374 DONALD STREET

ALDOUS BUILDING ANNEX

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: Murray Peterson
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The growth of Winnipeg’s warehouse district after 1900 was a dramatic process of replacing old residential structures and filling vacant lots with massive brick and stone structures. The buildings were massively built and reinforced to store and manipulate tonnes of goods, food, hardware and retail items of every possible description. Located on both sides of Main Street east of Portage Avenue, the Exchange District, as it became known, also filled with office buildings, garages, factories, hotels, theatres and banks – all the services needed by the thousands of people that frequented the area every working day.

Because of Winnipeg’s unique position as warehouse and distribution centre for almost every type of manufactured good entering Western Canada, the city filled with a specialized worker, the manufacturers’ agent. These salesmen, also referred to as commercial agents, would represent several lines of merchandize, a specific market or industry and maintain accounts in an assigned territory. The agent would then develop a customer base and add or remove manufacturers and their lines as he saw fit. On his own, in a partnership or as an incorporated company, the agent provided the manufacturer with a regional sales force usually without associated employee costs.

So prevalent and important was this sector, that in 1882, the North West Commercial Travellers’ Association was formed in Winnipeg to provide organized support for agents, including travel discounts for accommodations and transportation, insurance programs and telephone rate reductions. In 1906, they built a large structure at the corner of Bannatyne Avenue and King Street to house the activities of their growing organization (Plate 1).

In 1905, a local paper announced the construction of “two more blocks for south Princess Street”¹ (Plate 2). A local printing firm was going to build on the southern-most lot, a London, Ontario publisher on the north lot and the land owner, F.C. Bell, was purported to be building a

¹ The building was originally known as #12 Princess Street (south end) and #14-16 (north end). The name of this block of Princess Street was changed to Donald Street south of Notre Dame Avenue ca.1916. 
Manitoba Free Press, April 27, 1905, p. 3. The company paid $12,500 for the lot.
structure between the two. All three building were constructed, all were originally three storeys in height and one account called the structures “…the connecting link between the wholesale and the new retail district”\(^2\) an acknowledgement of the spatial growth of the well-established wholesale district and the newly growing retail/office district along Portage Avenue.

The two buildings at the north end have had both separate and common histories, the southernmost, now 374 Donald Street, is the Aldous Building Annex, referring to the Aldous Building to the north, 376 Donald Street.

**STYLE**

The Aldous Building Annex is a functional structure with minimal classical-based detailing including the rounded arches, rough texture and bulky visage of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, especially popular for warehouses. The “two-part” front façade makes this block unique but the basic design is similar to many other blocks built in the downtown during the 1900-1912 period.

**CONSTRUCTION**

As mentioned previously, this building was constructed as a three-storey building, completed in 1905. The upper two storeys of the building were completed in 1911 (see Appendix I for construction data and Plate 3).\(^3\) Resting on a foundation of stone, the superstructure is built of solid, dark hued brick. Combined cost of construction, 1905-1911, was $26,000.

**DESIGN**

The lower portions of the building, similarly designed to the northern building: began with a raise basement and a ground floor clad in rusticated stone (Plate 4). Large basement windows in rectilinear openings and similar openings on the ground floor fill much of the wall space and the


\(^3\) The upper two storeys of the Aldous Building were added in 1909, via City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #541/1909.
raised entrance is found at the north end of the façade. A small window in a rectilinear opening is placed above the entrance and a modest stone belt course leads to the upper storeys where the two buildings differ significantly.

The Annex features four vertical bays of windows in arched openings, with stone lug sills and raised brick heads; the only exception is a smaller arched window opening on the second floor above the door (Plate 5). The building is finished with a complete, metal-clad entablature with heavy overhanging cornice (Plate 6).

The south and north walls are party walls and are completely covered by the neighbouring buildings. The rear (west) façade, unlike the front, features matched window and door openings throughout the upper floors of the Annex and the Aldous Building (Plate 7). The ground floor includes two raised loading doors and a metal fire escape serving both buildings.

**INTERIOR**

There is no description of how the original building was arranged on the interior, although plans exist for the top two floors, which were divided into offices (Plate 8). A doorway at the rear of the first added floor and two on the second, all with fireproof doors, allowed access to the Aldous Building to the north.

Today, the basement is used for storage; the ground floor includes cast iron posts (Plate 9) and ornamental tin clads the ceiling. The staircase features tin ceilings and a wooden bannister (Plate 10). The upper floors are a mixture of open and divided space, the wood beams and posts are exposed in most areas of the building (Plate 11).

**INTEGRITY**

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition for its age. All original window units on the rear façade have been replaced, although most of the units on the front façade are original to the buildings (Plate 12).
STREETSCAPE
This building is located just outside the Exchange District National Historic Site at the south end of Princess Street. Historically, this area included a wide variety of structures – theatres, churches, office buildings, warehouses and factories and this has not significantly changed as the neighbourhood has evolved. It makes an important contribution to the streetscape along with its neighbouring buildings on the west side of the block (Plates 13 and 14).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR
Herbert E. Matthews (1867-1941) is the architect responsible for the design of the 1905 building and the upper storey addition, as well as the Aldous Block to the north. Matthews came to Winnipeg in 1905 and ultimately worked in the federal government’s local Public Works Department office (see Appendix II for biographical information). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

Frank Powell (1844-?) was named as the masonry contractor, F.W. Latimer the carpenter for the 1905 building. Powell was born in England and was one of the founders of the Winnipeg Builders’ Exchange in 1910. Among his notable local contracts were: John Walter Harris House, 26 Edmonton Street, (1903 – Grade III); Free Kindergarten Building, 294 Ellen Street (1903); D.S. Perrin Warehouse, Portage Avenue East (1905); Hampson Court Apartments, 47 Kennedy Street (1912 – demolished); and St. Luke’s Anglican Church, 130 Nassau Street North (1904).

The 1911 addition was built by F. Powell.5

4 Manitoba Free Press, July 18, 1905, p. 20.
5 BP #1737/1911.
PERSON/INSTITUTION
Originally, this building (known as #12 Princess Street and then 374 Donald Street) was owned by Frank C. Bell, local real estate agent and investor. Bell purchased its neighbour to the south (now 370 Donald Street) in 1907. By 1912, Breen Kennedy of London, England was listed as owner of 374 Donald Street and grain dealer and M.L.A. William Linton Parrish was listed as the owner in 1918 (also purchasing 376 Donald Street at that time).

The Bate family (H.N., E.G., F.G. and the H.M. Bate Realty Corporation) owned the linked properties from World War I into the 1950s. The north portion appears to have been renamed the Aldous Building in the early 1930s. Today, the two buildings have separate owners.

Tenancy in the two parts of the building has been extremely varied and included Bovey Brothers Company, barber supplies, Gould Printing, Ontario Beauty Supply Company, Ransom Engraving Company, the De Laval Separator Company, Kirby Ice Machine Company, Western Aircraft Supply and Monarch Overalls.

EVENT
There is no known significant historical event connected with this structure.

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6 City of Winnipeg Assessment Roll, No. 527960-12-2 (PC 50) – below as ARo, 1905-1907. Interestingly, Bell’s ownership of 370 Donald Street included the construction of the upper two floors in 1909 (City of Winnipeg Building Permit #918/1909.


8 ARo, 1905-1960.

9 Winnipeg Free Press, various.

**CONTEXT**
This mixed use structure is a good example of the type of development that occurred in downtown Winnipeg. Built and enlarged prior to World War I, it was part of a large stock of well designed, sturdily built and attractive structures that provided modern office, warehouse and manufacturing space for the growing number of local, national and international firms expanding their presence in the region’s primary city, Winnipeg.

Post-War, as Winnipeg’s regional position lessened in importance, tenancy could be short-lived as firms came and went, expanded and folded.

**LANDMARK**
The Aldous Building Annex is one of many large brick and stone mixed-use blocks in and around the Exchange District. It is located near a busy intersection that heightens its conspicuousness in the area.
APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Assessment Record

Building Address: 374 Donald Street  Building Name: Aldous Building Annex

Original Use: retail/office  Current Use: offices

Roll No.: 13052796000  RSN: 150008

Municipality: 12  Ward: 2  Property or Occupancy Code: 50

Legal Description: 1 St. John, Plan 24208, Lots 32/34 and right-of-ways

Location: west side between Cumberland and Notre Dame avenues

Date of Construction: 1905  Storeys: 5  Heritage Status: ON NOMINATED LIST

Construction Type: ordinary brick and stone foundation

- 1810/1905 $20,000 (original- 3 storeys); 1737/1911 [CS] $6,000 (additional 2 storeys); 207445/2002 $35,000 (interior alterations)

Information:
- 32 x 90

ARCHITECT: H.E. MATTHEWS

CONTRACTOR: POWELL & CO.
APPENDIX II

Herbert E. Matthews

Born in London, Ontario in 1867, H.E. Matthews passed his land surveyor exam in 1885 and worked in the office of a leading London, Ontario architect. In 1889, Matthews moved to Toronto to work for Darling and Curry and in 1893, moved to New York City working for Charles C. Haight (1841-1917), an influential church and school designer.¹ In 1894, Matthews returned to London and set up his own office, winning the competition to design for London’s Public Library (see Plate 15). His office in London was very successful, but in 1905, he closed it in favour of a new office in Winnipeg. In that year alone, he designed ten structures totalling $103,000. These structures included large and small homes, warehouses and a business block.

In Winnipeg, he was involved in the formation of the Manitoba Architects Association in 1906 (serving as its president in 1914) and for two building seasons, 1910 and 1911, Matthews formed a partnership with Frederick F. LeMaistre.² Working alone afterwards, Matthews closed his office in 1921 after being appointed Resident Architect for the Dominion Government, overseeing the construction of major federal buildings in northwestern Ontario and Manitoba. He resigned in 1931 and died in Winnipeg on December 7, 1941.

A list of his larger Winnipeg work would include:

D.S. Perrin and Company Warehouse, Portage Ave. East (1905)
Aldous Building, 376 Donald St. (1905)
Bell Warehouse, 130 Portage Ave. East (1905)
Potter Building, 132 Portage Ave. East (1905)
Five houses for Robert Wyatt, 99-111 Norquay St. (1905)
Myers Iron Fence Co. Factory, Chambers St. (1906)
Winnipeg Casket Company Warehouse, Dufferin Ave. at Parr St. (1907)
St. James Park Church, 240 Home St. (1908)
Congress (Boylston) Apartments, 300 River Ave. (1910) – Grade II

² City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books; and M. Peterson, files.
H.E. Matthews’ designs (continued):

Drewry Stables, Redwood Ave., with F.F. LeMaistre (1910) – demolished
James O’Donohoe House, 40 Arlington St., with F.F. LeMaistre (1910)
Speirs-Parnell Baking Company Building, 666 Elgin Ave., with F.F. LeMaistre (1910)
Farmers’ Advocate Building, Notre Dame Avenue (1912)
St. Matthews Anglican Church (West End Cultural Centre), 586 Maryland St. (1912)
Rumley Products Co. Warehouse, Dufferin Ave. (1912)
Rothesay Apartments, 828 Preston Ave. (1912) – Grade III
McGregor Armoury, 551 Machray Ave. (1914)
Minto Armoury, 969 St. Matthews Ave. (1914)
Sharpe and Colledge Warehouse, Henry Ave. (1915)
Speirs-Parnell Baking Company Stable, 666 Elgin Ave. (1919)
Deer Lodge Hospital, 2109 Portage Ave. (1929-major addition)
Plate 1 – Travellers Building, 283 Bannatyne Avenue, front (south) and east façades, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)
Plate 2 – Drawing of three new business blocks to be built in 1905 on Princess Street. Left structure built by the Moore Printing Company (became the Bell Block, 370 Donald Street), the right by the William Weld Company and William Bell was, according to the report, to build the central structure (became 376 Donald Street). (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, July 1, 1905, p. 6.)
Plate 3 – Architect’s drawing, “Front Elevation for Additional Storeys,” Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street, 1911. (Architect’s Plan No. 1737/1911.)
Plate 4 – Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street (left) and Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street (right), front (east) façades, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 5 – Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street, detail of front (east) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 6 – Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street, front (east) façade, detail of upper storeys, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 7 – Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street (right) and Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street (left), north façades, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 8 – Architect’s drawing, “First Additional Storey” and “Second Additional Storey,” Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street, 1911. (Architect’s Plan No. 1737/1911.)
Plate 9 – Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street, cast iron post and ornamental tin ceiling, ground floor, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 10 – Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street, staircase, 3rd floor, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 11 – Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street, 2nd floor, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 12 – Aldous Building and Annex, 374-376 Donald Street, front (east) façade with original fenestration, 1978. (City of Winnipeg.)
Plate 13 – Looking north from Cumberland Avenue towards Notre Dame Avenue and Princess Street, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Plate 14 – West side of Donald Street between Cumberland and Notre Dame avenues with the Phoenix Building, 388 Donald Street (#1), the Aldous Building and Annex, 374-376 Donald Street (#2) and the Bell Block, 370 Donald Street (#3), 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 15 – London, Ontario Public Library, Queen’s Avenue at Wellington Street, ca.1895. Built 1894-1895, designed by H.E. Matthews (demolished). (Reproduced from London Public Library website, http://www.londonpubliclibrary.ca/research/local-history/historic-sites-committee/london-public-library-first, 2013.)