

259 CHURCH AVENUE – CHURCH BLOCK APARTMENTS

Edward G. Sherwood (1912)



This well-designed and ornamented block in Winnipeg's North End has filled many roles since its construction in 1912.

It was completed as part of the expansion of the Main Street campus of St. John's College, an outgrowth of St. John's Academy which had opened in 1833 in a modest structure beside St. John's Church, near the present-day location of St. John's Cathedral, 135 Anderson Avenue. The Academy closed in 1859, only to be restarted as the College in 1866 which was incorporated in 1871. The College became a founding member of the University of Manitoba when it was created in 1877 and in 1884, the new College building at the southwest corner of Main Street and Church Avenue was officially opened.

Expanding enrollment was addressed by the St. John's College's Council with the construction of an ice rink, gymnasium/drill hall and this building, with classroom space in the basement and on the ground floor and two upper floors for student residences.

The solid red brick building is supported by reinforced concrete and accented in limestone. Cost of construction was \$65,000. Ornamental elements include a projecting central bay on the front (south) façade holding the raised main entrance, stone accenting around the arched and rectilinear window openings on the front and side elevations and crenelation at the roof line. It is a good example of the Neo-Classical or Classical Revival style a popular form in the pre-World War I period.

The designer of the building was Edward George Sherwood (1863-1948), a British born and trained carpenter who settled in Winnipeg's North End in 1898, working in the architectural offices of well-known local designer George C. Browne. He set up his own modest practice in 1906.

In 1944, the structure was sold to the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, who renamed it St. Andrew's College. It vacated the building in the early 1960s when it was taken over by the Canadian Nazarene College and in 1968, the building's interior was completely renovated and converted into an apartment block.

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Exterior-

- The dark brick and stone accented three-storey building on raised basement with flat roof on the northeast corner of Charles Street, its front (south) facade facing Church Avenue, its west facade facing Charles Street, its east facade facing a parking lot and its rear (north) facade facing neighbouring residential property;
- The symmetrical front (south) facade with its raised stone-clad foundation with rectilinear window openings, dark brick superstructure with arched window openings accented with stone and concrete on all floors, projecting central section with stone framed entrance, stone belt course below the second storey windows and corbelled brick above the third storey windows leading to a stone-capped brick parapet with crenellation;
- The east and west elevations that continue the materials, design and ornamental elements of the main facade and include open metal fire escapes; and
- The rear (north) facade with windows in arched openings on all floors.

Interior-

- None