

**185 LOMBARD AVENUE – GREAT-WEST LIFE BUILDING ANNEX**  
*Laird and Murray, 1900*



In 1900, William F. Alloway (1852-1930), a wealthy Winnipeg banker and founder of the Winnipeg Foundation, moved to supply the need for modern office space in the growing downtown by building a modest two-storey brick and stone block on the north side of Lombard Avenue east of Main Street. The block featured large display windows on the ground floor and minimal ornamentation. A variety of small businesses and commercial tenants soon filled the building.

In the 1920s, the block was sold to the Great West Life Assurance Company, founded in 1891 and one of the country's leading insurance institutions which had opened its magnificent headquarters next door at 177 Lombard Avenue in 1911. The Company used the small building for overflow offices and as its North Winnipeg Branch.

The building has seen several transformations throughout its history. In 1954 the front (south) façade was redesigned. In 1971, extensive renovations, including the present dark brick front façade, were completed and the building converting into Oliver's Restaurant and Old Bailey's Lounge – known today as Bailey's Restaurant and Bar.

The 1900 block was designed and built George T. Laird and George W. Murray, a short-term partnership that did not produce significant work. Laird was born in Ontario and arrived in Winnipeg in the 1880s and Murray was a Scottish-born builder who established a sash and door business in 1877.

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

Exterior-

- Two-storey building occupying its mid-block location on the north side of Lombard Avenue east of Main Street; and
- original cladding materials including those concealed by newer cladding materials.

Interior-

- None