



**563 WILLIAM AVENUE**  
**HOLYROOD COURT APARTMENTS**

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



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## 563 WILLIAM AVENUE HOLYROOD COURT APARTMENTS

**Date of Construction:** 1906

**Building Permit:** 2310/1906

**Architect:** Atchison, John Danley

**Contractor:** Sharpe Company

### ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Another of Winnipeg's fine, three-storey brick and stone apartment blocks that rose to popularity as a building form in the city after 1906, the Holyrood Court Apartments is located on the northwest corner of William Avenue and Kate Street.

Because of its corner location, the block has two public elevations, the front (south) facing William Avenue and the east facing Kate Street. Both feature a thin band of stone at grade below the red brick walls of the superstructure. The brick on the lower section of the ground floor is laid with deep horizontal grooves and is interrupted by basement windows on the east façade. A continuous band of smooth cut limestone acts as sills for the ground floor windows, the units within the rectangular openings are replacements for the original windows. The front façade features a central, arched entrance with brick drip moulding and a circular opening within the arch. The central portion of this elevation features large



Front (south) and east façades, 2009

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windows with an ornamental stone and brick panel and stone accenting that brings natural light into the stairwell. The remainder of the second and third floors on both façades feature banks of square headed windows (with replacement window units); the second floor openings feature stone lug sills, the third have continuous stone sills. Above the third floor is a complete entablature finished with a plain brick parapet.

Much of the west façade is covered by a neighbouring building, but the visible portion shows a continuation of the red brick cladding and the entablature for a short distance at the front and then common clay brick for the remainder of the building. The rear (north) façade includes an open fire escape.

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. Alterations to the exterior elements/materials have been few, the most intrusive being the replacement of the original window units with newer elements.

J.D. Atchison, designer of this apartment block, was born in Monmouth, Illinois in 1870. Educated in Chicago, he studied architecture at the Chicago Art Institute and the Chicago Manual Training School.<sup>1</sup> In 1895, he opened his own practice in Chicago that continued until the early 1900s. He worked on the staff of the World's Columbian Exposition and for the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad. His commissions brought him to Winnipeg and by 1905 the city's prosperity and future prospects prompted him to relocate his business there.<sup>2</sup>

A list of some of the more prominent local buildings designed by J.D. Atchison over his career includes: Wardlow Apartments, 544 Wardlaw Avenue (1905, Grade II), Kennedy Building (Mitchell-Copp), 315 Portage Avenue (1906, Grade II), Dennistoun House, 166 Roslyn Road (1908, Grade III), N.W.C.T.A. Building, 291 Garry Street (1908, Grade III),



Front (south) and west façades, 2009

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Paterson Block, 54 Donald Street (1909, Grade II), Oldfield, Kirby and Gardner Building, 234 Portage Avenue (1909, Grade II), Canada Permanent Building, 296-98 Garry Street (1909, Grade II), Maltese Cross Building, 66 King Street (1909, Grade III), Chamber of Commerce Building (Great-West Life Building), 177 Lombard Avenue (1911, Grade II) Carlton Building, 354 Portage Avenue (1912, Grade III), Boyd Building, 388 Portage Avenue (1912, Grade III), Union Tower, 191 Lombard Avenue (1912-13, Grade II), Merchants' Bank Branch, 1386 Main Street (1913, Grade III), Curry Building, 233 Portage Avenue (1915, Grade II) and the Bank of Hamilton Building, 395 Main Street (1916-18, Grade I).<sup>3</sup>

Atchison also designed structures in other western provinces. He won the design competition for the Moose Jaw City Hall, c.1912-13 (not built) and planned the Moose Jaw Collegiate (1908-10), Saskatchewan Presbyterian Boys' College and Principal's Residence (1911-12), and Hammond Building, Main St., Moose Jaw (1912). In 1923, Atchison left Winnipeg for Pasadena, California, and continued to practice there, adopting the Spanish Colonial style for his residential work. He died in 1959.<sup>4</sup> He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.



Rear (north) and east façades, 2009

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HISTORICAL INTEREST:

The building was originally named the McLean Block, after its owner D.W. McLean, a local merchant. McLean and his representatives owned the building until its sale in 1942 to manufacturer Benjamin Cohen. Saskatoon, SA merchant Max Brooks owned the property from 1945-1948 when it was sold to Winnipeg barrister B.A. Shuckett.<sup>5</sup>

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- another example of a pre-World War I era apartment block, its date of construction making it one of the earlier of its type in the city;
- its associations- N/A;
- its design- an excellent example of a three-storey stone and brick multi-tenant block with classical detailing;
- its architect- J.D. Atchison was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- defines an important intersection and contributes greatly to the historic streetscape of its neighbourhood; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (south) façade, 1978

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ENDNOTES:

- 1 Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906, p. 55; and F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: S.J. Clarke, 1913), Vol. II, p. 374.
- 2 F.H. Schofield, op. cit., p. 374.
- 3 Compiled from City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Files; J. Wade, Manitoba Architecture to 1940 (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 1976); Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906, p. 55; Winnipeg Tribune, December 21, 1907; and F.H. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 374-75.
- 4 The Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation, Historic Resources Branch, 1985), pp. 8-11.
- 5 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 610000-12-2, 1920-1990.