



288 WILLIAM AVENUE

SOUDACK BUILDING

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2007



288 WILLIAM AVENUE SOUDACK BUILDING

Date of Construction: 1947

Original Building Permit: 6859/1947 (Plans on file at City Archives)

Architect: Finch, Lloyd

Contractor: Cowin & Company Limited (concrete engineers)

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This is one of a small number of one-storey infill retail blocks found in the Exchange District National Historic Site. It was originally designed as a single unit, with public space and offices in the front (north) end of the building and warehouse and storage space to the rear.¹ The building's main entrance was located near the west end of the building with a row of glass block windows beside it. The remainder of the space was planned with three matching windows with nine panes of glass each and modest lug sills. The plans also called for foundation walls strong enough for a 2nd storey to be built at a later date.

Between the design and construction, however, the building was drastically changed. The block was divided into two retail spaces with doors at the east and west ends of the front façade with two large unmatched windows between. The east and west walls butt up against the neighbouring buildings and the rear (south) façade features two doors (one



Rear (south) façade, 2005

newer) and several small windows. As built, this structure's lack of ornamentation and small size ensured that it was not conspicuous to passers-by. The structure has seen alterations to its exterior and interior as tenants changed.

The block was originally designed by H. Lloyd Finch, of whom little is known at present. By the early 1950s his business was known as H. Lloyd Finch and Associates. He was responsible for the design of the Apex Building, 200 Osborne Street North (1947). He died in April 1967.²



Two views of 288 William Avenue, the left image from 1978 shows the front as it was originally built. The left image, from 1998, shows the building just prior to its most recent renovations.
(City of Winnipeg)

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

The original plans for this block call it the Soudack Building. Soudack Fur Auction and Sales had been established in Winnipeg prior to World War I, one of several local enterprises connected to the then active business of raw furs. The company merged with another local company, Dominion Fur Auctions to become Dominion/Soudack Fur Auctions and Sales and in 1978 it was acquired by the Hudson's Bay Company.³ The company had bought the former Massey-Harris Company Building, 294-296 William Avenue in 1944 and occupied it into the 1980s. It could be that the company was looking to build this small block, which is immediately east, as an annex building. Whatever the reason, plans changed and the company never occupied any of the space at 288 William Avenue, although they owned it into the 1980s. Harry and Samuel Reiss owned the building in the 1980s and 1990s.⁴

Tenants of the building were varied, Canada Laboratory Supplies Limited (#288) and North Pelt Market Co-operative (#290) were early occupants, the Acme Letter Service and Printing Company, machine leasing, occupied part of the building throughout the 1970s and in the late 1980s and 1990s, Aactive Personnel Service Limited, office and industrial temporary personnel, was listed as a tenant.⁵

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

- Under the Historical Buildings By-law, this building meets a number of important criteria:
- its historical importance- illustrative the type of commercial expansion in the Exchange District in the post-World War II period; and
 - its architect- a modest example of the work of H. Lloyd Finch;



Looking west along William Avenue near King Street, 1887, showing the Massey Manufacturing Company Building, 296 William Avenue (#1) and the building on the site of the present 288 William Avenue (#2).
(Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, N909)

ENDNOTES:

- 1 Architect's Plans, #6859/1947, courtesy of City Archives.
- 2 Winnipeg Free Press, April 7, 1967, p. 26.
- 3 Information from www.furs.com, no date; "Endowment Book of Life – Lillian Dozar (Soudack)," no date; and Women's Wear Daily, March 12, 1987.
- 4 S.C. Grover, "294-296 William Avenue – Massey-Harris Block," report for the Historical Buildings Committee, April 1982, p. 3; and City of Winnipeg Assessment Roll, Roll No. 13060961000, 1945-1995.
- 5 Henderson's Directory, 1948-1998.