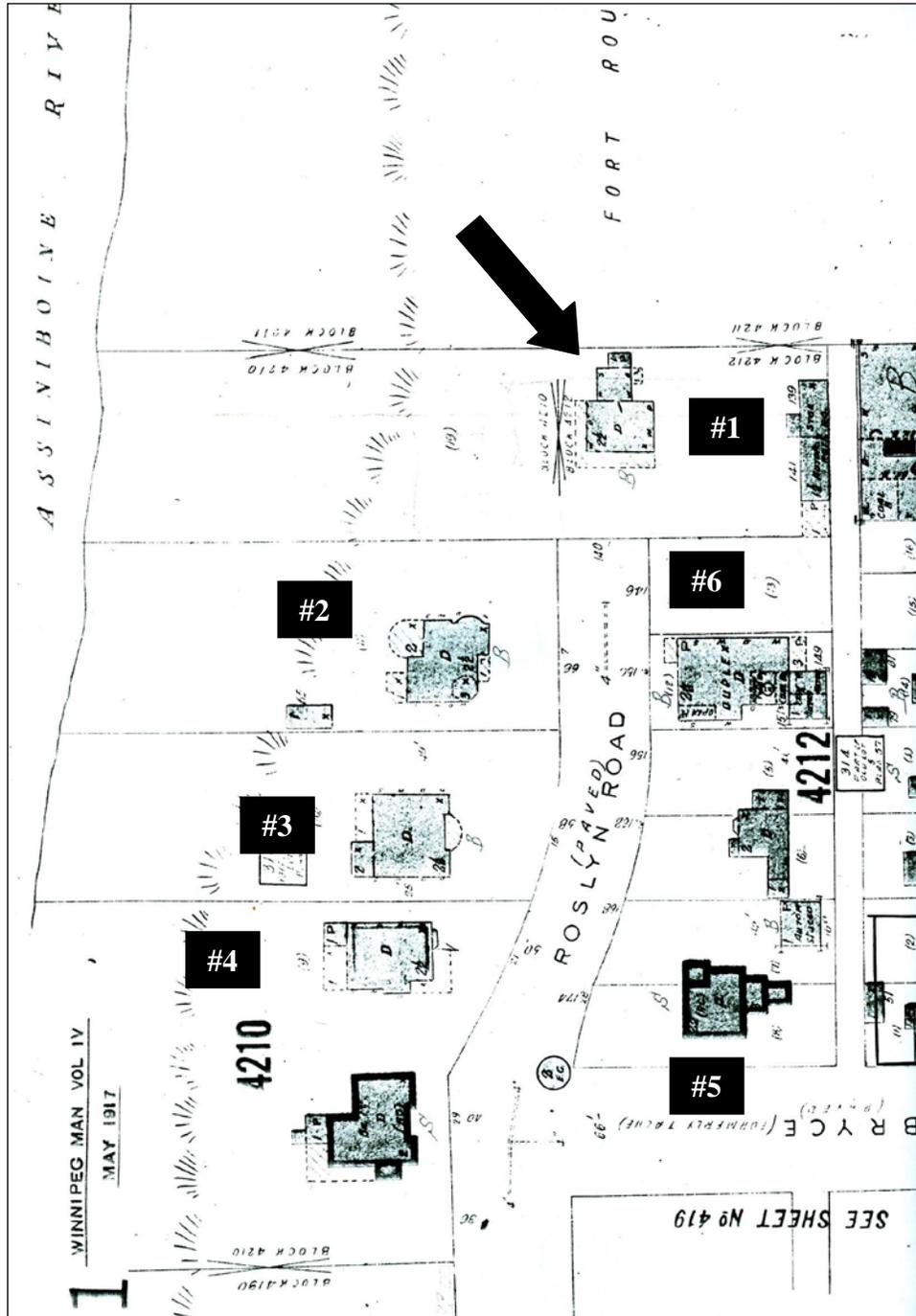


Plate 1 – City of Winnipeg Fire Atlas, Vol. IV, Sheet 421, May 1917, (City of Winnipeg.). Killam House is at arrow; note the other large single family dwellings to the west, which were occupied by (according to the Henderson’s Directory, 1918): #1 (1 Roslyn Road)- Walter P. Moss, vice-president of Robinson & Co.; #2 (7 Roslyn Road)- John McEachern, Bank of British North America Superintendent of Central Branches; #3 (15 Roslyn Road)- William R. Allan of Allan, Killam & McKay, lawyers; #4 (21 Roslyn Road)- William H. Gardner of Oldfield, Kirby & Gardner, financial institution; and #5 (28 Roslyn Road)- John D. Atchison, architect. A.C. Killam’s son, George K. Killam, is living in one-half of the duplex at 6 Roslyn Road (#6).

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS

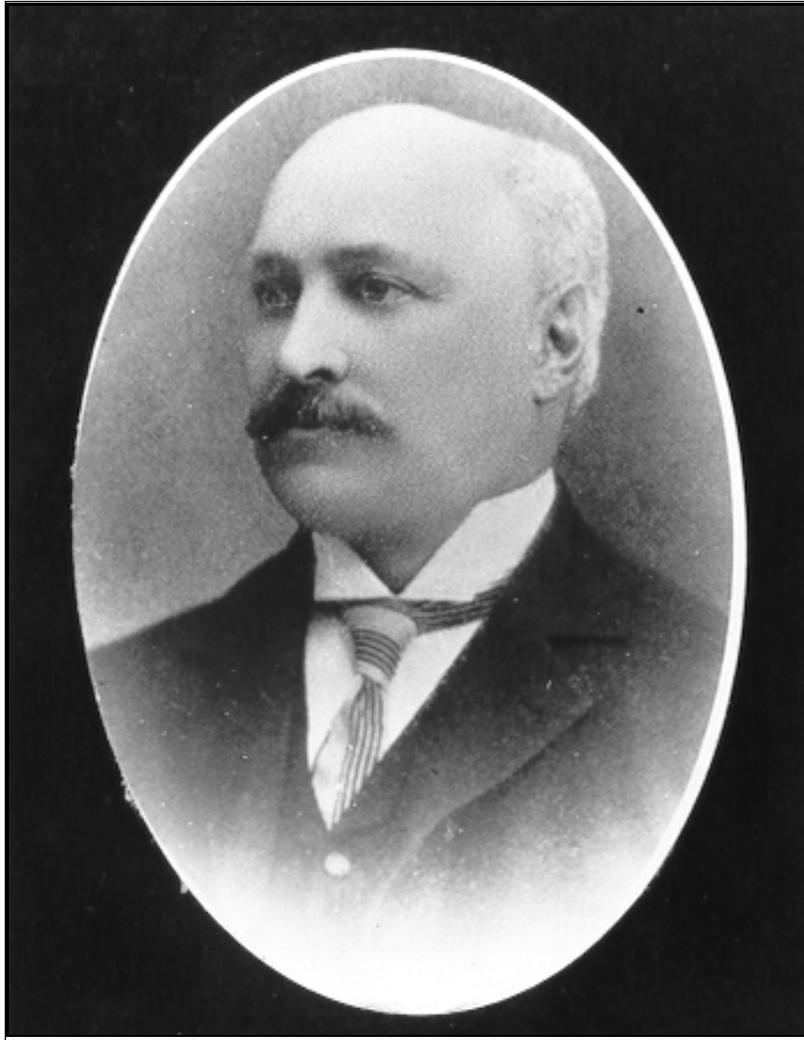


Plate 2 – Albert Clements Killam (1849-1908), ca.1886. (Archives of Manitoba, “Killam, Albert Clements #1”.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 3 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, looking south from the riverbank with Building A on the right, Building B on the left and the garage in the background, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)



Plate 4 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, front (west) and south façades of Building B, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 5 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, detail of east façade of Building B, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 6 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, southwest corner of Building B, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)



Plate 7 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, main (west) entrance, Building B, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 8 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, ornamental light fixture, Building B, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 9 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, north façade, Building B, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 10 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, west and south façades, Building A, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 11 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, Building B, main staircase, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 12 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, Building B, Suite 20, interior hallway, 2018.
(M. Peterson, 2018.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 13 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, living room/dining room, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 14 – Locarno Apartments, 1 Roslyn Road, living room/dining room, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)

1 ROSLYN ROAD – LOCARNO APARTMENTS



Plate 15 – Roslyn Road looking east from Osborne Street, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)



Plate 16 – Roslyn Road looking west towards Osborne Street, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)