



376 DONALD STREET

ALDOUS BUILDING

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: Murray Peterson
December 2015

376 DONALD STREET – ALDOUS BUILDING

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 merchandise, 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, a local paper announced the construction of "two more blocks for south Princess Street"¹ (Plate 2). A local printing firm was going to build on the southern-most lot, a London, Ontario publisher on the north lot and the land owner, F.C. Bell, was purported to be building a

¹ The building was originally known as #12 Princess Street (south end) and #14-16 (north end). The name of this block 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.

structure between the two. All three buildings were constructed, all were originally three storeys in height and one account called the structures "...the connecting link between the wholesale and the new retail district"² an acknowledgement of the spatial growth of the well-established wholesale district and the newly growing retail/office district along Portage Avenue.

The two buildings at the north end have had both separate and common histories, the northernmost, now 376 Donald Street, is commonly known today as the Aldous Building.

STYLE

The Aldous Building is a functional structure with minimal classical-based detailing. It utilizes squared openings throughout and a modestly detailed roofline. The "two-part" front façade makes this block unique but the basic design is similar to many other blocks built in the downtown during the 1900-1912 period.

CONSTRUCTION

As mentioned previously, this building was constructed as two separate, three-storey buildings, both completed in 1905. The upper two storeys of the Aldous Building were completed in 1909, the north end storeys (Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street) in 1911 (see Appendix I for construction data). The building sits on a stone foundation; the superstructure is built of solid, dark hued brick. Combined cost of construction, 1905-1909, is \$45,000.

DESIGN

The lower portion of the building, similar to the Annex, began with a raised basement and ground floor clad in rusticated stone (Plate 3). Large basement windows in rectilinear openings and similar openings on the ground floor fill much of the wall space and a raised entrance is found at the north end of the building. Small windows in rectilinear openings are placed above this entrance. A modest stone belt course leads to the upper storeys which are divided into four

² Manitoba Free Press, May 13, 1905, p. 9.

bays, each filled with windows in rectilinear openings with lug stone sills and heads (Plate 4). Again, the second floor space above the door is unique, with no opening. Modest brick pilasters with stone bases and capitals are found at the north and south corners and the middle of the building. The building is finished with complete metal-clad entablature with heavy overhanging cornice (Plate 5). The painted words “ALDOUS BUILDING” was once found in the frieze (Plate 6).

The south wall is a party wall and completely covered by the neighbouring building, the north wall features a raised rusticated stone base interrupted by basement windows and a common clay brick superstructure dotted with thin windows in arched openings with stone lug sills (Plate 7). The northwest corner is slightly angled with a raised loading dock located nearby (Plate 8). The rear (west) façade, unlike the front, features matched window and door openings throughout the upper floors of the Aldous Building and the Annex (Plate 9). The ground floor includes a raised loading door and a metal fire escape serving both buildings.

INTERIOR

There is no description of how the original buildings were arranged, except that the basement was designed to hold the printing presses and an electrical power plant.³

Plans exist for the additional top storeys; the space included dark rooms and an etching room on the top floor (Plate 10). In 1911, when the top two floors of the building to the south were completed, the upper two floors were connected internally, one doorway on the fourth floor and two on the fifth, protected with fireproof doors.⁴

Today, the basement has been renovated for office space, the ground floor features cast iron posts as well as the familiar wood beam/post mill construction system and tin ornamental ceilings (Plate 11). The staircase includes a wood bannister and ornamental tin and the original

³ Manitoba Free Press, October 30, 1905, Special Building Number, p. 42. Note: this article mistakenly reversed the locations of the Bell and Farmer’s Advocate buildings.

⁴ Architect’s plans, #1737/1911, City of Winnipeg.

tile floor in the entrance foyer (Plate 12). The upper floors have seen little alteration, the beams and posts are exposed in most areas, some of the original wood floors are still uncovered and much of the space has remained undivided (Plate 13). The original horizontal radiator piping is visible on the second floor (Plate 14).

One unique feature is the ornamental tin covering door frames for most of the openings in the building.

INTEGRITY

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition for its age. All original window units on the rear façade and many on the side elevation have been replaced, although most of the units on the front façade are original to the buildings (Plate 15).

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 16 and 17).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR

Herbert E. Matthews (1867-1941) is the architect responsible for the design of the two 1905 buildings and both upper storey additions. Matthews came to Winnipeg in 1905 and ultimately worked in the federal government's local Public Works Department office (see Appendix II for biographical information). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

Frank Powell (1844-?) was named as the masonry contractor, F.W. Latimer the carpenter for the 1905 building.⁵ Powell was born in England and was one of the founders of the Winnipeg Builders' Exchange in 1910. Among his notable local contracts were: John Walter Harris House, 26 Edmonton Street, (1903 – Grade III); Free Kindergarten Building, 294 Ellen Street (1903); D.S. Perrin Warehouse, Portage Avenue East (1905); Hampson Court Apartments, 47 Kennedy Street (1912 – demolished); and St. Luke's Anglican Church, 130 Nassau Street North (1904).

Local builder W.J. Davidson is listed as the contractor for the 1909 upper storey addition.⁶

PERSON/INSTITUTION

The building (originally #14-16 Princess Street) was originally the property of William Weld of London, Ontario, publisher of the Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine (Plate 18). This influential publication was founded in 1866, a monthly publication devoted to agriculture. By the late 1880s, a push began in Winnipeg to have a western edition of the paper, because, according to reports and editorials in one local paper, its "zeal for Ontario interests" made it a "persistent enemy of the Northwest."⁷ A Winnipeg and Western edition began appearing in 1889 (with editors and managing staff in the City but still printed in London, ON) and the company moved their Main Street offices from near William Avenue to the McIntyre Block in the late 1890s. In 1905, the company, with a reported 20,000 subscribers in the West, announced it would be printing the paper in Winnipeg,⁸ underlining the importance and growth of the Western Canadian agricultural sector and Winnipeg's position at its lead.

In 1911, the company announced its move out of the downtown, and built a new, five-storey block on Notre Dame Avenue at the corner of Langside Street, which opened in 1912 (Plate 19).

⁵ Manitoba Free Press, July 18, 1905, p. 20.

⁶ City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #541/1909.

⁷ Manitoba Free Press, August 7, 1889, p. 2 and November 18, 1891, p. 4.

⁸ Manitoba Free Press, April 27, 1905, p. 7.

The paper was ultimately absorbed by the Winnipeg Free Press and became the Free Press Weekly Farmer's Advocate. It ceased publication in 1965.⁹

The Donald Street building was sold in ca.1918 to W.L. Parrish, who then owned both it and the building to the south. The Bate family (H.N., E.G., F.G. and the H.M. Bate Realty Corporation) owned the combined property from World War I into the 1950s.¹⁰ The north portion appears to have been renamed the Aldous Building in the early 1930s¹¹ and today, the buildings have separate owners.

Tenancy in the two parts of the building has been extremely varied and included Bovey Brothers Company, barber supplies, Gould Printing, Ontario Beauty Supply Company, Ransom Engraving Company, the De Laval Separator Company, Kirby Ice Machine Company, Western Aircraft Supply and Monarch Overalls.¹²

EVENT

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

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.

⁹ Government of Manitoba, Legislative Library, online catalogue, 2015.

¹⁰ City of Winnipeg Assessment Roll, No. 527970-12-2 (PC 50), 1905-1960.

¹¹ Winnipeg Free Press, various.

¹² Henderson's Directory, 1905-1950.

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

LANDMARK

The Aldous Building is one of many large brick and stone mixed-use blocks in and around the Exchange District. It is located near a busy intersection that heightens its conspicuousness.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Assessment Record

Building Address: 376 Donald Street

Building Name: Aldous Building

Original Use: retail/office

Current Use: offices

Roll No.: 13052797000

RSN: 150009

Municipality: 12

Ward: 2

Property or Occupancy Code: 50

Legal Description: 1 St. John, Plan 24208, Lots 35/37 and right-of-ways

Location: west side between Cumberland and Notre Dame avenues

Date of Construction: 1905

Storeys: 5

Heritage Status: ON NOMINATED LIST

Construction Type: ordinary brick and stone foundation

Building Permits (Plans available: [CS] Archives; [M] Microfilm):

- 1809/1905 \$37,000 (superstructure – 3 storeys); 541/1909 [CS] \$8,000 (additional 2 storeys);
207445/2002 \$35,000 (interior alterations)

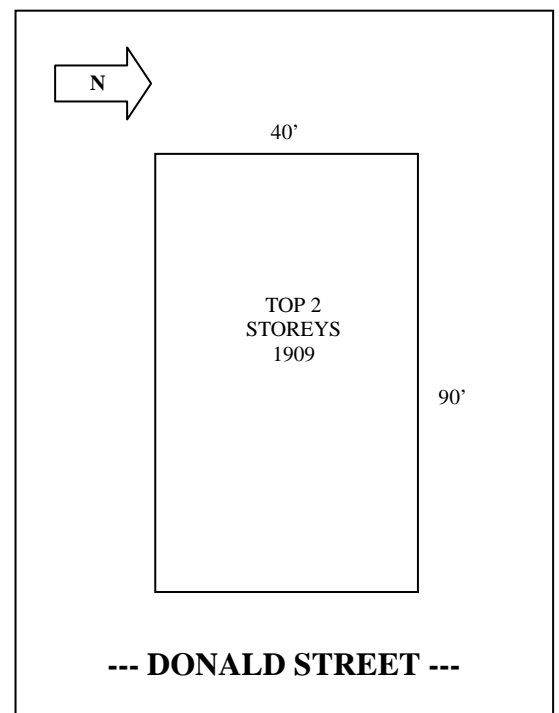
Information:

- 72 x 90

- 1909 addition- 13” solid brick walls (both floors),

ARCHITECT: H.E. MATTHEWS (1905 & 1909)

**CONTRACTOR: POWELL & CO. (1905);
W.J. DAVIDSON (1909)**



APPENDIX II

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.¹ In 1894, Matthews returned to London and set up his own office, winning the competition to design for London's Public Library (see Plate 20). 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.² 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

¹ “Matthews, Herbert Edward,” in Robert G. Hill, Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950, online edition, <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/1469>, 2015.

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)

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Plate 1 – Travellers Building, 283 Bannatyne Avenue, front (south) and east façades, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)

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MANITOBA FREE PRESS, W^{INNIPEG}, SATURDAY, JULY 1, 1905.

TWO MORE BLOCKS FOR SOUTH PRINCESS STREET

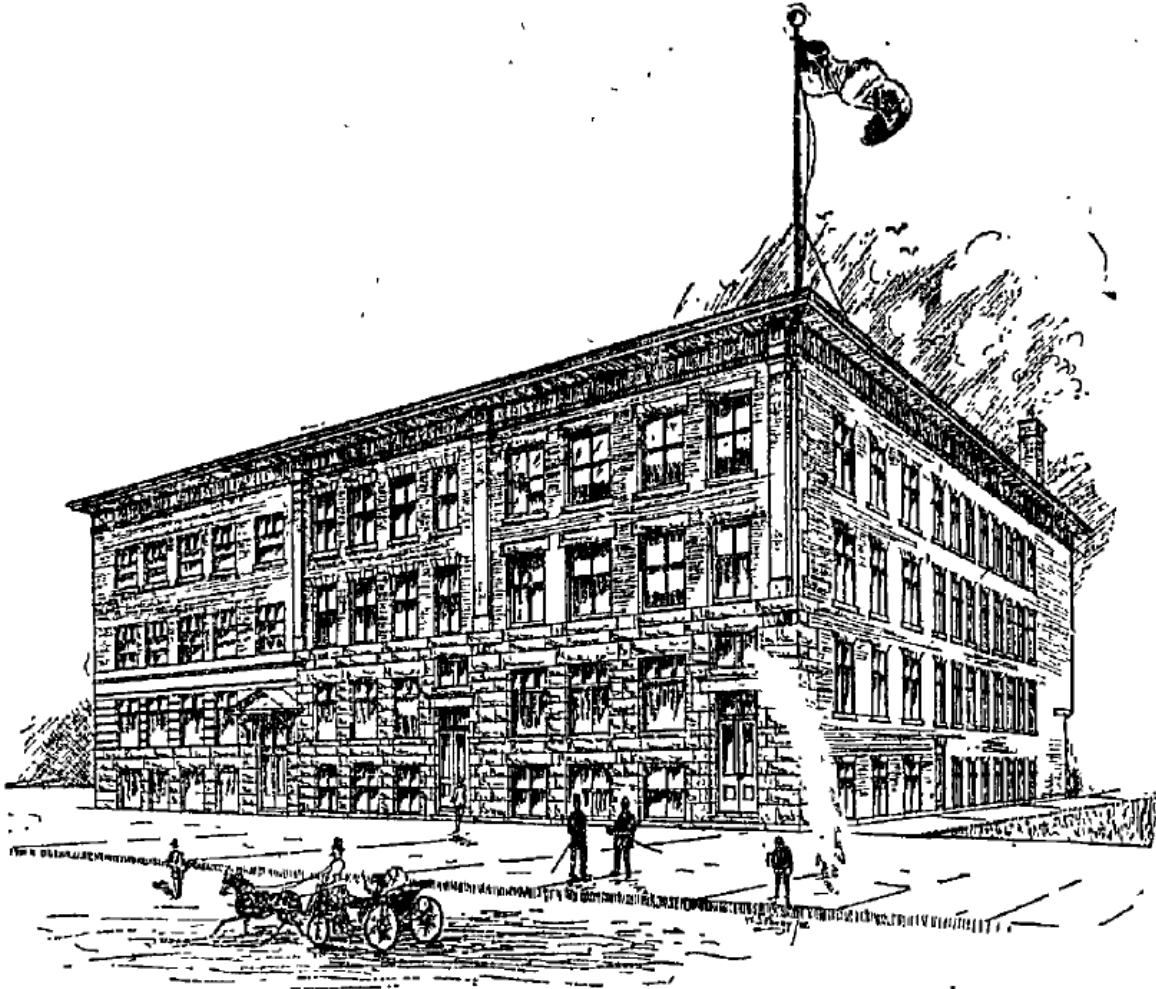


Plate 2 – Drawing of three new business blocks to be built in 1905 on Princess Street. Left structure built by the Moore Printing Company (became the Bell Block, 370 Donald Street), the right by the William Weld Company and William Bell was, according to the report, to build the central structure (became 376 Donald Street). (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, July 1, 1905, p. 6.)

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Plate 3 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, front (east) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 4 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, front (east) façade, detail of upper storeys, 2015.
(M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 5 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, front (east) façade, detail of upper storeys, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)



Plate 6 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, front (east) façade, “ALDOUS BUILDING” signage, 2005. (M. Peterson, 2005.)

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Plate 7 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, north façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 8 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, northwest corner, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 9 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street (left) and Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street (right), rear (west) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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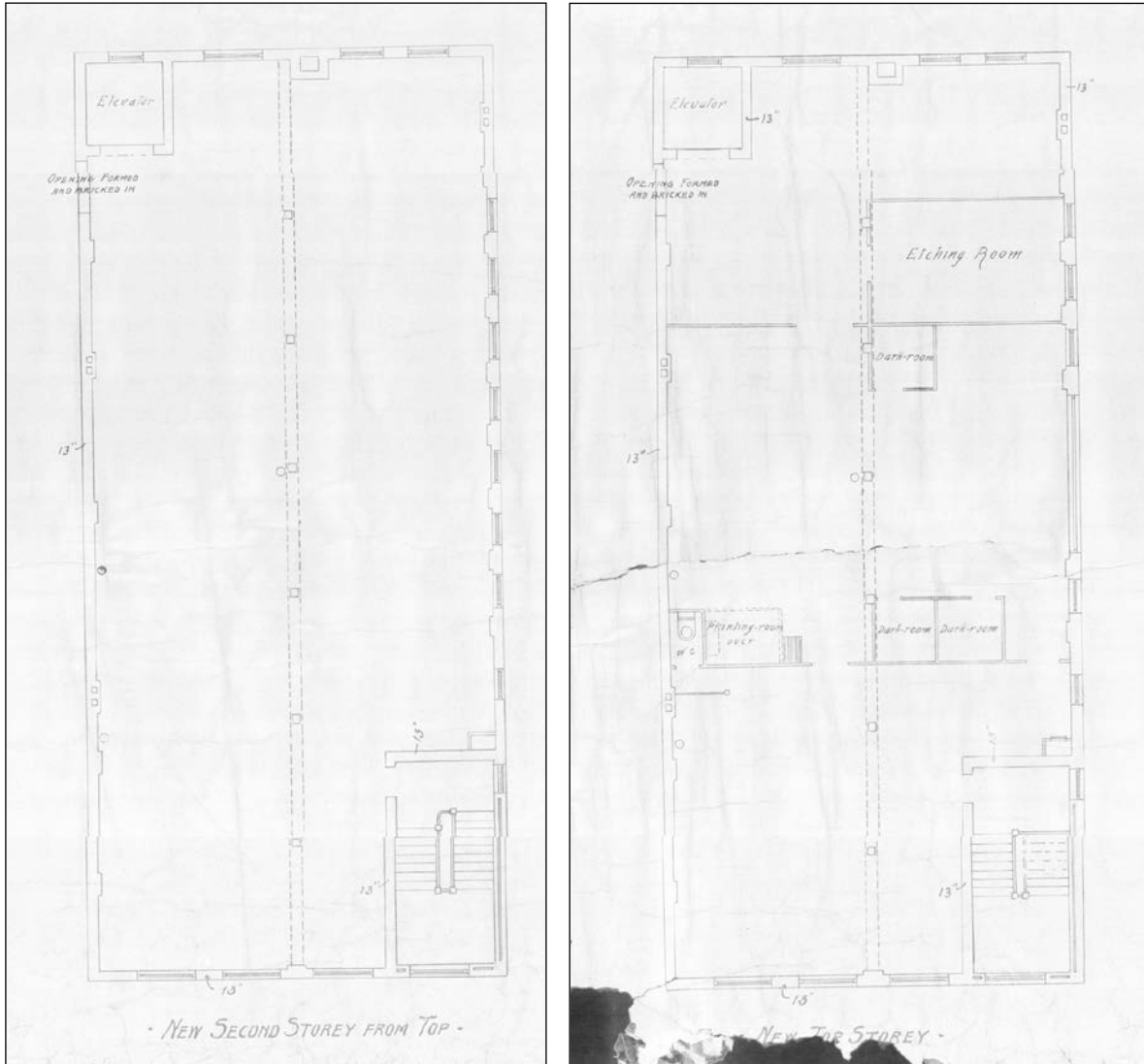


Plate 10 – Architect’s drawing, “New Second Storey From Top” and “New Top Storey,” Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, 1909. (Architect’s Plan No. 541/1909.)

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Plate 11 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, cast iron post and ornamental tin ceiling, ground floor, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 12 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, staircase and entrance lobby, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 13 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, 5th floor, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 14 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street, 2nd floor, original horizontal radiator piping, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 15 – Aldous Building, 376 Donald Street (right) and the Aldous Building Annex, 374 Donald Street (left), front (east) façade with original fenestration, 1978. (City of Winnipeg.)

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Plate 16 – Looking north from Cumberland Avenue towards Notre Dame Avenue and Princess Street, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)



Plate 17 – West side of Donald Street between Cumberland and Notre Dame avenues with the Phoenix Building, 388 Donald Street (#1), the Aldous Building and Annex, 374-376 Donald Street (#2) and the Bell Block, 370 Donald Street (#3), 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Wright & Vanleit
a mar 30, 1900

MANITOBA AND WESTERN EDITION

THE FARMER'S ADVOCATE

AND HOME MAGAZINE

* AGRICULTURE, STOCK, DAIRY, POULTRY, HORTICULTURE, VETERINARY, HOME CIRCLE *

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Vol. XXXIV. LONDON, ONTARIO. NOVEMBER 6, 1899. WINNIPEG, MANITOBA. No. 489

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Plate 18 – Cover of the Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine, "Winnipeg and Western Edition," November 6, 1899. (Reproduced from <http://canmag.streetprint.org/items/533?sort=date.>)

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Plate 19 – Farmer’s Advocated Building, 592 Notre Dame Avenue, “Elevation to Notre Dame Avenue,” Plan #536/1912. The basement held the press room and bindery, the ground floor the general and private offices and composition room and the upper floors were for tenant offices. It became known as the Connor Building in the early 1960s and was demolished, date unknown. (City of Winnipeg.)

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Plate 20 – 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.)