



80 ROSLYN ROAD
ROSSMORE APARTMENTS

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: Murray Peterson
April 2019

This building embodies the following heritage values as described in the *Historical Resources By-law, 55/2014* (consolidated update July 13, 2016):

- (a) Built in 1903 as a single-family dwelling, this structure was enlarged and altered into a multi-tenant block, mirroring the evolution of the entire Roslyn Road area;
- (b) This house was associated with Robert Lorne Richardson, newspaper man and Member of Parliament and his wife Clara J.M. Richardson and the conversion to an apartment block was associated with contractor J.A. Tremblay;
- (c) It was designed by local partnership Parkinson & Halley, built by contractor J.A. Tremblay and is an excellent example of one of only a handful of Georgian Revival Style structures in the city;
- (d) Built of brick with stone accenting, this block is representative of contemporary construction methods;
- (e) It is a highly conspicuous building within the residential neighbourhood; and
- (f) The building's main façades have suffered little alteration.

80 ROSLYN ROAD - ROSSMORE APARTMENTS

By the early 1900s, Winnipeg was in the midst of the most far-reaching and sustained period of growth in its history. The effects on the physical landscape of the community were enormous.

In the city's downtown, for example, infill construction, the demolition of older structures and erection of larger, more permanent buildings greatly increased the density of development. Much of this activity followed spatial patterns established before the turn-of-the-century which had created specific banking, warehouse and commercial districts.¹ Similarly, empty lots along streets in older residential neighbourhoods began to fill as the demand for housing increased.

Beyond the central core, these same pressures led to the creation of new residential, commercial and industrial precincts or the expansion of established districts. This necessitated a constant redefinition of the city's boundaries by civic officials and leaders.

One area that witnessed tremendous growth before and after 1900 was Fort Rouge. What had been a scattered settlement of French-speaking, agriculturally-based families in the 1870s became the City of Winnipeg's Ward One in 1882. Properties close to the Assiniboine River attracted wealthy businessmen and public figures who sought the quasi-rural lifestyle offered by the area combined with its proximity to the downtown.

Numerous mansions, situated on extensive, well-manicured grounds, were built during this period. The homes were filled with a "Who's Who" of Winnipeg – judges, lawyers, doctors and businessmen.

In 1903, local marine insurance man A.C. Archibald (Plate 1) took out a large permit to build a home on the south side of Roslyn Road. Archibald was born in Truro, Nova Scotia in 1867 and

¹ M. Peterson, "36 Roslyn Road - J.C. Falls House," report for the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee, January 1994, p. 1.

came to Winnipeg in the late 1880s. He first worked for the Commercial Bank of Manitoba before opening his own insurance business in the mid-1890s. In October 1904, at only 37 years of age, he contracted pneumonia and died, leaving only his wife, Maud (1869-?).²

The 2½-storey solid brick home he lived in for only a short time measured 12.7 x 11.0 x 13.7 metres and cost \$11,000. It was designed by J.H.G. Russell.³ According to Russell's ledgers, more work was completed on the building in 1905, including wiring and maple flooring.⁴

His widow sold the property in the fall of 1905 to Alexander Duncan McRae (1874-1946). McRae (Plate 2) was born in Glencoe, Ontario in 1874 and joined cousins Andrew Duncan Davidson (1853-1916) and Alexander Rae Davidson (1855-1922) in Duluth, Minnesota after graduating from business school in a company known as Davidson & McRae.⁵ Having amassed small fortunes from their various business ventures, the three, operating as the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company, purchased vast stretches of empty prairie in what would become the Province of Saskatchewan.⁶ By 1905, the company, renamed the Saskatchewan Valley and Manitoba Land Company, was active in real estate as well as specializing in organizing block settlements for various religious and ethnic groups in Western Canada and had, at its peak, 3,000 agents working in the United States.⁷

The McRae's and their children moved to Winnipeg in 1904 and immediately rose to the top of the social scene. He purchased the Archibald House in 1905⁸ and in 1906 and 1907 made

² Manitoba Free Press, October 8, 1904, pp. 1 & 7; and Canada Census, 1901.

³ City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #394/1903.

⁴ "Russell, J.H.G. Ledgers", Archives of Manitoba, MG11 E2, pp. 210-211.

⁵ B. O'Keefe & I. Macdonald, Merchant Prince: The Story of Alexander Duncan McRae (Surrey, B.C.: Heritage House Publishing Company, 2001), pp. 10-14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24. By 1902, the company owned 5-million acres. Land it had purchased near Saskatoon for 1¢ per acre in 1899 sold in 1902 at \$20 per acre. According to this biography, McRae made so much money so quickly, rumours of illegal or unethical practices followed him the rest of his life.

⁷ "Davidson, Andrew Duncan," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. XIV (1911-1920), on line version, 2016.

⁸ Manitoba Free Press, September 14, 1905, p. 11. The article stated that the house had stood vacant after Mr. Archibald's death.

several additions and alterations to the home, also designed by J.H.G. Russell, including a wide front porch (Plate 3).⁹

But the family would not stay long in Winnipeg. In 1907, the family moved to Vancouver, B.C. and three years later moved into their opulent new house, Hycroft Manor (Plate 4).¹⁰

The house was then sold to Robert Lorne and Clara J.M. Richardson. R.L. Richardson (1860-1921) was born in Ontario and worked as a reporter for the Montreal Star (1878) and Toronto Globe (1880) prior to moving west to Winnipeg in 1882 and help found the Manitoba Sun which became the Winnipeg Tribune in 1890 (Plate 5).¹¹ Three times a Member of Parliament, he died in 1921 leaving a wife and five daughters. His widow sold the property in 1929 to local contractor J. Albert Tremblay for \$40,000 who then spent approximately \$100,000 putting a large addition on the front and converting the entire structure into an apartment block (Plate 6 and 7).¹²

STYLE

This block has many of the distinguishing features of the Georgian Revival style. It has been described as the most popular revival style of the 20th century in Canada, used mainly in residential architecture and still popular today.¹³ Influential New York City architects McKim, Mead and White, who utilized elements of the style to design residences for their most affluent clients, promoted the style in the early 1900s.¹⁴ The style is based on English and Dutch colonial architecture from the 18th and early 19th centuries.

⁹ BP #2073/1906 (\$800 for front porch and entrance alterations) and #505/1907 (\$11,000, one- and two-storey addition, 12.8 x 13.4 metres).

¹⁰ B. O'Keefe & I. Macdonald, op. cit., pp. 44, 49-50.

¹¹ "Richardson, Robert Lorne," Memorable Manitobans, Manitoba Historical Society, online, 2013.

¹² Manitoba Free Press, March 11, 1929, p. 4; and BP #331/1929.

¹³ L. Maitland et al, A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), pp. 152-153.

¹⁴ Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, 1991), pp. 26-27.

Distinguishing characteristics of the style include a symmetrical façade with a centrally located entrance as its focal point. Classical elements and detailing such as pediments, cornice-like eaves, Palladian windows, columns and porticos are common. Roofs can be hipped or gambrel-shaped although flat roofs are also common. Exterior cladding ranged from wood to brick and stone to stucco and ornamentation is usually restrained and simple.¹⁵ There are a handful of good examples of the style in Winnipeg; one of the best is nearby, 218 Roslyn Road, built in 1917 for Walter P. Moss (Plate 8).

CONSTRUCTION

As outlined previously, the Rossmore Apartments were built as a single-family dwelling in 1903, enlarged and altered in 1905, 1906 and 1907 and converted into an apartment block in 1929. The new front section facing Roslyn Road does not feature a basement (see Appendix I for construction information). Fire upgrades were completed in 1980.

DESIGN

The front (north) façade features many embellishments beginning at grade with its raised smooth-cut limestone base to the sills of the ground floor windows. The symmetrically designed front has a centrally-placed, stone framed entrance with fluted stone columns supporting a shallow hood above with the word “ROSSMORE” carved in a stone panel above (Plate 9). Above the entrance is a two-storey window in arched opening with metal railing mimicking a balcony. Three colourful shields are located in the spandrel. The first and second floor windows on either side of the entrance are connected by a stone frame with carved stone ornaments in the spandrels. The remainder of the ground floor windows are set in stone frames and arched openings.

A modest stone belt course divides the second and third floors, window units on both levels are set in plain rectilinear openings. A complete entablature including metal cornice and a stone

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

capped brick parapet complete the design (Plate 10). This elevation does not appear to have suffered any major alteration from the original plans (Plate 11). The side and elevations of the front section continue the design, materials and ornamentation of the front except only one arched opening is found on the ground floor of the east façade. The brickwork at all four corners are raised to mimic quoins. The rear elevation of the front section east of the original building features a continuation of the window design and belt courses of the front and side elevations (Plate 12).

The rear of the building, the original single-family dwelling, has its own design elements. The raised foundation walls are clad in rough-cut limestone interrupted by basement windows. All windows, except for one of the south façade, are located in rectilinear openings and smooth-cut stone belt courses run above the second and third storey windows and the flat roof is unadorned. The east façade includes both rusticated stone and brick sills and wood clad oriel windows (Plate 12). A single entrance is found on the rear elevation and the west façade includes rusticated stone sills and heads on the ground and second floor window openings (Plate 13).

INTERIOR

According to the 1929 plans, each upper floor boasted eight suites all with bedroom, living room, kitchen with “eating alcove” and washroom. The front four suites in the north section all included small entrance halls while the entrances to the suites in the back section entered directly into the living rooms (Plate 14).

The basement was unexcavated under north section; the south section (accessed by stairs at the south end) had lockers, boiler room and laundry room. Revisions to the original plan added a caretaker’s suite located in the southeast corner of the basement.¹⁶

The Committee could not gain access to the interior to evaluate its present condition.

¹⁶ “Architect’s plans, #331/1929.

INTEGRITY

The block stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition for its age and does not appear to have suffered major exterior alteration since construction/conversion in 1929.

STREETSCAPE

Roslyn Road, once lined with luxurious mansions, has undergone considerable change in the 20th century. Initially, development entailed infill housing and apartment block construction as some of the larger pieces of property were subdivided. Later in the century, many of the older homes, having been passed down or purchased from the original owners, were demolished to make room for large, high-rise apartment blocks. The Blackstone Apartments remain as one of the oldest multi-tenant blocks on Roslyn Road (see Appendix II for list of area apartment blocks).

Today, the east end of Roslyn Road is filled with a variety of structures (Plates 15 and 16).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR

This structure was designed by the short-lived local partnership of Edward Parkinson (ca.1878-1953)¹⁷ and James Halley (1886-?).¹⁸ Parkinson was born in Halifax, England and by 1910 had settled in Winnipeg. Little is known of his professional life outside this partnership other than his work as the Dominion government's resident architect from 1938-1948. He was named to St. Boniface's first Parks Board in 1947.

James Halley was born in Perth, Scotland and when he applied to join the Manitoba Association of Architects (MAA) in 1919 he listed 4 years work in his hometown as well as 1 year in the Winnipeg offices of Pratt and Ross and P.C. Sewell, 3 years with G.W. Northwood, 4 years with J.D. Atchison, 1 year at the Provincial Architect's office and 2 years with Thompson Daniel and

¹⁷ Winnipeg Free Press, June 16, 1953, p. 10.

¹⁸ "Halley, James," file of the Manitoba Association of Architects.

Cothurst in Saskatoon, SA (1912-1913). Halley was on the Executive Council of the MAA in 1921 and by 1937 was living in Ottawa, ON.¹⁹

A list of the pair's Winnipeg work includes:

- St. Mary's Cathedral, 346 St. Mary Avenue, repairs and alterations to front entrance (1929)
- Crescent Furniture Building, 425 Portage Avenue (1928 – demolished)
- Bowyer House, 12 Middle Gate (1929)
- Rossmore Apartments, 80 Roslyn Road (1929)
- Modern Dairy Building, 738 St. Joseph Street (1930)

This is the first Parkinson & Halley design evaluated by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

It is likely that the original owner, J. Albert Tremblay (1881-1938) was the contractor of the block. Tremblay was born in St. Etienne, Quebec and moved to Winnipeg in the early years of the 20th century, finding work with prominent local contractor James McDiarmid.²⁰ Tremblay started his own company with brothers Joseph Josephat and Joseph Desiré, and built built several large structures over his career, including:

- 380 William Avenue, Carnegie Library (1908)
- 1470 William Avenue, Weston Fire Hall (1909)
- Banning Street, General Wolfe School (1909 – demolished)
- 155 Kingsway, Kelvin High School (1910 – demolished)
- 852 Burrows Avenue, St. John Cantius Educational Building (1918)
- 777 Pritchard Avenue, Canadian Ukrainian Institution Club House (1921)
- 846 Burrows Avenue, St. John Cantius Roman Catholic Church (1925)
- Sherbrook Street, Misericordia Hospital addition (1926)
- St. Anthony's Hospital, The Pas, MB (1928)
- 538-540 Broadway, Picardy Candy Factory & Tea Room (1928)
- 255 Stafford Street, St. Ignasius Catholic Church (1928)
- Western Canada Motors Building, 263 Edmonton Street (1929-1930)
- 55 Pavilion Crescent, Assiniboine Park Pavilion (1930)
- Manitoba Liquor Commission Warehouse, The Pas, MB (1930)
- 440 River Road, St. Vital Sanatorium (1931)

¹⁹ Loc. cit.

²⁰ Winnipeg Free Press, September 28, 1938, p. 5.

PERSON

Local contractor J.A. Tremblay, as mentioned previously, is listed as the original owner of the apartment block, selling it to the Banque Canadienne Nationale in 1936. This financial institution sold the property in 1956 to the McDonald Grain Company. The Happy Wanderer Properties Limited was listed as the owner in 1985 and 1995.²¹

The original tenants of the block included brokers, managers, engineers, manufacturers, real estate agents and Roman Lacher, consular secretary and deputy consul of Poland.²²

EVENT

There is no known significant historic event connected with this block.

CONTEXT

This house was built at the start of a decade-long growth period that lasted until World War I and had dramatic effects on Winnipeg. The expansion of its economy increased its population necessitating the construction of thousands of new homes in established neighbourhoods and newly developing suburbs. For the business leaders of the city, the expansion meant an increase in personal wealth, expressed in the construction of mansions in Winnipeg's exclusive neighbourhoods. Roslyn Road was the centre of one of these neighbourhoods and its houses held some of the city's most influential families.

The home's conversion in 1929 into an apartment block is an unusual part of its history, the fact that the 1903 section was not demolished is likely a function of the quality of its design and materials.

²¹ City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12032475000, 1930-1990.

²² Henderson's Directory, 1931.

LANDMARK

The unusual design and ornamentation of this apartment block would heighten its conspicuousness in the neighbourhood.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Assessment Record

Building Address: 80 Roslyn Road

Building Name: Rossmore Apartments

Original Use: apartment block

Current Use: apartment block

Roll No. (Old): 12032475000

RSN: 143162

Legal Description: 41 St. Boniface, Plan 27423, Lot 19 & Plan 314, Block 2, Lot 25

Location: south side between Osborne and Bryce streets

Date of Construction: 1929

Storeys: 3 & basements

Heritage Status: **ON NOMINATED LIST**

Construction Type: brick and concrete on concrete foundation

Building Permits (Plans available: **[CS]** City Storage; **[M]** Microfilm):

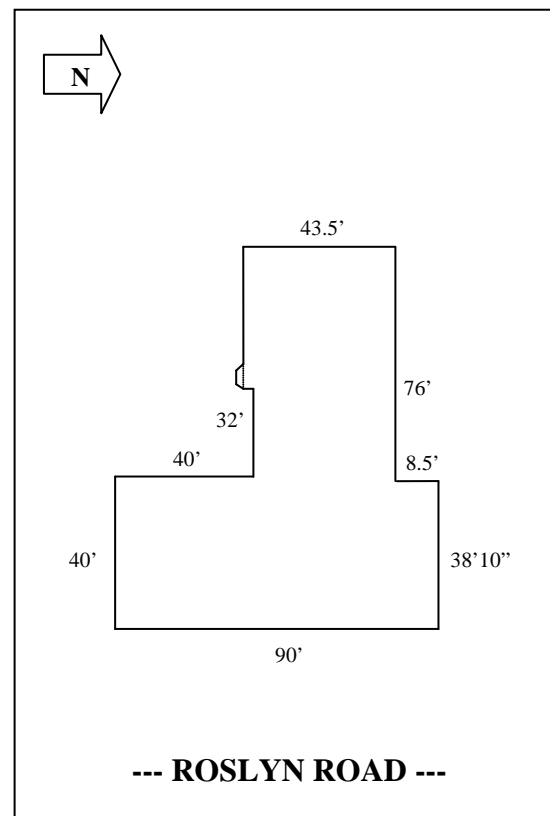
- 331/1929 **[CS]** \$100,000 (original); 2033/1980 \$7,500 (upgrading)

Information:

- 40 x 90 x 41' +
- cut stone cladding 6' from grade to brick
- ceilings: 1st- 9'2" to 10'; 2nd- 8'5" to 9'2"; 3rd- 9'
- BP 2033/1980- new fire alarm system including fire doors
- 25 suites

ARCHITECT: PARKINSON & HALLEY

CONTRACTOR: TREMBLAY, J. ALBERT (OWNER)



**APPENDIX II
ROSLYN ROAD APARTMENT BLOCKS**

NUMBER	NAME	AGE	NO. OF STOREYS	NO. OF SUITES	COST
#1	Locarno Apartments	1929	3 & 4	37	\$300,000
6	Lilly Apartments (house conversion)	1914	2.5	19	\$20,000
7	Gannon Apartments	1957	3	30	\$150,000
16	The Shelldrake	1958	3	20	\$100,000
21	Twenty-One Roslyn Road Apartments	1979	12	112	\$1,600,000
26	Marquis Apartments	1958	3	21	\$125,000
29	Roslyn on the River	1988	8	23	Unknown
43	Blair House	1957	5	40	\$300,000
50	Riverborne-Roslyn Place	1992	4	40	Unknown
51	Saigon Apartments	1952	3	25	\$115,000
71	Penthouse Towers	1960	10	99	\$1,000,000
80	Rossmore Apartments	1929	3	25	\$100,000
81	Shorecrest Plaza	1959	3	60	\$320,000
90	The Terraces of 90 Roslyn	1985	3.5	14	\$560,000
99	Roslyn Manor	1958	3	66	\$225,000
100	Blackstone Apartments	1927	3	18	\$45,000
139	London Towers	1965	8	31	\$310,000
151	Dorset House	1965	7	24	\$237,000
176	Manor Apartments (house conversion)	1909	2.5	6	\$18,000
188	Nassau House	1966	10	34	\$350,000
230	Sussex House	1965	14	111	\$1,100,000
246	Imperial Place	1968	12	117	\$1,038,000
270	Canterbury House	1967	12	142	\$1,400,000
300	Fountain House	1963	13	180	\$1,800,000

OTHER AREA APARTMENT BLOCKS

ADDRESS	NAME	AGE	NO. OF STOREYS	NO. OF SUITES	COST
40 Osborne Street	Roslyn Apartments	1908-09	5	36	\$208,000
1 Evergreen Place	No. One Evergreen Place	1970	29	221	\$2,962,000
7 Evergreen Place	Evergreen Towers	1981	26	183	\$7,760,000
11 Evergreen Place	(originally Hycroft Towers)	1984	26	185	\$5,740,000

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Plate 1 – A.C. Archibald (1867-1904), no date. (Reproduced from the Manitoba Free Press, October 8, 1904, p. 1.)

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Plate 2 – Alexander Duncan McRae (1874-). Left photograph, date unknown, right, with daughters in 1906. (Reproduced from B. O’Keefe & I. Macdonald, Merchant Prince: The Story of Alexander Duncan McRae [Surrey, B.C.: Heritage House Publishing Company, 2001].)

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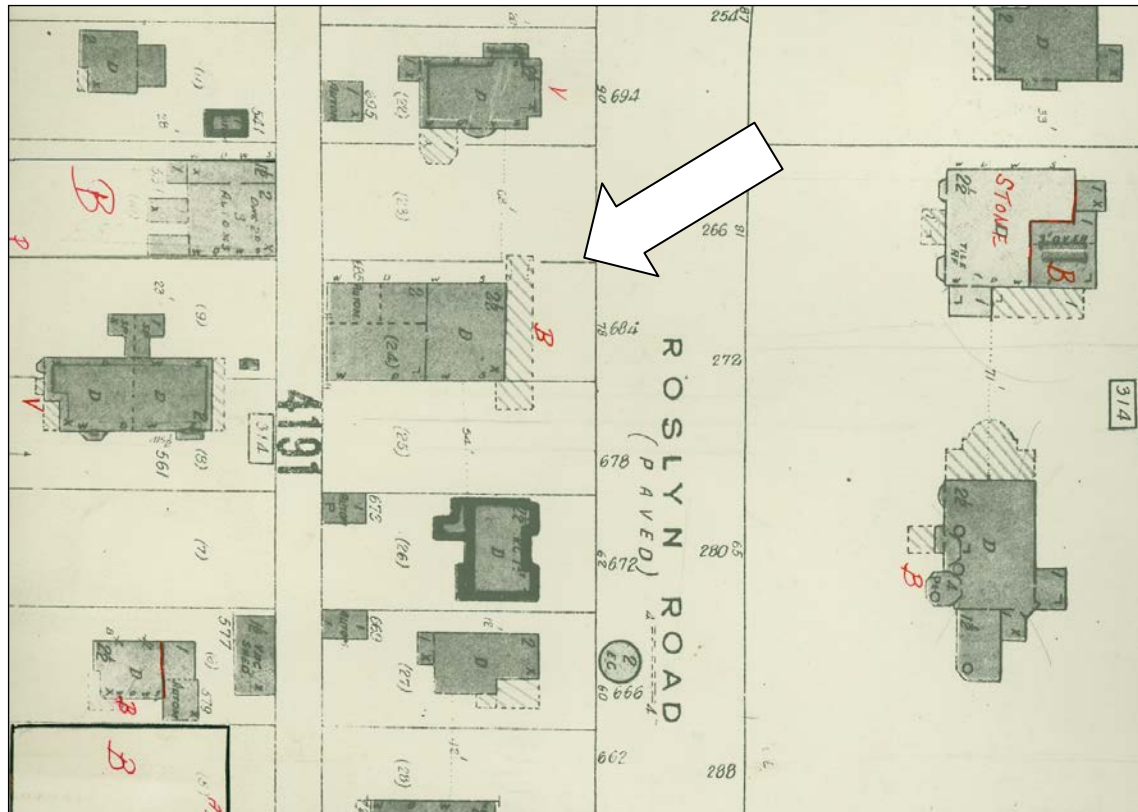


Plate 3 – 78 Roslyn Road, 1917. The brick house with 2½-storey front section (original, 1903), a 2-storey rear section (probably 1907) and a garage in the southwest corner and also features a large wooden front porch that was added in 1906. (Fire Atlas of Winnipeg, Vol. 4, Sheet 419 [May 1917].)

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Plate 4 – “Hycroft,” A.D. McRae Manor, 1489 McRae Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., 1927. Built between 1909 and 1911 it is an over 1,800 square-meter, 30-room mansion set on expansive grounds. (Courtesy of Vancouver Archives Item #Bu P688, Photographer Leonard Frank found at <http://www.miss604.com/2010/11/vancouver-history-hycroft.html>.)

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Plate 5 – The editorial staff of the Winnipeg Tribune, 1896. R.L. Richardson is on the left side. (Reproduced from the Winnipeg Tribune Collection, University of Manitoba Archives, PC 18/6551/18-5660-036.)

80 ROSLYN ROAD – ROSSMORE APARTMENTS

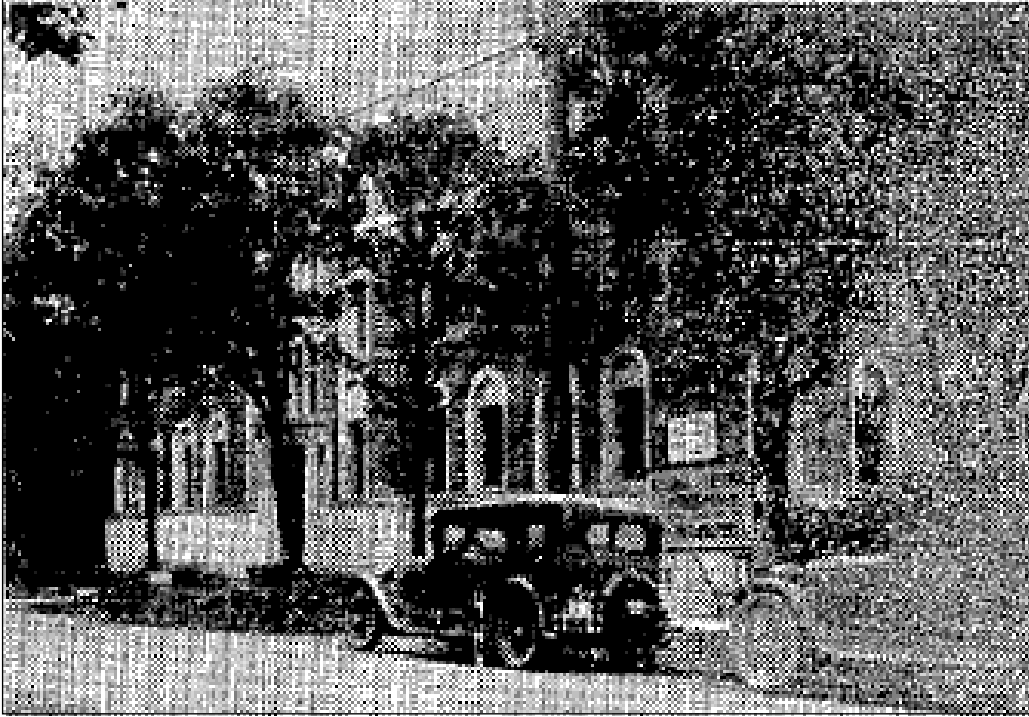


Plate 6 – Rossmore Apartments, 80 Roslyn Road, during construction, 1929. (Manitoba Free Press, July 20, 1929, p. 16.)

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Plate 7 – Rossmore Apartments, 80 Roslyn Road, front (north) and east façades, 2106. (M. Peterson, 2016.)



Plate 8 – Walter P. Moss House, 218 Roslyn Road, built 1917. (M. Peterson, 2009.)

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Plate 9 – Rossmore Apartments, 80 Roslyn Road, façade, 2106. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

80 ROSLYN ROAD – ROSSMORE APARTMENTS



Plate 10 – Rossmore Apartments, 80 Roslyn Road, front (north) and west façades, 2106. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

80 ROSLYN ROAD – ROSSMORE APARTMENTS

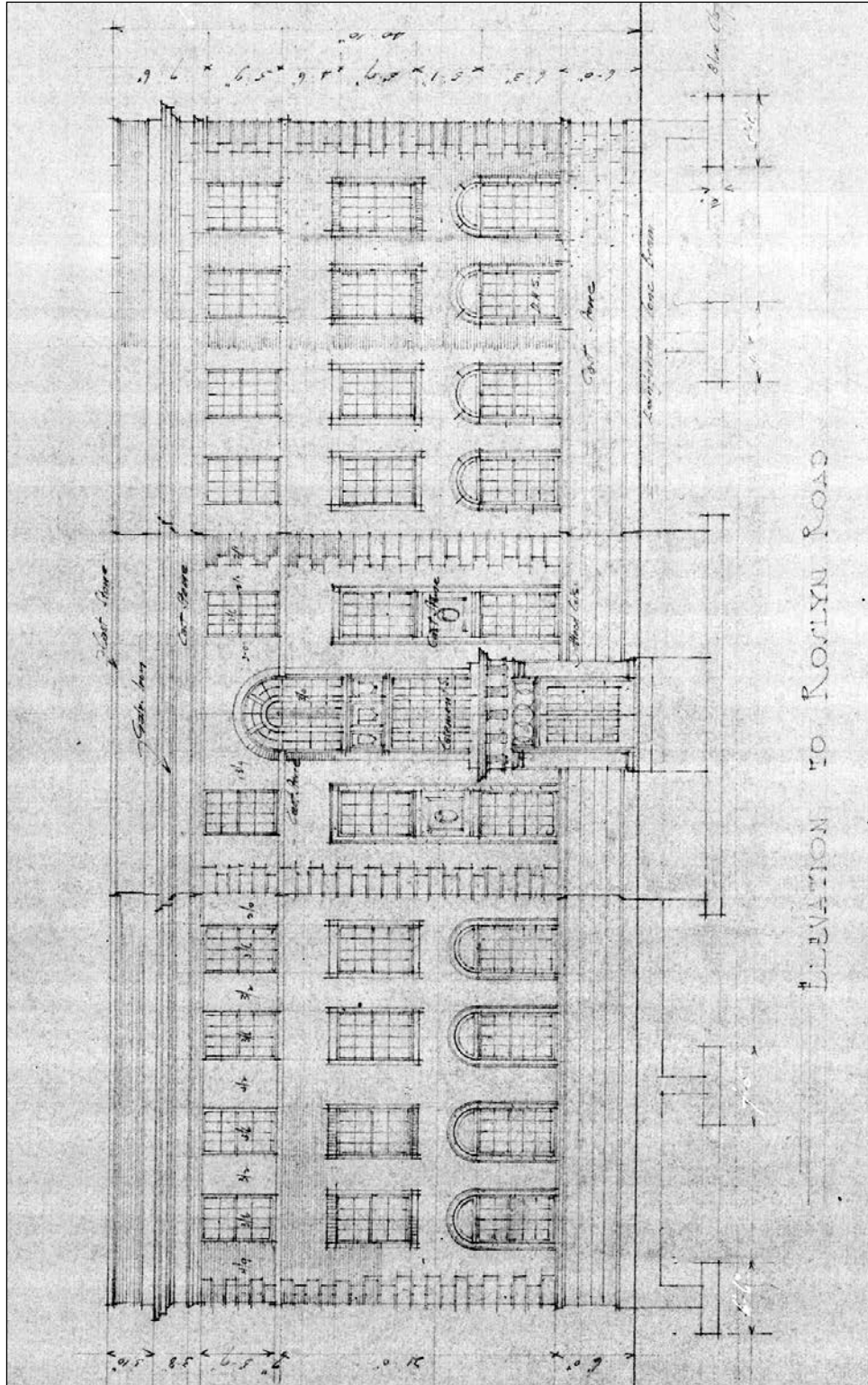


Plate 11 – “Elevation to Roslyn Road,” architect’s plans, 1929. (City of Winnipeg, Plan No. 331/1929.)

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Plate 12 – Rossmore Apartments, 80 Roslyn Road, east (original building) and south (1929 addition) façades, 2106. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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Plate 13 – Rossmore Apartments, 80 Roslyn Road, west and south façades of original and 1929 buildings, 2106. Note that the stone belt course does not meet perfectly at the southwest corner (arrow). (M. Peterson, 2016.)

80 ROSLYN ROAD – ROSSMORE APARTMENTS

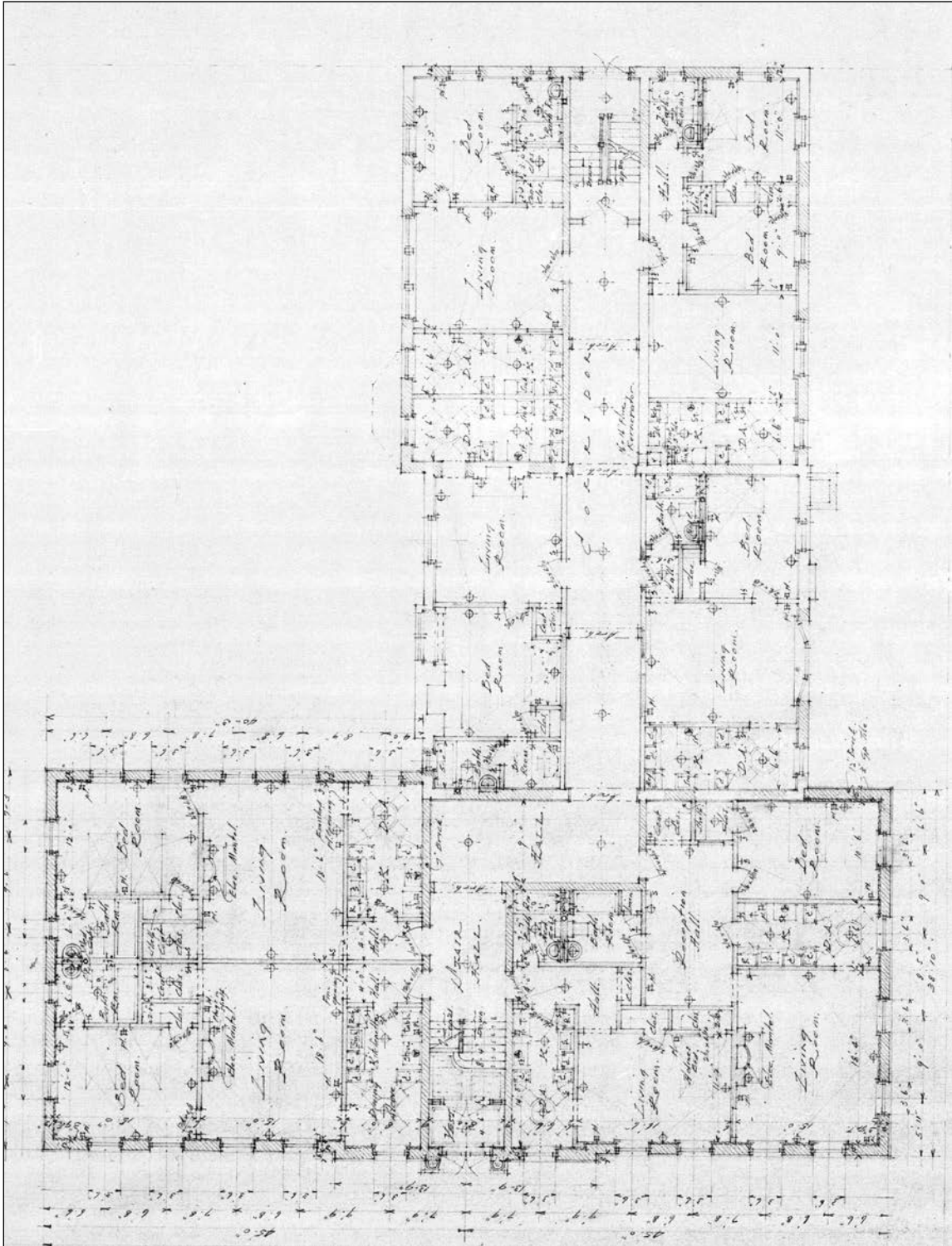


Plate 14 – “First Floor Plans – Typical of Second and Third Floors,” architect’s plans, 1929.
(City of Winnipeg, Plan No. 331/1929.)

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Plate 15 –Roslyn Road, looking west towards Osborne Street, 2106. (M. Peterson, 2016.)



Plate 16 –Roslyn Road, looking east towards Bryce Street, 2106. (M. Peterson, 2016.)