



**796-808 ST. PAUL AVENUE
(348, 350 & 352 ARLINGTON STREET)**

ROW HOUSING

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



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ROW HOUSING

Date of Construction: 1929

Building Permit: 135/1929

Architect: Wallace and Akins (owners)

Contractor: Wallace and Akins (owners)

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This two-storey, 10-unit row housing complex was built on the southwest corner of St. Paul Avenue and Arlington Street, just as the world's economy crashed, causing financial ruin for many across the globe.

The building is designed in an "L" shape, the long arm runs west along St. Paul Avenue and the shorter section runs south along Arlington Street. There are seven units in the longer section. Ornamentation is kept to a minimum – the flat stuccoed walls feature a thin band of dark brick above the basement windows. Brick is also used to accent the rectangular window openings and at the building's corners. Four enclosed projecting entrance porches are embellished with the same half-timbering in their gable ends as the



East façade, 2009

gable ends at roof level. The eastern-most porch is a single entrance; the others have doors for two suites each.

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in fair structural condition and does not appear to have suffered major exterior alteration, although the entrance doors have been replaced.

This block was designed in the Tudor style, most popular in the design of single family dwellings constructed throughout Winnipeg and North America from the 1890s until World War II, although the decades of the 1920s and 1930s also saw an explosion in Tudor-style house construction on this continent. The style is loosely based on a number of late Medieval English structures ranging from thatch-roofed cottages to grand mansions. In North America, the style developed several distinctive elements - ornamental half-timbering, steeply pitched roofs, front-facing gables, and stucco, masonry or masonry-veneered walls.¹ The most common feature of Tudor homes is a steeply pitched central roof with cross gables. Tall, narrow windows in multiple groups, and massive chimneys crowned by chimney pots, are other common elements. About half of all examples of the style contain decorative (non-structural) half-timbering with stucco or brick infill.²

This block was designed and built by Wallace and Akins, a well-known local construction company. John James Wallace (1865-1936) was born in Carleton County, Ontario and began his contracting career in Ottawa, Ontario in 1894. He came to Winnipeg in 1904 and from 1908-1914 was a City councillor.³ Upon his arrival in the city, he set up a partnership as Wallace and Akins Brothers which would become Wallace and Akins (present-day Akins Building Consultants). The firm was responsible for a number of fine buildings throughout the city including: First Church of Christ Scientist, 511 River Avenue (1910);



Front (north) and west façades, 2009

Dominion Bank Branch, 648 Notre Dame Avenue (1910 – demolished); Victor Fox Foods Warehouse, 132-134 James Avenue (1912); Crescent Creamery Factory/Warehouse and Stable, Burnell Street (1912); and Canada Bread Building, 258 Burnell Street (1924).

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Wallace and Akins, well-known local builders, maintained ownership of this block from construction into the 21st century (it became Akins Building Consultants in the 1970s).⁴



Rear façades, 2009

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- an unusually late example of row housing in Winnipeg dating to the late 1920s long after this building type had been popular throughout the city;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early building firm Wallace and Akins;
- its design- a good example of the Tudor style;
- its architect- Wallace and Akins were respected and important practitioners;
- its location- defines an intersection and contributes greatly to the historic streetscape of its neighbourhood; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



North façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 V. and L. McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), p. 358.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 355-356.
- 3 C. W. Parker, editor, *Who's Who in Western Canada: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women of Western Canada, Vol. 1* (Vancouver, B.C.: Canadian Press Association, 1911); and *Western Municipal News*, April 1936, p. 100.
- 4 *City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls*, Roll No. 13030325000, 1920-1990.