370 DONALD STREET

BELL BLOCK

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: Murray Peterson
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The growth of Winnipeg’s warehouse district after 1900 was a dramatic process of replacing old residential structures and filling vacant lots with massive brick and stone structures. The buildings were massively built and reinforced to store and manipulate tonnes of goods, food, hardware and retail items of every possible description. Located on both sides of Main Street east of Portage Avenue, the Exchange District, as it became known, also filled with office buildings, garages, factories, hotels, theatres and banks – all the services needed by the thousands of people that frequented the area every working day.

Because of Winnipeg’s unique position as warehouse and distribution centre for almost every type of manufactured good entering Western Canada, the city filled with a specialized worker, the manufacturers’ agent. These salesmen, also referred to as commercial agents, would represent several lines of merchandize, a specific market or industry and maintain accounts in an assigned territory. The agent would then develop a customer base and add or remove manufacturers and their lines as he saw fit. On his own, in a partnership or as an incorporated company, the agent provided the manufacturer with a regional sales force usually without associated employee costs.

So prevalent and important was this sector, that in 1882, the North West Commercial Travellers’ Association was formed in Winnipeg to provide organized support for agents, including travel discounts for accommodations and transportation, insurance programs and telephone rate reductions. In 1906, they built a large structure at the corner of Bannatyne Avenue and King Street to house the activities of their growing organization (Plate 1).

In 1905, another stone and brick mixed-use structure was built, at the south end of Princess Street (Plates 2 and 3), originally housing a local printing company.

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1 The building was originally known as #4 Princess Street and then #8. The name was changed to Donald Street south of Notre Dame Avenue ca.1916. *Manitoba Free Press*, April 27, 1905, p. 3. The company paid $12,500 for the lot.
STYLE
The Bell Block is a functional structure with minimal classical-based detailing. While many of its contemporaries featured the rounded arches, rough texture and bulky visage of the Richardsonian Romanesque style, the Bell Block utilizes squared openings throughout and a modestly detailed roofline. It is similar to many other blocks built in the downtown during the 1900-1912 period.

CONSTRUCTION
The present Bell Block was built in two stages. The original structure, three storeys tall, was built in 1905 at a cost of $26,750. Resting on a raised, 61.0-centimetre stone foundation on concrete footings, the solid common clay brick walls measured 43.2 centimetres thick on the ground and second floors and 33.0 centimetres on the top floor. Wooden beams and posts supplied internal support for the structure with basement columns of 35.6 centimetres square.²

The upper two storeys of the building were completed in 1909 at a cost of $12,000. Slight modifications were made to the brick walls and posts of the extant third floor.³ The walls of the new floors were 33.0 centimetres thick.

DESIGN
As originally designed, the three-storey structure was divided into five bays on the main (east) façade (Plate 4). The ground floor was clad in rough stone to a height of 2.4 metres,⁴ the common clay brick walls of the superstructure above. Unusually large basement window openings and ground floor window openings filled the southerly four bays; a door with stone

² City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #870/1905; and City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 527910-12-2 (below as AR).
³ BP #918/1909.
⁴ AR.
pediment was located in the northerly most bay (Plate 5). A 45.7-centimetre metal cornice\(^5\) separated the ground floor from the upper storeys, all levels holding five large, multi-paned windows in rectilinear openings with modest stone lug sills and unadorned heads (Plate 6).

The third floor of the block shows brick and stone remnants of the original entablature. It now acts as a belt course. The fourth and fifth storeys, completed in 1909, are different that the lower floors, the windows are inset slightly, brick quoins embellish the corners and a row of corbelled brick accents the area above the fifth floor windows. A complete entablature with heavy overhanging metal cornice finished the façade (Plate 7).

The ground floor of the south or Cumberland Avenue elevation continued the stone cladding of the main façade for the four eastern-most bays (Plate 8). There were ten bays in total on this side; the multi-paned windows were set in narrower rectilinear openings than on the front and again finished with stone lug sills. The third floor belt course and ornate roofline entablature of the main façade ran the entire length of this façade.

The north wall was covered by the neighbouring structure, the Aldous Building, 374 Donald Street (built 1905 and additional two storeys added in 1911\(^6\) – Plate 9). The rear (west) façade included five bays of windows in arched openings with stone lug sills on the first three floors (a plain door was located in the north bay at grade). The rectilinear openings of the top two storeys featured stone lug sills (Plate 10). A metal fire escape was also present.

Significant changes have been made to the exterior of this structure. The original entrance was modernized (date unknown – Plate 11) and then the metal cladding and door unit replaced during the 2012 renovations (Plate 12). During the major renovations in 2012, all the original window units were replaced with sensitive, multi-paned units (Plates 13 and 14). Metal grating protects the basement window openings along the front and part of the south façades.

\(^5\) Ibid.

\(^6\) BP #1810/1905 and #1737/1911.
INTERIOR
According to a contemporary account, the basement was used to house the large presses, the ground floor for general and private offices (finished in oak panelling with brick fireplaces in the two private offices). As the building neared completion, a report stated that the structure was “the finest exclusively job printing office in the city.”

Changes in tenancy/use over time created the need for alterations to the building with offices being added and layouts changed.

The entire building was converted into rental apartments in 2012-2013 (Plate 15) except for the basement, which is used as a restaurant (Plate 16).

One unusual feature is the high ceilings with tin cladding of the entrance foyer.

INTEGRITY
The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition for its age. The original windows have been replaced by units of similar design, lessening the effect on the original design.

STREETSCAPE
This building is located just outside the Exchange District National Historic Site at the south end of Princess Street. Historically, this area included a wide variety of structures – theatres, churches, office buildings, warehouses and factories and this has not significantly changed as the neighbourhood has evolved. It makes an important contribution to the streetscape along with its neighbouring buildings on the west side of the block (Plates 17 and 18).

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7  Manitoba Free Press, April 27, 1905, p. 3.
8  Manitoba Free Press, October 30, 1905, Special Building Number, p. 42.
ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR

Victor William Horwood designed the original warehouse. Horwood came to Winnipeg in 1904 and worked as a private designer before being hired on in the provincial architect’s office and soon after assuming the head role (see Appendix II for biographical information). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

Herbert E. Matthews is the architect responsible for the design of the upper two storeys of the building, completed in 1909 (see Appendix III). Matthews came to Winnipeg in 1905 and ultimately worked in the federal government’s local Public Works Department office. He has also been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

Saul and Irish, the well-known local contracting firm, built the original warehouse; day labour was used for the 1909 addition. Brothers-in-law John A. Saul (1861-1939) and William A. Irish (1872-1941) formed a partnership in 1900 that was still operating in 1919,9 and were responsible for a number of large projects including: Elim Chapel (St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church), 546 Portage Avenue (1902); Silvester-Wilson Building, 75 Albert Street (1904); the Bell Block, 370 Donald Street (1905); Crane & Ordway Building, 93 Lombard Avenue (1906); 149 Pioneer Avenue, Scott-Bathgate Building (1907); La Verendrye School, 290 Lilac Street (1909); the Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street (1910); and Westminster United (Presbyterian) Church, 745 Westminster Avenue (1910-1911, List of Historical Resources).10

PERSON/INSTITUTION

The original owner/tenant of this structure was the Moore Printing Company, owned by William Moore. Moore was born in Ontario on December 2, 1876 and appears in the Canada Census, 1901 in Winnipeg with his wife Emily (born Ireland, September 2, 1875, immigrated to Canada

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9 Saul and Irish were responsible for nearly $2 million worth of work in Winnipeg between 1900 and 1913.
in 1896). The firm began ca.1899 as the Judd-Moore Publishing Company, a partnership between Moore and James Weston Judd (1872-1946). The pair originally operated out of space in the Ryan Block, 492 Main Street but only for a short time. The first mention in local newspapers of the Moore Printing Company, printers and rubber stamp manufacturers, is 1900, operating out of the Lyon Block, 219 McDermot Avenue, in the heart of Winnipeg’s burgeoning newspaper and printing district (McDermot Avenue west of Main Street was referred to as “Newspaper Row” for many decades).

The company’s occupancy in the new Princess Street premises was short-lived. The company and plant were sold to O.H. Pollard and then to E.W. Rugg, printer, in September 1906. Moore moved to the United States and in 1912 was a founder of the United Canadian Oil Company of Los Angeles, California. Moore became embroiled in a legal conflict over his handling of stocks of the company and he was ultimately arrested on charges of defrauding shareholders and fraudulent use of the mails in 1913.

Frank C. Bell, a local real estate agent and owner of the land prior to the construction of the building, purchased the building in 1907. Bell was born in the United States, and was one of the early settlers, Justice of the Peace and a newspaper publisher in the Clara City, Minnesota.

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11 In the Canada Census, 1906, the Moore family, which now included son Edward (born in 1901), are listed as living in the Selkirk District.

12 Anaconda Standard, July 26, 1904, p. 14 and Butte Montana Standard, June 3, 1946, p. 2. Born in Ontario, Judd moved to Anaconda, near Butte, Montana, in the early 1900s and remained in the state for the remainder of his life. His wife, Ethel M. Judd (1878-1915), also an Ontarian, died in Butte in 1915 and was buried in Winnipeg’s Brookside Cemetery – online information, http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=diane63&id=I369, no date.


14 Manitoba Free Press, September 8, 1906, p. 11.

15 Bakersfield Californian, May 28, 1912, p. 18.


17 City of Winnipeg Assessment Roll, Roll No. 527910-12-2. Below as ARo.
area. He moved to Winnipeg in 1901 with his wife, Louise and their two children Charles P. and Ruth R.

It was Bell who had the upper two storeys built but by 1911, Dr. Donald McKay of Collingwood, Ontario is listed as the owner (McKay would be a part owner of the block until 1939). Over the next several decades, the ownership group included William Johnston, Johnston Investments, Emma H. Johnston and William H. Johnston (1913-1947), and Bryce and Company, later Bryce Sales Limited (1913-1953). This commercial merchant venture was founded by Robert H. Bryce (1851-1924), who had arrived in the city in 1882. The younger brother of historian, author, cleric and professor Dr. George Bryce (1844-1931), Bryce Sales operated in the city until the early 1960s, occupying the ground floor at 370 Donald Street all that time. By the late 1980s, the building was owned by a numbered Manitoba company.


The building stood vacant for several years before its recent residential development.

EVENT

There is no known significant historical event connected with this structure.

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19 Census of Canada, 1906. The family lived at 507 Sargent Avenue.
20 Manitoba Free Press, February 12, 1924, p. 5.
22 ARo, 1910-1996.
**CONTEXT**
This mixed use structure is a good example of the type of development that occurred in downtown Winnipeg. Built and enlarged prior to World War I, it was part of a large stock of well designed, sturdily built and attractive structures that provided modern office, warehouse and manufacturing space for the growing number of local, national and international firms expanding their presence in the region’s primary city, Winnipeg.

Post-War, as Winnipeg’s regional position lessened in importance, tenancy could be short-lived as firms came and went, expanded and folded.

Recently, the building was transformed into residential space, an important development in Winnipeg’s Exchange District in the 21st century.

**LANDMARK**
The Bell Block is one of many large brick and stone mixed-use blocks in and around the Exchange District. It is located on a busy intersection that heightens its conspicuousness.
APPENDIX I
CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Assessment Record

Building Address: 370 Donald Street
Building Name: Bell Block

Original Use: retail/office
Current Use: vacant

Roll No. (Old): 527910 (9571)
RSN: 150007

Municipality: 12
Ward: 2
Property or Occupancy Code: 50

Legal Description: 1 St. John, Plan 129, Block 4, south 49’ of east 38.3’ Lot 82: south 49’ Lot 83

Location: northwest corner Cumberland Avenue

Date of Construction: 1905
Storeys: 5

Heritage Status: ON NOMINATED LIST

Construction Type: ordinary brick and stone foundation

- 870/1905 $26,750 (superstructure – 3 storeys); 918/1909 [CS] $12,000 (additional 2 storeys); 3025/1910 $12,000 (interior alterations); 1756/1936 $2,000 (alterations); 3607/1944 $33,000 (addition); 2132/1948 $2,800 (interior alterations); 9571/1949 $1,000 (interior alterations); 7493/1954 $1,200 (interior alterations); 207/1956 $5,000 (fire escape); 1180/1979 $15,000 (interior alterations); 528/1985 $1,000 (interior alterations) – see next page for additional permits

Information:
- 49 x 90 x 71½’ = 315,315 cu. ft.

- Permit 3025/1910- passenger elevator installed, tin ceiling installed throughout

- ceilings: B & 1st- 12½’+; 2nd-4th- 10’+; 5th- 9’+

- south wall- rock face to 3’, stone sills, balance clay brick, metal cornice, 18” metal belt course; rear wall- clay brick; north wall- against neighbour; front- rock face to 8’, stone sills, balance clay brick, metal cornice, 18” metal belt course

- 24” stone foundation; 18” brick walls (1st & 2nd); 13” brick wall (3rd - 5th)

ARCHITECT: V.W. HORWOOD (1905);
H.E. MATTHEWS (1909)

CONTRACTOR: SAUL & IRISH (1905); DAY LABOUR (1909)
Additional City of Winnipeg Building Permits:

144622/2012 – Interior alteration for converting existing office space into 38 apartment units ($2,000,000).

174650/2014 – Landlord work to the basement of an existing residential multi-use building to include the construction of 3 new washrooms ($143,500).

103033/2015 – Related Building Permit Number 174650/2014 ($17,500).
APPENDIX II

Victor William Horwood

V.W. Horwood was born in Frome, Somersetshire, England on February 27, 1878 and came to Canada in 1884, settling with his family in Prescott, Ontario.¹ Horwood’s father, a stained glass artist, is credited for having installed the decorative glass in the House of Commons Building in Ottawa. Victor Horwood studied art in New York City, after which he worked in Ottawa in a local architectural firm. In 1904, he came to Winnipeg and set up his private practice.

A partial list of his private contracts includes:

- J.J. Conklin House, Burrows Avenue, 1904
- J. Simpson House, Bannatyne Avenue, 1905
- St. Boniface City Hall, 219 Provencher Boulevard, 1905 (Grade II)
- St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church, Notre Dame Avenue, 1906 (demolished)
- Allward and McCormick Glass Warehouse, 259 Smith Street, 1906
- Moxam Court, 280 River Avenue, 1907
- Rev. C. Mackinnon House, 114 Balmoral Street, 1907
- G.A. Broadbent House, 607 Gertrude Avenue, 1907
- Merrick-Anderson Company Warehouse & Factory, Levis Street, 1908 (demolished)
- T.M. Ryan Jr. House, 175 Harvard Avenue, 1908
- Waldron Court Apartments, 544 Broadway, 1909 (demolished 1979)
- John Moxam House, Wellington Crescent, 1909 (demolished)
- L. Mitchell House, 303 Ashland Avenue, 1909
- A.B. Stovel House, 34 Amherst (now Avonherst) Street, 1909
- Ryan Brothers Building, 110 James Avenue, 1910
- C.D. Stovel House, 6 Ruskin Row, 1910
- Macmillan Court Apartments, 469 Kennedy Street, 1910
- Haslemere Apartments, 559 Ellice Avenue, 1910 (demolished)
- Collegiate Institute, Virden, Manitoba
- Schools & residences in Ontario and Saskatchewan²

His design and supervision of the St. Boniface City Hall project caused much controversy, as the finished product was considerably different from the original design and the project was marred by a number of cost overruns – the original $40,000 total increased to $60,000 by its completion in

April of 1906. The finished product featured an ornamentally reduced tower that met with overwhelming disapproval in St. Boniface and appeared to have been an attempt by Horwood to cut costs.³

In 1911, he was appointed assistant to the provincial architect, Samuel Hooper, and assumed the head position upon Hooper’s death only a few months later.⁴ As the province’s chief architect, Horwood controlled the office during one of its most productive periods and oversaw the construction of some of Manitoba’s most spectacular buildings including: Brandon’s Normal School; Stonewall’s Town Hall; Agricultural College, Tuxedo (Winnipeg); and Winnipeg’s Law Courts.⁵

As with the St. Boniface City Hall, Horwood became embroiled in controversy over his role in the Legislative Building scandal. It was Horwood’s suggested changes to the structure’s foundation in 1913 that allowed contractors to embezzled from the government. Subsequent Royal Commission hearings and court proceedings determined that Horwood had not only known about the illegal activities, but had perjured himself as part of an early cover-up attempt.⁶ Horwood, however, bargained with the courts and was not charged in return for testimony that placed the blame on Premier Rodmond Roblin and three of his cabinet ministers. After the affair, Horwood was dismissed as provincial architect.⁷

Horwood would return to private life, in later years he lectures, wrote a regular column for Western Home Monthly and authored and illustrated short stories about life in Manitoba. He died at his home in Matlock, Manitoba on March 15, 1939.⁸

⁴ F.H. Schofield, op. cit., p. 664; and Manitoba Free Press, November 1, 1911, p. 5.
⁵ Various Public Buildings (Winnipeg: Manitoba Department of Public Works, 1912).
⁷ “219 Boulevard Provencher,” p. 3.
APPENDIX III

Herbert E. Matthews

Born in London, Ontario in 1867, H.E. Matthews passed his land surveyor exam in 1885 and worked in the office of a leading London, Ontario architect. In 1889, Matthews moved to Toronto to work for Darling and Curry and in 1893, moved to New York City working for Charles C. Haight (1841-1917), an influential church and school designer. In 1894 Matthews returned to London and set up his own office, winning the competition to design for London’s Public Library (Plate 19). His office in London was very successful, but in 1905, he closed it in favour of a new office in Winnipeg. In that year alone, he designed ten structures totalling $103,000. These structures included large and small homes, warehouses and a business block.

In Winnipeg, he was involved in the formation of the Manitoba Architects Association in 1906 (serving as its president in 1914) and for two building seasons, 1910 and 1911, Matthews formed a partnership with Frederick F. LeMaistre. Working alone afterwards, Matthews closed his office in 1921 after being appointed Resident Architect for the Dominion Government, overseeing the construction of major federal buildings in northwestern Ontario and Manitoba. He resigned in 1931 and died in Winnipeg on December 7, 1941.

A list of his larger Winnipeg work would include:

D.S. Perrin and Company Warehouse, Portage Ave. East (1905)
Aldous Building, 376 Donald St. (1905)
Bell Warehouse, 130 Portage Ave. East (1905)
Potter Building, 132 Portage Ave. East (1905)
Five houses for Robert Wyatt, 99-111 Norquay St. (1905)
Myers Iron Fence Co. Factory, Chambers St. (1906)
Winnipeg Casket Company Warehouse, Dufferin Ave. at Parr St. (1907)
St. James Park Church, 240 Home St. (1908)
Congress (Boylston) Apartments, 300 River Ave. (1910) – Grade II

2 City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books; and M. Peterson, files.
H.E. Matthews’ designs (continued):

- Drewry Stables, Redwood Ave., with F.F. LeMaistre (1910) – demolished
- James O’Donohoe House, 40 Arlington St., with F.F. LeMaistre (1910)
- Speirs-Parnell Baking Company Building, 666 Elgin Ave., with F.F. LeMaistre (1910)
- Farmers’ Advocate Building, Notre Dame Avenue (1912)
- St. Matthews Anglican Church (West End Cultural Centre), 586 Maryland St. (1912)
- Rumley Products Co. Warehouse, Dufferin Ave. (1912)
- Rothesay Apartments, 828 Preston Ave. (1912) – Grade III
- McGregor Armoury, 551 Machray Ave. (1914)
- Minto Armoury, 969 St. Matthews Ave. (1914)
- Sharpe and Colledge Warehouse, Henry Ave. (1915)
- Speirs-Parnell Baking Company Stable, 666 Elgin Ave. (1919)
- Deer Lodge Hospital, 2109 Portage Ave. (1929-major addition)
Plate 1 – Travellers Building, 283 Bannatyne Avenue, front (south) and east façades, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)
Plate 2 – Drawing of three new business blocks to be built in 1905 on Princess Street. Left structure built by the Moore Printing Company, the right by the William Weld Company and William Bell was to build the central structure. (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, July 1, 1905, p. 6.)
Plate 3 – Drawing of the Moore Printing Company Building, Princess Street. (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, Special Building Number, October 30, 1905, p. 31.)
Plate 4 – Bell Block, 370 Donald Street, front (east) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 5 – “Elevation to Princess St.,” architect’s plan of two-storey addition to Bell Block, 1909, showing the original pedimented entrance and the original level of the cornice. (City Archives, Architects’ Plan # 918/1909.)
Plate 6 – Bell Block, 370 Donald Street, front (east) and south façades, 2003, showing the original window units. (M. Peterson, 2003.)
Plate 7 – Bell Block, 370 Donald Street, upper floors of front (east) façade, 2005. Note the original flag pole is still intact. (M. Peterson, 2005.)
Plate 8 – Bell Block, 370 Donald Street, south side, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)
Plate 9 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, south end of the front (east) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 10 – Bell Block, 370 Donald Street, rear (west) façade, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)
370 DONALD STREET – BELL BLOCK

Plate 11 – Bell Block, 370 Donald Street, detail of ground floor, 2003. (M. Peterson, 2003.)

Plate 12 – Bell Block, 370 Donald Street, detail of ground floor, including outline of original pediment (arrow), 2012. (M. Peterson, 2012.)
Plate 13 – Bell Block, 370 Donald Street, front (east) and south façades, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 14 – Bell Block, 370 Donald Street, rear (west) and south facades, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 16 – Bell Block, 370 Donald Street, basement restaurant space, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 17 – Looking north from Cumberland Avenue towards Notre Dame Avenue and Princess Street, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Plate 18 – West side of Donald Street between Cumberland and Notre Dame avenues with the Phoenix Building, 388 Donald Street (#1), the Aldous Building, 374-376 Donald Street (#2) and the Bell Block, 370 Donald Street (#3), 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 19 – London, Ontario Public Library, Queen’s Avenue at Wellington Street, ca.1895. Built 1894-1895, designed by H.E. Matthews (demolished). (Reproduced from London Public Library website, http://www.londonpubliclibrary.ca/research/local-history/historic-sites-committee/london-public-library-first, 2013.)