



74 CARLTON STREET

ELLESMERE APARTMENTS

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – JANUARY 2007



74 CARLTON STREET ELLESMERE APARTMENTS

Date of Construction: 1911

Building Permit: 1106/1911 (Plans on file at City Archives)

Architect: Teeter, George G.

Contractor: Nelson and Foster

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

One of the more elaborate pre-World War I apartment blocks is the Ellesmere Apartments, built in the heart of one of Winnipeg's earliest prestigious residential neighbourhoods, known as The Reserve. The Ellesmere was another of the many opulent apartment blocks built in the district in addition to the large mansions on manicured lawns found on the intersecting streets on both sides of Broadway, the area's premier roadway.

The front (east) façade is heavily treated with classical detailing, from the large stone portico to the stone banding, diamonds, quoins, keystones and other accenting around doors and windows, from the complete entablature with heavy overhanging cornice to the stone capped brick parapet with its arched central section. Bay windows on either side of the portico animate all three floors and the raised basement. Above the portico are two large arched windows on the second and third floors both filled with intricately designed stained



Front (east) façade details, 2006

glass units. Open brick and stone balconies grace the northeast and southeast corners and the metal railings add variety to both the front and side elevations. A stone panel with the building's name graces the portico. It is an impressive front and one designed to fit into the neighbourhood.

The front of south side features the red brick of the front façade as well as the embellishments at the roofline. A red brick bay window is located just west of the front balcony. To the rear, the walls are constructed of common clay brick and a large three-storey screened and glazed balcony with metal railings is located near the southwest corner. Windows between the balconies feature arched heads and stone lug sills. The base of this façade is covered in rusticated stone, a plainer bay window is located to the west of the rear balcony and the window openings are square headed and feature stone lug sills.

The north side is similar to the south, both red and common clay brick are used in a similar fashion, a large screened porch is found to the rear, bay windows are located to the west of both the front and rear balconies and window openings between the balconies are arched with stone lug sills.

The rear of the building is completed in common clay brick on a rusticated stone base, window openings are arched with stone lug sills and there is a metal fire escape from the second floor.

The use of porches and bay windows was a common practice to increase the amount of air and natural light available to each suite, an important consideration and had been included in by-laws regarding multi-tenant housing in the city.



Rear (west) and north façades, 2006

Stylistically, the Ellesmere is an excellent example of a luxury apartment built in the pre-1915 era, with a wealth of classically inspired ornamentation and accenting meant to attract an elite tenant. With a construction cost of \$55,000, it ranks as one of the top ten most expensive apartment blocks built in Winnipeg in 1911.¹

Its colouring, detailing and design may well be an attempt by the architect to mimic the architectural language of the Macdonald House, Dalnavert, located across the street.

The designer of this block, G.G. Teeter, was a distinguished Winnipeg architect whose practice spanned four decades. Born in St. Annes, Ontario, Teeter received his architectural degree in Toronto. After graduation he moved to North Bay, Ontario and became a junior partner in a large local firm. He moved to Winnipeg by 1907 and set up a private practice, designing a number of fine apartment blocks throughout the city. After World War I, he became Chief Draughtsman for the Manitoba government while continuing his private practice.² At one time, he was also the president of the Manitoba Association of Architects. He died in Winnipeg in 1949.³ Some of his more prominent local designs include: Salem Reformed Church, 235 Andrews Street (1907); Trinity Baptist Church, 549 Gertrude Avenue (1907-09); Windermere Apartment Block, 224 Kennedy Street (1909); St. Elmo Apartments, 177 Colony Street (1910); King Edward Memorial Hospital, Morley Avenue (1910-11, demolished); Ellesmere Apartments, 74 Carlton Street (1911); and Elmwood Presbyterian Church, Cobourg Avenue (1912).⁴



Rear (left) and front (right) balconies, north side, 2006

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Starting in the 1880s, The Reserve began to fill with the mansions and large homes of Winnipeg's business and social elite. For the next several decades, it was one of the most desirable addresses in all of Western Canada, with the tree-lined Broadway running down its centre. This residential activity fostered the development of related facilities such as churches, schools and terraces.

As Winnipeg's downtown expanded, many of the city's elite chose to relocate further away in rapidly developing neighbourhoods such as Armstrong's Point, River Heights, Fort Rouge, Crescentwood and Wolseley. Many of The Reserve's original properties were subdivided, allowing more modest infill housing to dot the streets and avenues. Many of the larger dwellings were converted into boarding houses, their interiors seriously altered. A relatively new form of housing, the apartment block, also found expression in The Reserve through construction of luxury blocks on both sides of Broadway and on cross streets. Again, as time progressed, smaller, less ostentatious blocks were built in the area.

The original owners of the Ellesmere Apartments, the Orris family, held onto this property until the 1970s. Named members include T.G. Milton Orris, clerk at the Tribune Publishing Company (owner in the 1910s), W.F. Lorne Orris, foreman at Saults and Pollard, printers (1920s to 1948)⁵ and H.L., R.L. and E.S. Orris (1950s to 1970s).⁶ None of the Orris family appears to have lived in this apartment block. Bermax Capital Limited is listed as owner in 1980.⁷ The building now functions as a condominium with 15 suites.

Tenants of the building have been varied, from clerks and salesmen to lawyers, business owners and professionals.⁸



Rear and south façades (left) and south side detailing (right), 2006

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- one of the group of older luxury apartments built in the east Broadway district (The Reserve) and illustrative of the area's opulent history in the pre-1915 era;
- its design- an excellent example of a classically detailed luxury apartment;
- its architect- G.G. Teeter was a well-known architect in the city;
- its location- an important contributor to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Detail of northeast corner, 2006

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permits.
- 2 S.C. Grover, "Morley Avenue - Winnipeg Municipal Hospitals," report for the Historical Buildings Committee, p. 5.
- 3 Winnipeg Citizen, February 17, 1949.
- 4 Compiled from City of Winnipeg, Building Permits; and D. Spector, Apartment House Architecture in Winnipeg to 1915 (Winnipeg: City of Winnipeg, 1980).
- 5 Henderson's Directory, 1910-1950.
- 6 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 926244-12-2 (Old No. 16643-2), 1912-1980.
- 7 Loc. cit., 1980.
- 8 Henderson's Directory, 1915-1980.