124 KING STREET

A. CARRUTHERS COMPANY BUILDING

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
May 2014
This building embodies the following heritage values as described in the *Historical Resources By-law, 55/2014* (consolidated update July 13, 2016):

(a) Built in 1916 in Winnipeg’s downtown warehouse district, this block illustrates the continued economic strength of Winnipeg’s business sector even as World War I raged;

(b) It was associated for many decades with the A. Carruthers Company, hide and wool supplier;

(c) It was designed by local architectural father and son firm of James Chisholm and Son (Colin);

(d) Its solid brick walls rest on a stone foundation, common building materials and practices;

(e) It is a contributor to this important streetscape in the Exchange District National Historic Site; and

(f) The building’s exterior has suffered little alteration.
124 KING STREET – A. CARRUTHERS COMPANY BUILDING

Winnipeg in the early 1890s was, although few realized it, on the verge of a spectacular era of
growth, development and maturity that would create, by World War I, a large, modern city with
all the amenities. But this comprehensive growth followed patterns established decades earlier
and resulted in specific districts within city boundaries even after this frenzied period of growth.

The real estate and construction boom of the early 1880s was intimately connected to the
construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) around Winnipeg and onto the western
prairies. Land prices in the small capital city skyrocketed, the population soared and solid brick
structures began replacing the small wooden shacks that dotted the mud streets. This
development led to the creation of specific districts within the city – residential, commercial and
industrial – and their related building-types.¹ The huge advance in land prices along Main Street
north of Portage Avenue necessitated the replacement of the earlier residential development with
large commercial structures. Investors chose to locate near one of the most important buildings,
City Hall, from which came assistance in advancing both singular business interests and those of
the community at large.

Commercial interests, both local and from Eastern Canada, were quick to locate in this area. The
city rapidly assumed the role of wholesale hub for all of Western Canada, partially because of its
central location and partially because of the preferential freight rates negotiated with the CPR
that made it cheaper for manufacturers to ship their goods to Winnipeg, unload them and then
send them west to the growing markets on the prairies. Companies like G.F. and J. Galt
Company, Stobart, Eden and Company and J.H. Ashdown were all organized and carrying on
business prior to the CPR boom. The bust of 1882, while it seriously affected some parts of the
local economy, did not have a devastating effect on the wholesale sector. This was mainly as a
result of the expanding regional base of the wholesalers as settlement increased on the prairies
and demand for goods grew. The areas east and west of Main Street, however, were undeniably

1980, pp. 112-114.
developing as the warehouse district, slowly through the 1880s and 1890s and then rapidly after 1900 (Plates 1-3).

The history of Winnipeg’s early 20th century massive economic growth phase ends with the opening of the Panama Canal and the start of World War I in the mid-1910s, some expansion did occur and new buildings were constructed in the wholesale district after 1915. The A. Carruthers Company, a hide and wool venture that had been operating in Winnipeg since the late 1880s, expanded its presence in the warehouse district by building a new structure in 1916 on King Street, immediately north of its original building (Plate 4).

STYLE
This modest commercial structure does not feature a wealth of architectural detailing and ornamentation. Given the era in which it was built, it is not surprising that it lacked this detailing and that stylistic concerns were secondary to cost. Its divided main façade define it as an example of a Two-Part Commercial Style structure, very common throughout the downtown regions of most North American cities. Especially popular after 1900, the design was used to reflect the varied activities housed in the different areas of the building. The ground floor held the retail spaces, often with recessed entrances and large display windows. A cornice or similar feature, often stone or metal, was usually used to visually separate the ground floor from the upper floors, which included banks of large windows to light the office and/or residential space. Access to this upper floor could be provided by an ornate entrance on the front façade.

CONSTRUCTION
The building stands mid-block on the west side of King Street between Bannatyne and William avenues. According to the original plans and City of Winnipeg records, this building has a King Street frontage of 7.6 metres and runs back 22.9 metres (see Appendix I for more construction information.2 The solid brick walls of the superstructure are 33.0 centimetres thick and rest on

2 City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 609550-12-2, PC 40.
50.8-centimetre thick stone foundation walls. The original design included basement windows set in brick window wells with steel grating at grade (Plate 5). The building shares a party wall with the structure to the south, 120 King Street. Ceiling heights are (Plate 6): Basement- 2.4 metres; First floor- 3.5 metres; Second floor- 3.2 metres. A 1.8-metre high, 4.7 x 2.3-metre penthouse was built at the northwest corner of the roof. Cost of construction was $10,000.3

**DESIGN**

The main (east) façade is clad in multi-hued dark face brick laid in a variety of bonds including a vertical header course outlining the window and door openings on both floors (Plate 7). Original windows on the main façade have been replaced but feature their original stone lug sills. A modest cornice was built between the two floors (removed) and the second storey window openings were embellished with sculpted limestone continuous sills with rectangular brackets. The roofline is flat and unadorned. The remainder of the building is built of common clay brick. The south wall is a party wall; the north elevation is interrupted on both floors by squared window openings with stone lug sills and newer window units (Plate 8). The rear (west) façade features window openings similar to those on the north wall and a single entrance door. The penthouse is found in the northwest corner (Plate 9).

**INTERIOR**

As originally designed, the basement of the building held an elevator and boiler and fuel rooms in the west end, a large vault on the south wall and open storage (Plate 10). The ground floor was divided into an entrance hall running along the north side of the building and giving public access to a small room with public counter. A vault, private office, general office and shipping room, as well as the elevator and stairs were also found on the main floor (Plate 11). The second floor was open storage space (Plate 12).

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3 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #734/1916.
Today, the space has been converted into bar space, with openings created in the south walls on all three levels to connect to the neighbouring building, 120 King Street (Plates 13-15).

**INTEGRITY**
The building stands in its original location and appears to be in good structural condition. Alterations to the building’s exterior include the replacement of all original windows.

**STREETSCAPE**
The A. Carruthers Company Building is an important part of a heritage streetscape (Plate 16). It, along with the other buildings in the district, has been recognized as a National Historic District by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. All buildings in the Exchange District are an essential part of the historic streetscape and as such, the Historical Buildings Committee has given them 60 points.

**ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS**
James Chisholm and Son was the local architectural firm given the task of designing the Carruthers Building in 1916. J. Chisholm was born in Ontario and settled permanently in Winnipeg in 1900 (Plate 17). His son, Colin Campbell Chisholm (Plate 18), joined his father’s firm in ca.1906 (see Appendix II for additional biographical information). Chisholm has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.

The structure was built by local contractors Fraser and MacDonald (also commonly spelled McDonald) of Winnipeg. Little is known about Alexander Macdonald but Finlay Fraser was born in Scotland, coming to Canada in 1903 and settling in Winnipeg. He was also president of the Builders Mutual Supply Company and a member of the fair wage board. He died in 1948.4

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Both Fraser and MacDonald were stonemasons and formed a partnership in by 1905. In 1907, they built Salem Reformed Church, 235 Andrews Street under the name Gillis, Fraser and MacDonald and also did work with another local stone mason, August Gillis and carpenter James Henry Neil.\textsuperscript{5}

The pair built Trinity Baptist Church, 549 Gertrude Avenue, in two stages – 1907 and 1909 as well as the Odd Fellows' Hall on McMillan Avenue (1912); Superintendent's House, Municipal Hospital complex, 594 Eccles Street (1914 – demolished); St. John’s Library, 500 Salter Street (1914) – Grade II; Northern Life Building, 300 Main Street (1922); two smaller commercial projects at 687 Main Street (1923) and 607-609 Main Street (1925); Singer Sewing Machine Building, 424 Portage Avenue (1930) and Eastman-Kodak Building, 287 Portage Avenue (1929); and portions of Winnipeg's first primary sewage treatment plant in Kildonan (1936-1937). They also did repairs, alterations and additions to numerous structures over the years.

The business was incorporated as Fraser, MacDonald and Co. Ltd. general contractors in 1935 and the firm was awarded several federal defence contracts during World War II.\textsuperscript{6} Fraser served as president until his death and was succeeded by MacDonald. The firm operated until 1957.\textsuperscript{7}

\textbf{PERSON/INSTITUTION}

Andrew Carruthers was born in 1839 in Glasgow, Scotland, coming to Canada with his parents to Toronto in 1846.\textsuperscript{8} In 1861, he moved with his new wife to Strathroy, Canada West (present-day Ontario, located between London and Sarnia) and ran a hide and wool business. In 1889, he moved west and set up his business, A. Carruthers Company, growing it to one of the largest

\textsuperscript{5} R.R. Rostecki, “549 Gertrude Avenue – Trinity Baptist Church (Formerly Nassau Street Baptist Church),” report for the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee, January 1996, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{6} Winnipeg Free Press, various dates.

\textsuperscript{7} M. Peterson and D.M. Lyon, “492 Main Street (131-133 Albert Street), Former Macdonald Shoe Store (Formerly Banfield Block; originally the Ryan Block),” report for the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee, January 1996, pp. 11-12.

\textsuperscript{8} Manitoba Free Press, April 5, 1909, p. 5.
ventures of its type in Canada, with branches in Brandon, Manitoba and Lethbridge, Alberta. In 1896, the company, which operated a warehouse on Logan Avenue, built 120 King Street for its offices and showrooms. Two decades later, a second building, at 124 King Street, was completed. It appears that the company occupied space in both buildings until it ceased operations in the early 1920s, although representatives of A. Carruthers continued to own both properties into the late 1930s.

Carruthers was also a director of the Monarch Life Assurance Company. He had a daughter and his two sons were both involved in the fur and hide business in Birkenhead, England (John A.) and in Brandon and Winnipeg (William W.). It was William who took over the Winnipeg operation when Andrew Carruthers died in April 1909, along with business partner John S. Rogers (1867-1926).

The building was then owned by a number of individuals and small companies after 1940, tenants included the Seiberling Rubber Company, Tully Ice Machine Company, B.J. Cutler Distributing Limited, King Display Equipment and the Core Area Initiative. It has recently been converted into restaurant space by the King’s Head Pub located at 120 King Street.

**EVENT**
There is no known event connected with this building.

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9 Loc. cit.; Lethbridge Daily Herald, April 6, 1909, p. 1; and Brandon Weekly Sun, April 8, 1909, p. 2.
11 City of Winnipeg Assessment Roll, Roll No. 609550-12-2 (124 King Street) and 609540-12-2 (120 King Street), 1900-1950.
12 Manitoba Free Press, April 5, 1909, p. 5 and July 26, 1926, p. 4.
CONTEXT
This block was constructed during World War I, a period when construction had slowed considerably in Winnipeg. Lack of manpower and materials combined to make construction difficult, many proposed projects were shelved and few new buildings were planned. This situation would continue until 1920 when the sector rebounded on the strength of the growing economy. That this firm was able to build during this time and use the new structure for the expansion of its business was very unusual.

LANDMARK
This block is located along a busy street in the heart of the Exchange District and combined with its dark colouring, is conspicuous in the neighbourhood.
APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Building Address: 124 King Street
Building Name: A. Carruthers Co. Building

Original Use: warehouse
Current Use: media services/offices

Roll No. (Old): 609550 (10114-1)
Municipality: 12
Ward: 2
Property or Occupancy Code: 40

Legal Description: 7W St. John, Plan 502, Lot 2

Location: west side between William & Bannatyne avenues

Date of Construction: 1916
Storeys: 2
Construction Type: Brick

HERITAGE STATUS: ON INVENTORY

Building Permits (Plans available: [CS] City Storage):
- 734/1916 [CS] $10,000 (original); 1097/1916 [CS] (additional); 2393/1935 $500 (alteration);
  334/1945 $100 (alteration); 9211/1976 [CS] $1,000 (interior alteration); 7252/1979 [CS] $26,000 (interior alteration);
  5000/1996 $2,000 (alteration); 119418/1999 $5,000 (interior alteration); 160385/2005 $50,000 (interior alteration);
  142703/2008 $70,000 (interior alteration)

Information:
- 25 x 75 x 34 = 63,750 cu. ft.
- East Face 13” brick – balance common clay brick
  (Interior wall finish sandblasted brick) – Tyndall sills
- Upper wall thickness – 13” brick, basement - stone
- 1948 – basement floor good, 2nd floor worn. Ext. appears good-
- Permit 334/1945 Inspection – no alterations, painted north side
- 1951 – building in “fair condition”
- 1961 Assessment – “Fair condition” for age
- 1965 Assessment – Normal condition, no changes
  A/C, sandblasted red brick walls
- 1978 – 2nd Floor renovated. Rest of building vacant
- Permit 7252/1979 – 1st Floor and basement renovated, converted
to a restaurant. Some new light fixtures, partitioning,
V.J. siding
- 1983 Permits – Interior & Exterior renovations
- #119418/1999- remove partition wall & floor skylight
- #160385/2005- 2 new openings between 120 & 124 King
- #142703/2008- renovate main floor into restaurant space

ARCHITECT: JAMES CHISHOLM & SON
CONTRACTOR: FRASER & MACDONALD
APPENDIX II

James Chisholm and Colin Campbell Chisholm

James Chisholm was born in Paris, Upper Canada (Ontario) in 1840, where he attended public school. He married Elizabeth Goodfellow at Brantford on February 22, 1864 and together they had six children. The pair lived for a time on a farm in Glengarry County before moving to London where James worked for a plough manufacturer but also took up the study of architecture. After moving back to Paris, Chisholm met a family acquaintance, the Hon. John Sifton, who talked him into moving to Winnipeg for both his health and his future, which he did in the spring of 1877, leaving his wife and three children at home.14

His first job was as a timekeeper on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway between Winnipeg and Whitemouth. He also spent one summer in Norway House, attempting to improve his poor health. Shortly thereafter, he began his architectural career in earnest, and became involved in the City Hall construction scandal when he was hired to replace C.A. Barber as the architect for the project.

The family moved to Superior, Wisconsin in 1892 and James became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1896. He worked during this period as a preacher for the Methodist Episcopal Church, travelling great distances every week.15 In 1900, the family returned to Winnipeg, James taking his place among the growing number of talented architects practising their trade in the city and throughout western Canada. James Chisholm was a member of the Winnipeg School Board and an avid curler, being an honorary member of the Manitoba Curling Association and long-time member of the Granite Curling Club.

14 Family information courtesy of Jim Chisholm, grandson of James and son of Colin C. Chisholm.
About 1911, Chisholm and his wife began wintering in Santa Monica, California because of continued poor health and they moved there permanently in 1914. He died on October 14, 1920 in Ocean Park, California.\textsuperscript{16}

Colin Campbell Chisholm was James Chisholm’s youngest child, born in Winnipeg on September 17, 1883. He moved south with the family and received his early education in Madison, Wisconsin before returning to Winnipeg. He officially joined his father’s architectural firm ca.1906, became its active manager in 1910 and eventually took over the practice.\textsuperscript{17} He shared his father’s love of curling and was a president of the Granite Curling Club. He died in Winnipeg on September 5, 1936.\textsuperscript{18}

The firm was responsible for designing buildings throughout Winnipeg and Manitoba as well as in Regina, Saskatoon (Bowerman Building, 1912), and Moose Jaw (Wesley Church, n.d.), Saskatchewan, and Edmonton, Alberta.\textsuperscript{19} An incomplete list of their Winnipeg structures includes:\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{James Chisholm:}
- Hochman (formerly Harris) Building, 154 Princess Street (1882) – Grade III
- Grace Methodist Church, Notre Dame and Ellice avenues (1883) – demolished
- A. Wilson House, Charlotte Street (1900)
- Addition to J. Ryan Building, 678-80 Main Street (1900)
- J.H. Turnbull House, Edmonton Street (1900)
- C.N. Bell House, Carlton Street (1900)
- D. Horn House, Edmonton Street (1901)
- J. Watson House, River Avenue (1901)
- C.H. Nix Building, Ross Avenue (1901)
- Rev. J.A. McClung House, Balmoral Street (1902)
- W.G. Moyse House, Langside Street (1902)
- G.N. Jackson House, Langside Street (1902)

\textsuperscript{16} Manitoba Free Press, October 18, 1920, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{17} F. H. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 723-24.
\textsuperscript{18} Winnipeg Tribune, September 5, 1936; and Winnipeg Free Press, September 7, 1936, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{19} F. H. Schofield, op. cit., p. 723.
\textsuperscript{20} Compiled from ibid., pp. 723-24; Winnipeg Tribune, September 5, 1936; Winnipeg Saturday Post, June 8, 1912, p. 39; and City of Winnipeg Building Permits, 1900-26.
James Chisholm (continued):
- Waterous Engine Works Company Warehouse, Higgins Avenue (1902)
- Coleclough Company Building, Logan Avenue (1902)
- W.J. Guest Building, 598 Main Street (1902)
- N. Page House, Spence Street (1902)
- J.W. Harris House, 26 Edmonton Street (1902) – Grade III
- A. McCormack House, Edmonton Street (1902)
- Wright and Stewart Building, Alexander Avenue (1902)
- J.D. McArthur House, Cumberland Avenue (1902)
- G. Forsyth House, Carlton Street (1903)
- Hotel, Notre Dame Avenue East (1903)
- A. MacDonald Company Warehouse, Market Avenue (1903)
- C. Lilt House, Hargrave Avenue (1903)
- Dr. Clarke House, Furby Street (1903)
- D.A. Stewart House, Wardlaw Avenue (1903)
- C.E. Young House, Mayfair Place (1903)
- Zion Methodist (then Zion Apostolic) Church, 335 Pacific Avenue (1904), destroyed by fire 1970
- M. Woodlinger House, Pacific Avenue (1904)
- Young Men’s Liberal Club, Notre Dame Avenue (1904)
- Manitoba Cartage Company stable, Henry Avenue (1905)
- W.J. Guest Fish Warehouse, 98 Alexander Avenue (1905 & 1910)
- Exeter Apartments, 76 Lily Street (1905)
- Strathcona Curling Rink, Furby Place (1908) – demolished
- J.T. Gordon House, Wellington Crescent (1909)
- House for St. John’s Methodist Church, Polson Avenue (1909)
- G.F. Galt House, Wellington Crescent (1910)
- J. Ryan Sr. House, Central Avenue (1910)
- Semmons Warehouse, 468 Ross Avenue (1910)
- I.O.O.F. (Odd Fellows') Temple, 293 Kennedy Street (1910)- Grade III (façade only remains)
- Sterling Bank Building, 283 Portage Avenue (1910-11)
- F.S. Parlee House, Canora Street (1911)
- E.C. Marrin House, Dorchester Avenue (1911)
- Gowans, Kent, Western Building, Market Avenue (1911-12)
- Granite Curling Club, 22 Mostyn Place (1912) – Grade III

James Chisholm and Son:
- Woods Building Company Warehouse, Robinson Avenue (1907)
- W.J. Guest House, 75 Academy Road (1907)
- Jobin-Marrin Warehouse, 158-62 Market Avenue (1907)
- Young Methodist (United) Church, 222 Furby Street (1907, 1910)- Grade II (only tower left after fire)
- Strathcona Curling Rink, Furby Place (1908) – demolished
- Kipling Apartments, 534-36 Langside Street (1908-09)
- J.T. Gordon House, Wellington Crescent (1909)
- House for St. John’s Methodist Church, Polson Avenue (1909)
- G.F. Galt House, Wellington Crescent (1910)
- J. Ryan Sr. House, Central Avenue (1910)
- Semmons Warehouse, 468 Ross Avenue (1910)
- I.O.O.F. (Odd Fellows') Temple, 293 Kennedy Street (1910)- Grade III (façade only remains)
- Sterling Bank Building, 283 Portage Avenue (1910-11)
- F.S. Parlee House, Canora Street (1911)
- E.C. Marrin House, Dorchester Avenue (1911)
- Gowans, Kent, Western Building, Market Avenue (1911-12)
- Granite Curling Club, 22 Mostyn Place (1912) – Grade III
James Chisholm and Son (continued):

  Sparling Methodist Church, Elgin Avenue (1912)
  Thistle Curling Club, McDonald Avenue (1912)
  Grandstand for Stampede Amusement Company, Sinclair Street (1913)
  B. Shragge Warehouse, Sutherland Avenue (1913)
  Marlborough Hotel, 331 Smith Street (1913) – Grade II
  La Salle Hotel, 346 Nairn Avenue (1914)
  City Light and Power, additional storey to power house, 54 King Street (1915)
  City Light and Power, additions to terminal station, McFarlane Street (1918)
  City Light and Power, show room, rear of 54 King Street (1919)
  City of Winnipeg garage, Elgin Avenue (1919)
  Walter Woods Warehouse, Sutherland Avenue (1920)
  Clarendon Hotel, 311 Portage Avenue (1920) and fire repairs (1923) – demolished

C.C. Chisholm:

  Clarendon Hotel, 311 Portage Avenue, fire repairs (1923) – demolished
  Filling station for M. Bergstrom, Maryland Street (1924)
  Calvary Evangelical Church, Alverstone Street (1925)
  Royal Oak Court, 277 River Avenue (1928)
  Addition, Winnipeg Police Court, Rupert Avenue (1930) – demolished
Plate 1 - Looking south from City Hall and William Avenue, ca.1888. King Street, on the right, shows several buildings already built. (Public Archives of Canada.)
Plate 2 – The same view south from City Hall, 1893. The Leland Hotel is in the foreground, new warehouses and commercial properties stretch out behind it. The King Street block has not seen significant development.  (Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg Outsize #133.)
Plate 3 – Looking south down King Street from the roof of City Hall, ca.1900. Buildings pictured include: #1- Central Fire Hall, 110 Albert Street; #2- Thomas Ryan Block, 104 King Street (now parkade); #3- Sparling Sales Building (the first Carruthers Building), 120 King Street. (Courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba, “Winnipeg-Views c1900-3,” N4553.)
Plate 4 – A. Carruthers Building, 124 King Street, no date. The small sign on the wood fence beside the building is for F.F. Carruthers (relationship unknown), advertising “WILL BUILD ON THIS PROPERTY TO SUIT TENANT”. (Western Canada Pictorial Index, #1516-50413.)
Plate 5 – Detail of front (east) portion of “Basement Plan,” architect’s drawing, plan #734/1916. (City of Winnipeg.)
Plate 6 – “Cross Section on A-B,” architect’s drawing, plan #734/1916. (City of Winnipeg.)
Plate 7 – A. Carruthers Company Building, 124 King Street, front (east) façade, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)
Plate 8 – A. Carruthers Company Building, 124 King Street, north façade, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)

Plate 9 – A. Carruthers Company Building, 124 King Street, rear (west) façade, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)
Plate 10 – “Basement Plan,” architect’s drawing, plan #734/1916. (City of Winnipeg.)
Plate 11 – “First Floor Plan,” architect’s drawing, plan #734/1916. (City of Winnipeg.)
Plate 12 – “Second Floor Plan,” architect’s drawing, plan #734/1916. (City of Winnipeg.)
Plate 13 – A. Carruthers Company Building, 124 King Street, ground floor, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)
Plate 14 – A. Carruthers Company Building, 124 King Street, ground floor staircase and vault doors, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)
Plate 15 – A. Carruthers Company Building, 124 King Street, second floor, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)

Plate 16 – King Street looking north from Bannatyne Avenue, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)
Plate 17 – James Chisholm, no date. (M. Peterson Collection.)

Plate 18 – Colin Campbell Chisholm, no date. (M. Peterson Collection.)