



36 NAVY WAY
MOUNT ROYAL APARTMENTS

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2008



36 NAVY WAY MOUNT ROYAL APARTMENTS

Date of Construction: 1926

Building Permit: 295/1926 (Plans on file at City Archives)

Architect: Davidson and Thorarinson (owners)

Contractor: Davidson and Thorarinson (owners)

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

The Mount Royal Apartments, originally with 31 suites and an address of 36 Smith Street, were built before the Great Depression near the banks of the Assiniboine River, in the south portion of downtown Winnipeg. It is one of a number of three-storey brick and stone multi-tenant structures built in the 1920s and 1930s in this neighbourhood and in every residential neighbourhood in Winnipeg. Popular as an investment, these comfortable, plainly designed blocks offered its tenants bright, well laid out suites at a reasonable cost.

The I-shaped building's main façade faces east, its dark red brick walls set above the smooth cut stone cladding of the raised foundation wall. The main entrance is centrally placed in the building and arched with a radiating brick head and stone keystone. On either side of the entrance are bay windows that run the entire height of the building finished at the roofline as a raised parapet. Windows throughout are square headed with stone lug sills



Front (east) and south façade, 2008

and dark brick heads. Above the third storey windows is a simple, smooth stone cornice with plain brick parapet above.

The north and south façades are similarly arranged, with a recessed middle section and common clay brick walls except for a small portion of the front that continues the dark brick of the front façade. Both sides feature two open wood fire escapes and unadorned window openings. The rear of the block features numerous plain window openings with lug sills and now protected by awnings.

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and has not seen extensive alteration to its exterior features or design. The building measures approximately 18.3 x 35.1 metres and cost \$76,000 to complete.¹

The block was designed and built by local contracting firm Davidson (W.A.) and Thorarinson (M.J.). Little is known at present about these partners; they began appearing in the City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books in 1914 and were still listed in 1926, although it is likely that they continued on after this date. They seem to have concentrated on the construction of apartment blocks and single-family dwellings in neighbourhoods throughout the City.



Front (east) and north façade, 2007

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Architects/builders W.A. Davidson and M.J. Thorarinson are listed as the original owners of the block. Davidson is listed as the sole owner from 1930-38, his representatives in 1939 and F.G. and W.F. Davidson, decorators, from 1940-1950. In the 1980s, Thomas H. Smith, c/o Smith Agencies Limited, is the listed owner.²

Tenants over the years have been varied, most renting for only a short period and then moving on.



Front (east) and north façade, 2007

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- one of many brick and stone apartment blocks built in residential districts throughout the City of Winnipeg between the two World Wars;
- its associations- N/A;
- its design- an example of a modest, classically-detailed multi-tenant block;
- its architect- architects/builders W.A. Davidson and M.J. Thorarinson were known local practitioners
- its location- contributes to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (east) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #295/1926.
- 2 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-092515200, 1920-1990.