



**826 MAIN STREET**

**NORTHERN HOTEL**

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



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## 826 MAIN STREET NORTHERN HOTEL

**Date of Construction:** 1906

**Building Permit:** 2360/1906

**Architect:** Smith, Daniel (1906)

**Contractor:** Unnamed

### ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Another of the group of modest north Main Street hotels built after the turn-of-the-century to fill the demand for short-term residential space that has evolved, like so many of them, into long-term housing for low-income citizens.

The Northern Hotel, originally called the Florence Block, was built in 1906, originally a two-storey brick structure resting on a stone foundation with concrete footings. The original layout included two ground floor retail shops and residential suites above and total cost of construction was \$25,000.<sup>1</sup> Illustrative of the economic climate in the city, a year later an additional storey was added to the block and the structure remodelled.<sup>2</sup> This remodelling did not include the retail space and the second floor, the new third floor featured two bathrooms, 18-single rooms on the outside walls and seven rooms on the inside of the building, the latter with windows into the interior light well. The stairs were



Front (east) and north façades, 2005

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located at the front (east) end of the floor and an exterior fire escape was located at the rear of the building, all of which apparently mimicked the floor immediately below.<sup>3</sup>

In 1928, major alterations were made to the building's exterior – a new central entrance and hotel lobby was created and the storefronts were moved north and south of their original locations. H.R. Eade was named as contractor for this work, no architect was listed.<sup>4</sup> More changes were made to the main (east) façade in 1931<sup>5</sup> and photographic evidence shows more alterations were completed before and after 1978 to create the present façade.

The present front features cut stone cladding on the ground floor with two entrances (one at the south end and one slightly off-centre) with two plain square-headed windows beside the southern entrance. The upper floors do not appear to have seen many changes. Here the façade is divided into three bays by brick pilasters and within each bay are two windows per floor, all in their original wooden frames and one-over-two layout. The original overhanging metal cornice and enriched parapet with empty name panel ornament the roofline.

The north and south walls include pairs of unusual triangular light wells on the second and third floors interrupting the otherwise blank brick walls. Windows in these light wells are rectangular with rough stone lug sills. The rear of the building includes an addition completed in 1958 that, according to City of Winnipeg records, was used originally as a mixed drinking area that could be separated from the “men’s parlor [sic]” by means of a folding door.<sup>6</sup>





Rear (west) and south façades, 2005

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On the interior, the building is a mix of original and renovated spaces. The basement features two solid brick walls running north/south the entire length of the building for added support. Storage space and the boiler room occupy most of this level (Plates 12 and 13). The ground floor includes the main lobby (Plate 14) with the office/front desk to the north, stairs and restaurant area to the south and the bar to the west (Plate 15). The upper two floors include original tin ceiling in hallways and stairwells (Plate 16) as well as some original hardware (doorknobs, etc.). Much of the layout of the upper floors is original, however, a narrow hallway at the rear of the third floor was added (date unknown) and the new owners have made a number of larger suites with baths by combining some of the smaller suites (Plate 17). There are almost never vacancies and the suites provide comfortable accommodations for the pensioners and social assistance tenants who live in the Northern Hotel year-round (Plate 18).

Architect Daniel Smith was born in Bristol, Quebec on November 1, 1840, and received his early education in Ottawa, Ontario.<sup>7</sup> At the age of thirty-eight Smith joined the Dominion Public Works Department in Ottawa, working for five years in that city. In 1882 he was transferred to Winnipeg, and that same year was promoted to Superintendent of the Western Canadian section of the Department of Public Works. As such, he had jurisdictional control of the territory west of the Great Lakes.

In 1900 he resigned his position and became a privately practicing architect in the city, designing many small to medium size buildings of various function and description. At the end of this short career, Smith took on partner William Bruce, forming Smith and Bruce that, according to City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, operated in the city from 1907-1910.<sup>8</sup>



Rear (west) and north façades, 2005

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Both men designed buildings before and after their partnership. A partial list of D. Smith designs would include: Strang and Co. Warehouse, Fort St. (1902); - Kilgour, Rimer Co. stores/warehouse, 104 Princess St. (1904 – Grade III); Royal Crown Soap Co., factory, warehouse, boiler house & alterations, 289 King St. (1904-1908); Codville-Georgeson Co. Warehouse, 43-51 Victoria St. (1906) – demolished; and the Bell Hotel, 662 Main St. (1906).

### HISTORICAL INTEREST:

The original owner was P.A. Crump, a real estate developer principally active in the North Main area.<sup>9</sup> The block, named for Florence I. Crump (relationship to P.A. Crump unknown), was enlarged and remodelled in 1908 and renamed the Northern Hotel. It now joined a growing list of hotels along Main Street and elsewhere in Winnipeg catering to the local clientele with small rooms, few amenities, a parlour and shared washroom facilities.<sup>10</sup>

Ownership of the building rested in the Crump family for many years. P.A. Crump was listed as the original owner; in 1910 he was listed as living in Riverside, California with Florence I. Crump the local contact. This set-up continued until the sale of the business to Northern Hotel Limited in 1931. This company owned the property until 1948 when it was sold to J.D. Diamond. Number of tenants living in the hotel during the first half of the century ranged from 34 in 1942 to 80 in 1929.<sup>11</sup> Since 1950, the hotel has changed hands several times.<sup>12</sup> Commercial tenants of the block have included: Louis Borodkin, watchmaker (1935); Harry Lamny, barber (1935-1955); several Chinese restaurants; and Chura's Beauty Parlour, Mrs Kay Chura proprietor (1955).<sup>13</sup>



Second floor room (left) and hallway (right), 2005

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RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

Under the Historical Buildings By-law, this building meets a number of important criteria:

- its historical importance- illustrative of the type of hotel facility popular in Winnipeg, especially along Main Street, built shortly after the turn-of-the-century that has evolved into a long-term boarding facility;
- its associations- N/A;
- its design- N/A;
- its architect- D. Smith was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes greatly to the historic streetscape of its north Main Street block; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display some of their original elements and design.



Front (east) façade, 1978

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ENDNOTES:

- 1        City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #2360/1906.
- 2        BP #1424/1907. Smith and Bruce were the architects of the additional storey, which cost \$8,000 to complete. Plans are available at City Storage.
- 3        City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 10700-12-3. Below as AR.
- 4        Architect's Plans, #276/1928, courtesy of City Archives.
- 5        BP #795/1931.
- 6        AR.
- 7        Manitoba Free Press, July 14, 1913, p. 16.
- 8        City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1913. Below as Ledgers.
- 9        City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 14001070100 (below as ARo), 1920-1990.
- 10       BP #1424/1907.
- 11       ARo, 1900-1950.
- 12       Ibid., 1950-1997.
- 13       Henderson's Directory, 1910-1990.