



297 BURROWS AVENUE

ASHKENAZIE SYNAGOGUE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



297 BURROWS AVENUE ASHKENAZI SYNAGOGUE

Date of Construction: 1906

Building Permit: 2240/1906; 1948 (rebuilding after fire)

Architect: Evans, Frank R.

Contractor: Dennis, H.J.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This brick veneer church rests on a stone foundation and features modest ornamentation on a busy corner in Winnipeg's North End.

The building rests on a raised stone foundation; the front (south) façade faces Burrows Avenue, is symmetrically designed and finished in dark stone. The raised basement wall includes small windows to light and ventilate the space; the central main entrance is set in an arched opening atop a short flight of stairs. A second entrance, located at the west end of the building, is plainer and at grade level. All window openings on this façade, both first and second floors, feature plain rectangular openings with stone sills and lintels. The flat roof is embellished with a raised parapet, a Star of David located in the central arched area. The east façade also includes an arched parapet and Stars of David. The west and rear walls are clad in common clay brick.



Front (south) and west façades, 1980

The building stands on its original location and appears to be in good structural condition. Other than the added Jewish religious symbols, there does not appear to have been any major alterations to the building's exterior.

Little is known about the architect of this block, Frank R. Evans. He began his practice in 1901, although he had only one commission that year and none the year after. From 1903 until the 1930s,¹ he was fairly busy, designing a wide range of buildings, most in the small-to medium-scale category. Some of his larger works include the Foley, Lock and Larson Warehouse, Market Avenue (1903, demolished), Paulin-Chamber Company Building, 311 Ross Avenue (1904 & 1910), Tabernacle Baptist Church, Burrows Avenue at Charles Street (1906, demolished), C.A. Baskerville House, Donald Street (1906), Johnstone Block, 209 Pacific Avenue (1910), Leslie Storage Warehouse, 83 Kate Street (1909), D.D. McOuat House, Balmoral Place (1907), R.S. Robinson Company Warehouse, Louise Avenue (1919) and the St. John's Skating Rink, Church Avenue (1922, demolished).²

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

This synagogue is built on the site of the Tabernacle Baptist Church that was completed in 1906 and used until its sale to the Ashkenazi congregation in 1922. At the time, it was one of over a dozen synagogues in the North End, now is one of only two left. The building was destroyed by fire in 1948 and rebuilt the same year³ and continues to serve its congregation.

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- one of Winnipeg's oldest Jewish congregations, worshipping since the early 1920s on a busy corner in the heart of Winnipeg's North End;
- its associations- its long-term connections to both a Baptist and a Jewish congregation;
- its design- N/A;
- its architect- F.R. Evans was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- defines an important intersection and contributes greatly to the historic streetscape of two major arteries within the North End; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ According to a website on the I.O.O.F. Hall, 74 Princess Street (http://www.ioofmanitoba.ca/74_princess_ave.htm), Evans was hired as the architect to design interior repairs to the building after a January 1930 fire.
- ² City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1926.
- ³ Sharon Chisvin, "North End outreach. Ashkenazi synagogue develops educational program," in Winnipeg Free Press, February 8, 2009.