





219 VAUGHAN STREET VAUGHAN APARTMENTS

Date of Construction: 1929

Building Permit: 251/1929 (Plans on file at City Archives)

Architect: Woodman, John

Contractor: Fraser and McDonald

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This block, located at the southwest corner of Winnipeg's downtown, is one of many 1920s-era apartment blocks built in and around Winnipeg's centre. Taking up the full site and utilizing a raised basement, these three-storey apartment blocks remain one of the most popular building types in the city.

The front (west) façade is clothed in a dark brick accented by the light limestone elements used as sills for the upper storey windows, as capping for the stepped parapet and in the highly stylized centre bay. This element, clad entirely in stone, holds the arched entrance and arched windows on the second and third floor, embellished with carved stone panels with quatrefoils. The original leaded glass windows in this central section have been replaced. Windows throughout the rest of the elevation are recessed and flat headed,



Detail of front (west) façade, 2007

although a brick arch is located above the third storey openings. Single paned units have replaced the original multi-paned window.

The north and south elevations are identical, the dark brick cladding wraps around the front and runs a short distance along each façade, the rear is clad in common clay brick interrupted on all floors by plain rectangular windows. The rear (east) façade is similarly designed and includes an entrance.

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and does not appear to have suffered major alteration to any of its exterior elevations.

Stylistically, the architect used elements of the Late Gothic Revival style to animate an otherwise plain, boxy exterior. The style gained popularity across North America after 1900 and used the basic components of the Gothic style – pointed arches, tracery, symmetrical massing, crenellated towers, buttresses, half-timbering and stucco – and translated them onto modern buildings. The effect was a more subdued ornamentation with simpler silhouettes. Most often used on churches and large school and university buildings, it was sometimes referred to as Collegiate Gothic.

John Woodman was born in Oshawa, Canada West (Ontario) in 1860, moved to Winnipeg in the employ of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in 1880, and by the late 1890s had risen to the post of chief engineer, western division. In the late 1880s, he also worked for the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railway as an engineer and superintendent of construction.¹

In 1901 he retired from the railway to establish a private practice. He was a pioneer in the new technique of reinforced concrete construction, new in the sense that it was not popular in



South façade, 2007

Winnipeg, although it was being used extensively elsewhere in North America.² He formed a partnership with Raymond Carey in 1911 and over the next five years they designed many structures in the city.³ In 1917 Woodman entered a new partnership with A.E. Cubbidge. From 1904-20 he was also one of the Hudson Bay Company's principal architects.⁴ He retired from active his practice in 1927 and died in Winnipeg in 1944.⁵

Among Woodman's major contracts were the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railway Engine House, The Forks, 1889, T. Eaton Company Store, 320 Portage Avenue, 1904-demolished, Allen (Wilson) Building, 288 McDermot Avenue, 1905 (Grade III), Breadalbane (Ambassador) Apartments, 379 Hargrave Street, 1909 (Grade III), Lindsay Building, 228 Notre Dame Avenue (Woodman and Carey), 1911 (Grade II), Rodgers (Heubach) House, 64 Nassau Street (Woodman and Carey), 1913 (Grade III), Winnipeg Free Press Building, 300 Carlton Street (Woodman and Carey), 1911-1913 (Grade II), Paris Building, 257 Portage Avenue (Woodman and Carey), 1915-1917 (Grade II), Stovel Printing Company Building, 365 Bannatyne Avenue (Woodman and Carey), 1916 (Grade III).⁶

Fraser and McDonald, the contractors, was a well-known firm in the city, working for many of the finest local architects beginning in 1905. Among their larger contracts were Nassau Street Baptist Church, 549 Gertrude Avenue (1909), St. John's Presbyterian Church, 250 Cathedral Avenue (1913 – Grade III), Julia Clark School, 611 Academy Road (1918 – Grade III), several branches for the Canadian Bank of Commerce (1919-1920) and Sir John Franklin School, 386 Beaverbrook Street (1921).⁷



Rear (east) and north façades, 2007

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Graham Apartments Limited was the original owner of this block, maintaining its ownership until the sale to Leon A. Brown Limited, a local insurance, real estate developer and management company.⁸ Over the years, the block has seen a wide array of tenants that has also included professional offices and small businesses.



Front (west) and south façades, 2007

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- one of many modest apartment blocks in the City;
- its associations- N/A;
- its design- a good example of the multi-tenant block with Late Gothic Revival style accenting;
- its architect- J. Woodman was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes to its downtown streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (west) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

¹ Henderson's Directory, 1890, and "C.N.R. East Yards, N.P. and M.R. Engine House" in The Year Past, 1985 (Winnipeg: Historical Buildings Committee, 1985), pp. 27-8.

² L.K. Eaton, "The Bemis bag plant in Winnipeg, Canada" in Concrete International, February 1979, pp. 64-5.

³ City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1910-1917.

⁴ Hudson's Bay Company Archives, "Architectural Drawings in the Hudson's Bay Company Archives."

⁵ Winnipeg Tribune, May 18, 1944.

⁶ Compiled from J. Wade, Manitoba Architecture to 1940. A Bibliography (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1978); Winnipeg Tribune, May 18, 1944; and Western Canada Contractor and Builder, July 1920, October 1922, September 1923 and May 1927.

⁷ City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1926.

⁸ City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-093697000, 1930-1990.