

**425 ST. MARY AVENUE – WINNIPEG CLINIC**  
*Frank R. Lount (1946 & 1946); Waisman and Ross (1959)*



One of Winnipeg’s most iconic and recognizable structures is the Winnipeg Clinic.

The original 1942 building was the two-storey stone and glass block portion with curved corner and elevations facing west onto Vaughan Street and south onto St. Mary Avenue. In 1946, a five-storey addition was built on the east side of the original structure and six storeys and a penthouse were added in 1959-1961. The original building was modestly ornamented- carved stone panels in columns and low planter walls and unique fenestration.

The limestone-clad main façades of the tower are much more conspicuous and architecturally treated. The Vaughan Street (west) façade boasts two slender, glass block filled openings running the entire height of the building while the south façade features delicate metal canopies

above the rectilinear window openings. Near the southwest corner, a wall of pink limestone runs from grade to roof and the canopies continue past the wall, curving out and around the corner.

The common clay brick north and east façades are more modest but still attractively designed. The north façade holds bands of regularly placed rectilinear window openings with brick sills and continuous concrete heads on all floors as well as slender, glass block filled windows at the west end of the elevation. The east façade features a combination of functional windows in rectilinear openings and slender, paired glass block filled openings and the concrete heads of the north façade are carried through this elevation as well. The exterior has remained virtually unchanged since the late 1950s addition, although a large pedestrian walkway has visually obscured part of the building.

The building was designed and continues to be used as a medical office tower, with floors of reception areas, offices and examination rooms. A great deal of alteration and upgrading has occurred on most floors although there are examples of original layout and finishes, including stair detailing, basement lighting and window accents.

The office building stands as one of Winnipeg best examples of the Art Modern style, rare in Winnipeg and popular in North America in the 1935-1950 period. The style combined a desire to break from historic styles and decoration and the use of new construction methods and materials to create unique designs. The Art Moderne style highlighted the horizontal and elements of the style included asymmetrical façades, rounded corners with wrap around windows (often filled with glass blocks), smooth exterior surfaces with minimal embellishments, the use of aluminum and/or stainless steel, flat roofs and curved canopies. Winnipeg's list of Art Moderne buildings is very short, the other large extant example is the Technical Vocational School "Tec Voc" (1555 Wall Street, built 1948 with 1962 addition).

The original building and its five-storey addition were designed by local contractor/developer Frank Reade Lount (1891-1976). Lount and son William formed Frank Lount and Son Construction which grew to be one of the city's major residential builders by World War II. After the War, the firm was best known for the development of the Silver Height district of St. James.

The construction of the 1959-1961 addition was supervised by the well-known local architectural firm Waisman and Ross.

The Clinic was the brainchild of Dr. Paul Henrik Thorbjorn Thorlakson (1895-1989), born in North Dakota but raised in Selkirk, Manitoba. After several years in private practice, Dr. Thorlakson bought the property and with financial support from several local businessmen and other donors, built and opened the Winnipeg Clinic in 1942 with 10 full-time partners, 4 part-time doctors and 20 support staff. Steadily increased patients necessitated the expansion of the facility and the construction of a separate heating plant just north of the Clinic building. The Winnipeg Clinic is now one of Canada's largest multispecialty medical facilities.

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

Exterior-

- Brick, stone and concrete building of varying heights located on the northeast corner of St. Mary Avenue and Vaughan Street, its main facades facing west onto Vaughan Street and south onto St. Mary Avenue, its east facade facing a public lane and parking lot and its north facade facing a parking lot and heating plant;
- The two-storey section with its smooth limestone cladding, single pane windows in rectilinear openings on the west side, curved canopy over the west entrance topped by glass block-filled openings and supported by an illuminated stone-clad pillar with carved medical symbols, curved southwest corner filled with glass block, small portion of the stone-clad east facade with a large main floor rectilinear window opening and three stained glass panes on the second floor, a south facade with thin window openings and a plain, brick-clad north façade;
- Low limestone planters with carved geometric shapes at the southwest corner and along the south façade; and
- The smooth limestone-clad 11- and 12-storey tower portion with slender, glass block filled openings on the west elevation, the south elevation with its projecting concrete and metal canopies curving around the southwest corner and accented by a shallow wall of pink limestone running the entire height of the tower with four small square glass block openings at each of the first five storeys, rectilinear window openings with canted windows in the southwest corner, an east facade with its rectilinear window openings with continuous concrete heads and slender, paired glass block filled openings and the north facade with its brick cladding, windows in rectilinear openings with brick sills and continuous concrete heads and slender, glass block filled windows at its west end.

Interior-

- Recessed illuminated ceiling coves in the basement;
- Metal and wood stair detailing; and
- Carved wood detailing on tower windows.