



40 ST. MARY'S ROAD

BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
May 2019

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

- (a) It was built in 1929 at the very end of the development stage of its neighbourhood, Norwood, addressing a need for multi-tenant residential facilities;
- (b) It is associated with its developer, David Campbell, lawyer and St. Boniface City mayor, who owned the property until his death in 1932;
- (c) Its layout, 16 separate bungalow units around a central open area and its Mission Style architecture are extremely rare in Winnipeg;
- (d) The frame bungalows are clad in stucco, a common material used in residential construction;
- (e) It is a highly conspicuous building within its residential neighbourhood; and
- (f) The building's exterior has suffered little alteration.

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St. Boniface grew steadily as a Francophone community east of Winnipeg in the later 19th century, but a small portion of it, the western area at the Red River, developed as an English-speaking neighbourhood known as Norwood.

The development actually officially began with the registration of two plans in 1891: Plan 385 for the Norwood Subdivision west of St. Mary's Road (Plate 1) and Plan 386 for the Oak Park Subdivision east of St. Mary's Road (Plate 2). These laid out several blocks of residential lots with Linden Avenue (now Lyndale Drive) following the curve of the river in Norwood and Oak Avenue (now Enfield Crescent) curving along the east side of Oak Park. Both were owned by the Norwood Improvement Company, which also built a pontoon bridge across the Red River to give access to downtown Winnipeg.¹

In 1893, the Norwood Bridge was constructed across the Red River, giving modern access to the growing population of St. Vital and Norwood (Plates 3 and 4). It was built as a toll bridge by the Norwood Improvement Company (new Norwood land owners were given a one-year free pass over the span).² This bridge, along with the 1881 Assiniboine Bridge, continued to serve south Winnipeg until 1897 when the City chose to build a new Assiniboine River span (known as the Main Street Bridge), the original structure having become unsafe due to increased traffic loads.³ Both new bridges were of steel construction. The Main Street span cost \$38,330 and was built by Dominion Bridge Company of Winnipeg (Plate 5).⁴

Oak Park and Norwood developed slowly, and one of its important early institutions was the Winnipeg Golf Club, which had organized as course in 1894, left later that year but returned in

¹ R.R. Rostecki, "Norwood Flats: A Mid-century Modern Winnipeg Subdivision," report for the Winnipeg Planning, Property and Development Department, 2013, p. 1. Below as "Norwood Flats."

² Winnipeg Free Press, September 14, 1955, p. 25. Tolls were collected until 1907. The bridge was purchased in 1909 by St. Boniface for \$90,000.

³ Winnipeg Tribune, January 19, 1949, p. 1.

⁴ Manitoba Free Press, September 12, 1931, p. 3; and Winnipeg Free Press, September 14, 1955, p. 25. New Norwood Bridges have been constructed in 1929-1931 and 1996-1999.

1905. In 1914, it became the Norwood Golf Course and was located on the west side of St. Mary's Road, beginning several decades of successful operation on the undeveloped land (Plates 6-8).⁵

On the other side of St. Mary's Road, on the present-day site of Coronation Park, was the Norwood Athletic Park, a cricket ground and Lawn Tennis facility that was demolished in 1919 (Plate 9).

In the mid- and late 1920s, however, a syndicate led by the C.H. Enderton Realty Company of Winnipeg began to purchase and assemble the vacant lots used by the golf course, using two front men to acquire the land: David Campbell, a local lawyer; and Tom Graham, a realty company bookkeeper.⁶ By 1930, much of the land was in the hands of the syndicate, known as Marion Properties Limited and Edgewater Heights Limited, but it wouldn't be until 1945 that pressure from development and the City of St. Boniface finally closed the golf course and allowed for the creation of a new subdivision within Norwood – Lyndale Park (Plate 10).

Although Campbell was only the lawyer for this new subdivision, he was responsible for the construction of one of the City's most unique apartment complexes, the Buena Vista Apartments, built in 1929 on the west side of St. Mary's Road in the heart of Norwood. Contemporary newspaper advertisements stated the complex had

All the privacy of a private residence, and none of the inconveniences. All conveniences of an apartment and none of the discomforts.⁷

⁵ "Norwood Flats," op. cit., pp. 1-2.

⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

⁷ Quoted in "40 St. Mary's Road," Winnipeg Architecture Foundation website, <http://www.winnipegarchitecture.ca/40-st-marys-road/>, 2017.

STYLE

The Buena Vista Apartments are an example of a simplified Spanish Colonial or Mission Revival Style structure fairly unique to the city. This style developed from the Spanish settlement period of the 18th century California. The revival of the style has been described as the Pacific counterpart to the Georgian Revival style of the eastern states. It developed out of a reaction to both the nineteenth century designs and the eastern styles that had dominated California architecture up until the 1880s.⁸ By the 1890s, it had become popular throughout California and was being seen elsewhere in North America.

The most recognizable feature of these structures is the tiled roof. This element is often low pitched and hipped or “stopped at the ends”. Walls are almost always smooth-plastered and sculptural ornamentation is invariably lacking. Balconies are a usual feature as are numerous semi-circular or segmental arches. Towers are also common in the larger buildings.⁹

In Winnipeg, there are a few remaining examples of small retail structures, originally grocery stores, exhibiting tiled roofs (595 Broadway, 893 Portage Avenue and 535 Osborne Street) and at least one large apartment block also features this detail – Pasadena Apartments, 220 Hugo Street North (Plate 11).

This development’s design as a complex of separate buildings has been used elsewhere, including the Chelsea Court Apartments, a group of eight, two-storey blocks built in 1914 (demolished 2008 – Plate 12).

CONSTRUCTION

The complex was built to City of St. Boniface, Building Permit #4853/1929. No dollar value was included on the Permit. The complex is designed with 16 separate one-storey units (Plate 12), all measure 4.3 x 12.8 x 5.5 metres and ceilings measuring 2.0 metres in the basements and 2.5 metres

⁸ M. Whiffen, American Architecture Since 1780 (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp. 213-244.

⁹ Ibid., p. 213.

on the ground floor (see Appendix I for construction information). In 1977, all units were restuccoed and windows replaced.

DESIGN

The complex consists of separate bungalow units arranged around a small open area (Plate 13). Each unit includes a raised, centrally located entrance (Plate 14), numerous windows in rectilinear openings, and stucco cladding (Plates 15-17). The flat roofs include raised sections (Plate 18) and the St. Mary's Avenue side features a stucco-clad fence at the sidewalk, which was built by the City of Winnipeg (Plate 19).

The replacement of most of the 1977-era aluminum windows has occurred over time.

INTERIOR

Contemporary descriptions describe the bungalows as all having large living rooms with concealed beds, a kitchen, bedroom and dining alcove. Central steam heating, electric refrigeration, garbage incinerators, open fireplaces, electric ranges and full basements were also features of the original apartments.¹⁰

Today, the units are a mix of older and newer renovations. Original hardwood floors exist in some of the units, as do the fireplaces and garbage incinerators (although these last elements are now disconnected) – Plates 20-23.

¹⁰ Quoted in "40 St. Mary's Road," Winnipeg Architecture Foundation website, <http://www.winnipegarchitecture.ca/40-st-marys-road/>, 2017. Winnipeg Free Press, December 19, 1928, p. 27, rents for the bungalows were given as \$65 and \$70 per month.

INTEGRITY

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in fair structural condition. Changes have occurred to the exterior of the buildings over time but have not significantly altered the original design.

STREETSCAPE

The complex is located on the west side of St. Mary's Road (Plates 24 and 25), just across the street from Coronation Park, a large greenspace. The complex is located on an irregularly shaped piece of property bounded by St. Mary's Road on the east, Walmer Street on the south, Ferndale Avenue on the west and Eugenie Street on the north. The scale of the buildings is consistent with the single family dwellings located nearby.

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

One sheet of original plans exists. They are very simple and do not include interior partitioning or measurements (Plate 12). The name of the owner, Campbell and Company is found on the plans but no architect or contractor is listed and no other contemporary consulted source names an architect or builder.

PERSON/INSTITUTION

David Campbell (Plate 26) was born in Ontario in 1870 and worked for several years as a railway telegrapher and on the board of both the Canadian and American Orders of Railway Telegraphers. He began his law studies while riding trains and graduated from Queen's University (Kingston) and Osgoode Hall (Toronto) in 1910. That year he moved to Winnipeg and set up a private practice with his son Oscar Herbert Campbell (1898-?).¹¹ His Winnipeg firm became known as Campbell

¹¹ "Campbell, David," in Memorable Manitobans on Manitoba Historical Society website, 2017. According to the website www.ancestry.ca, Campbell married Elizabeth (nee. Thomas, 1865-1940) and had two children: Ivy Edna (1895-1960) and Oscar.

and Kelly and he also operated an office in Regina, SA with his son-in-law, William Currie as Campbell and Currie.¹²

His political career lasted only a short time, he was elected mayor of St. Boniface in 1931 and then returned by acclamation in 1932. He also became the leader of the provincial Liberal party and refused to join the Progressives in a new party. They were known as “Continuing Liberal” and lost all 13 seats they contested in the 1932 provincial election.

After a major operation in early 1932, Campbell returned to work at City Hall but while on a holiday in Saskatchewan complications arose and he died in Regina on August 25, 1932.¹³

EVENT

There is no known important historical event connected with this building.

CONTEXT

Built just before the Great Depression, this was residential complex was unusual in Winnipeg. Developers and renters preferred the traditional apartment block, which was a very popular building type in Winnipeg or the terrace, prevalent in the city in the late 19th century. But the Buena Vista Apartments offered tenants individual buildings, originally heated by a central boiler, located around a small green space – something rarely seen in the city.

LANDMARK

While these apartments are located on a busy street and feature an unusual design, they would not be considered conspicuous and would not be well known outside of their neighbourhood.

¹² Winnipeg Free Press, August 26, 1932, p. 5.

¹³ Loc. cit.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Building Address: 40 St. Mary's Road

Building Name: Buena Vista Apartments

Original Use: residential

Current Use: residential

Roll No. (Old): 06090410200 (904103-06)

RSN: 71860

Municipality: 06

Ward: ---

Property or Occupancy Code: ---

Legal Description: 93/100 St. Boniface, Plan 13656, Part of Parcel A

Location: west side from Ferndale Avenue to Walmer Street

Date of Construction: 1929

Storeys: 1

Heritage Status: NOMINATED LIST

Construction Type: frame and stucco

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

- 4853/1929 [CS] (original); 5356/1977 \$12,000 (alterations); 187467/2001 \$5,000 (interior alterations); 155881/2008 \$19,970 (alterations & repairs)

Information:

- 16 separate units all 14 x 42 x 18 – 10,584 cu. ft.

- ceilings: B- 6'6"; 1st- 8'3"

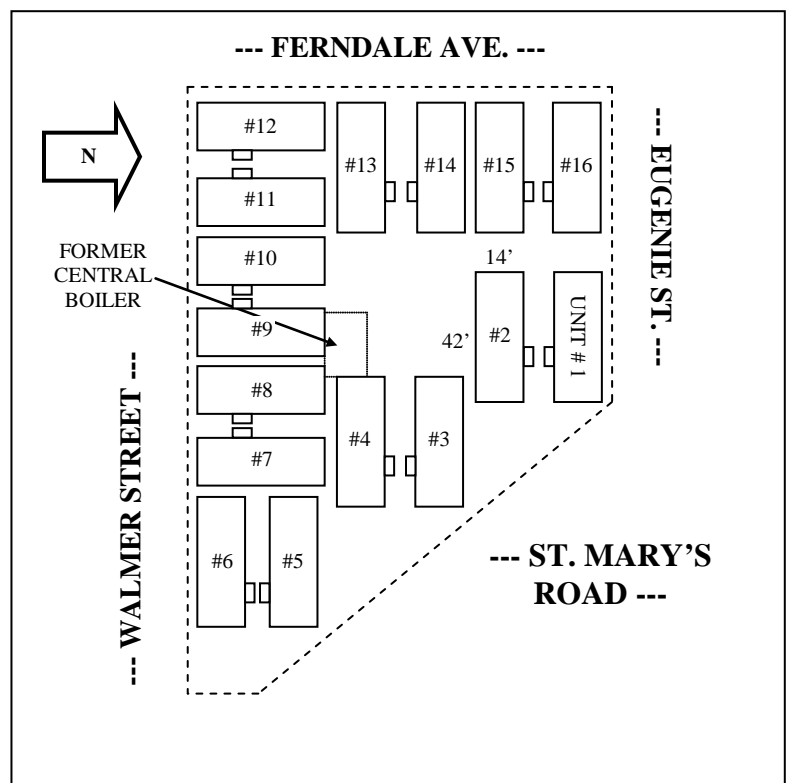
- Permit 5356/1977- all units newly stuccoed, new aluminum windows. Central boiler system disconnected, replaced by individual forced air furnaces.

- Permit 187467/2001- new drywall for all units & re-tar all roofs

- Permit 155881/2008- replace all doors & windows, replace furnaces

ARCHITECT – UNNAMED

CONTRACTOR – UNKNOWN



[illegible]

Plate 1 – Plan 385, Norwood Subdivision, Registered at the Winnipeg District Land Titles Office
August 1, 1891. (City of Winnipeg, Land Information Branch.)

[illegible]

ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО

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Plate 3 – The Norwood Bridge, built in 1893, ca.1905. (M. Peterson Collection.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 4 – Streetcar crossing the Norwood Bridge, no date. (Reproduced from the Rob McInnes Postcard Collection, found in Past Forward, City of Winnipeg Digital History Collection.)

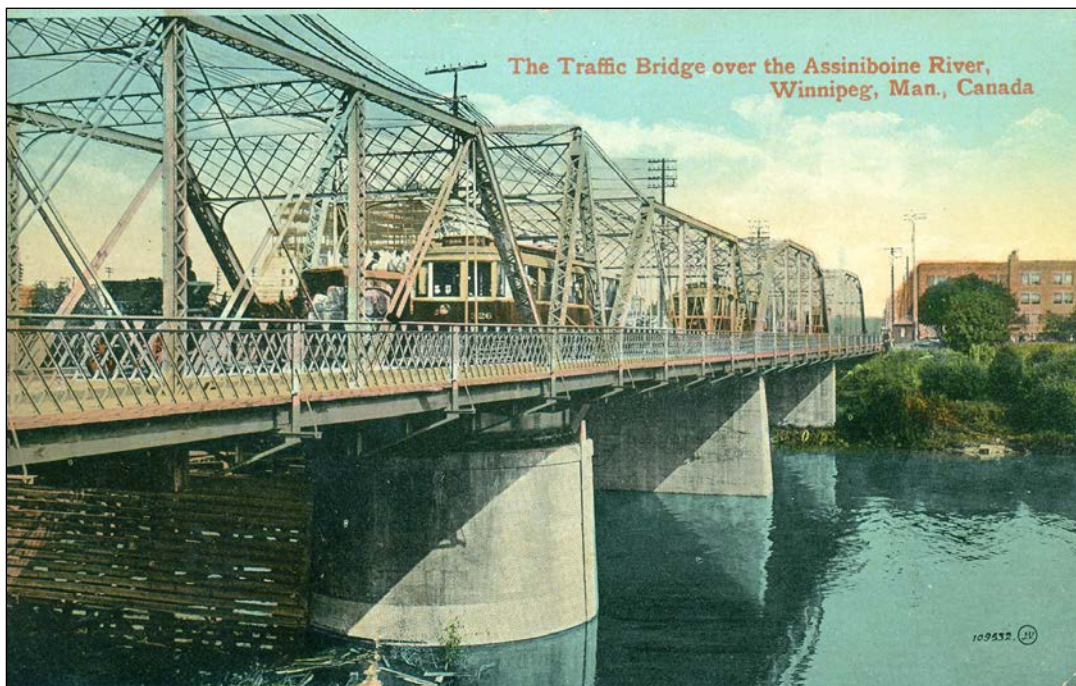


Plate 5 – Main Street Bridge, ca.1913. (Reproduced from the Rob McInnes Postcard Collection, found in Past Forward, City of Winnipeg Digital History Collection.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 6 – Aerial view of the Norwood Golf Course, ca.1928. (Archives of Manitoba, Alan Hackett Collection No. 128, N14349.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 7 – Aerial view of the Norwood area, 1927. The Norwood Golf Club is located along the river (arrow). Note that the east side (originally known as Oak Park) was significantly more developed than the west side (Norwood). (City of Winnipeg.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 8 –Norwood Golf Course clubhouse, 1927. (Archives of Manitoba, Alan Hackett Collection No. 61, N3413.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS

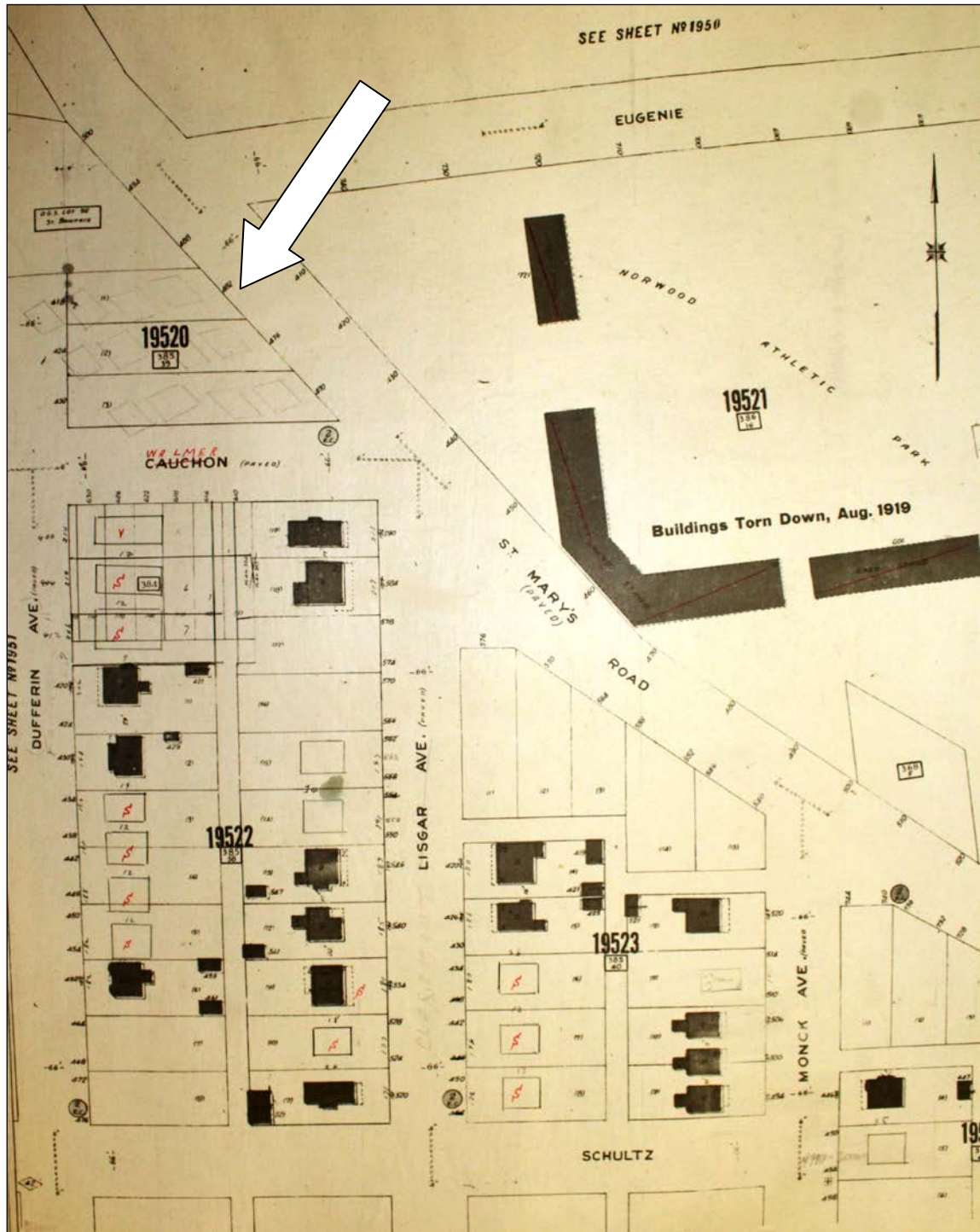


Plate 9 – City of St. Boniface Fire Atlas, Vol. XIX, Sheet 1952, April 1919. Buena Vista Apartments are located at arrow. (City of Winnipeg.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 10 – This aerial photograph shows the devastation of the 1950 flood on the Riverview neighbourhood and hospitals (#1) and the protection the dike provided to Norwood (#2). The curved layout of the new Lyndale Park subdivision (#3) is contrasted by the grid layout of the old Norwood development (#4). The Buena Vista Apartments is at the arrow. (City of Winnipeg.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 11 – Pasadena Apartments, 220 Hugo Street North, 2004. Built in 1912, Hooper and Hooper, architects. (M. Peterson, 2004.)



Plate 12 – Chelsea Court Apartments, 440-442 Assiniboine Avenue, 2004. Built 1914, P.C. Samwel, architect. (M. Peterson, 2004.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS

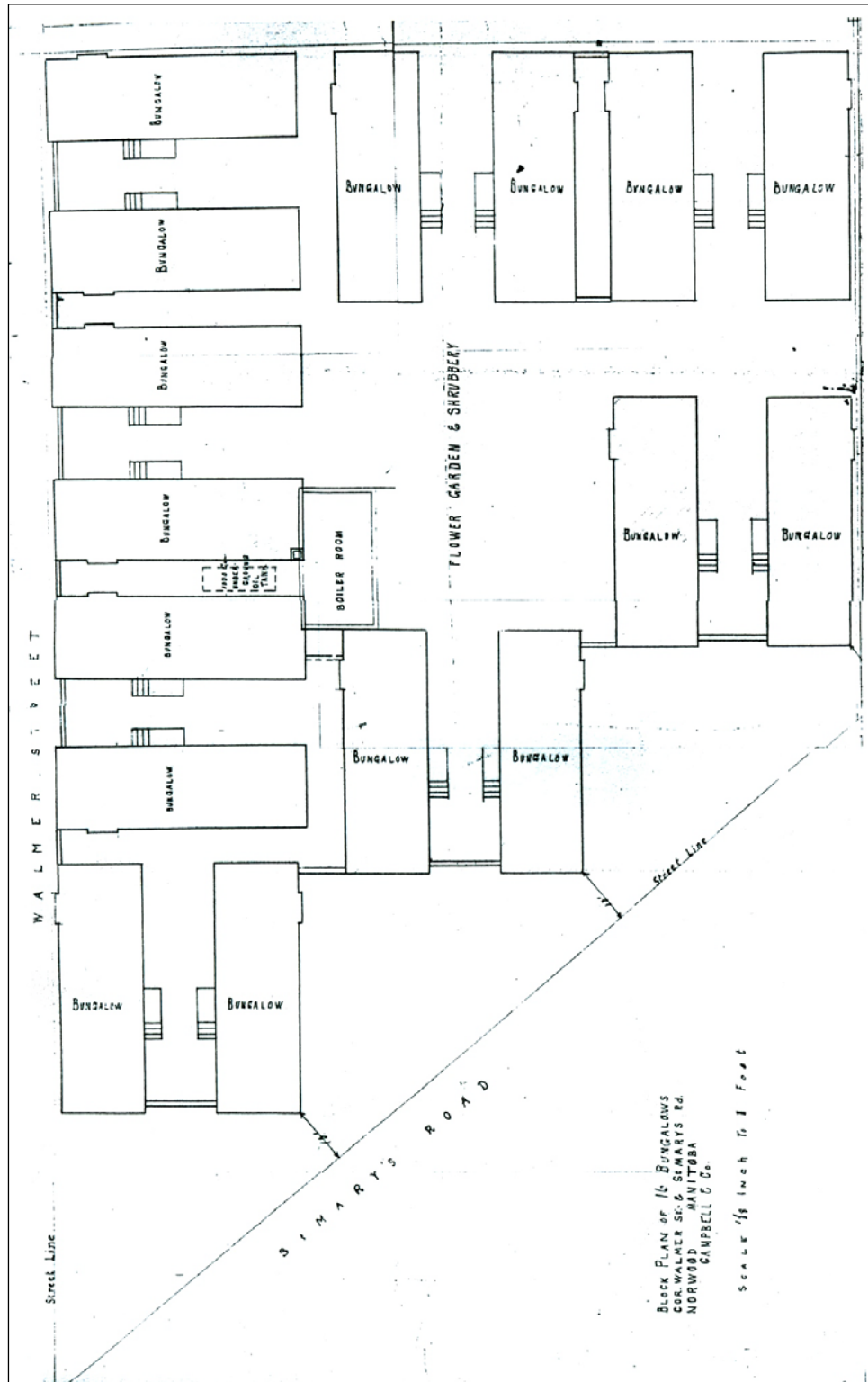


Plate 12 – Architect's Plans, #4853/1929, Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road. (City of Winnipeg.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 13 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, shared central greenspace, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

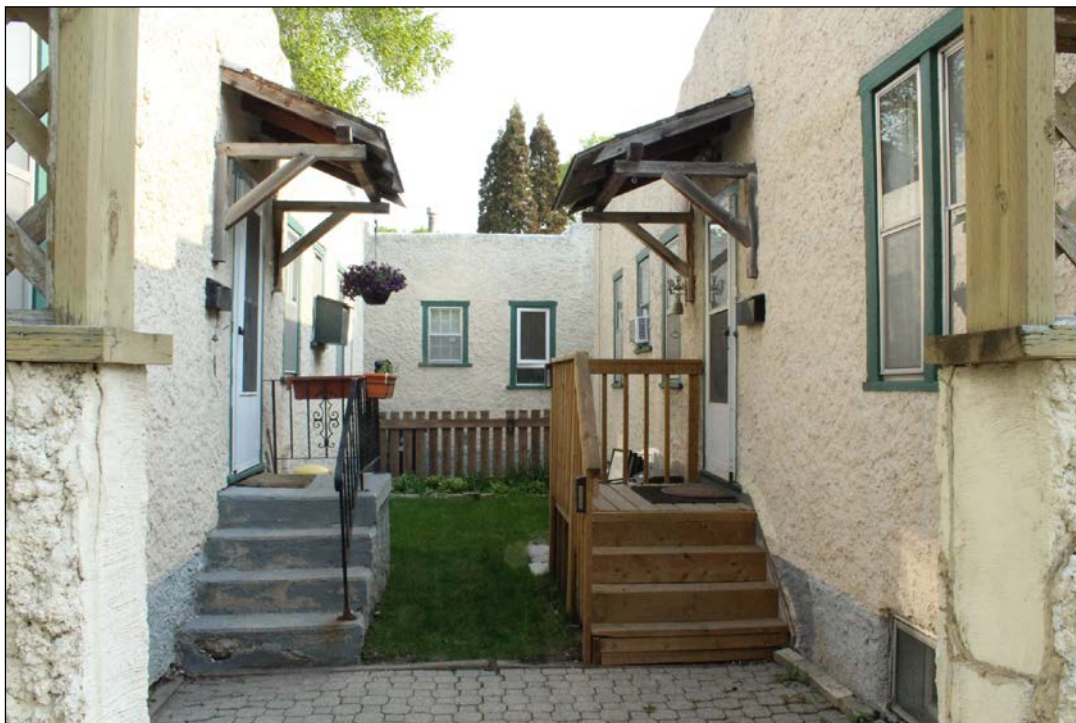


Plate 14 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, main entrances to units, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 15 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, south side (Walmer Street), Units 12-7, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 16 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, Unit 10, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 17 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, north side of complex (Fernwood Avenue), 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 18 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, door hood and parapet detail, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 19 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, St. Mary's Road façades and City-built wall, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 20 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, example of renovated basement space, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 21 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, example of renovated living room space
, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 22 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, original fireplace , 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 23 – Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road, original basement garbage incinerator, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 24 – St. Mary's Road looking north from Walmer Street, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)



Plate 25 – St. Mary's Road looking south from Eugenie Street, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

40 ST. MARY'S ROAD – BUENA VISTA APARTMENTS



Plate 26 – David Campbell, ca.1932. (Reproduced from Winnipeg Free Press, August 26, 1932, p. 5.)