



**City of Winnipeg Records Committee
Discussion Paper
Program Requirements
City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch**

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Discussion Paper: Program Requirements, of the City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch

Mission: City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch

To acquire, manage and maintain accurate, authentic and usable records in the public trust. To foster civic identity and awareness by connecting citizens to the sources of their past, their histories, their communities. To support the transformation of information into knowledge.

Executive Summary



The City has a legislated and fiduciary responsibility to provide for proper stewardship of its records and archives on behalf of its citizens – present and future generations. The purpose of this discussion paper is to describe challenges to access and preservation of archival materials held by the City of Winnipeg and to act as a catalyst for the creation of a strategic plan to improve the facility designated to house the City’s unique and valuable historical collection.

1. The archival collection of the City of Winnipeg is one of the oldest and most complete municipal government collections in Canada and includes records of the original City of Winnipeg and all amalgamating municipalities. These unique records date from 1873 and the information contained within them is irreplaceable. The City of Winnipeg Archives and Records Control Branch has utilized space at 380 William Avenue since the program was established in the 1970’s. A global preservation assessment conducted in 2002 by a nationally-recognized conservator found the building sub-standard in all areas considered essential for the long term preservation of archival materials. The report is attached as Appendix A.
2. In 2005, an engineering review of the building identified significant structural problems that resulted in an order to remove 1500 boxes of records from the main and second floor storage areas to reduce floor loads. The report is attached as Appendix B.

Accommodation-related issues represent a significant constraint on the Archive’s ability to both protect and provide access to City records. The situation is further

complicated by the heritage status of 380 William Avenue. Appropriate care, storage and exhibition of archival materials and the delivery of efficient service to City staff and citizens alike depend upon resolution of these issues.

Background



For the Archives and Records Control Branch of the City Clerk's Department, this discussion paper is an important next step in a developmental process that began with Council approval of the Cook Report in 1998. Since then, the Archives has made significant progress in corporate record keeping, and more records than ever before are being scheduled using By-Law 166/2003 – a significant volume of which are destined for the Archives. To accommodate departmental demand for the storage of City records, the Department received a capital appropriation of \$500,000 in 2006 to renovate the third floor of 311 Ross Avenue for use as a records storage facility. While this facility began to receive departmental records in 2007, available storage space for the records management program was reduced by 1600 cubic feet as a result of structural problems at 380 William Avenue. The loss of storage space is a serious concern for the Archives. However, the condition of the building at 380 William Avenue also affords the City with an opportunity to address the program requirements of its growing records management and archival programs. Key issues relating to the 380 William Avenue site are:

1. the absence of a fire suppression system.
2. significant temperature/humidity fluctuations throughout the building.
3. the absence of appropriate storage space for specialized collections (i.e. maps and cartographic materials, architectural plans and artifacts).
4. excessive lighting levels combined with infiltrating exterior light in storage areas (window shades are torn, pockmarked, dirty and most are inoperable).
5. accessibility issues (both for the public – universal access – and for shipping and receiving record transfers).
6. problematic maintenance, safety issues, suitability for current use and load issues relating to the compact moveable shelving in the basement. This shelving was not intended to hold cubic foot boxes. Bearing too much weight has caused mechanical problems – in particular, locking mechanisms frequently jam, thereby hampering access. More recently, accumulations of sand and debris degrading out of the building foundation periodically block the tracks of the

compact moveable shelving creating a new safety issue and delaying access to records – note that a sample of the rubble was tested and no traces of asbestos or mould were identified.

Finally, the shelving material in the compact moveable shelving units and on combination steel/wood shelves elsewhere in the building is substandard for use in archives: wood products used in the existing shelving off gas formaldehyde, which causes paper to yellow and become brittle over time, even though it is inside a storage container. Brittle paper is subject to breakage and eventually crumbles to dust. The City is at risk to lose information through the degradation of paper records housed using substandard equipment.

7. floor load, related structural integrity and code non-compliance issues as identified in the structural audit that require attention over the short, mid and long term (see Appendix B: THE CARNEGIE BUILDING, 380 William Avenue, Building Structure Audit, Crosier Kilgour & Partners Ltd., September 2005). Note that in the fall of 2006, approximately 1600 boxes had to be moved out of 380 William Avenue due to imminent risk of failure of the flooring system.

As the City identifies capital to undertake repairs to the building, specific archival program requirements could be reviewed in advance of this work to determine if the building can be adapted/renovated to meet these requirements. Repairs to the building should be undertaken with a view to its suitability as the home of the City of Winnipeg Archives.

Environmental Scan



Risk Management: The Archives currently operates in risk management mode, monitoring for building and equipment failures and managing the collection around these risks. Environmental risks within 380 William Avenue include water damage to records from leaks in the roofing system, from overhead pipes and heating/cooling conduits; insect and rodent infestations; extreme fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity; fire; security. Appendix C contains a summary of incidents in which records were damaged or subjected to specific risk. Salvage of records utilizing City insurance coverage is undertaken where viable and appropriate given the value of the records involved (*Note: In 2009, the Archives will undertake a limited monetary appraisal of its holdings to establish a dollar value from which a meaningful insurance package can be designed*).

Strategic Redevelopment: A comprehensive redevelopment strategy for 380 William Avenue has never been proposed. An essential component of such a strategy is consultation with key stakeholders to ensure that redevelopment efforts address the program requirements of the building occupant. For example, the building has no fire suppression/sprinkler system, yet is used to house the City's unique and irreplaceable archival collection, most of which is paper-based. While various methods and equipment have been used to meet the City's demand for storage of archival and temporary records since 1977, a purpose-designed solution is critical for the long-term preservation of this important civic resource and to provide for the secure storage of electronic archives.

Area Character: An important consideration for redevelopment of 380 William Avenue is the character of the surrounding neighbourhood and its proximity to City Hall and the historic market area. The building is comparable to other buildings in the area which have been successfully repurposed: the Princess Street campus of Red River College, the Massey Building which houses the University of Winnipeg's downtown campus, and the Fairchild Lofts development, to name a few. In addition, the building grounds provide much needed green space within the precinct, which could be used to advantage.

Plan Winnipeg: Plan Winnipeg identifies as a priority the conservation of heritage assets in the City of Winnipeg. In particular, the Plan promotes adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and use of listed heritage buildings to accommodate

civic departments or programs, provided that buildings can be suitably renovated to health, safety and accessibility standards while remaining affordable. The Carnegie Library building is an excellent candidate for expansion/redevelopment to meet archival program requirements given its proximity to City Hall and adjacent educational programs that make use of the City's archival holdings. The recent expansion/redevelopment of Centennial Library substantially increased public usage of library services and enhanced the look and feel of the Graham Avenue Mall. By repurposing 380 William Avenue, the City will meet its responsibility to contribute to efforts to revitalize the downtown by maintaining and/or rehabilitating its own properties.

Link to Cultural and Heritage Development Strategies for Downtown

Winnipeg: Archives are a significant contributor to research for cultural and heritage initiatives and for development of film, literary and other artistic endeavours. This is in addition to their research value for social, environmental and community history and corporate responsibilities. Archival institutions located in or near downtown Winnipeg include the Manitoba Archives/Hudson's Bay Company Archives, University of Winnipeg Archives, United Church Archives, Osaredek and Societe historique de Saint-Boniface. In addition to these archival institutions, downtown Winnipeg is home to the Manitoba Museum and the new state-of-the-art human rights museum. All of these institutions are cultural/heritage destinations in and of themselves. Expansion/redevelopment of 380 William Avenue would enable the Archives to develop outreach programs that actively engage with citizens and promote the history of our City, and to participate actively in this important cultural/heritage sector.

Building Health and Safety Issues: The Carnegie Library building in its present state is outdated, in poor condition, poorly maintained, and does not meet the program requirements of the present occupant. The building is in need of extensive repairs and upgrades to address basic building code and health and safety requirements identified in reports of the City of Winnipeg Health and Safety Committee and in the independent structural audit conducted by Crosier Kilgour & Partners Ltd. As well, the building's HVAC system is at serious risk of failure. Determining the viability and potential for expansion/redevelopment of this building is critical before initiating an expensive patchwork of repairs that add nothing to the building's functionality or appeal in the current service environment in which the Archives functions.

The Building Crisis: The Carnegie Library Building was constructed in two stages between 1903 and 1908 with funds donated by American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. It occupies a treed site bordered by its original wrought-iron fence in a transitional area between downtown Winnipeg and residential neighbourhoods to the north and west. The building was designed by

Samuel Hooper, who later became Provincial Architect for Manitoba. Hooper was responsible for many significant buildings in Winnipeg, including Isbister School on Vaughan Street (which was recently expanded and renovated to meet the needs of its current occupant, the Winnipeg Adult Education Centre).

The Carnegie Library is the oldest purpose-built public library in Manitoba and served as Winnipeg's main library until 1977. As such, it housed reference, educational and recreational collections used by generations of local readers, all in keeping with Carnegie's desire to enhance public access to reading material for educational and recreational use. When Centennial Library opened as the City's new main library, the future of 380 William Avenue was uncertain. Public protest over its proposed closure resulted in a decision to keep it open as a branch library with reduced floor space and public hours. Space not used by the branch library was allocated to the storage of civic records – primarily in the basement.

In 1978, a pilot project saw records from all amalgamating municipalities and from the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg transferred to 380 William Avenue. This pilot project resulted in creation of the City Archives and Records Control branch within the City Clerk's Department. When the William Avenue Branch Library was closed in 1994, the entire building was used as the City's records centre and archives.

On July 30, 1984, 380 William Avenue was designated a Grade II Heritage Building. This designation applies to the building on its footprint, the front two rooms on the first and second floors and the wrought-iron fence that borders the property.

In 2005, as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations for the building, 380 William Avenue was rededicated as the City of Winnipeg Archives by Mayor Sam Katz. While the 380 William Avenue Building has a great deal of cache and is fondly remembered by many, people who visit the building now tend to note its worn and crumbling condition with dismay. Visitors often ask about the security of records stored at 380 William Avenue – in particular, they want to know about fire prevention/suppression. As noted previously, the building is not equipped with this basic safety feature at this time. In addition to issues of security and fire safety, a recent structural audit found the building in need of significant capital intensive repairs, and consecutive Health and Safety Committee visits have resulted in orders for repairs to flooring, windows, carpets, etc. Finally, the issue of universal access is in limbo.

Rather than proceed with incremental repairs that serve essentially as stop gap methods to keep it open, the City could conduct a study to determine whether the building can be suitably expanded/redeveloped to meet the needs of its growing archival program. If the study supports significant purpose-designed renovation,

the building could once again be a source of pride for the City and a meeting place in downtown Winnipeg.

The Stewardship Crisis: The City of Winnipeg Archives holds the most valuable information resource on the development and evolution of municipal government in the greater Winnipeg area. Records date from 1873, and include textual materials, rare books, historical publications, maps, plans, photographs, documentary art, gifts presented to the Mayor, and corporate memorabilia dating from 1873. The archival collection currently occupies approximately 10000 box storage spaces at 380 William Avenue.

The archival collection includes information fixed on a variety of support media including linen, vellum, various grades of paper, glass (negatives), mylar, microfilm and audio and visual films. Each of these supports has specific long-term storage requirements and is optimally housed in a temperature and humidity controlled environment (at 15 C and RH 45-50%). The present facility at 380 William Avenue has no climate control capabilities and environmental monitoring over the last two years indicates that the RH drops to as low as 6% in the winter months. Significant temperature fluctuations have also been recorded due to failure of the building’s heating and cooling system. The combination of a high average temperature and a low RH, as well as significant seasonal fluctuations in these climate indicators, speeds the decay and degradation of paper and other records. Given that much of the collection consists of lower grade paper records, the City is at a serious risk of loss of its documentary history.

In addition to traditional media as noted above, the City of Winnipeg now creates, receives and stores electronic records, a percentage of which have archival value. Future program plans for the Archives will require identification of methods to acquire and migrate forward electronic archives. A central secure, climate-controlled vault to house a data repository may be viable.

Environmental Challenges

Issue	380 William	311 Ross
Fire suppression/sprinkler system onsite	No	Yes
Seasonal fluctuations in temperature and humidity (see Table 2 for a data table)	Significant	Moderate
Overcrowding of documents in existing housing	Significant	Moderate
Housing, Security, Climate: open pack files, pigeon hole storage of rolled plans, (all of these records are exposed to settling dirt, extreme temperature/RH fluctuations, loss or damage through theft or careless handling).	Significant	Moderate
Overhead pipes (potential for water damage)	Significant	Significant
Excessive light levels in storage areas	Significant	Moderate
Benign Neglect	Significant	Not a Factor

Archival Principles, Practices and Standards: The City has a responsibility to acquire, document and conserve its archival collections in accordance with professional practices and standards, for the benefit of citizens today and into the future. Through the preservation of information over time, the Archives protects citizen rights and ensures that the ideas and activities of each generation are made known to successive generations. Archival programs in Manitoba are accredited by the Association for Manitoba Archives (AMA). An archives must be accredited in order to receive grants adjudicated by the AMA on behalf of the Canadian Council of Archives (CCA). The Archives has received \$19,717.70 from the CCA since 2005. The AMA also provides expert advice to the Heritage Grants Advisory Council (HGAC) for grant applications from Manitoba archives. The Archives has received \$21,585.00 from HGAC since 2002. The City of Winnipeg Archives is scheduled for reaccreditation in 2010. Accreditation includes a facility review against key preservation criteria (i.e. fire suppression, light exposure, temperature and humidity controls, monitoring methods, preservation management activities and remedial treatments, policy framework, public access, etc.). As noted, 380 William Avenue is sub-standard in many of these accreditation criteria (a program to undertake gradual rehousing to offset environmental issues and benign neglect is ongoing, though slow and laborious and hampered by a lack of adequate workspace and tools to capture information about the collection).

Moving Forward



Records now housed at 380 William Avenue date from 1873 and include critical core records for all amalgamating municipalities, as well as records for the Greater Winnipeg Water District, the Board of Control, municipal parks boards and the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg, to name just a few. The collection is comprised of records in a variety of formats, including: paper documents; leather-bound record and minute books; maps; architectural plans; photographs; paintings; audio and video recordings; and artifacts. The collection has been called remarkable, both for its completeness and for the simple fact of its survival, given that the City did not have a records management program or archives in place until the 1970's.

In addition to the present at risk situation in which these valuable archival records are kept, the City is at risk of losing a "generation" of electronic archival records as departments deploy electronic systems to receive, create, track and report on civic business. A plan for the storage and retrieval of electronic archives could be articulated and incorporated into the expansion/redevelopment of 380 William Avenue.

The building in which the City's unparalleled historic collection is stored was officially opened in 1905. While some alterations have been made to 380 William Avenue to facilitate record storage, a recent preservation assessment of the facility found it substandard in all categories considered critical to the long-term preservation of archival records. Further, a structural audit undertaken in 2005 by an independent engineering firm identified structural integrity and building code issues and the City's Health and Safety Committee assessments have uncovered other issues that are addressed as identified (i.e. broken and loose asbestos floor tiles; knots of wires/cables no longer in use; broken or cracked windows; plaster falls from walls and ceilings; etc.).

Accommodation-related issues represent a significant constraint on the Archive's ability to both protect and provide access to City records. The situation is further complicated by the building's heritage status. Appropriate care, storage and exhibition of archival materials and the delivery of efficient service to City staff and citizens alike depends resolution of these issues. Repairs to the building should be undertaken with a view to its suitability for use as the home of the City of Winnipeg Archives.

The Vision



An archive exists to preserve and protect the records entrusted to its care. As well, it must provide a safe and comfortable working environment for staff and include facilities to allow the public access to valuable records. An archive equipped to provide educational experiences for young and old alike and to create and enhance awareness of local history is an integral component of civic life and fosters tolerance, awareness and a deep understanding of place.

The Carnegie Library building has significant capital maintenance requirements and does not meet the program requirements of an archives. However, redevelopment to purpose-designed specifications could give new life to this once vital building, enhance and complement development of the downtown campus, and tie in to a growing cultural/heritage sector.

The Carnegie Library Building is similar in scale and design to Isbister School – which was recently expanded and renovated to meet the requirements of its occupant – and could equally be expanded to include an onsite climate-controlled vault to house the City’s core archival collection and archival server for electronic records. Redevelopment of existing space to provide suitable workspace, office space, exhibition space, research space and meeting space as specified in Appendix D would bring the building and the program into line with modern archival programs across the country.

***Appendix A – Global Preservation Assessment
City of Winnipeg Archives
Rosaleen Hill Conservation Services
1 December 2002***

Appendix B – Crosier Kilgour & Partners Ltd. Report

Appendix C – Incident Reports

Date	Summary	Action	Cost
03/2004	Roof leak. Water dripping from ceiling onto boxes stored on open shelving.	Damaged boxes identified, salvage firm contacted and boxes shipped for treatment (freeze/dry). Shelves draped in plastic sheeting until roof repairs executed.	\$1,000
Date?	Compact moveable shelving, basement storage area, failure of locking mechanism.	Service provider onsite to repair and perform general maintenance on disabled units.	
12/2005	Radiator leak. Carpet wet. Boxes resting on the floor wet.	Clean-up of area. Damaged plans removed from boxes. Salvage proposed but plans were identified as copies.	\$200
09/2006	Order to remove/redistribute boxes from main and second floor storage areas to reduce floor load.	Removed 1500 boxes to a commercial records centre and redistributed remaining load inside the building as per instructions from the structural engineer (see Crosier Kilgour & Partners Ltd. report).	\$7000 (annual for storage and service fees)
07/2007	Leak from overhead pipe, second floor mezzanine, with water penetrating through the floor to lighting fixtures below and dripping onto open shelving.	Water damaged boxes identified, salvaged. Plastic sheeting draped over shelves directly beneath the affected area until repairs executed.	Staff
07/2007	Leak from overhead conduit for air conditioning unit, basement storage area.	Damaged boxes identified (five). As records were dry, files were simply reboxed. Plastic sheeting draped over shelves directly underneath the air conditioning conduit.	Staff
08/2007	Blocked rail, basement compact shelving, from an accumulation of sand and debris degrading out of the foundation.	Building services called, debris tested for mold and asbestos (none found). Contract cleaners hired to clean the storage area of debris.	
08/2008	Break and enter, theft of equipment.	Report filed. Improvements to rear door locks.	\$3000
02/2009	Theft of equipment, building security issues experienced during construction period.	Report filed. Enforcement of security procedures revisited.	\$2000

Appendix D – Archives’ Program Requirements

Accommodation-related issues represent a significant constraint on the Archive’s ability to both protect and provide access to the City’s historic collections. Appropriate care, storage and exhibition of archival materials and the delivery of efficient service to City staff and citizens alike depend upon purpose-designed upgrades of the present facility.

The building at 380 William Avenue once represented the City’s commitment to intellectual vitality and freedom and the pursuit of lifelong learning. A 2004 study of cities with successful downtowns found that the presence of cultural activities and “unusual assets” such as universities, libraries and archives housed in buildings with historic character was a significant success factor. Through expansion and renovation, 380 William Avenue would contribute in a significant way to revitalizing the northwest corner of the downtown campus and Market area and restore the building to its original purpose and prominence in City life.

The expansion/renovation of 380 William Avenue would include design and development of a secure climate-controlled vault for storage of the City’s core archival collections; sufficient space for collection management (workspace to sort, process and store records); a research area large enough to accommodate ten researchers at one time; exhibition, programming and meeting space. The following sections provide details on key program elements, which reflect best practice in contemporary archival programs.

1. **Archival Vault/Server Room:** An archival vault is the main storage area for archival materials. Within the vault, holdings are secure and environmental conditions ensure preservation over the long term. A state-of-the-art vault also provides for air filtration to eliminate dust and particulate accumulations on storage containers. Temperature and RH requirements for optimum long term preservation of most archival materials is the same as that required for servers in a digital archives setting.

To facilitate preservation, archival storage space must meet environmental conditions specific to each medium (i.e. for paper, the recommended temperature is 18 degrees Celsius, RH 40%, with maximum fluctuations of 2% year round). Ideally, the storage area is separate with secured access and air is filtered to remove air borne pollution and dust particles. As noted previously, 380 William is substandard in all of these requirements.

An archival vault would permit the Archives to provide optimal storage conditions for its core archival collection, thereby ensuring its preservation over a much longer term than the present facility will allow. It would also meet requirements to house a server for an electronic data archives.

2. **Research Room (with adjacent public washrooms):** In 2006, the Archives received 1170 researchers, including City staff and citizens. This figure represents a 28% increase over 2005 statistics. Between 2004 and 2005, research visits increased by 35%. Given that by-law implementation has resulted in an increased rate of transfer of records to the Records Centre and that the public profile of the Archives has improved significantly through web exhibits on the City's website and through an active exhibition program, we anticipate that the number of requests for access by City staff and research visits by citizens will continue to rise over the next few years.

The present size of the Research Room at 380 William Avenue and available equipment/furniture provides useable space for up to 12 researchers at a time to consult archival materials in traditional form (i.e. textual records, maps and plans). Departmental staff typically request multiple boxes, thus can occupy more than one table for the duration of their research visit – records are kept out for city staff for a maximum of two weeks.

For university students and other researchers, the use of a laptop is routine, and often includes the use of peripheral equipment (scanners, digital cameras, etc.). The Research Room has only one usable electrical outlet at this time. Updating the electrical system to accommodate researcher requirements for power and cabling to enable installation of a computer to facilitate the use of reference tools is a priority.

Although the Research Room is configured to allow for security of records through invigilation by reference staff, security of archival and departmental materials could be improved by providing end of day lockers to store materials in use by City staff or researchers returning on subsequent days. Alternatively, a shelving area adjacent to the public research area but behind a secured door would improve security for departmental records.

Researchers who wish to view audio/visual records must make use of a vcr/tv in the Research Room proper, as the Archives has no other available space for viewing this type of record. A sound booth would eliminate the disruption caused by use of these materials by researchers.

At this time, university orientations and other tours are conducted in the Research Room proper, because there is no other available space to conduct these sessions. Other researchers present during these sessions are offered alternate space, if available (typically, a staff cubicle).

3. **Exhibit/Reception Area:** To be located near the Archives' entrance. To serve many functions, including reception of researchers, tour and

orientation groups and for permanent or rotating exhibits of archival material.

4. **Program Space (with adjacent public washrooms and storage rooms):** A multipurpose room with kitchen and storage area to serve as space for large group orientations, public school tours, seminar or lecture series sponsored by the Archives, and as a venue for election training, an ongoing function of the City Clerk's department. To be equipped with sound system and overhead projector/drop down screen. The facility could be made available to outside community groups who require meeting space. Storage rooms adjacent for chairs, tables, podium, etc.
5. **Staff Offices:** Provide space for two suites of offices (City Archivist and ten staff and Protocol Manager and one staff).
6. **Staff Work Room:** Equipped with photocopier and cupboards for storage of archival supplies, paper, exhibition supplies, etc. and room to work on extensive collections (i.e. former municipalities with upwards of 100 boxes to inventory, sort, appraise, cull and rehouse).
7. **Staff Break Room/Staff Washrooms:** Adjacent to the Staff Offices or Staff Work Room. Basic kitchen and room for comfortable seating.
8. **Receiving and Shipping Area:** Equipped with a standard loading dock to receive and ship out record transfers.
9. **Technical Processing Area:** Space to stage and unpack incoming or outgoing record transfers.
10. **Storage Room:** Located near Receiving and Shipping Area. To be used for the storage of bulky exhibition supplies, inventory of archival boxes, and other bulk ordered supplies.