



71 KENNEDY STREET

SCARSDALE APARTMENTS

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2007



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Date of Construction: 1930

Building Permit: 1763/1930 (Plans on file at City Archives)

Architect: Hawker, James W.

Contractor: Irish, W.A. (owner)

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

One of many of the three-storey brick apartment blocks built in the city during the latter part of the 1920s and the early 1930s is the Scarsdale Apartments.

The main (west) façade features a number of ornamental elements adding variety to the richly hued brick walls including: centrally-located, pointed arch entrance with carved stone accenting; brick pilasters with stone heads and capitals running from the continuous brick sills of the ground floor windows to the roof; stone and brick accenting around the banks of square headed windows; and the stone capped parapet. The building is shaped like an “T”, allowing for more windows, increasing the natural light and ventilation into the suites.



Front (west) and south façades, 2006

The west portion of the south wall continues the dark brick cladding of the front façade, to the rear, the building is constructed with common clay brick. The windows on this side are rectangular with brick sills. The west portion of the north wall abuts the neighbouring apartment block; the rear is designed in a similar fashion to the south façade. The rear (east) façade includes a raised concrete foundation, common clay brick walls and a recessed central area holding an entrance.

The building is a subdued example of the Gothic Revival style, popular from 1900 until approximately 1940, especially in the design of churches, schools and universities (it was often referred to as Collegiate Gothic – several of the original buildings at the University of Manitoba Campus on Pembina Highway are designed in this style). Common elements used include the pointed arch, stuccoing and half-timbering (residential), low crenellated towers, symmetrical massing and the use of stone as cladding or detailing.¹

James W. Hawker, a British-trained architect who came to Winnipeg in the early 1920s, designed this block. Hawker began his career in England and partnered with A.A. Oakden of Eastbourne and Bexhill from 1900-05. For the next eight years he worked in the Brighton-Seaford-Portsmouth area, first in the firm Hawker and Clover (1905-10) and then on his own. In 1913 he came to Canada and in April 1921 requested membership in the Manitoba Association of Architects (MAA). He joined in January of 1922.²

Hawker's first job in the city seems to have been as the chief draughtsman for James Chisholm and Son, although he quickly set up his own architectural practice. Hawker was named president of the MAA for 1930 and 1931 and, after travelling to England on an extended trip in 1935, decided to remain there.³



Front entrance detail, 2006

Other Hawker designs are the City Dray Company garage, Rupert Avenue (1923), Raleigh Apartments, 340 Vaughan Street (1931, Grade III), the John A. Forlong House, 295 Dromore Avenue (1928), the Wiltshire Apartments, Spence Street (1930).⁴ Hawker has been given 5 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.

The structure was built by the original owner, W.A. Irish. Little is known about his education and training, although it may have included some architectural or drafting training, because he was named as the designer for many structures built by his construction firm, Saul and Irish, which formed in the late 1890s and lasted until 1912. The company was responsible for the construction of many fine buildings throughout Winnipeg and southern Manitoba. In Winnipeg, the firm built the Anne Building (1901, Grade III), Westminster United Church, 745 Westminster Avenue (1909-12, Grade II), 87 King Street and the Dingwall Building 62 Albert Street (1911, Grade III). After the firm split, Irish continued to work in the city as both an architect and contractor into the 1920s, rebuilding the Hammond Block, 63 Albert Street in 1924 (Grade II) and building several modest homes throughout the city.⁵ Irish died in 1940.



North façade looking west (left) and east (right), 2006

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and does not appear to have been altered on the exterior. It is an excellent example of the type of multi-tenant structure built during this period, three storeys in height, brick construction, built to the limits of the lot, minimally ornamented and filled with comfortable, average size suites.

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

W.A. Irish owned this 28-suite block until his death in 1940, after which his estate, under the care of the W.C. Irish Company, continued to own the block into the 1990s.⁶ The suites themselves have been filled with a wide variety of tenants.⁷



Rear (north) and east façades, 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 many apartment blocks built throughout Winnipeg during the 1930s, built and owned as a rental property by one of the city's many successful contractors;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early and influential local builder W.A. Irish;
- its design- an reduced example of the Gothic Revival style;
- its architect/contractor- J.W. Hawker was a local designer; W.A. Irish was a respected and important local contractor;
- its location- contributes to its streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (west) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 Identifying Architectural Style in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, 1991), pp. 20-21.
- 2 "Hawker, James," file at the offices of the Manitoba Association of Architects.
- 3 Ibid.; and "Notes," Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal, XII, 10 (October 1935), p. 174.
- 4 Manitoba Free Press, May 12, 1928, p. 36 and June 16, 1928, p. 17.
- 5 City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1926.
- 6 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-092694000, 1930-1990.
- 7 Henderson's Directory, 1930-1990.