



464 STRADBROOK AVENUE

BANK OF MONTREAL

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
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464 STRADBROOK AVENUE – BANK OF MONTREAL

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 quickly began to develop in the early 1880s because of two main factors: the construction in 1881-1882 of a permanent, privately-owned bridge at the foot of Osborne Street by the South Winnipeg Bridge Company;² and the annexing of the area and its organization as Ward One of the City of Winnipeg in 1882.

The bridge had a major impact – developers and citizens now had easy access to and from the area and dozens of mansions and modest homes were started and/or completed in 1882, especially along the river and Roslyn Road.

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

² D.M. Lyon, "History of the Osborne Village Development Plan Area: Part A," report for the City of Winnipeg, Planning, Property and Development Department & Historical Buildings Committee, November 2003, p. 26. The bridge was designed by engineer H.N. Ruttan and built by Dean and Westbrook and was caused some controversy when construction began before the owners had secured all the required approvals.

As one reporter wrote when the bridge opened in September 1882:

Now that the Osborne Street bridge is completed for traffic the pretty woodland scenery and the pleasant promenades of Fort Rouge attract many visitors, especially on Sundays.³

Fort Rouge leaders were able to negotiate terms for becoming a Ward within the City of Winnipeg:

- Fort Rouge would become a single ward within the expanded city;
- Winnipeg would grant the ward \$5,000/year for five years over and above its fair appropriation for infrastructure improvements. In addition, Winnipeg would spend \$5,000 on public works in Fort Rouge in 1882; and
- Winnipeg would provide three toll-free bridges across the Assiniboine by purchasing the privately owned Assiniboine and Osborne Street⁴ bridges and building a third crossing at or near the foot of Boundary (present-day Maryland) Street.

The area now attracted some of the City's wealthier families and well-known public figures because of its proximity to the downtown, its large, relatively cheap parcels of land and its relative ruralness.

The 1882 bridge ensured that Osborne Street would develop as the premier commercial thoroughfare in Fort Rouge. Thirty years later, a modern bridge was completed at the same location (Plate 1). The bridge included overhead counter-balances to lift the central section, the decorative arches remained part of the bridge until 1937 when one of the 63-tonne weights broke loose and crashed onto the deck in the middle of the night. The arches were removed shortly after.

The Bank of Montreal, known for its conservative approach and catering to the wealthiest clientele, recognized the value of locating a branch in the growing suburb – both in terms of commercial investment and personal banking.⁵ In 1905-1906, it opened its first two branches, one in the North

³ Winnipeg Daily Times, October 2, 1882.

⁴ Manitoba Daily Free Press, November 7 and December 5, 1882; and Winnipeg Daily Times, July 18, August 8, 15, 22 and 29, September 19 and December 6, 1882.

⁵ D. Spector, "Suburban and Downtown Bank Architecture and Banking in Winnipeg," report for the Historical Buildings Committee, 1980, p. 4.

End and one in the middle of Fort Rouge on the corner of Spadina Avenue (now Stradbrook Avenue) and Pembina Street (now Osborne Street), the area's first of many bank building.

STYLE

The building is a good example of the Classic Revival style, popular throughout North America after 1900 until the 1930s. Based on the historic examples from Roman and Greece, buildings featured a wealth of elements including columns, pediments, capitals, entablatures and cornices. Exterior layouts were normally symmetrical and simple and smooth surfaces were preferred. Windows were lintelled rather than arched.

The style was used to design large public buildings such as train stations and legislatures and small structures such as banks, post offices and even single-family dwellings.⁶ There are many excellent examples in Winnipeg since the style's rise in popularity coincided with the city's major growth phase of the early 20th century and range from modest single family dwellings to massive government buildings.

CONSTRUCTION

A stone foundation with concrete footings supported load-bearing masonry walls. The building measures 12.2 x 17.4 metres, rising one storey above grade with a small addition built on the rear (south) end. The original cost of construction in 1905 was \$22,000.⁷ The building uses Menominee brick with Tyndall stone accenting.⁸

⁶ Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, 1989), p. 18.

⁷ City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #876/1905.

⁸ City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 3166300-12-1, PC 43. Below as AR.

DESIGN

The front (north) façade is symmetrically designed with a raised basement clad in rusticated stone. Above is the dark Menominee superstructure with its raised central entrance flanked by quoined pilasters rising to the entablature (which encircles the entire building) and two tall windows in rectilinear openings with radiating stone voussoirs (Plate 1). The corners of this façade also feature stone quoins. A clock is located above the entrance as are the words “BANK OF MONTREAL” carved in the stone frieze. Above the cornice is a brick parapet capped in stone which includes decorative stone elements (Plate 2) now partially hidden by signage.

A newer building hides the west side, although the design and finishes of the front façade carry around to this elevation (Plate 3). The east façade also continues the materials and design of the front and also includes a second entrance (raised) and a modest stone cornice at the rear (Plate 4). The rear (south) elevation includes a one-storey portion and a brick chimney (Plate 5).

INTERIOR

Original interior furnishings were typical of other branch banks. The banking hall featured terrazzo flooring, oak trim and an oak counter with tellers’ cage for customers. The building also possessed one common vault and one book vault.⁹

The Bank of Montreal upgraded the interior of its Fort Rouge branch on several occasions. In 1942, basement lavatory facilities were modernized. In 1970, a new banking-room counter was installed, as were new floor coverings, light fixtures and an air-conditioning unit.¹⁰

Today, the retailer occupies the entire ground floor (Plate 6), the basement is used for storage (Plate 7) while the partial upper storey is residential space. Several of the original walk-in vaults are still present (Plate 8).

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

INTEGRITY

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition for its age. It does not appear that the exterior has suffered major alteration beyond signage and the construction of a concrete and steel wheelchair ramp on the front (north) façade.

STREETSCAPE

This bank has been located on a busy intersection in Fort Rouge for over 100 years. The neighbourhood includes apartment blocks, commercial development, single family dwelling and churches both contemporary and newer than this building (Plates 9 and 10).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

This suburban bank branch was designed by Samuel Frank Peters (1847-1926), British-born architect who studied in Toronto before settling in Winnipeg and opening a private practice in 1892 (see Appendix II for biographical information). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

The contractor for the building was local builder Robert W. Watson.

PERSON/INSTITUTION

One of Canada's largest banks, the Bank of Montreal established in Winnipeg in 1877 and erected their first permanent building near the southwest corner of Portage Avenue and Main Street 1881. But in the early 20th century, most of the major banks were building opulent halls further north on Main Street. The Bank of Montreal followed this lead by opening, in 1913, its magnificent hall at 335 Main Street (Plate 11). The company utilized a conservative business approach and the purchasing the assets of financially-troubled banks to expand throughout the country.

The Fort Rouge branch remained one of only a few operated by the bank in the city's suburbs (Plate 12). In 1999, the vacant building was purchased by Alexis Vlassie and renovated into a kitchen retail establishment – the Happy Cooker, which had been established in Osborne Village (126 Osborne Street) in 1975.¹¹

EVENT

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

CONTEXT

This building stands as an example of the early 20th century development of one of the city's important suburbs, Fort Rouge, and the recognition of this importance by one of Canada's major banks, the Bank of Montreal.

LANDMARK

This building has filled a financial/commercial role in its neighbourhood for over a century and is well-known in the area.

¹¹ Winnipeg Free Press, February 2, 1979, p. 126 and December 17, 1999, p. A5.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Building Address: 464 Stradbrook Avenue

Building Name: Bank of Montreal

Original Use: bank

Current Use: retail

Roll No. (Old): 12031663000 (---)

RSN: 143951

Municipality: 12

Ward: 1

Property or Occupancy Code: 43

Legal Description: 35/36 St. Boniface, Plan 27342, Lot 5

Location: southwest corner Osborne Street

Date of Construction: 1905

Storeys: 1 & 2

Heritage Status: NOMINATED LIST

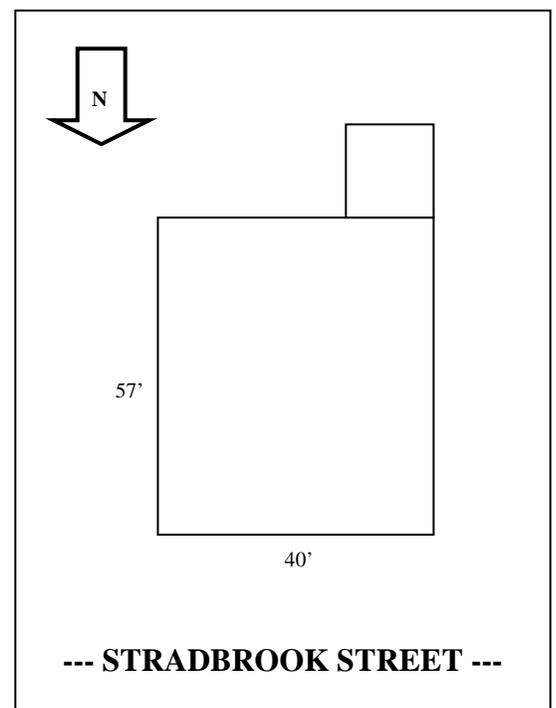
Construction Type: Menominee brick and Tyndall stone

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

SEE NEXT PAGE

Information:

- 40 x 57'



ARCHITECT: SAMUEL F. PETERS

CONTRACTOR: ROBERT W. WATSON

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

YEAR	NO.	PLANS	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
1905	876		\$22,000	Original
1933			\$1,250	Second storey added to rear
1942				Basement renovations
1952	347	CS		New boiler and oil-burner
1966	412	M		
1969	269	M		
1970	4308	M23	\$27,400	Interior alterations, new windows
1983	7823	CS	\$10,000	Interior alterations
1985	4675	CS	\$7,000	Interior alterations
1990	4047	CS	\$110,000	Interior and exterior alterations
2001	173796		\$15,000	Construct outdoor patio

APPENDIX II

S. Frank Peters

Peters was born in Yeovil, Somerset, England on November 7, 1847¹ and was educated in London, Ontario, graduating with a civil engineering degree from Toronto University. He began his own architectural practice in London, Ontario in 1872 and in 1881 moved to the larger opportunities in Toronto.² In 1885, Peters took his first trip west as commander of a company of the 7th Fusiliers regiment of London, Ontario. The company formed part of the government response to the Riel Rebellion and Peters lost an arm in the conflict.³

Peters moved to Winnipeg in 1892 and set up a practice that was to include his brother, W.A. Peters, by 1902.⁴ Throughout his career, S.F. Peters was a strong advocate of the development of a Canadian design, separate from the American and European standards. In a 1910 speech made to the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Peters dismissed the newly popularized skyscrapers as "cooping up a mass of hard workers."⁵ He preferred classical detailing, however many of his designs, especially warehouses, borrowed liberally from the Richardsonian Romanesque style.

An incomplete list of Peters' buildings includes:⁶

- Wesley College (co-designed by George Browne), now part of the University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Ave. (1896) – Grade II
- Ashdown Warehouse, 157-179 Bannatyne Ave. (1896) - Grade II
- F.W. Alloway Building, 179 McDermot Ave. (1898) - Grade III
- London Building, 432 Main St. (1898)
- McClary Block, 185-187 Bannatyne Ave. (1899) - Grade III

¹ Neepawa: An Architectural Walking Tour (Winnipeg, MB: Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, 1987), n.p. Below as Neepawa. Canada Census, 1901 gives his date of birth as 1848.

² "A Group of Winnipeg Architects," in Canadian Architect and Builder, Volume X (January 1897), p. 4.

³ The Year Past, 1983, (Winnipeg, MB: City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee, 1984), p. 33.

⁴ Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906, p. 55.

⁵ S.F. Peters, "Architecture in the West" in Construction, Volume III (October 1910), p. 78.

⁶ List compiled from City of Winnipeg, Building Permits; Neepawa, op. cit., n.p.; "Winnipeg Architects," Binder of the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Officer; and various newspaper articles compiled by the author.

S.F. Peters designs, continued:

Manitoba College of Pharmacy, 422 Notre Dame Ave. (ca.1899)
Gilmer Block, 329 Donald Street (1900)
Cockshutt Plow Warehouse, 238 Princess St. (1902-1903)
W.L. Alexander House, Colony St. (1903)
Strathclair, Manitoba Town Hall (1904)
Miller and Richard Warehouse, 121 Princess St. (1904) – Grade III
Massey-Harris Building addition, 294-296 William Ave. (1904) – Grade II
Manitoba Club, 194 Broadway (1905)
Nanton Building, Portage Ave. (1905) – demolished
Cornish Library, 20 West Gate (1914) – Grade II
-many private residences in Winnipeg

He died in Winnipeg in 1926.⁷

⁷

Neepawa, op. cit., n.p.

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Plate 1 – Bank of Montreal, 464 Stradbroke Avenue, front (north) façade, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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Plate 2 – Bank of Montreal, 464 Stradbroke Avenue, ca. 1930. Note the stone balustrade with ornamental features in the parapet above the entrance. (City of Winnipeg.)

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Plate 3 – Bank of Montreal, 464 Stradbrook Avenue, west façade, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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Plate 4 – Bank of Montreal, 464 Stradbrook Avenue, east façade, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)



Plate 5 – Bank of Montreal, 464 Stradbrook Avenue, rear (south) and east façades, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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Plate 6 – Bank of Montreal, 464 Stradbrook Avenue, ground floor retail space with high ceilings, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

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Plate 7 – Bank of Montreal, 464 Stradbrook Avenue, basement storage space, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

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Plate 8 – Bank of Montreal, 464 Stradbrook Avenue, basement vault, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

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Plate 9 – Osborne Street looking south towards Stradbrook Avenue, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)



Plate 10 – Stradbrook Avenue looking east towards Osborne Street, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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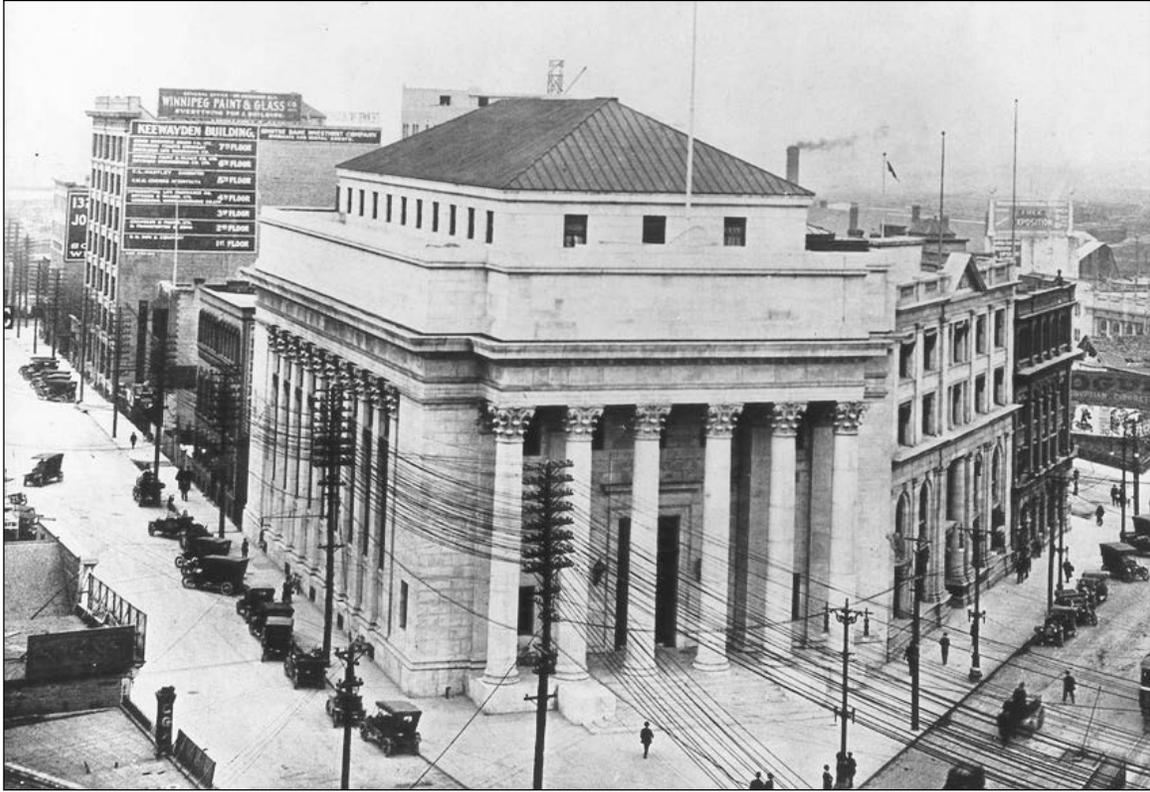


Plate 11 – Newly opened Bank of Montreal, 335 Main Street, 1913. (Courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba.)

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Plate 12 – Bank of Montreal, 464 Stradbrook Avenue, ca. 1930. (City of Winnipeg.)