

109 PRINCESS STREET (291 BANNATYNE AVENUE)

SANFORD BUILDING

City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings & Resources Committee Researchers: Sheila C. Grover (1985) M. Peterson (2024)

Winnipeg in the early 1890s was, although few realized it, on the verge of a spectacular era of growth and development that would almost completely remake it by World War I. But this comprehensive growth followed patterns established a decade earlier and resulted in the maturation of specific districts within city boundaries even after this frenzied period of growth.

The real estate and construction boom of the early 1880s was brought on by the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) through Winnipeg and onto the western prairies. Land prices in the small capital city skyrocketed, the population soared, and solid brick structures began replacing the small wooden shacks that dotted the mud streets and avenues. Perhaps more important, however, was the beginning of the segregation of the various sectors of the city – residential, commercial and industrial – and their specific building-types. The huge advance in land prices along Main Street north of Portage Avenue necessitated the replacement of the earlier residential development (Plate 1) with large commercial structures. Investors chose to locate near one of the most important buildings, City Hall, from which would come assistance in advancing both singular business interests and those of the community at large.

Commercial interests, both local and from Eastern Canada, were quick to locate in this area. The city rapidly assumed the role of wholesale hub for all of Western Canada. Companies like R.J. Whitla, Stobart, Eden and Company, George D. Wood and J.H. Ashdown were all organized and carrying on business prior to the CPR boom. The bust of 1882, while it seriously affected some parts of the local economy, did not have a devastating effect on the wholesale sector. This was mainly as a result of the expanding regional base of the wholesalers as settlement increased on the prairies and demand for goods grew. The areas east and west of Main Street, however, were undeniably developing as the warehouse district, slowly through the 1880s and 1890s and then rapidly after 1900 (Plate 2).

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R.R. Rostecki, "The Growth of Winnipeg, 1870-1886," unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1980, pp. 112-114.

In 1890, the Hamilton, ON firm of W.E. Sanford Manufacturing Co. chose Winnipeg to open its western wholesale branch, choosing a lot in the heart of the burgeoning warehouse district at Bannatyne Avenue and Princess Street (Plate 3).

STYLE

The Sanford Building was designed in the Romanesque Revival style that became the prominent architectural style of the warehouse district (Plate 4). In the 1880s, the style was influenced greatly by American architect H.H. Richardson (1838-1886) and was often referred to as Richardsonian Romanesque.² Primarily built of brick with a raised rusticated stone base and stone accenting, these elements combined to create highly textured façades. Towers could flank the main elevations; quoins, belt courses and decorative brick corbelling or chevrons were often added to animate the flat elevations. The most familiar element, however, was the arch, used for entrances and windows. Often, straight-topped windows were grouped under large arches.³

Although the style was applied to other public and private structures, it was used almost exclusively for warehouses in Winnipeg. Its massiveness and sturdiness appealed to wholesalers looking to promote their businesses and portray the stability of their firms through the design of the structures they occupied.

CONSTRUCTION

The Sanford Building was originally completed as a 3-storey structure on the southeast corner of Princess Street and Bannatyne Avenue, with a frontage of 27.5 metres on Bannatyne Avenue and 20.3 metres on Princess Street.⁴ For fire protection and for rental use, the building's interior was divided into north and south sections (with Princess Street entrances) by a solid brick wall on each

L. Maitland et al., <u>A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles</u> (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), p. 84.

Ibid., p. 84; and <u>Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba</u> (Winnipeg, MB: Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, 1991), p. 14.

^{4 &}lt;u>City of Winnipeg Assessment Record</u>, Roll No. 609660-12-1, PC 30. Below as AR.

floor (for addition construction information see Appendix I).⁵

In February of 1941, a \$75,000 blaze destroyed much of the building and threatened to spread to other buildings in the district. The fire began in the north section of the building and was fought by apparatus from 5 stations.⁶

DESIGN

The original building was designed with two main façades, south facing Bannatyne Avenue and west facing Princess Street. Both began with a rusticated stone base, interrupted by small, arched basement windows. Each façade was divided into bays (4 on the west and 7 on the south) by brick pilasters – the bays at the north and south ends of the west elevation and west end of the south elevation holding entrances accessed by a short flight of stairs. The main floor of the west façade held two large arched window openings under a larger arch and smaller arched windows on the second and third floors, all with stone lug sills and topped by brick drip moulding.

On the south façade, the main floor holds single arched windows, pairs of arched openings on the second floor and triple on the top level. The building is completed by corbelled brick leading to a parapet including raised sections at the east and north ends, another raised section midway on the south façade, and an ornate raised section at the southwest corner.

In 1903, an additional storey was added (Plates 5 and 6), a much plainer continuation of the original elements – large, singular arched window openings, continuous stone sills and brick drip moulding and a complete entablature with plainer brick parapet.

Today, only the main floor remains (Plates 7-12).

Manitoba Free Press, Feb. 14, 1891, p. 5.

⁶ Winnipeg Tribune, Feb. 13, 1941, p. 13.

INTERIOR

There is no description of the original interior of this block, but it is likely that it included sample rooms, office and warehouse space. In 1898, it appears that the Sanford Company ceased all activities in the building save for a sample room on the main floor. The upper floors were converted into sample rooms and offices for other wholesalers and manufacturers' agents. A freight elevator was also added at this time.⁷

After the 1941 fire, the interior hosted a variety of uses (Plate 13). Old Spaghetti Factory Restaurant was a major alteration to the interior that included use of the western portion of Maw's Garage, 112-114 King Street (Plates 14 and 15).

INTEGRITY

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. In 1941, a fire gutted the building and the top three floors were demolished, leaving the structure in its present state. Over the years, the masonry has been painted a number of times (Plate 16).

STREETSCAPE

The Sanford Building occupies and important and busy intersection in Winnipeg's Exchange District National Historic Site.

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

This structure, and its addition in 1903, were designed by well-known British-born and trained architect Charles H. Wheeler (1838-1917) – Plate 17. Wheeler was extremely influential as an early architect in Western Canada designing warehouse, homes, churches and other buildings. He has received 20 points from the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

Winnipeg Tribune, March 15, 1898, p. 8 and May 2, 1898, p. 4.

It is unknow who built the original structure, local contractors John Alexander Girvin (1851-1931) and Robert Watson (1856-?) were responsible for the 1903 addition.⁸

PERSON/INSTITUTION

William Eli Sanford (Plate 18) was born in New York City in 1834. Sanford was orphaned at the age of 7 and was sent to Hamilton, ON to live with his aunt and uncle. After finishing school, he attended a private school in Connecticut and then clerked for a bookseller in New York City. He returned to Hamilton in 1856 and married his cousin, Emmeline, who died 18 months later during childbirth. Sanford gave up his partnership in an iron foundry in London, ON and returned to Hamilton. Two years later, Sanford and partner Alexander McInnes began a ready-made clothing company, taking advantage of the new technologies in the sector. Sanford, McInnes and Company was founded in 1861 manufacturing men's clothing. Expanding in 1865, Sanford took on the role of marketing and travelled throughout British North America with his samples. With Alexander Begg as his agent, the company became the first Canadian manufacturer selling in the Red River Settlement (now Winnipeg).

In 1881, Sanford opened in Hamilton and Toronto the first of his chain of retail clothing outlets, called Oak Hall. He followed with stores in St. Catharines (ca.1888), London (ca.1892), and Windsor (ca.1895). The company also established three agencies: Winnipeg (1882), Toronto (1889), and Victoria (1890). The company was also able to obtain lucrative government contracts for military clothing beginning in the mid-1880s (Plate 19).

With his accumulated wealth, extensive business and church contacts and vocal support of the Conservative government, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald called Sanford to the Senate in 1887.

In Manitoba, Sanford for many years operated a large cattle and horse ranch, Westbourne Cattle

⁸ City of Winnipeg Building Permit, No. 380/1903.

P. Hanlon, "Sanford, William Eli," <u>Dictionary of Canadian Biography</u>, online edition, 1990 (revised 2023); and "W.E. Sanford Manufacturing Co. Ltd., <u>The Heart of the City</u>, Library and Archives of Canada, https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/205/301/ic/cdc/hamilton tour/sanford.htm, no date.

Company, and through is many real estate ventures, became one of the largest land owners in the province by the 1880s.¹⁰ He was also heavily involved in philanthropy in both Hamilton and elsewhere. He drowned at his summer home on Lake Rosseau in 1899 with an estate worth an estimated \$1-million.

One of Sanford's biographers summed up this life:

Sanford had wealthy origins and received his initial backing from his millionaire uncle. As he grew rich at the expense of his sweated labourers, he courted respectability, sought and received the prestige of a senatorship, and feathered his own nest. Wealth became an end in itself...As the city's [Hamilton's] largest employer, Sanford saw himself, not as an exploiter, but as a benefactor who provided hundreds of men and women and boys and girls with jobs and the opportunity to learn a trade so that they might become self-sufficient and contributing members of society. He never once paused to consider how precariously their lives hung in the balance of his pursuit of a living profit, nor how sumptuously he lived in contrast to their struggle for a meagre existence. ¹¹

In Winnipeg, the company, organized in 1882, then known as Sanford, Vail and Company, Albert S. Vail retiring in 1883. 12 The firm was located at 24 McDermot Avenue (south side between Albert and Arthur streets), where it did business until the opening its large building at Princess and Bannatyne in 1890. By 1912, it had grown into one of the largest businesses of this nature in Canada, and compared favourably with its eastern contemporaries in the United States of America. It was the leading Canadian clothing manufacturers in the western trade. The firm manufactured "all grades of goods best suited to the masses; hence, the stocks carried by the Winnipeg branch...[were] well adapted to the industries of the country." The firm employed over twenty-five people locally in its warehouse and eight travellers who sold to retail outfits throughout Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. 13

The Sanford Building, from the outset, was designed for more than one tenant, the owner

Manitoba Free Press, Dec. 11, 1882, p. 5. Sanford owned hundreds of lots in Gladstone in 1882.

P. Hanlon, op. cit.

¹² Ibid.

Winnipeg Saturday Post, June 8, 1912.

occupying part and various tenants, including Spera Cornell and Co., wholesale men's furnishings, occupying space. Other early tenants included Canadian Fire Insurance Co.; Walter Woods & Co., wooden wares; Duncan Bros., wholesale teas; Myron McBride & Co., men's furnishings; and Boulter Waugh and Co. Ltd., hatters and furriers, wholesale. By the mid-1920s, the Sanford Company was no longer in local directories although Sanford's second wife and representatives continued to own the building until the 1941 fire. 16

Over the next decades, the now one-storey building was occupied by a number of firms, most staying less than 10 years. In 1970, the Sanford Building and Maw's Garage were converted into a restaurant and lounge – Old Spaghetti Factory & Brandy's– one of the early conversions for what would become Winnipeg's Exchange District. Since the early 2000s, several businesses have occupied the space (Plate 20).

EVENT

There is no known significant event connected with this building.

CONTEXT

The Sanford Building was constructed just before Winnipeg's expansion era of the early 19th century and the additional storey underlines the business success of companies like W.E. Sandford, taking advantage of the economic growth of Winnipeg and Western Canada.

City of Winnipeg Assessment Roll, Roll No. 609660-12-1, PC 30 (old Roll No. 10124), below as ARo, 1895.

¹⁵ Henderson's Directory, Winnipeg, 1890-1910.

ARo, 1910-1950. After 1947, the Sanford Building and Maw's Garage, 112-114 King Street were combined on one Roll No. 10113-12-1 (then 609510-12-1).

¹⁷ AR.

LANDMARK

The Sanford Building has been an integral part of the Exchange District for many years as one of its earliest and most popular businesses.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Assessment Record

Building Address: 291 Bannatyne Avenue

(109 Princess Street)

Building Name: Sanford Building

Original Use: warehouse Current Use: commercial

Roll No. (Old): 13060966100 (609660-12-2 [10124-12-2]) R.S.N.: 148133

Municipality: 12 Ward: 2 Property or Occupancy Code: 30

Legal Description: 6/7 St. John, Plan 33009, Lot 9 (Original: 6/7 St. John, Plan 16, Block A, W ½ Lot 9, Lot

10)

Location: Southeast corner Princess Street and Bannatyne Avenue

Date of Construction: 1890 Storeys: 1

Construction Type: Masonry **HERITAGE STATUS: GRADE II (Nov. 1979)**

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

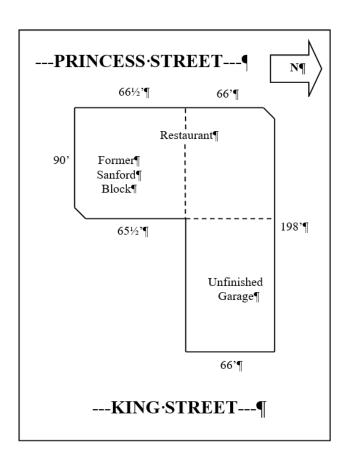
SEE NEXT PAGE FOR PERMITS

Information:

- 90 x 66½ x 15½
- Exterior 13" thick common brick with quarry-face stone base to 3'; 4 @ steel I-beams, 15' ceilings
- originally 3 storeys, fourth floor added 1903, top 3 floors destroyed by fire 1941
- building is evenly divided into two sections by a solid brick wall (Manitoba Free Press, Feb. 14, 1891, p5)

ARCHITECT: C.H. WHEELER (1890 & 1903)

CONTRACTOR: UNKNOWN (1890) J. GIRVIN & R. WATSON (1903)



BUILDING PERMITS:

Available Plans: (CS- City Storage; M- Microfilm)

YEAR	NO.	PLANS	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
1903	380		\$6,000	Additional storey
1929	4414	CS	\$2,000	Alterations
1945	2003	CS	\$5,000	Interior alterations (to 114 King – Maw's Garage)
1958	95	CS	\$1,900	Interior alterations (to 114 King – Maw's Garage)
1970	4327	M-24	\$15,000	Alterations
1977	392		\$2,500	Alterations
1978	2433	CS	\$5,400	Interior alterations
1979	5720	CS	\$180,000	Interior alterations
2000	171836		\$20,000	Interior alterations (new concrete and wood floors
				and constructing partition walls)
2001	143258		\$620,000	Interior alterations for meZZo (constructing a 300
				sq. ft. performance stage/dj booth, constructing a
				kitchen, two bars, reworking an existing bar,
				reworking the two public bathrooms)
2001	153028		\$80,000	Exterior alterations to west (Princess Street)
				entrance and southeast corner (Bannatyne
				Avenue) entrance, and removing and reworking
				the existing roof assembly and erecting two
				canopies roof assembly
2009	102126		\$130,000	Interior alterations for a new tenant in an existing
				cabaret/lounge for Republic. Alterations include
				constructing a new stage 12 ft by 16 ft, millwork,
				flooring, paint and electrical work.
2010	146657		\$5,000	Republic - Interior alterations to an existing
				cabaret/lounge to include the installation of a
				staircase to an existing mezzanine.

APPENDIX II

Charles H. Wheeler

Charles H. Wheeler was born in Lutterworth, Leicestershire, England in April 1838. He learned architecture through the study of its composite trades: carpentry, brick-laying and stone masonry. He was also instructed in pattern-making in the Coventry Engine and Art Metal Works. He worked as an architect with firms first in Birmingham and later in London for approximately 20 years. Some of his work carried him to continental Europe.

Wheeler brought this wide range of experience to Canada when he immigrated to Winnipeg in 1882 with his family. He worked first in the architectural office of James Chisholm before establishing his own trade late in the 1880's. His first major work was the design of the beautiful Holy Trinity Church on Donald Street, competing against sixty other entries. Wheeler was most active during the 1890's, designing such structures as Hugh John MacDonald's Dalnavert House, now restored as a Victorian mansion (museum), the G.F. and J. Galt Warehouse, the George Wood Warehouse, the Portage la Prairie Home for Incurables, the Merchants' Bank in Brandon, the Winnipeg Deaf and Dumb Institute, an Anglican Church in Regina and innumerable fine residences and public buildings. By 1897, he had designed over 270 buildings in Manitoba and the North West Territories.

In later years, Charles Wheeler pursued his other great love, music. He was choirmaster of Knox and Zion churches, a vocalist and choir trainer, and a music and theatre critic. For several years, Wheeler had a regular music and theatre column in the Winnipeg Tribune and was a well-known figure in these circles. In 1916, he published a study of artistic affairs in Winnipeg since the early days entitled The Story of Music and Drama.

He died in Winnipeg on January 7, 1917 after injuring himself on January 1, 1917. He had slipped and fallen while going to review a play.¹

Sources: "A Group of Winnipeg Architects," in <u>Canadian Architect and Builder</u>, January 1897, pp. 3-4; "Charles H. Wheeler," in <u>Winnipeg Daily Tribune</u>, August 1, 1891, p. 13; <u>Winnipeg Tribune</u>, January 8, 1917, pp. 1, 3; and <u>Winnipeg Free Press</u>, January 8, 1917, p. 5.

The following were among Charles Wheeler's architectural works:

Holy Trinity Church, 256 Smith Street (1884) - Grade II

Fred B. Ross House, Roslyn Road (1885) – demolished

G.F. and J. Galt's Warehouse, 103 Princess Street (1887)

George D. Wood & Co. Warehouse, 22-24 Alexander Avenue East (1887) – demolished

E.F. Stephenson House, 11 Osborne Street (1888) – demolished

Euclid School, corner of Lusted Avenue & Euclid Avenue (1889) – demolished

Moosomin Methodist Church, Moosomin, NWT [Saskatchewan] (1889) – demolished

Home for the Incurables, Portage la Prairie, MB (ca. 1890) – demolished

Sanford Building, 109 Princess Street (1890) - Grade II

James Robertson & Co. Warehouse, 179 Pacific Avenue (1890) – demolished

Merchant's Bank, 11th Street & Rosser Avenue, Brandon, MB (1890)

Queen's Hotel, Moosomin, NWT [Saskatchewan] (1890)

Smith and Fergusson Block, Regina [Saskatchewan] (ca.1890)

Baskerville & Co. Warehouse, 660 Main Street (ca. 1890) - demolished

Union Bank, Moosomin, NWT [Saskatchewan] (ca. 1890)

A. C. Baskerville & Co. Warehouse, 660 Main Street (1890) – demolished

F. H. Mathewson House, 432 Assiniboine Avenue (1890)

A.E. Ferte House, Balmoral Street (1890)

Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, 275 Henry Avenue (1890) – demolished

Deaf and Dumb Institute, Portage Avenue (1890) – demolished

Morden Methodist Church, Morden, MB (1890)

Carr's Terrace, Elgin Avenue (1891) – demolished

High School, Port Arthur, ON (1891)

Senator Sanford's Warehouse, 105 Princess Street (1891) – demolished

Anglican Church, Regina, NWT [Saskatchewan] (1891)

Maxwell & Co. Warehouse (ca. 1891) – demolished

Foulds Block, 546 Main Street (1891) – demolished

St. Albans Church, Rat Portage [Kenora], ON (1891)

Provincial Gaol, Portage la Prairie, MB (1891)

Insane Asylum, Brandon, MB (1892)

Isolation Hospital, Winnipeg General Hospital (1892)

John Galt House, River Avenue (1892)

R.D. Bathgate House, Kennedy Street (1892)

James Burridge House, 99 George Avenue (1893) - Grade III

J. Perkins House, Edmonton Street (1893)

George Kirkland House, McDermot Avenue (1893)

John Peck & Co. Warehouse, 33 Princess Street (1893-1894) - Grade II

Judge A.C. Killam House, Roslyn Road (1893)

Court House, 155 Kennedy Street (1893-1894) – demolished

Bank of Ottawa, 363 Main Street (1894) – supervised construction

Davis Block, Market Square (1894)

Water Works Company's Station, Armstrong's Point (1894) – demolished

Wheeler designs (continued):

E.H. Webb Duplex, Kennedy Street (1895)

Dalnavert, Sir H.J. MacDonald House, 61 Carlton Street (1895) - Grade I

Campbell Block, 532-534 Main Street (1895) - demolished

Argyle School, Argyle Street (1896) – demolished

Dufferin School, Logan Avenue (1896) - demolished

D. Lennon House, 195 Kennedy Street (1896)

John Plaxton House, 226 Vaughan Street (1896)

Winnipeg Lodging and Coffee House, Lombard Avenue (1898) – demolished

Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition Grandstand, Dufferin Avenue at Sinclair Street (1900) – demolished

Tees and Persse Block, 285 Market Avenue (date unknown)

High School, Prince Albert, AL (ca.1906)

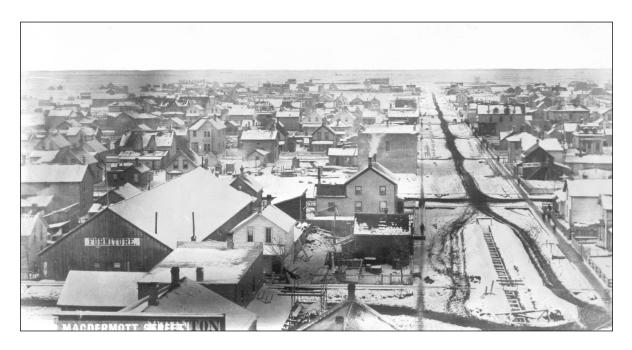


Plate 1 – McDermot Avenue looking west from Main Street, ca.1883. (Archives of Manitoba.)



Plate 2 – Warehouse District, ca.1905, showing the scale of development over the previous 20 years. (Archives of Manitoba.)

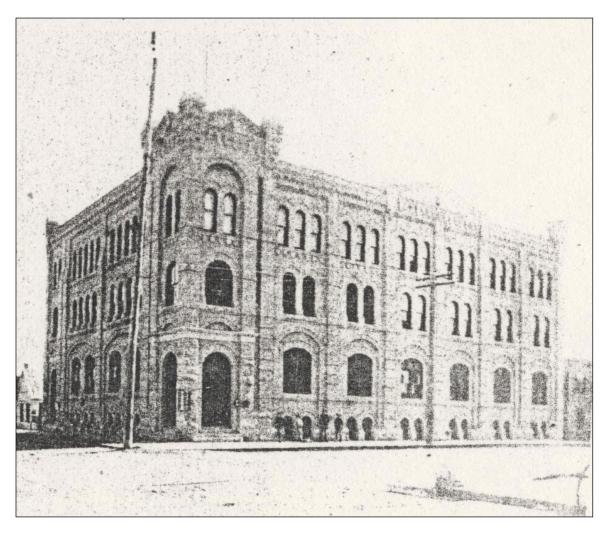


Plate 3 – Sanford Block, Bannatyne Avenue and Princess Street, ca.1891. (Winnipeg Daily Tribune, 1891.)



Plate 4 – Bannatyne Avenue, looking west from Rorie Street. Warehouses, including Ashdown's in the foreground, displaying Romanesque Revival style elements. (M. Peterson Collection.)



Plate 5 – Sanford Building, Princess Street and Bannatyne Avenue, with the additional storey completed, ca.1903. (Illustrated Souvenir of Winnipeg [W. A. Martel and Sons, Winnipeg, n.d.], p. 40.)

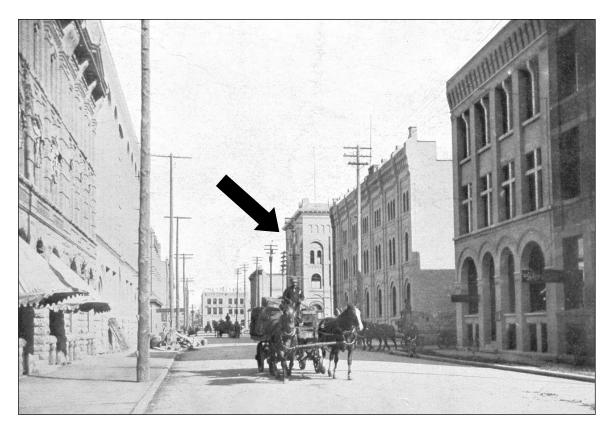


Plate 6 – Princess Street looking north from McDermot Avenue, ca.1904. The Sanford Block with its new top floor is at the arrow. (M. Peterson Collection.)



Plate 7 – Sanford Building, 109 Princess Street (291 Bannatyne Avenue), west and south façades, 2024. (M. Peterson, 2024.)

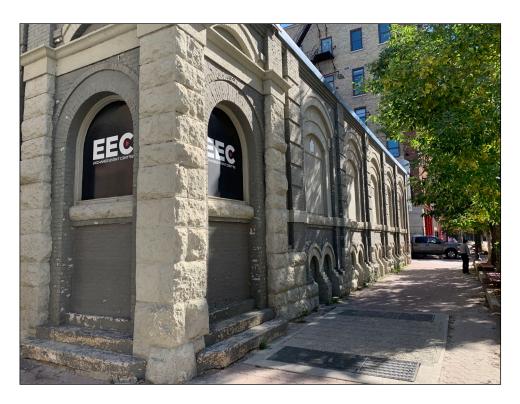


Plate 8 – Sanford Building, 109 Princess Street (291 Bannatyne Avenue), south façade and southwest corner, 2024. (M. Peterson, 2024.)

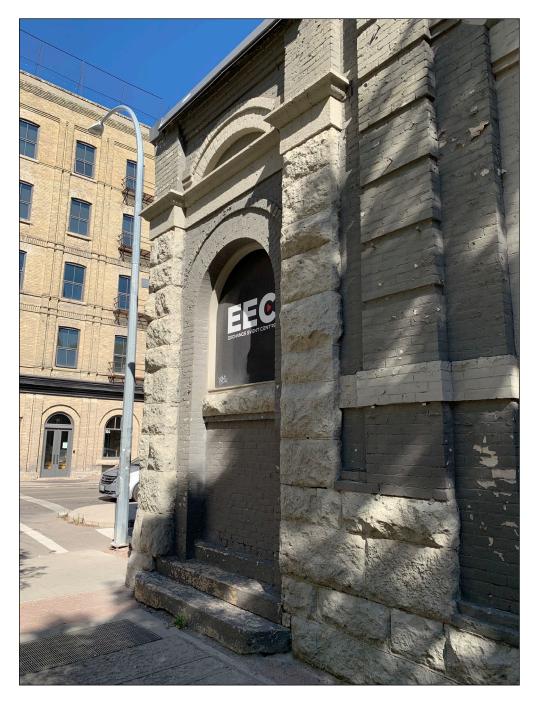


Plate 9 – Sanford Building, 109 Princess Street (291 Bannatyne Avenue), former entrance, west end of south façade, 2024. (M. Peterson, 2024.)

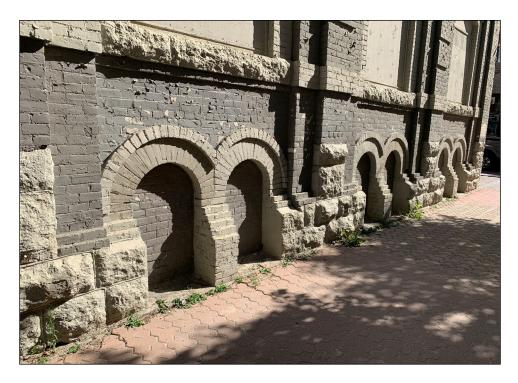


Plate 10 – Sanford Building, 109 Princess Street (291 Bannatyne Avenue), detail of south façade, 2024. (M. Peterson, 2024.)



Plate 11 – Sanford Building, 109 Princess Street (291 Bannatyne Avenue), west façade, 2024. (M. Peterson, 2024.)



Plate 12 – Sanford Building, 109 Princess Street (291 Bannatyne Avenue), east façade, 2024. (M. Peterson, 2024.)

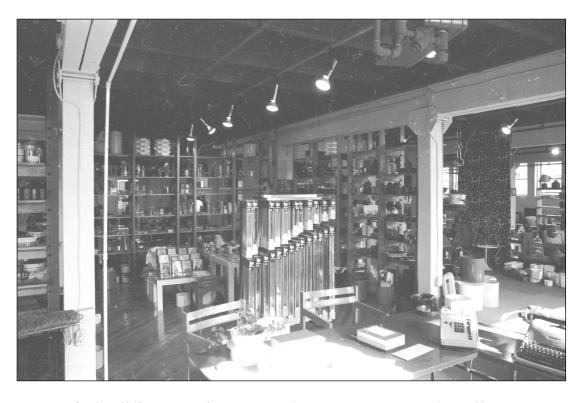


Plate 13 – Sanford Building, 109 Princess Street (291 Bannatyne Avenue), retail space, ca.1974. (M. Peterson, 2024.)

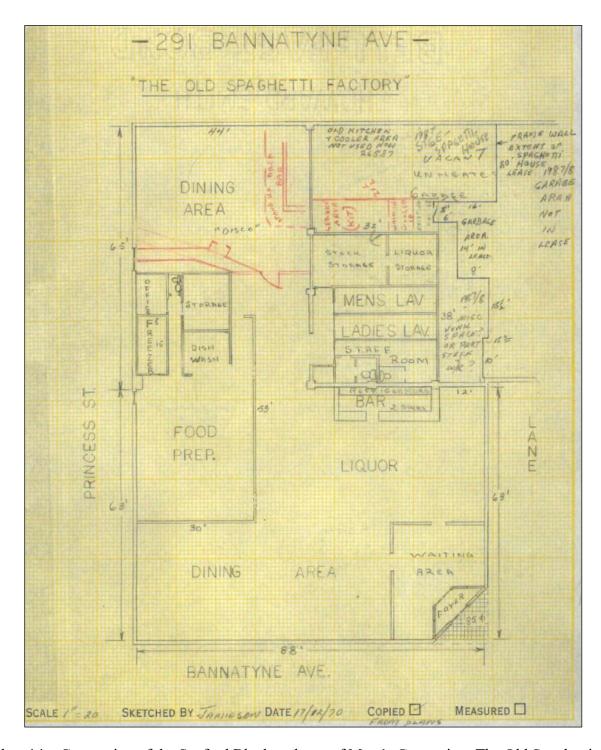


Plate 14 – Conversion of the Sanford Block and part of Maw's Garage into The Old Spaghetti Factory Restaurant. (City of Winnipeg, Assessment Record.)

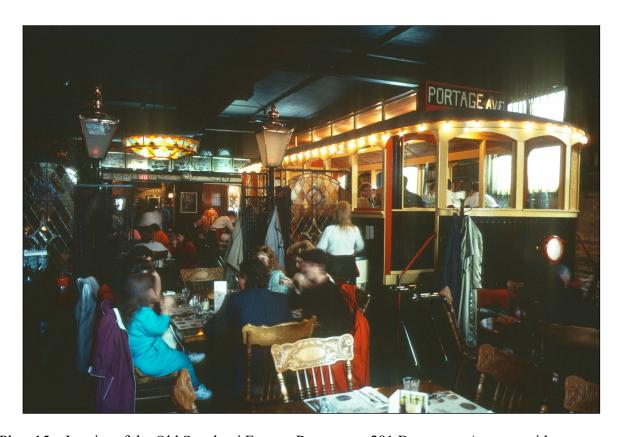


Plate 15 – Interior of the Old Spaghetti Factory Restaurant, 291 Bannatyne Avenue, with streetcar seating, 1989. (<u>Historical Buildings and Resources Committee Collection</u>.)



Plate 16 – Sanford Building, 109 Princess Street (291 Bannatyne Avenue), 1981. (<u>Historical Buildings and Resources Committee Collection</u>.)

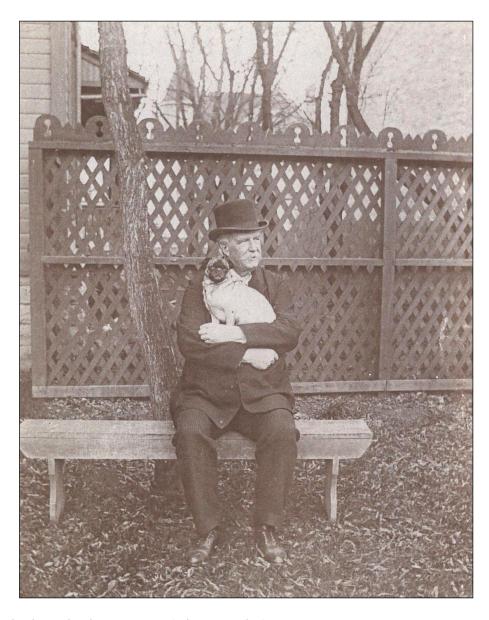


Plate 17 – Charles Wheeler, ca.1903. (<u>Historyworks</u>.)



Plate 18 – Hon. William Eli Sanford, senator, date unknown. (<u>Library and Archives of Canada</u>.)



Plate 19 – W.E. Sanford Manufacturing Company Building, King and John streets, Hamilton, ON, date unknown. At its height in the 1890s, the firm employed over 2,000 workers. (Local History and Archives, Hamilton Public Library.)



Plate 20 – "Vertigo," Sanford Building, 109 Princess Street (291 Bannatyne Avenue), 2003. (M. Peterson, 2003.)