

586 MAIN STREET – MAYCOCK BLOCK

J. Chisholm (1885)



The Maycock Block has stood on a busy downtown Winnipeg corner for over a century, making it one of the City's older buildings.

This structure was built as an investment property by Edward and Annie E. Maycock, wholesale/retail merchants originally from Woodstock, Ontario. The couple came to Winnipeg in the early 1880s and opened several retail stores selling “useful and ornamental goods” according to their newspaper advertisements. Their retail success translated into the construction of this block, its original tenants were D.R. Dingwall, jeweller, on the ground floor and the Young Men's Christian Association on the second floor.

The building rests on a 50.8 centimetres thick stone foundation (which may have been built in 1898) and the solid brick exterior walls are 43.2 centimetres thick on the ground floor and 33.0

centimetres thick on the upper two floors. The building runs 13.9 metres along Main Street and 21.4 metres along Alexander Avenue.

The building has two main façades, east facing Main Street and south facing Alexander Avenue, with an angled corner that originally held an entrance (now a window). This entrance boasts an ornately carved stone frame. Built of common clay brick, modest stone accenting is used around window openings on the upper floors. These openings, arched on the second floor and rectilinear on the top floor, are topped by ornate metal hood mouldings, a main architectural feature of the building. Two thin bands of metal visually separate the second and third storeys and a band of brick corbelling leads to the metal-clad entablature which also features a wealth of ornamental detailing. Window and door units on these two elevations have been replaced.

The north wall is partially hidden by the neighbouring two storey building; the exposed portion is a plain brick wall. The rear (west) façade includes arched and rectilinear door and window openings and a metal fire escape.

The interior of the building has seen significant change over the years, as space was altered for new uses and space was converted by new tenants. The Alexander Avenue staircase bannister, several walk-in safes and some ceiling mouldings on the ground floor are all that remain of the original interior, which now features retail space on the ground floor and office space on the upper two floors.

This building is located on an extremely busy downtown intersection and at the south end of a block of several turn-of-the-century business blocks heightening its importance as a contributor to its streetscapes.

The architect of the building was noted local designer James Chisholm (1840-1920). Chisholm was born in Ontario and came to Winnipeg in 1877, working as a construction timekeeper on the Canadian Pacific Railway. He began his architectural career shortly after although he worked during the 1890s in the United States. In 1900, he returned to Winnipeg and restarted his practice, which would ultimately include his son Colin C. Chisholm (1883-1936) as Chisholm and Son.

James moved to California in 1914 because of poor health and died there in 1920. He was responsible for a large number of fine buildings throughout Western Canada, locally, his work included: Hochman (formerly Harris) Building (now part of the Red River College Princess Street Campus), 154 Princess Street (1882) – Grade III; J.W. Harris House, 26 Edmonton Street (1902) – Grade III; Young Methodist (United) Church, 222 Furby Street (1907, 1910) – Grade II (only tower left after fire); I.O.O.F. (Odd Fellows’) Temple, 293 Kennedy Street (1910) – Grade III (façade only remains); Granite Curling Club, 22 Mostyn Place, now 22 Granite Way (1912) – Grade III; and the Marlborough Hotel, 331 Smith Street (1913) – Grade II.

The second owner of the building, A.R. McNichol, converted the upper floors into four residential suites in 1902 and renamed it the Holt Block. In 1906, the Canadian Bank of Commerce moved into part of the ground floor space with Dingwalls and the upper floors were further divided to create 18 suites, used for a time as both offices and apartments. In 1913, the Bank (which owned the structure) took over the entire ground floor, renamed the building the Canadian Bank of Commerce Chambers and again altering the upper floors. The bank remained in the building into the late 1970s.

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

Exterior-

- Three-storey brick and stone building with a flat roof located on the northwest corner of Alexander Avenue, its main façades facing east onto Main Street and south onto Alexander Avenue, its north façade partially hidden by the neighbouring building and the rear (west) façade facing onto a back lane;
- The lightly-hued common clay brick clad front (east) and south façades with the original stone framing of the entrance in the angled southeast corner, windows in arched openings (second floor) and rectilinear openings (third floor) with pressed tin hood moulding and stone accenting, pair of thin metal bands between the second and third floors, band of brick corbelling and metal-clad entablature; and
- Rear (west) façade with arched and rectilinear window openings.

Interior-

- Wood handrail and volume of the main (west) staircase; and
- Central main level vault.