



853 SHERBROOK STREET

COLUMBIA APARTMENTS

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



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Date of Construction: 1910

Building Permit: 1027/1910 (Plans on at City Storage)

Architect: Northwood, George W.

Contractor: Unnamed

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Standing on a busy corner, this mixed-use apartment block features retail space on the ground floor.

The building has two public façades: west facing Sherbrook Street and north facing William Avenue. Both elevations begin at grade with a raised stone foundation wall supporting the dark brick superstructure. Both elevations, connected by an angled corner, feature square headed windows on all floors and a flat roof line with raised sections. The south façade is plain, clad in common clay brick and faces a back lane. The east façade is also plainly designed with recessed light wells to increase the number of windows allowing natural light and ventilation into the suites.



Front (west) and north façades, 2009

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. Alterations to the building have included the replacement of all the windows with unsympathetic units.

Major George W. Northwood was born in 1876 and came to Winnipeg in 1905 as a graduate of McGill University. Shortly after his arrival in the city, Northwood formed a short-lived partnership with William Blair, an Irish-born designer 24 years his elder. Blair and Northwood were responsible for the design of four local buildings, all completed in 1906 including the Thomas Ryan Warehouse, 44 Princess Street (Grade III).¹ By 1907, the pair was working individually according to the City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledgers.

Northwood continued working alone for over a decade, designing a number of large and small structures including Western Glove Works, 321 McDermot Avenue, 1912 (Grade III) and Ralph Connor House, 54 West Gate, 1913 (Grade II). In 1919, Northwood formed a four-year partnership with local architect Raymond Carey and then with fellow World War I veteran Brigadier Major Cyril W.U. Chivers (1879-1969). This latter pair was responsible for a large number of fine structures throughout the city including the Manitoba Cartage Building, 345 Higgins Avenue (1926), St. Ignatius Church, 255 Stafford Street (1928), the second pavilion at the Assiniboine Park and Zoo, 55 Pavilion Crescent (1929-30, Grade II), the Riverbend School for Girls Junior School, now Balmoral Hall School, 630 Westminster Avenue (ca.1930), Greater Winnipeg Gas Building, 265 Notre Dame Avenue (1930, Grade III) the Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge, 200 Woodlawn Street (1931, Grade II), the Civic Auditorium, 444 St. Mary Avenue (1932), the Bank of Toronto Branch on Academy Road (1934) and the Federal Building, 269 Main Street (1935).² They have been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.



Rear (east) and south façades, 2009

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

This block was built for original owner Lögberg Printing and Publishing Company, founded in 1888 as Canada's second Icelandic language publisher. The company published the *Lögberg Weekly* from its offices in this block into the 1920s, although it sold the block to Columbia Press shortly after construction was completed.³ *Lögberg Weekly* and the other Icelandic newspaper, *Heimskringla News* (founded in 1886), amalgamated in 1959 to create *Logberg-Heimskringla*, still published today.⁴

From 1945-1955, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania research physicist Dr. E.L. Armi and his wife Emita owned the block. Tenants in the early years of the block tended to be Icelandic and Scandinavian in background and less so as the neighbourhood evolved in later years.⁵



Northwest corner detail, 2009

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- a familiar building type – the apartment block with retail space on the ground floor – that was built in all corners of Winnipeg in the 1900-1915 era;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early and Icelandic publishing company Lögberg Printing and Publishing Company;
- its design- an excellent example of a modestly detailed mixed-use retail/residential block;
- its architect- G.W. Northwood was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- defines an important intersection and contributes greatly to the historic streetscape of two major arteries; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display some of their original elements and design.



Front (west) and north façades, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Book, 1906.
- 2 City of Winnipeg, Historical Buildings Committee, files.
- 3 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 13061543000 (below as ARo), 1910-1920.
- 4 Biographical information from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baldwin_Baldwinson," no date.
- 5 ARo, 1920-1960; and Henderson's Directory, 1915-1960.