



561 McDERMOT AVENUE

MANITOBA MEDICAL COLLEGE (ST. REGIS APARTMENTS)

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



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Date of Construction: 1884; 1908 conversion to apartment block

Building Permit: N/A; 671/1908

Architect: Stewart, V.; Bouche, V.L. (owner)- 1908

Contractor: Ennis, J.; Day labour- 1908

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This building has filled two roles in its existence, originally as a medical college and then since 1908, as a multi-tenant residence.

As can be seen by the pictures on the following page, this building has seen extensive renovation since it was built in the 1880s. It was originally a 2½-storey brick and stone building with a unique attached tower with mansard roof and small dormers, a bay window on the ground floor and hipped gable roof over the main building. Expansion of the building was necessary in 1894 because of the growth of the number of students attending. The work more than doubled the size of the building – an additional storey was added to both wings and the tower’s mansard roof was replaced by a dome. Finally, in 1908, after the college had moved to its new facilities on Bannatyne Avenue, the block was converted into an apartment block with eight suites (it now has 10). The conversion necessitated the



Changing faces of 561 McDermot Avenue: Left- 1891, as built; Middle- ca.1900 after the expansion of the College; Right- 1969 as St. Regis Court Apartments
(All photographs courtesy of Archives of Manitoba)

replacement of the tower with a three-storey wooden balcony and new windows were opened into the façade. Cost of these renovations was \$10,000.¹ Exterior ornamentation is extremely limited; some ornate brickwork graces the third floor and roofline.

Nothing is known about either the architect, V. Stewart, or the contractor, J. Ennis. The

The building stands on its original location and appears to be in good structural condition. Alterations to the buildings exterior have been extensive, although they are now significantly old. It is also thought that some of the ground floor windows and perhaps the main door dates to the original 1884 structure.



Rear (north) and west façades, 2002

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

After the Manitoba Medical College vacated the premises, it was purchased by C.H. Simpson, contractor, Joseph Turner, T.A. Irvine and J.H. Neelands, all plumbers, none of whom lived in the block. By 1925, the group had sold the building to W.E. Seaborn a Moose Jaw, SA barrister, who owned the property until the late 1950s.²

Tenancy in the block has been varied, the list for St. Regis Court in 1910 was: Suite A: Victor Coupez; B: Lee Stringer, accountant with Miller & Richards; C: George Boyd Munnoch, insurance clerk at Home Investment and Savings Association; D: McR. Gunn, no employment listed; D: W.M. Fulton, manager at Sub Surface Packer Co.; E: C.A.L. Wilson, no employment listed; F: J.W. McNeill, traveller at Martin Bole Co.; G: Emmett McGrath, salesman at Stovel Co.; H: J.M. McKay, no employment listed; Unlettered suite: Matthew Snow, deputy warehouse commissioner.³



Front (south) and east façades, 2002

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- a very unusual history, including its construction as Western Canada's first medical college and then an early conversion into multi-tenant housing;
- its associations- its long-term connections to medical education in Western Canada;
- its design- N/A;
- its architect- V. Stewart was a known practitioner;
- its location- defines an important intersection and contributes to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display some of their original elements and design from its 1908 conversion into an apartment block and a few elements from the original 1884 structure.



Front (south) and west façades, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #671/1908.
- 2 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 13-061399000, 1900-1990.
- 3 Henderson's Directory, 1910.