



596-598 MAIN STREET

GUEST BLOCK

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
October 2015

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK

During the decades leading up to 1900, Winnipeg's Main Street was transformed from a muddy track bordered mainly by wood-frame buildings into a paved thoroughfare with imposing brick and stone structures along its walkways (Plates 1 and 2). The small premises that served as shops and residences were replaced by modern buildings, offering commercial, office and residential space for the ever-growing population and local service industry.

Development of the transcontinental railway had created an entirely new situation by connecting Winnipeg with both eastern manufacturing interests and a burgeoning population to the west. The city actively promoted itself as the middleman between eastern supply and western demand. Its success had far-reaching economic, political and social effects. It also resulted in rapid physical change in what became downtown Winnipeg.

New residential districts extended the outer boundaries of the built-up area, while new warehouse, banking halls, offices and shops popped up throughout the downtown. Three distinct sectors developed around Winnipeg's large, imposing City Hall on Main Street: a warehouse district to the west, a financial section from Portage Avenue north to Bannatyne Avenue along both sides of Main Street and a commercial/retail area running north from City Hall to Higgins Avenue and eventually beyond.

This last area was dominated by smaller firms selling everything from shoes and boots to harnesses and fruit. They generally were housed in two- or three-storey commercial blocks with retail space on the ground floor and offices, suites or storage space above. This type of combined or mixed-use structure became increasingly popular as demand grew for downtown office and residential space. It also was a perfect small-scale investment for the new group of successful businessmen inhabiting the city.

In 1902, successful commercial fisherman W.J. Guest purchased a vacant lot on the west side of Main Street, a few blocks north of City Hall and built a new structure to house both the retail portion of

his business and two storeys of modern offices (Plate 3), #598 Main Street. Less than a decade later, a large addition was built on the south side, known as #596 Main Street

STYLE

This block is a good example of the Romanesque Revival style, very popular in warehouse and commercial districts throughout North America from the 1880s well into the 20th century. The buildings were nearly always built of brick with a raised basement and utilized rusticated stone for accenting around windows and doors and at roof level. Other elements include towers flanking the main façade, quoins, belt courses, corbelled brick panels, chevrons and flat rooflines, with or without cornices and entablatures. The most obvious feature of these structures was the use of the arch above windows and doors. Often, straight-topped windows located on the middle storeys were grouped under large arches on the upper floors.¹ Although the style was applied to private residences and on large public buildings, in Winnipeg it was almost exclusively used in the warehouse district, where the designs were somewhat more subdued. The massiveness and sturdiness of the style appealed to wholesalers and retailers looking to promote their businesses and portray the stability of their firms through the design of the structures they occupied.

CONSTRUCTION

This structure was built in two phases, the northern portion, three bays wide, was completed in 1902; the southern two bays were completed in 1909. Both were built on stone foundations, featured full basements and solid brick superstructures on a wood frame (see Appendix I for more construction information).

¹ L. Maitland, et al., *A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1992), p. 84; and *Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, 1991), p. 14.

DESIGN

The building's main façade faces east on Main Street, originally three bays wide with a main floor featuring large display windows framed by two single entrance doors with large transom windows filling the remainder of the ground floor (Plate 3). Above these openings was space for signage, leading to the second and third floors. The addition added to more bays to the south and a second display window and entrance on the ground floor. The ground floor has been completely altered over time (Plate 4).

The upper floors, however, remain virtually unchanged; modest brick pilasters separate the rectilinear windows of the second floor and arched windows of the third floor (Plate 5). The second floor begins with a narrow stone sill for the window openings that also boast rusticated stone heads. The spandrels between the upper-storey openings are embellished with corbelled brick elements. The arched window openings of the third floor are highlighted by stone lug sills, brick drip moulding and rusticated stone keystones. A band of corbelled brick leads to a wide band of rusticated stone topped by more brick corbelling accenting the stone capped parapet, raised at the ends and the horizontal locations of the pilasters (Plate 6).

The building's north and south façades are covered completely by the neighbouring structures (Plate 7) and the rear (west) façade is partially covered by a stuccoed, one-storey addition, the visible portion features brick walls and a number of windows in arched openings (Plate 8).

INTERIOR

The space was originally divided into retail on the ground floor and residential on the upper floors, as many as 15 apartments were rented out (Plate 9).² The original staircase, located on the south side of the 1902 building became a central staircase once the 1909 addition was completed (Plate 10). The building featured long hallways running the entire length (Plate 11) and wide doors connecting the north and south sections on the staircase landings of the second

² City of Winnipeg Fire Atlas, Vol. II, Sheet 208 (December 1917).

and third floors that still include the original metal clad fire doors (Plate 12). Skylights and interior light wells originally increased the natural light and ventilation to suites on both floors.

The building has been vacant for many years and many of the original design elements and materials are deteriorating (Plates 13 and 14). The south end retail space is vacant; the north is used as a grocery store (Plate 15).

INTEGRITY

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition for its age. Alterations have significantly affected the main façade's ground floor but left the upper two storeys unchanged and the interior has seen significant deterioration.

STREETSCAPE

This building is located on one of the City's major downtown thoroughfares on and in the middle of a block of several turn-of-the-century business blocks (Plate 16). It is an important contributor to this historic streetscape (Plate 17).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

The architect for the 1902 building was James Chisholm (1840-1920), an Ontario-born designer who was responsible for many fine buildings before and after 1900 (see Appendix II for biographical information). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee. The contractor for this building was the Davidson Brothers.

The 1909 addition was designed by George W. Northwood and built by J.G. Latimer.³

³ City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #1941/1909.

PERSON/INSTITUTION

William John Guest was born in Bervie, Canada West (Ontario), near the eastern shore of Lake Huron in 1852, leaving public school at the age of 12 to pursue a career as a sailor. Although forced by his parents to abandon this career in favour of helping on the family farm, Guest continued to work on the water, as a fisherman on nearby Lake Huron beginning in 1856 with his own nets. In the fall of 1881, Guest moved to Winnipeg and after years as a delivery driver, took up land near Brandon, MB and then worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway.⁴ In the early 1890s, he began a modest fishing business that flourished, in spite of “unbusinesslike and underhand methods” used by his competition (his own words).⁵ The W.J. Guest Company formed and began bringing fish from Lake Winnipeg south to the City for sale.

In the spring of 1901, Guest and five Selkirk, Manitoba men incorporated the Northern Fish Company (Plate 18).⁶ This successful venture grew quickly and by 1913 the company had 36 sail boats, two tugs, a passenger/freight steamer, *The Wolverine* (Plate 19), docks and warehouses, including a large one at the foot of Alexander Avenue (Plate 20).⁷ When Guest chose to concentrate on his wholesale business, he closed the Main Street retail store.

New commercial tenants in the Guest Block included Moore’s Studio (photography), Innis and Company, fish dealers, Western Art Gallery (photography studio), Winnipeg Candy Kitchen, Castran’s Café (Plate 21) and residential tenants (15 suites). Property agents Robinson and Black assumed control of the block and it was they who financed the 1909 addition prior to selling it in the summer of 1909.⁸ The Godman family, including R.T., G.W. and T.E., owned the building from the 1920s into the 1940s. Other commercial tenants have included the Cameo

⁴ “William John Guest (1852-1940)” in Manitoba Historical Society’s Memorable Manitobans website, August 31, 2014.

⁵ F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 63-65.

⁶ Manitoba Free Press, March 11, 1901, p. 7.

⁷ Loc. cit.

⁸ Manitoba Free Press, July 24, 1909, p. 27. It was sold to “old country investor.”

Café (1940) and Julius Lunch Soda Bar (1950) – Plate 22. Residents have been varied, including labourers, railway workers, clerks and waitresses.⁹

EVENT

There is no known significant historical event connected with this building.

CONTEXT

This block, built in 2 sections in the first decade of the 20th century, is an example of the type of development occurring throughout the downtown in the pre-World War I period. Successful local businesses took the opportunity to construct new space for their enterprises and build extra room for rental property. The ground floor retail space/upper floor office or residential space was a popular model and repeated in every commercial district in the city and surrounding municipalities and towns.

LANDMARK

This block is located on a busy downtown street but its mid-block location and muted ornamentation reduces its conspicuousness.

⁹ City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 13-081391100, 1920-1990.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report Assessment Record

Building Address: 598 Main Street (596-598)

Building Name: Guest Block

Original Use: mixed use

Current Use: mixed use

Roll No. (Old): 13081391100 (---)

RSN: 154167

Legal Description: 9/11 St. John, Plan 32065, Lot 45 (Old: 11^W St. John, Plan 11, N22' of E120' Lot 2)

Location: West side between Alexander and Logan avenues

Date of Construction: 1902

Storeys: 3 and basement

Heritage Status: **ON NOMINATED LIST**

Construction Type: Brick and stone

Building Permits (Plans available: [M] Microfilm; [MF] Microfiche; [PPD] Department Storage):

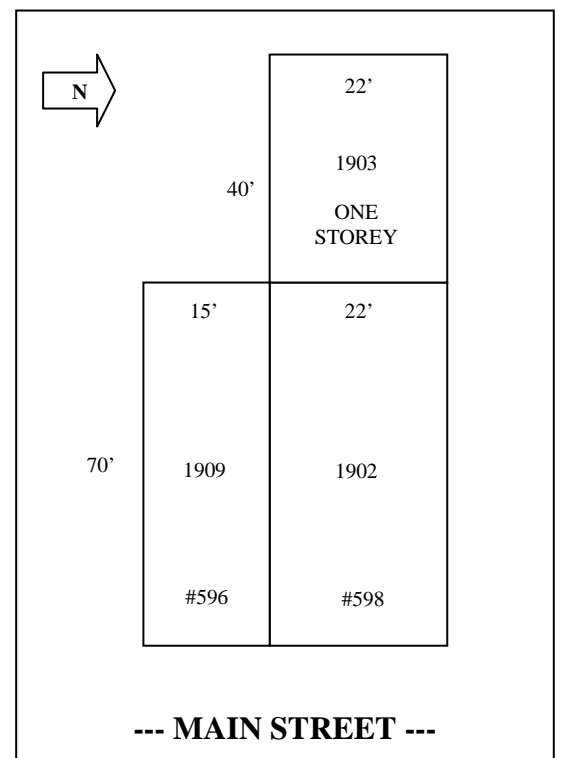
- 422/1902 \$9,000 (original); 1151/1903 \$1,500 (rear addition); 1941/1909 \$5,500 (construct #596); 310/1921 [PPD] \$4,000 (alteration to #596); 1136/1948 [PPD] \$2,500 (alteration to #598); 4522/1948 \$2,500 (alteration); 4142/1975 [M] \$15,000 (alteration to restaurant @ #596); 7963/1976 \$5,000 (alterations); 1991/1985 [MF] \$2,500 (alteration to #598); 5584/1989 \$4,500 (exterior alteration); 9306/1989 \$1,000 (interior alteration to restaurant)

Information:

- 22 x 70 x 35' + 22 x 40 x 12' + 15 x 70 x 40'
- ceiling heights (#598 & #596): B- 8'; 1st- 12'+; 2nd & 3rd- 9½'+
- 1903 addition- 18" stone foundation & 9' ceilings
- 1948 work: new storefront (#598), new retail space, ornamental tin in restaurant space
- upper floors vacated, heating & power shut off by 1977

ARCHITECT: CHISHOLM, JAMES (1902); NORTHWOOD, G.W. (1909)

CONTRACTOR: DAVIDSON BROTHERS (1902); LATIMER, L.G. (1909)



APPENDIX II

James Chisholm

James Chisholm was born in Paris, Upper Canada (Ontario) in 1840, where he attended public school. He married Elizabeth Goodfellow at Brantford on February 22, 1864 and together they had six children. The pair lived for a time on a farm in Glengarry County before moving to London where James worked for a plough manufacturer but also took up the study of architecture. After moving back to Paris, Chisholm met a family acquaintance, the Hon. John Sifton, who talked him into moving to Winnipeg for both his health and his future, which he did in the spring of 1877, leaving his wife and three children at home.¹

His first job was as a timekeeper on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway between Winnipeg and Whitemouth. He also spent one summer in Norway House, attempting to improve his poor health. Shortly thereafter, he began his architectural career in earnest, and became involved in the City Hall construction scandal when he was hired to replace C.A. Barber as the architect for the project.

The family moved to Superior, Wisconsin in 1892 and James became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1896. He worked during this period as a preacher for the Methodist Episcopal Church, travelling great distances every week.² In 1900, the family returned to Winnipeg, James taking his place among the growing number of talented architects practising their trade in the city and throughout western Canada. James Chisholm was a member of the Winnipeg School Board and an avid curler, being an honorary member of the Manitoba Curling Association and long-time member of the Granite Curling Club.

Colin Campbell Chisholm was James Chisholm's youngest child, born in Winnipeg on September 17, 1883. He moved south with the family and received his early education in Madison, Wisconsin

¹ Family information courtesy of Jim Chisholm, grandson of James and son of Colin C. Chisholm.

² Certificate of Naturalization, United States of America (County of Douglas, Wisconsin), dated February 19, 1896; and Local Preacher's License, dated September 8, 1893; and F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba (Winnipeg: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1913), p. 723.

before returning to Winnipeg. He officially joined his father's architectural firm ca.1906, became its active manager in 1910 and eventually took over the practice.³ About 1911, James Chisholm and his wife began wintering in Santa Monica, California because of continued poor health and they moved there permanently in 1914. He died on October 14, 1920 in Ocean Park, California.⁴

James Chisholm and his son were responsible for designing many buildings throughout Western Canada and an incomplete list of their Winnipeg structures includes:⁵

James Chisholm:

Hochman (formerly Harris) Building, 154 Princess Street (1882) – Grade III
Grace Methodist Church, Notre Dame and Ellice avenues (1883) – demolished
Maycock Block, 586 Main Street (1885)
A. Wilson House, Charlotte Street (1900)
Addition to J. Ryan Building, 678-680 Main Street (1900)
J.H. Turnbull House, Edmonton Street (1900)
C.N. Bell House, Carlton Street (1900)
D. Horn House, Edmonton Street (1901)
J. Watson House, River Avenue (1901)
C.H. Nix Building, Ross Avenue (1901)
Rev. J.A. McClung House, Balmoral Street (1902)
W.G. Moyse House, Langside Street (1902)
G.N. Jackson House, Langside Street (1902)
Waterous Engine Works Company Warehouse, Higgins Avenue (1902)
Coleclough Company Building, Logan Avenue (1902)
W.J. Guest Building, 598 Main Street (1902)
N. Page House, Spence Street (1902)
J.W. Harris House, 26 Edmonton Street (1902) – Grade III
A. McCormack House, Edmonton Street (1902)
Wright and Stewart Building, Alexander Avenue (1902)
J.D. McArthur House, Cumberland Avenue (1902)
G. Forsyth House, Carlton Street (1903)
Hotel, Notre Dame Avenue East (1903)
A. MacDonald Company Warehouse, Market Avenue (1903)
C. Lilt House, Hargrave Avenue (1903)
Dr. Clarke House, Furby Street (1903)
D.A. Stewart House, Wardlaw Avenue (1903)
C.E. Young House, Mayfair Place (1903)

³ F. H. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 723-24.

⁴ Manitoba Free Press, October 18, 1920, p. 15.

⁵ Compiled from Ibid., pp. 723-24; Winnipeg Tribune, September 5, 1936; Winnipeg Saturday Post, June 8, 1912, p. 39; and City of Winnipeg Building Permits, 1900-26.

James Chisholm (continued):

Zion Methodist (then Zion Apostolic) Church, 335 Pacific Avenue (1904), destroyed by fire 1970
M. Woodlinger House, Pacific Avenue (1904)
Young Men's Liberal Club, Notre Dame Avenue (1904)
Manitoba Cartage Company stable, Henry Avenue (1905)
W.J. Guest Fish Warehouse, 98 Alexander Avenue (1905 & 1910)
Exeter Apartments, 76 Lily Street (1905)
Shipley Block, 614-18 Portage Avenue (1906)

James Chisholm and Son:

Woods Building Company Warehouse, Robinson Avenue (1907)
W.J. Guest House, 75 Academy Road (1907)
Jobin-Marrin Warehouse, 158-62 Market Avenue (1907)
Young Methodist (United) Church, 222 Furby Street (1907, 1910) – Grade II (only tower left after fire)
Strathcona Curling Rink, Furby Place (1908) – demolished
Kipling Apartments, 534-36 Langside Street (1908-09)
J.T. Gordon House, Wellington Crescent (1909)
House for St. John's Methodist Church, Polson Avenue (1909)
G.F. Galt House, Wellington Crescent (1910)
J. Ryan Sr. House, Central Avenue (1910)
Semmons Warehouse, 468 Ross Avenue (1910)
I.O.O.F. (Odd Fellows') Temple, 293 Kennedy Street (1910) – Grade III (façade only remains)
Sterling Bank Building, 283 Portage Avenue (1910-11)
F.S. Parlee House, Canora Street (1911)
E.C. Marrin House, Dorchester Avenue (1911)
Gowans, Kent, Western Building, Market Avenue (1911-12)
Granite Curling Club, 22 Mostyn Place (1912) – Grade III
Sparling Methodist Church, Elgin Avenue (1912)
Thistle Curling Club, McDonald Avenue (1912)
Grandstand for Stampede Amusement Company, Sinclair Street (1913)
B. Shragge Warehouse, Sutherland Avenue (1913)
Marlborough Hotel, 331 Smith Street (1913) – Grade II
La Salle Hotel, 346 Nairn Avenue (1914)
City Light and Power, additional storey to power house, 54 King Street (1915)
City Light and Power, additions to terminal station, McFarlane Street (1918)
City Light and Power, show room, rear of 54 King Street (1919)
City of Winnipeg garage, Elgin Avenue (1919)
Walter Woods Warehouse, Sutherland Avenue (1920)
Clarendon Hotel, 311 Portage Avenue (1920) and fire repairs (1923) – demolished

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK

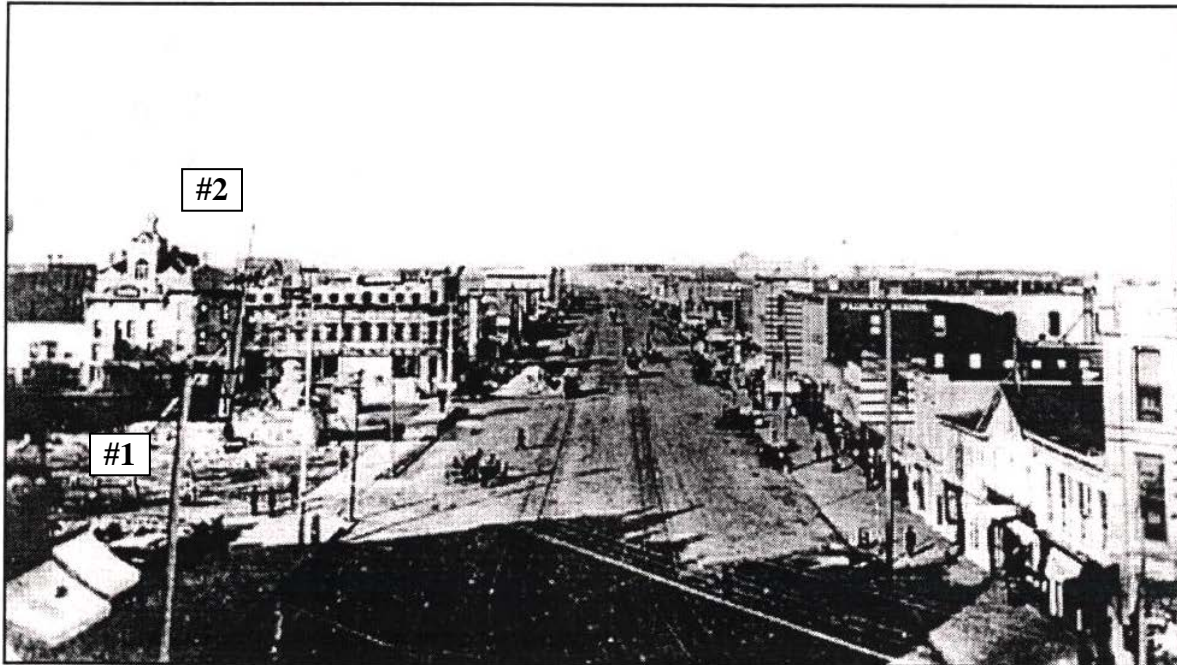
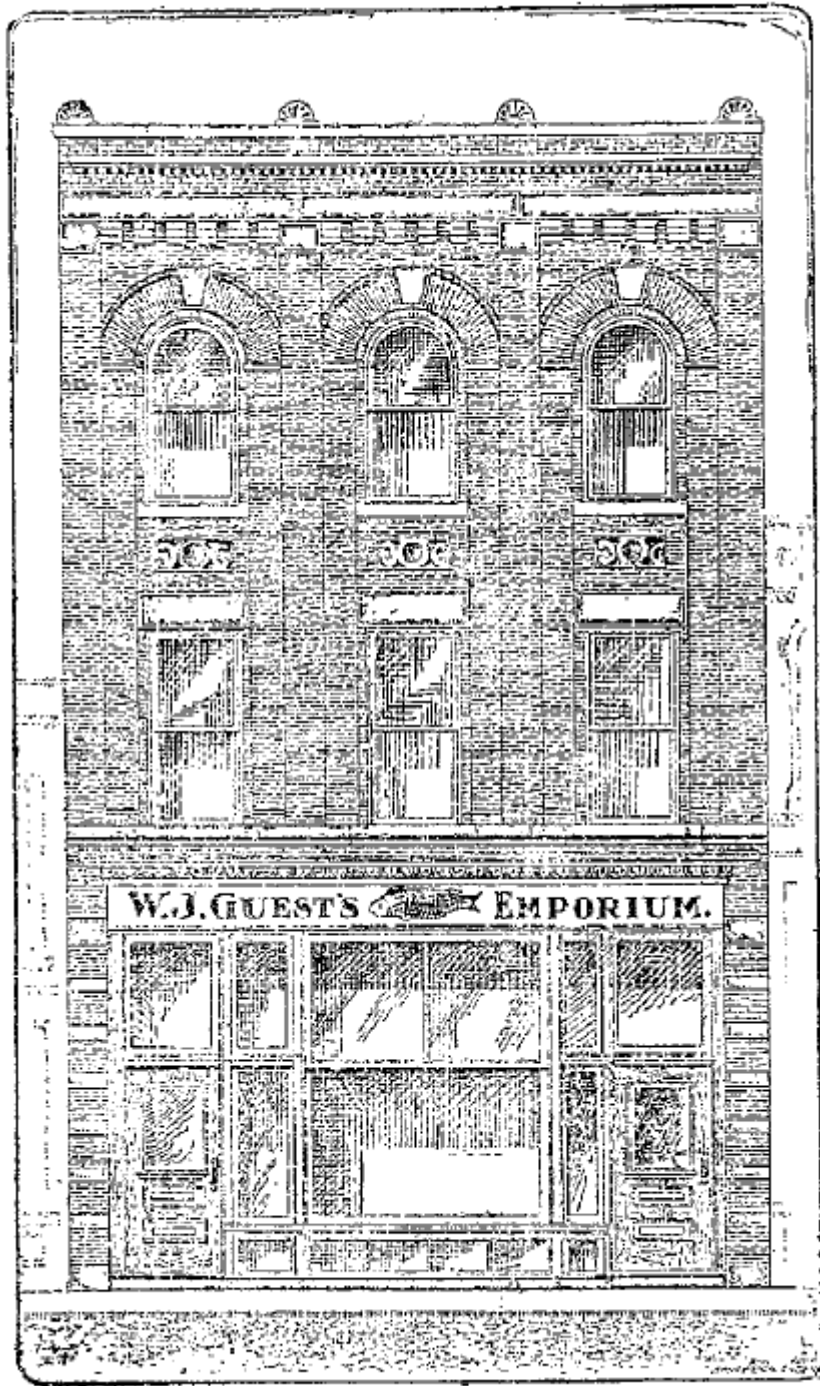


Plate 1 – Looking north on Main Street from William Avenue, 1886. Pictured here are: #1- the second City Hall; and #2- Police Courts, James Avenue. (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg-Streets-Main, 1886-#1.)



Plate 2 – Looking north from the roof of City Hall, ca.1895, from the roof of City Hall. (Courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



NEW FISH WAREHOUSE OF W. J. GUEST.

Plate 3 – Rendering of the new Guest Block, 1902. (Reproduced from the Manitoba Free Press, November 12, 1902, p. 8.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 4 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, front (east) façade, detail of ground floor, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)



Plate 5 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, front (east) façade, detail of upper floors, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 6 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, front (east) façade, detail of roofline, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)



Plate 7– Guest Block, 598 Main Street, and neighbouring buildings, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 8 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, rear (west) façade, 2014. ([M. Peterson, 2014.](#))

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK

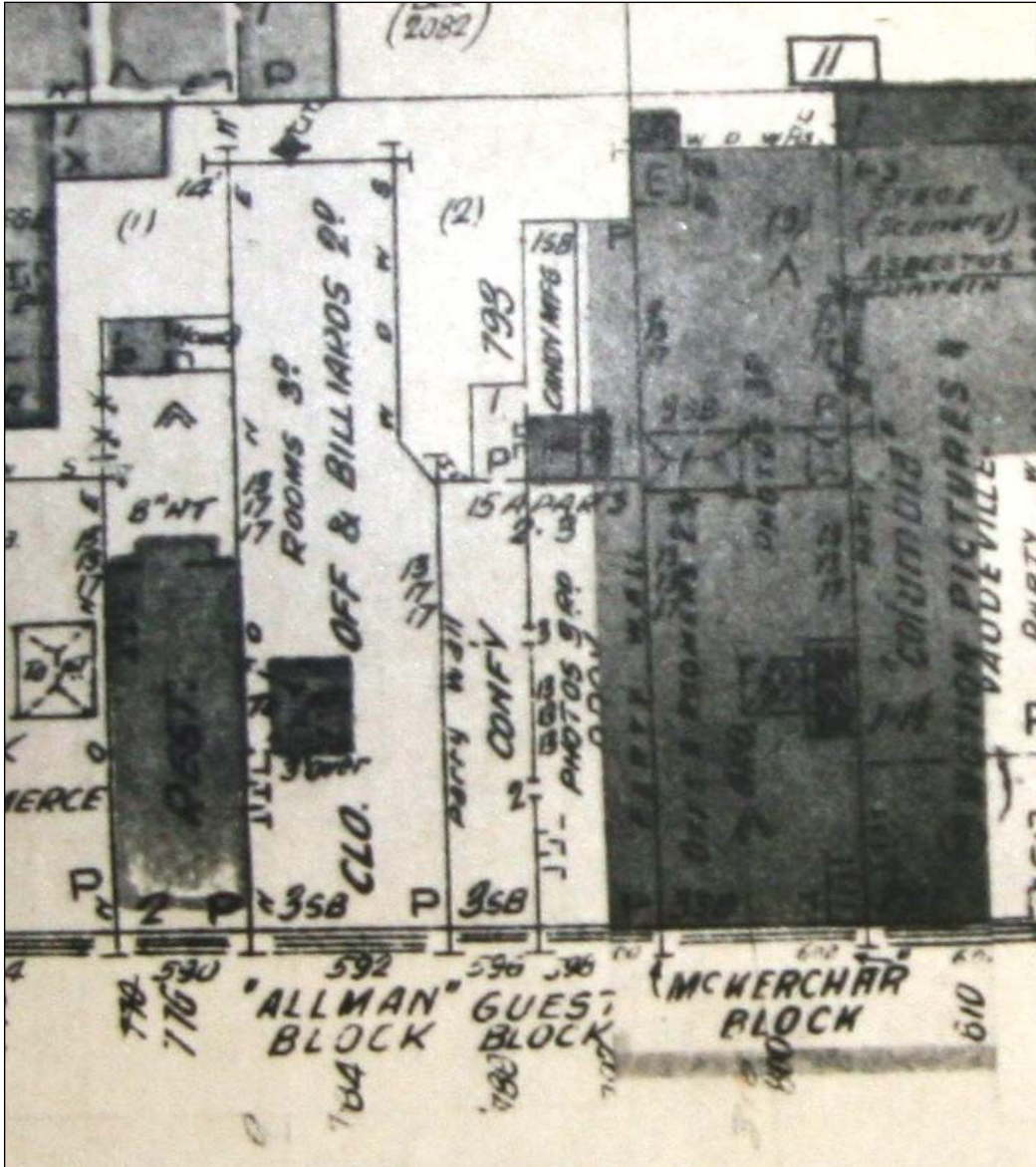


Plate 9 – City of Winnipeg Fire Atlas, Vol. II, Sheet 208 (December 1917), Guest Block at arrow. (City of Winnipeg.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 10 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, stairs to third floor, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 11 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, third floor hallway, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 12 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, fire door, third floor, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 13 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, deterioration in a second floor suite, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 14 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, deterioration in a third floor suite, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 15 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, main floor grocery store, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 16 – Main Street, west side from Alexander Avenue to Higgins Avenue, 2014. Buildings (left to right): Maycock Block, 586 Main Street, built 1885; Singer Building, 590 Main Street, built 1939; Allman Block, 594 Main Street, built 1904 (List of Historical Resources); Guest Block, 598 Main Street, built 1902-1909; McKerchar Block, 600 Main Street, built 1902. Not pictured to the north of these buildings are two empty lots (surface parking) and Royal Bank of Canada Branch, 618 Main Street, built 1946. (M. Peterson, 2014.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 17 –Main Street looking north past Alexander Avenue, 2014. (M. Peterson, 2014.)

A FRESH



STORY!

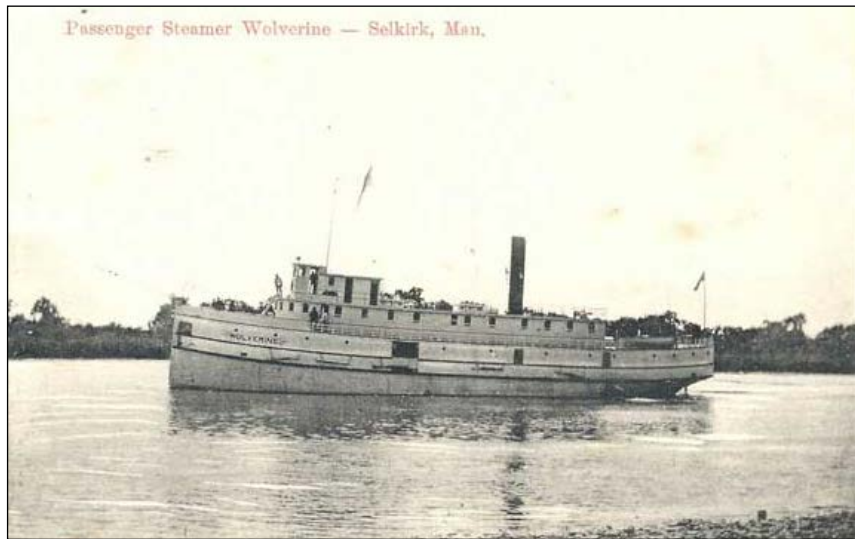
THE NORTHERN FISH CO'S STEAMER
"The Lady of the Lake,"

Arrived at Selkirk with the first catch of
Lake Winnipeg Whitefish, which we have
for sale from to-day on.

W. J. GUEST, 602 Main Street
Phone 597.

Plate 18 – Advertisement for W.J. Guest and his Northern Fish Company, 1901. (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, May 30, 1901, p. 10.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



FOR A
SUMMER OUTING
ON
LAKE WINNIPEG
TAKE STEAMER
WOLVERINE
T. E. POLLOCK, Master,
Leaves Selkirk every Monday
at 1 p.m. for Warren's Landing
and intermediate points.
Leaves Selkirk every Friday
at 1 p.m. for Black River and in-
termediate points.
For particulars apply
W. J. GUEST FISH CO., Ltd.
Winnipeg.
The NORTHERN FISH CO., Ltd.
Selkirk, Man.

Plate 19 – An undated postcard of the steamboat Wolverine at Selkirk, MB and a 1909 newspaper advertisement for a “summer outing” on the boat. The boat was built in 1903, sold to the Northern Fish Company in 1904 and dismantled in 1936. (Postcard: Rob McInnes Collection, MN0467; Advertisement: Manitoba Free Press, July 15, 1909, p. 20.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 20 – W.J. Guest Warehouse, 90 Alexander Avenue, front (north) façade, 2006. The structure was built in 1905 with a large addition on the west side completed in 1910. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK

ANNOUNCEMENT!
NOW OPEN



THE NEW

CASTRAN'S CAFE

596 Main Street
Formerly Winnipeg Candy Kitchen. Established 1909

ALL REMODELLED

The Place of Good Eats.
OUR SPECIALTIES:

HOME-MADE CANDIES and ICE CREAM	Take Her a Box of Our QUEEN'S CHOCOLATES
--	--

Only White Help Employed and First Class Chef.
PHONE 25 743.

Plate 21 – Newspaper advertisement for Castran's Café, Guest Block, 598 Main Street, 1929. The Café is listed at the address beginning in 1915 and remained into the 1950s. (Reproduced from Winnipeg Free Press, March 16, 1929, p. 5.)

596-598 MAIN STREET – GUEST BLOCK



Plate 22 – Guest Block, 598 Main Street, 1978. (City of Winnipeg.)