

80 ROSYLN ROAD – ROSSMORE APARTMENTS
Edward Parkinson & James Halley, 1929



The Rossmore Apartments were built just as the 1920s were coming to an end and just before the start of the Great Depression and the global economic downturn. They were built in the heart of one of the City's early affluent neighbourhoods, Fort Rouge, and on one of its most prestigious streets, Roslyn Road.

Roslyn Road, following the curves of the banks of the Assiniboine River, began its modern development shortly after it became the City of Winnipeg's Ward One in 1882. The same year, a permanent bridge was built connecting Osborne Street and fueling development in the area that had previously been occupied by predominantly Métis families. Properties along Roslyn Road were especially attractive to wealthy businessmen and public figures and the large lots soon filled with numerous mansions with well-manicured grounds.

The site of the Rossmore Apartments was originally occupied by the home of insurance agent A.C. Archibald, who built a fine home in 1903 for him and his wife. Unfortunately, he died two years later and his widow sold the property to businessman Alexander D. McRae. McRae sold the property in 1907 to Member of Parliament and newspaper founder Robert Lorne Richardson. He died in 1921 leaving a wife and five daughters and in 1929; the house was sold and demolished to make way for the Rossmore Apartments.

The replacement of early mansions by multi-tenant apartments was an ongoing evolution along both sides of Roslyn Road as developers took advantage of excellent location and the ability to purchase older building stock.

The Rossmore was designed by the short-lived local partnership of British-born Edward Parkinson (ca.1878-1953) and Scot James Halley (1886-?). The pair worked together only a few short years. It is likely that the block's first owner, Quebec-born contractor J. Albert Tremblay, built the apartments.

This block has many of the distinguishing features of the Georgian Revival style, including classical elements and detailing such as pediments, cornice-like eaves, Palladian windows, columns and porticos. There are several good examples of the style in Winnipeg, including the house at 218 Roslyn Road.

The front (north) façade of the Rossmore features a number of outstanding elements including arched window openings, stone detailing and an ornamental stone entrance. The side elevations continue this design; the rear portion of the building is more modestly finished but still features the dark red brick cladding.

As originally built, each floor held eight well-appointed suites.

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Exterior-

- Three-storey brick and stone structure with flat roof with main (north) facade facing Roslyn Road, the east side facing a parking lot, the west side facing a single-family dwelling and the rear (south) facade facing a back lane;
- The front facade of the newer portion of the building (north end) with its smooth-cut limestone base to the sills of the ground floor windows, symmetrically front with centrally- placed, stone framed entrance with fluted stone columns supporting a shallow hood above with the carved word “ROSSMORE” above and a two-storey window in arched opening with metal railing mimicking a balcony and colourful shields in the spandrel, first and second floor windows on either side of the entrance connected by a stone frame with carved stone ornaments in the spandrels, remaining ground floor windows in arched stone openings, stone belt course between the second and third floors, window units on both levels set in plain rectilinear openings and a complete entablature including metal cornice and stone capped brick parapet;
- East and west side elevations continuing the materials, layout and design of the front facade, brickwork mimicking quoins on all four corners and an arched ground floor opening on the east facade;
- The south facade of the original house (south end) with its raised rough-cut limestone foundation walls with basement windows, windows in rectilinear openings and one window in an arched opening, smooth-cut stone belt courses running above the second and third storey windows that continue the length of the east and west elevations and the flat, unadorned roof;
- The west facade of the south end with its raised rough-cut limestone foundation walls with basement windows, windows in rectilinear openings with stone sills and heads and flat, unadorned roof; and
- The east facade of the south end with rusticated stone and brick sills, wood clad bay window on the ground floor and wood-clad oriel window on the second floor and flat, unadorned roof.

Interior-

- None