

**466 MAIN STREET – WOODBINE HOTEL**  
*P. Sutherland, 1878; Architect Unknown, 1899;*  
*J.H. Cadham, 1904; E.W. Crayston, 1923*



Winnipeg's first hotel, "The Royal Hotel," was opened in 1859 by Henry McKenney and was situated between McDermot and Bannatyne Avenues, east of Main Street. In time this area, stretching north and south along Main Street, became the city's prime commercial district with hotels that were "heavy on booze and light on rooms." By the mid 1870s with the large immigration from Ontario, there were over thirty-two hotels for a population of less than 8,000. The history of the Woodbine Hotel dates back to these early frontier days when it was known as Dufferin Hall.

Peter Sutherland built Dufferin Hall in 1878 at a cost of \$1,000. This two-storey wood frame building was 22 feet wide and about twice as long. Apparently, it was only a saloon, with no rooms to let. By 1881 it was sold and its name was changed to the Woodbine. As the name of a popular race track and a large hotel in Toronto, it was a bid to appeal to expatriates from eastern

Canada. Ownership changed quickly during these heady days in Winnipeg's history, and when Edward H. Hebb bought the hotel in 1889, a dining room and billiard hall were already established on the second floor. Hebb operated the hotel for over thirty years and directed the numerous alterations to the building. At some time light coloured brick veneer was added to the façade and the two-storey structure was extended at the rear to open onto Albert Street. In 1899, the façade was veneered in dark brick with limestone accents and a scrolled datestone was placed at the top of the building.

A major fire in several neighbouring buildings in 1904 severely damaged the roof and interior of the building. Architect J.H. Cadham was hired to design an additional storey to the building, but curiously it extended to within 30 feet of the front of the hotel on Main Street. Another fire in 1923 enabled architect E.W. Crayston to extend the third storey to the street and to rework the Main Street façade to its present appearance. Compatible in design with the Baker Block next door, the main elevation has a two bay vertical division that is balanced by an elaborate overhanging cornice and large stone lintels and sills.

The increasing lobbying of prohibitionists, along with the growing concern by religious groups for the social well-being of the individual, resulted in the provincial government passing the Prohibition Act on 1 June 1916. In effect until 1927, all bars were closed and smaller hotels were forced to diversify to remain in business. The Woodbine Hotel installed a "temperance" bar where soft drinks, coffee and a prohibition concoction called "temperance beer" was sold. The long and narrow shape of the hotel allowed for the installation of eight billiard tables and two bowling alleys: one on the main floor; one in the basement. In the city directory, the building was listed as the Woodbine Billiard Parlors. After prohibition, the long bar returned for male patrons only. Since 1985 the establishment has been open to both men and women. In 1985, in order to qualify for financial assistance under the terms of the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative Heritage Program, the owner of what may be the oldest hotel in Winnipeg requested that the building be evaluated and placed on the Buildings Conservation List.