



**114 HIGGINS AVENUE**

**RICHELIEU (KING'S) HOTEL**

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2007



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## 114 HIGGINS AVENUE RICHELIEU (KING'S) HOTEL

**Date of Construction:** 1903

**Building Permit:** 213/1903

**Architect:** Soucessie (or Soucesse), H.

**Contractor:** Soucessie (or Soucesse), H.

### ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Built of solid brick, three storeys in height and minimally ornamented, this is one of many small downtown hotels built between the late 1890s and World War I.

The base of the front (north) façade is clad in newer brick, above which the walls are stuccoed with an unadorned entrance at the west end accessed by a short flight of stairs. Two newer windows are also located on the ground floor. Also present is newer signage attached to metal cladding. The upper floors are more original, the brick walls are exposed (although painted yellow), the window openings are original with their radiating brick heads and stone lug sills (although window unit replacement has occurred), and the roof line is still embellished with patterned and corbelled brick bands, a stepped brick parapet and flagpole. The east façade features a one-storey addition partially covering the original



Front (north) and east façades, 2006

walls; the upper floors again exhibit the brick walls and the original window openings, designed in a similar fashion to the front openings. A newer building now covers the lower portion of the west elevation; the upper storeys are exposed and are similar to those of the front and east side. The rear (south) façade is covered by the one-storey addition that wraps around from the east side; the upper floors include a metal staircase from the third floor. The building is very plain, built inexpensively to house guests requiring a comfortable room with a minimal amount of creature comforts at a low price.

The hotel stands on its original site and appears to be in fair structural condition. The addition to the east and south has partially hidden the original structure. The unsympathetic alterations to the front of the building have seriously affected its appearance.

H. Soucessie (or Soucesse) is listed on the City of Winnipeg Building Permit as the architect and contractor of the building. Nothing is known about him at the present time and his name only appears on three permits between 1899 and 1913 (this hotel and two houses which he owned, designed and built, one on Osborne Street [1900] and one on Good Street [1903]).<sup>1</sup> An inventory of St. Boniface recently completed for the Historical Buildings Committee does not include any work by Soucessie or Soucesse.



Rear (south) and east façades, 2006

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#### HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Small hotels, like this one on Higgins Avenue, were an important part of the Winnipeg downtown, built to supply rooms for the thousands of visitors coming to the city. In many cases, these facilities also supplied living space for citizens, especially salesmen who travelled throughout the region and required inexpensive accommodation near the train station that did not need upkeep. In more recent times, many of these hotels have become the home of single men and women on fixed incomes.

The location, on Higgins Avenue, was important; the hotel was able to attract clientele from the thousands of passengers detraining from the nearby Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) station on Higgins Avenue.

Marie and J.N. Levesque are listed as the original owners of the Richelieu Hotel, although by 1920, Morris Liss is listed as the owner. By 1930, Fred Gates is listed as the owner and he lived at the renamed Roman Hotel. It became the Kings Hotel by 1940 under the ownership of Reliance Securities Corporation Limited, an arm of Drewry's Brewery.<sup>2</sup> The ownership of downtown hotels and drinking establishments by local breweries, including Shea's and Drewry, was a not uncommon trend seen during this period.



Rear (south) and west façades, 2006

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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 older hotels in the downtown area and one of the last remaining of the many that located close to the CPR station;
- its architect- H. Soucessie (or Soucesse) is the named architect and contractor; and
- its location- contributes to its streetscape; and





Front (north) façade, 1978

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ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1913. Soucessie dwelling permits 422/1900 and 1040/1903.
- 2 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 13-091074500, 1900-1960.