

259 PORTAGE AVENUE – THE PARIS BUILDING
Northwood and Carey, 1915-17



Once described as Winnipeg’s “most elegantly clothed steel frame skyscraper”, the Paris Building features magnificent terra cotta ornamentation and striking architectural design. Although seemingly a single design, the building was erected in two stages: the first five storeys in 1915 and the upper six in 1917. The rather large price tag of \$330,000 included rental office and retail space finished with grey marble wainscoting and stairs, with elegant woodwork and glass partitions between the airy, well-lit rooms. The Paris Building was one of the several office towers that caused Portage Avenue to rival Main Street in high rents and prestige.

Stores such as Dingwall's Jewellers and Shea's Custom Tailors originally occupied the first two storeys. The upper storeys housed a variety of businesses including a number of insurance companies and manufacturers' agents. In recent years, many professional people shared the building with a modeling school, travel agency, architect and the offices of the *West Jewish News*. For several decades, the Western Canada Insurance Underwriters' Association leased the entire eleventh floor.

The building was designed by architects Northwood and Carey of Winnipeg and constructed by Carter-Halls-Aldinger, both active and prominent Winnipeg firms. The façade on the main floor and some of the interior features have been modernized and altered, but by and large the Paris Building retains the same appearance as the 1915-17 period.