



287 GARRY STREET

GARRICK (WELLINGTON) HOTEL

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
April 2016

287 GARRY STREET – GARRICK (WELLINGTON) HOTEL

Hotels, given the nature of Winnipeg's growth in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were one of the most important building types throughout the ever-expanding downtown district. Winnipeg was always used as a stop off, whether by horse, steamboat or train. As the premier city of the Canadian prairies and the easternmost population centre, it became the first stop for businessmen, bankers, merchants, developers and homesteaders on their way further west. This necessitated the construction of hotels throughout what became downtown: initially along south Main Street near Upper Fort Garry (Plate 1), then near the new Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) station at Higgins Avenue (Plate 2) and finally throughout the rest of the growing downtown after 1900 (Plate 3).

Portage Avenue had usurped Main Street as the city's commercial heart in the early 1900s when the T. Eaton Company announced plans for a major department store building on one of its blocks west of Main Street. The formal sod-turning ceremony for the massive department store that took place on July 15, 1904 and signalled the beginning of another land boom, as retailers, developers and speculators began purchasing Portage Avenue lots and older buildings. Also in 1904, the Dominion government announced plans to build a new Post Office at the corner of Portage Avenue and Garry Street, replacing the 1886 building located on the northeast corner of Main Street and McDermot Avenue.¹ Although it was only a move of a few blocks south and west, it was another indication that Portage Avenue was going to lead the development of Winnipeg's downtown in the early 20th century.

But the growth in the number of Winnipeg hotels was mirrored by a growth in the concern over the evils of alcohol by a wide range of organizations and individuals. Temperance and prohibition had been an issue of debate in Manitoba going back to a provincial referendum in 1893. While the majority supported prohibition in 1893 and again in 1898, no action was taken. It was 1900 when the first prohibition act was passed by the provincial government, but it was deemed unconstitutional. It wasn't until the successful passing of Prohibition Act in 1916 that

¹ M. Peterson, "315 Portage Avenue – Former Canadian Bank of Commerce," report for the Historical Buildings Committee, October 1994, p. 1. The new Post Office was opened in 1908.

Manitoba official prohibited alcohol.² But the strengthening of the temperance movement prior to 1916 led to a number of facilities operating as “Temperance Hotels.”

Beyond the actual provincial legislation, temperance groups (with the support of at least one local newspaper), were able to convince the province to pass amendments to the Liquor License Act in 1906. The amendment set aside a portion of downtown Winnipeg as a “Non-License Area” in which no establishment (mainly hotels), could be granted a license to sell alcohol. Specifically targeting the Portage Avenue area, the non-license area encompassed several blocks west of the back lane between Fort and Garry streets from the Assiniboine River to just south of Portage Avenue (Plate 4).³

Olivo John Biollo⁴ (Plate 5) was born in Venice, Italy on May 27, 1883 and immigrated to Canada in 1902, sponsored by the CPR to provide labour for their railway.⁵ He settled in Winnipeg ca.1904 and by September of that year was a founding member of a new Italian benevolent society.⁶ He became part owner of the Savoy Hotel, 686 Main Street and in 1905 was part of the group that incorporated the Western Co-operative Construction Company.⁷ Biollo and his brothers Angelo and Sante (also as Santi) also worked in various downtown restaurants, including the Venice Restaurant,⁸ and in 1907, decided to build their own hotel, which opened in November 1907 as the Mount Royal Hotel, a temperance facility, on Garry Street just south of Portage Avenue (Plates 6 and 7).

² K. Korneski, Race, Nation and Reform Ideology in Winnipeg, 1880s-1920s (London, England: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015), pp. 66-68. Prohibition remained in force in the province until 1921 when it was voted down in a referendum.

³ Manitoba Free Press, January 14, 1909, p. 7.

⁴ “Biollo Family Fonds, Administrative History/Biographical Sketch,” Provincial Archives of Alberta, online version, www.archivescanada.ca, no date (below as Biollo Family Fonds). This report states that Biollo went by several versions of this name, including: O.J.; Oliver John; Olive J.; Oliver Joseph; Oliver or Olive J.P.; Olive Joseph Peter; and even Giuseppe Billos.

⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶ Manitoba Free Press, September 30, 1904, p. 3.

⁷ Manitoba Free Press, April 17, 1905, p. 9.

⁸ Manitoba Free Press, January 14, 1909, p. 7.

STYLE

The building is designed in the Classical Revival style, popular at the turn-of-the-century and used as the basis for the design of a wide range of building types, including homes, warehouses and office buildings. Columns, pediments and entablatures were utilized – all the classically based architecture of the Greek and Roman eras. The structures were usually symmetrical and featured smooth surfaces, flat and unadorned rooflines and rectilinear window and door openings were favoured over arched openings. They could range from simple forms (often referred to as Neo-Classical) to monumental structures, Beaux-Arts Classicism, named for the architecture school in Paris, France.⁹ Winnipeg has a number of fine Classical Revival structures including the Bank of Nova Scotia, 254 Portage Avenue (built 1908-1910), the Bank of Montreal, 335 Main Street (1911-1913) and the Legislative Building, 450 Broadway (1913-1920).

CONSTRUCTION

This five-storey brick and stone structure rests on a heavy stone foundation and measures 36.6 metres deep with a frontage of 7.6 metres (see Appendix I for more construction information). It was built at a cost of \$50,000.¹⁰

DESIGN

The front (west) façade is one of downtown Winnipeg's most intricately detailed elevations: rust-coloured brick accented with cream-coloured stone and terra cotta embellishments- quoins, window sills, arched and pedimented heads, keystones, oversized brackets and enriched window frames (Plates 8-10). The ground floor is clad in deeply grooved terra cotta (now painted) and the flat roof is embellished with a heavy overhanging cornice and parapet (which originally included a raised arched central section – Plate 7).

⁹ Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, 1991), p. 18.

¹⁰ City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #3261/1906.

The rear (east) façade is clad in dark brick and includes an open metal fire escape and arched windows and doors on each level (Plate 11). The top two floors of the north elevation are visible, finished in common clay brick and featuring two shallow window wells (Plate 12). The common clay brick of the south façade is interrupted by plain windows and two window wells from the second to the top floor (Plate 13).

INTERIOR

As described in a newspaper article, the hotel boasted several unique features on its interior, including an electric elevator. There were common bathrooms on each floor, 12 suites with their own bathrooms and sitting rooms, 35 single apartments, a main floor rotunda and dining room, a second floor parlour, a large banqueting hall “especially suited for the larger theatre parties” and a grotto.¹¹ The bar was remodelled in 1913.¹²

Today, the facility has 45 suites, 11 with their own bathrooms, all off the central hallways (Plate 14). The ground floor features an entrance foyer, a small eating area, kitchen and bar (Plate 15). The interior spaces feature high ceilings and minimal ornamental finishes (Plates 16 and 17).

INTEGRITY

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition for its age. Much of the original detailing on the front (west) façade remains intact, although the original protruding balconies with wrought iron railing gracing the middle windows on the second and third floors were removed sometime after 1978 (Plate 18).

¹¹ [Manitoba Free Press](#), November 21, 1907, p. 28.

¹² BP #2145/1913. Cost of the renovations was \$10,000.

STREETSCAPE

The Wellington Hotel opening in 1907, becoming one of many new buildings constructed in the area (Plate 19). It continues to be an important contributor to this block of early 20th century buildings (Plate 20).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

Well-known local architects Daniel Smith and William Bruce were responsible for the design of the Wellington Hotel.¹³ The partnership, which lasted from 1907-1910 (see Appendix II for biographical information). Neither architect nor their partnership has been given points by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

The original owner's own construction company, Western Cooperative Construction, built the hotel. A scan of the City's building permits shows the business only completed projects in 1905 and 1906, most of them small, single family dwellings, totalling approximately \$75,000.¹⁴ The company built 494 College Avenue, where Biollo and his two brothers and their families all lived (Plates 21 and 22).

PERSON/INSTITUTION

Upon opening, the Wellington Hotel was the centre of considerable controversy. The owner, O.J. Biollo, applied to the Liquor Commission to get a license for the establishment, even though it was within the "Non-License Area" of the Liquor License Act. Biollo, according to newspaper accounts, had visited the neighbouring businesses in the fall of 1907 and had obtained signatures on a petition supporting a liquor license for the hotel (only one businessman and the Manitoba Free Press refused to sign the petition).¹⁵ But he was refused the license because of the Liquor License Act and, according to Biollo, he lost the hotel.

¹³ Manitoba Free Press, November 21, 1907, p. 28.

¹⁴ City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1926.

¹⁵ Manitoba Free Press, January 14, 1909, p. 7.

The controversy arose in December 1908 when the Commission granted a license to the new operator and lease holder, John O. Eggo.¹⁶ It was discovered that a typo in the 1906 Liquor License Act amendment made the described boundary unclear. Despite several articles and scathing editorials in the Manitoba Free Press, the license was upheld. In June 1909, the Wellington Hotel was put up for auction by lumber dealer John Arbuthnot, who apparently held the mortgage on the property.¹⁷ The property sold to Eastern Canadian investors in November and again in 1910, to P.J. Grogan, and again in 1912, to E.W. Hanna.¹⁸

This was not, unfortunately, the end of troubles for the business. Over the next decade, several of its managers/proprietors were arrested and found guilty of selling alcohol. By 1920, the hotel had been sold to a group of businessmen that included William Pitt Alsip (1859-1944) of Alsip Brick, Tile and Lumber Company.¹⁹ In 1922 its contents were put up for auction²⁰ and shortly thereafter, the business was renamed the Garrick Hotel and announced that it was “redecorated and refurnished” (Plate 23).²¹

Shea’s Brewery, established in Winnipeg in 1887 near the corner of Broadway and Osborne Street, purchased the hotel in 1935, following the lead of other local breweries to buy and operate small downtown hotels. It owned the hotel until the mid-1940s. In the 1960s and 1970s, the hotel advertised furnished rooms that included maid service and gave daily, weekly and monthly rates.

¹⁶ The name “Wellington Hotel” came into use by early 1908.

¹⁷ Manitoba Free Press, June 19, 1909, p. 2.

¹⁸ Manitoba Free Press, various dates; and City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls (below as ARo), Roll No. 12-093127000, 1910-1920. E.W. Hanna sold the property by 1920 to a group of businessmen, including William Pitt Alsip of Alsip Brick, Tile and Lumber Company.

¹⁹ ARo, 1910-1920.

²⁰ Manitoba Free Press, May 17, 1922, p. 2.

²¹ Manitoba Free Press, July 20, 1922, p. 18.

EVENT

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

CONTEXT

The Garrick Hotel, also known as the Mount Royal and the Wellington, was built in the early years of the 20th century as Winnipeg's economy was expanding rapidly and as its downtown was being redefined along Portage Avenue rather than the traditional Main Street. Growth on both sides of the avenue, as well as its intersecting streets, mirrored this economic expansion. All types of buildings were completed, including several hotels that offered comfortable accommodations, often with "home cooked" meals on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

The Garrick has continued this role in Winnipeg's downtown for over 100 years.

LANDMARK

This structure has been an important public building in Winnipeg's downtown for over a century and would be familiar to many Winnipegger's because of its age and unique façade.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Building Address: 287 Garry Street

Building Name: Garrick (Wellington) Hotel

Original Use: hotel

Current Use: hotel

Roll No. (Old): 12093127000 (---)

R.S.N.: 134806

Municipality: 12

Ward: 1

Property or Occupancy Code: ---

Legal Description: 1 St. John, Plan 24135, Lot 66

Location: east side between Portage and Graham avenues

Date of Construction: 1906-1907

Storeys: 5 + B

Construction Type: Brick and stone

Heritage Status: ON NOMINATED LIST

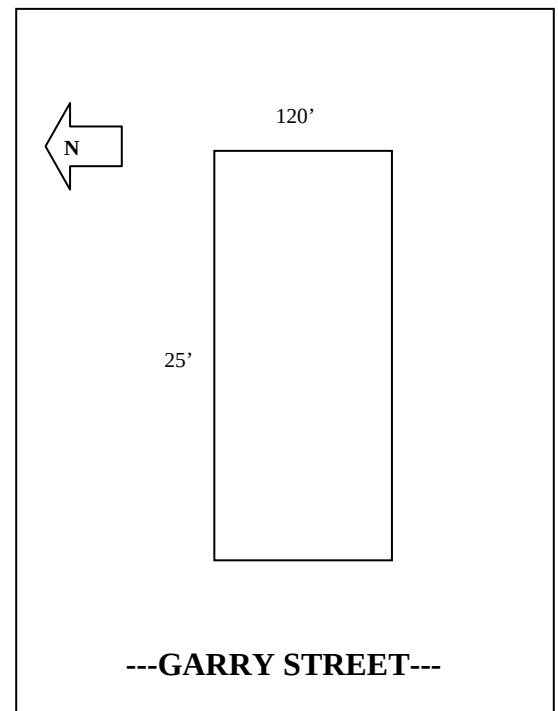
Building Permits (Plans available: **[CS]** Department Storage; **[M]** Microfilm):

- 3261/1906 \$50,000 (superstructure); 2145/1913 **[CS]** \$10,000 (interior alterations); 1091/1928 **[CS]** \$1,100 (repairs and construct fire escape); 158/1939 **[CS]** \$4,000 (alterations); 1418/1973 \$8,000 (alterations); 9754/1989 \$4,000 (interior alterations); 192417/2001 \$2,500 (interior alterations);

Information:

- wall widths- B- 31 in. stone; 1st- 21-25 in. brick; 2nd- 21 in. brick; 3rd- 17-21 in. brick; 4th & 5th- 12-17 in. brick

- ceiling heights- B- 8.8 ft.; 1st- 12.5 ft.; 2nd & 3rd- 10.5 ft.; 4th & 5th- 9.0 ft.



ARCHITECT: SMITH & BRUCE

CONTRACTOR: WESTERN COOPERATIVE CONSTRUCTION CO.

APPENDIX II

Daniel Smith and William Bruce

Daniel Smith was born in Bristol, Lower Canada (Quebec) on November 1, 1840, and received his early education in Ottawa, Ontario.¹ At the age of 38, Smith joined the Dominion Public Works Department in Ottawa, working for five years in that city. In 1882, he was transferred to Winnipeg, and that same year was promoted to Superintendent of the Western Canadian section of the Department of Public Works. As such, he had jurisdictional control of the territory west of the Great Lakes.

In 1900, he resigned his position and became a privately practicing architect in the city, designing many small to medium size buildings of various function and description. At the end of this short career, Smith took on partner William Bruce, forming Smith and Bruce that, according to City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, operated in the city from 1907-1910.²

Bruce was born in 1852 in Caithness-shire, Scotland and studied architecture in Haldane Academy, Glasgow. After practising in London, Glasgow and Edinburgh, he moved to Winnipeg in 1906. He prepared a plan for Roblin City, a proposed urban centre of half-a-million people located at present-day Churchill. Bruce travelled extensively in northern Manitoba and reportedly discovered a number of new forms of stone that were ultimately used in construction.³

In 1909, Daniel Smith was appointed the provincial factory inspector, a role he filled until his death at his home on Balmoral Place on July 12, 1913, although he had continued to take on private work into 1911.⁴ Besides his other interests, Smith was one of the founders of the Winnipeg Industrial Exhibition.⁵

¹ Manitoba Free Press, July 14, 1913, p. 16.

² City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1913. Below as Ledgers.

³ F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 325-326.

⁴ Ledgers, 1899-1913.

⁵ F.H. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 325-326.

A review of the City of Winnipeg, Building Permits (1900-1913) shows that both men individually and as partners were responsible for a number of buildings throughout the city, the most substantial of these would include the following:

Daniel Smith:

- Strang and Co. Warehouse, Fort Street (1902)
- W.J. Boyd Bakery, 300 Spence Street (1902) – demolished
- Canada Moline Plow Co. warehouse, Chambers Avenue (1903)
- Steele Furniture Co. warehouse/showroom, Fort Street (1904)
- Kilgour, Rimer Co. stores/warehouse, 104 Princess Street (1904) – Grade III
- Royal Crown Soap Co., 289 King Street, factory, warehouse, boiler house & alterations, (1904-1908)
- Western Bag Co. Factory, Pacific Avenue (1906)
- Codville-Georgeson Co. Warehouse, 43-51 Victoria Street (1906) – demolished
- Bell Hotel, 662 Main Street (1906)
- Canada Paint Co. Factory & boiler house, 112 Sutherland Avenue (1906) – demolished
- Northern Hotel, 826 Main Street (1906) and additional storey (with W. Bruce, 1907)
- Fire Hall No. 2, Smith Street, addition (1907) and repairs (with W. Bruce, 1908) – demolished

William Bruce:

- Minnewaska Court Apartments (now Chateau Apartments), 74 Spence Street (1910)
- Carmell Apartments, 39 Sherbrook Street (1911) – demolished
- Pritchard Avenue Baths, Charles Street (1911) – demolished
- Simcoe Apartments, 618 Simcoe Street (1912) – demolished
- Manitoba & Saskatchewan Bible Society Building, now Ukrainian Cultural Centre, Oseredok, 184 Alexander Avenue (1912) – Grade III

Smith & Bruce:

- mixed retail/apartment block for P.A. Crump, Main Street (1907)
- Mount Royal (Wellington/Garrick) Hotel, 287 Garry Street (1906)
- St. Stephen's Anglican Church, 546 Portage Avenue, addition (1908)
- Assiniboine Mansion Apartments, Assiniboine Avenue (1908) – demolished
- Elite Theatre, 285 Portage Avenue (1908) – demolished
- theatre for P.A. Crump and Co., Dufferin Avenue (1909)
- St. Edwards Public School, Arlington Street (1909)
- Winnipeg Public Baths, Fort Street (1909) – demolished
- Public Press Ltd. Office Building, Sherbrook Street (1909)
- Melbourne Apartments, 133 Sherbrook Street (1910)
- McDonagh & Shea Livery Company Stables, Osborne Place (1910) – demolished

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Plate 1 – West side of Main Street between York and St. Mary streets, 1892. Note the lack of empty lots as far as the eye can see north. Buildings on the left from south to north are: Dominion Lands Office; Trust and Loan Co. of Canada; Winnipeg Hotel (still standing); Dominion Hotel; Commercial Hotel (still standing) and the Fortune Block (still standing). (Archives of Manitoba, Victor Acker Collection- 2, N842.)

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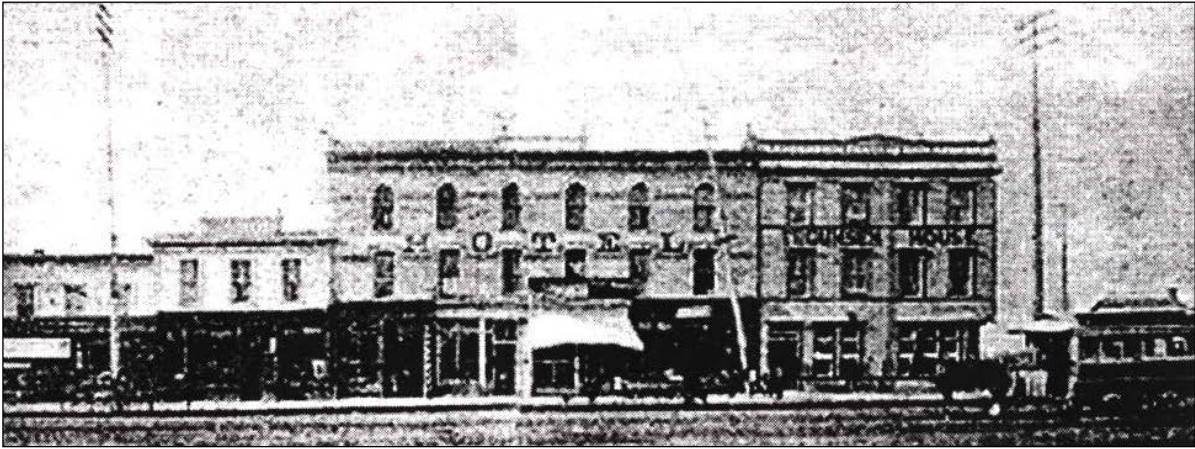


Plate 2 – This 1892 image shows the west side of Main Street south of Higgins Avenue, across from the Canadian Pacific Railway Station with the Scandinavian Hotel (#1) and the Tecumseh House Hotel (#2). (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg-Streets-Main Street Views, 1892.)



CLARENDON HOTEL

Plate 3 – The Clarendon Hotel, 311 Portage Avenue (at Donald Street), one of the earlier downtown hotels, ca.1905 (demolished 2012). (M. Peterson Collection.)

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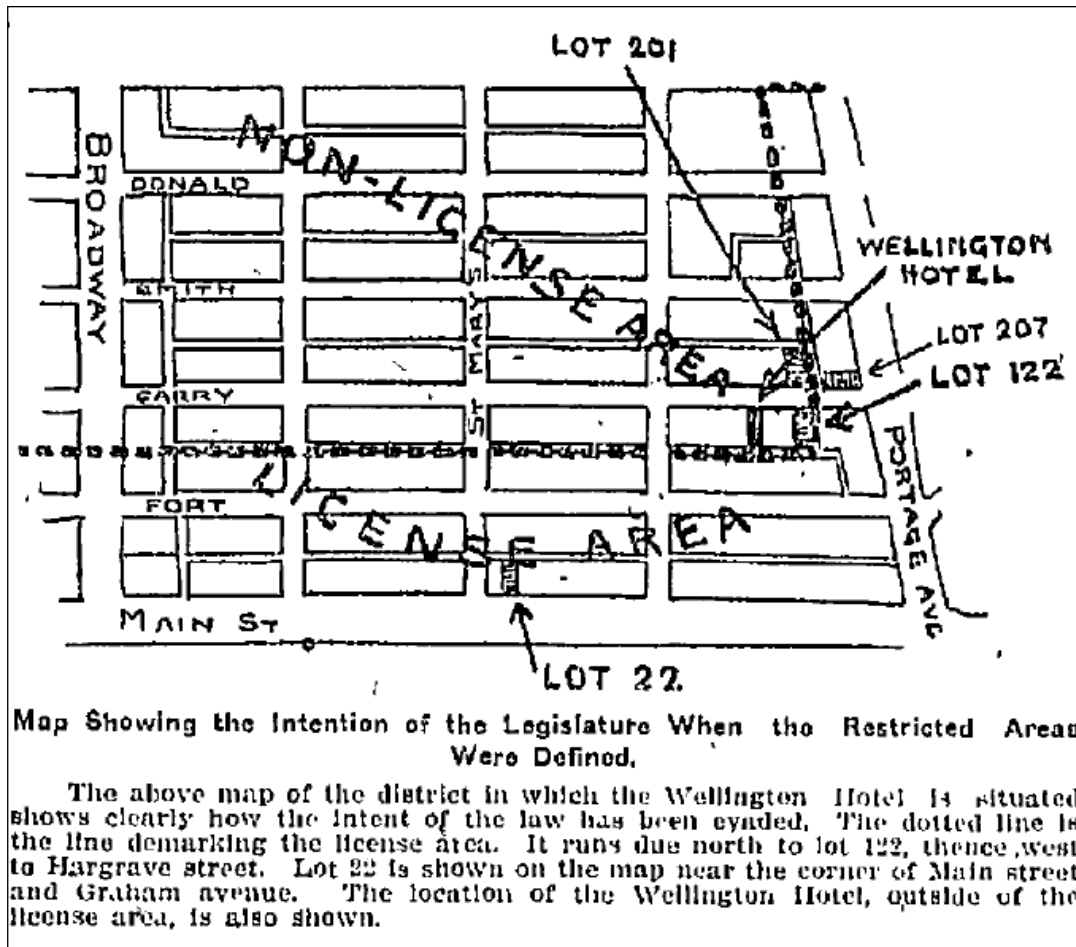


Plate 4 – The “Non-Licensed Area” of downtown Winnipeg according to the 1906 amendments to the Liquor License Act. This map was provided to Winnipeggers during the controversy over granting a liquor licence to the Wellington Hotel. (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, January 14, 1909, p. 7.)



Plate 5 – Wedding portrait of Olivo and Annie Biollo, September 10, 1907. (Reproduced from Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII, online version [www.italiancanadianww2.ca], Columbus Centre of Toronto, 2012, picture courtesy of Mary Biollo Doyle.)

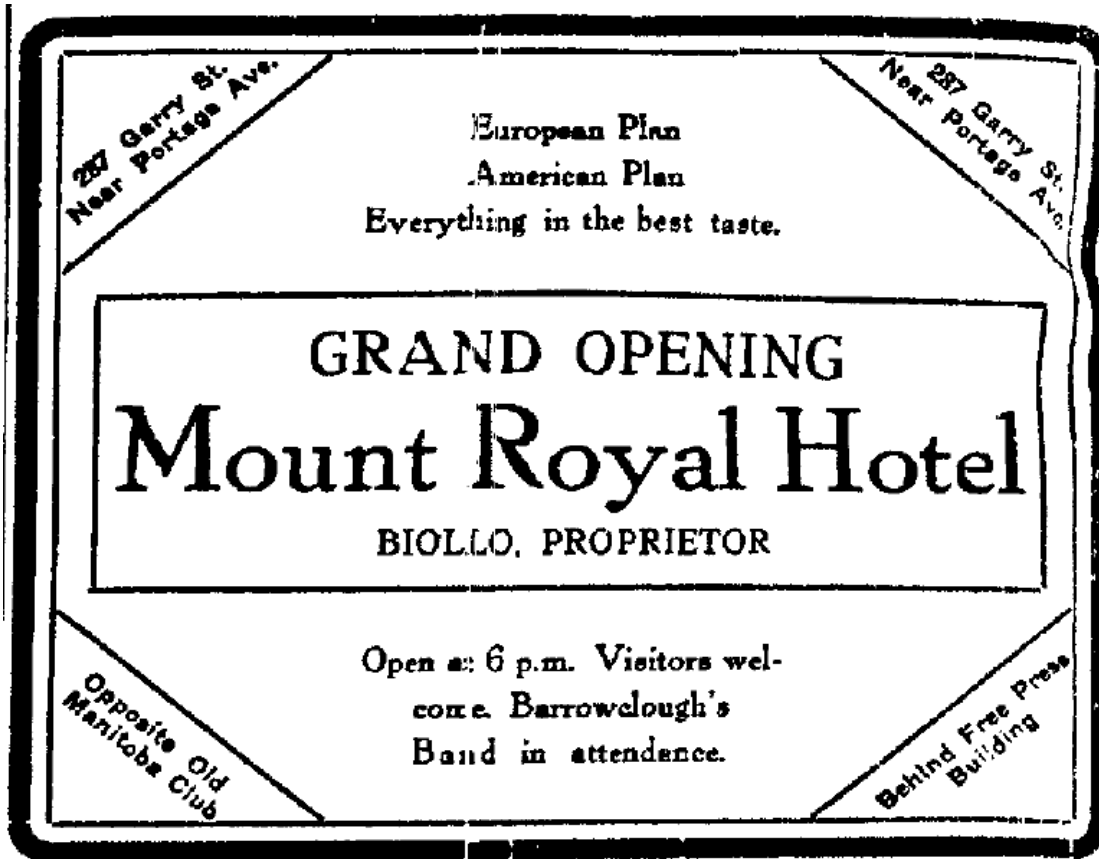
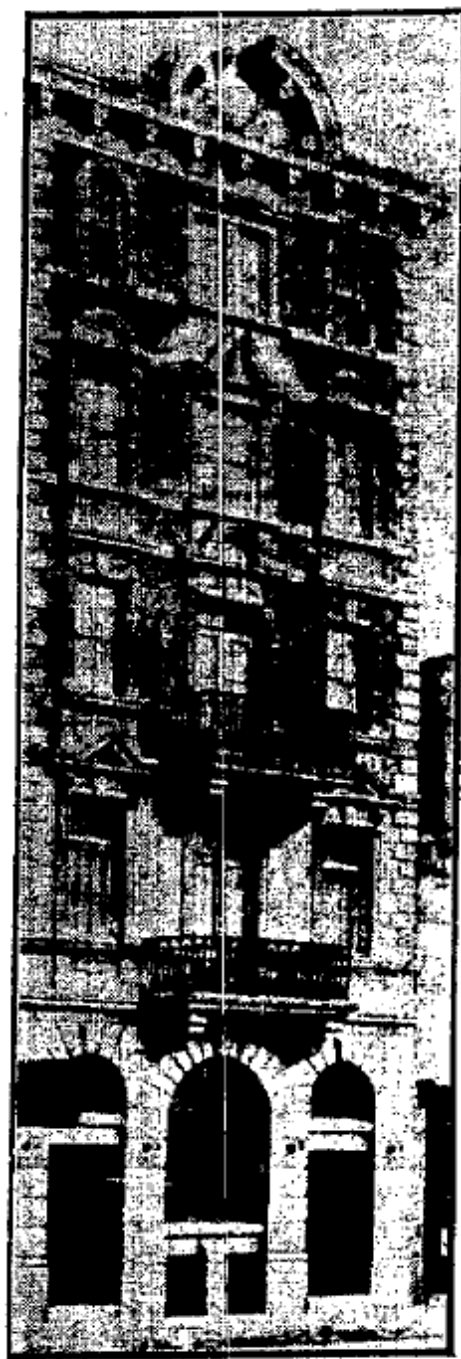


Plate 6 – Announcement of “Grand Opening” of the Mount Royal Hotel, 287 Garry Street, 1907.
(Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, November 7, 1907, p.6.)

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Mount Royal Hotel, Garry Street.

Plate 7 – Image of the newly opened Mount Royal Hotel, 287 Garry Street, 1907. (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, November 21, 1907, p. 28.)

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Plate 8 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, front (west) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 9 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, detail of front (west) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 10 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, detail of front (west) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 11 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, rear (east) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 12 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, north façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 13 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, south façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 14 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, 5th floor hallway, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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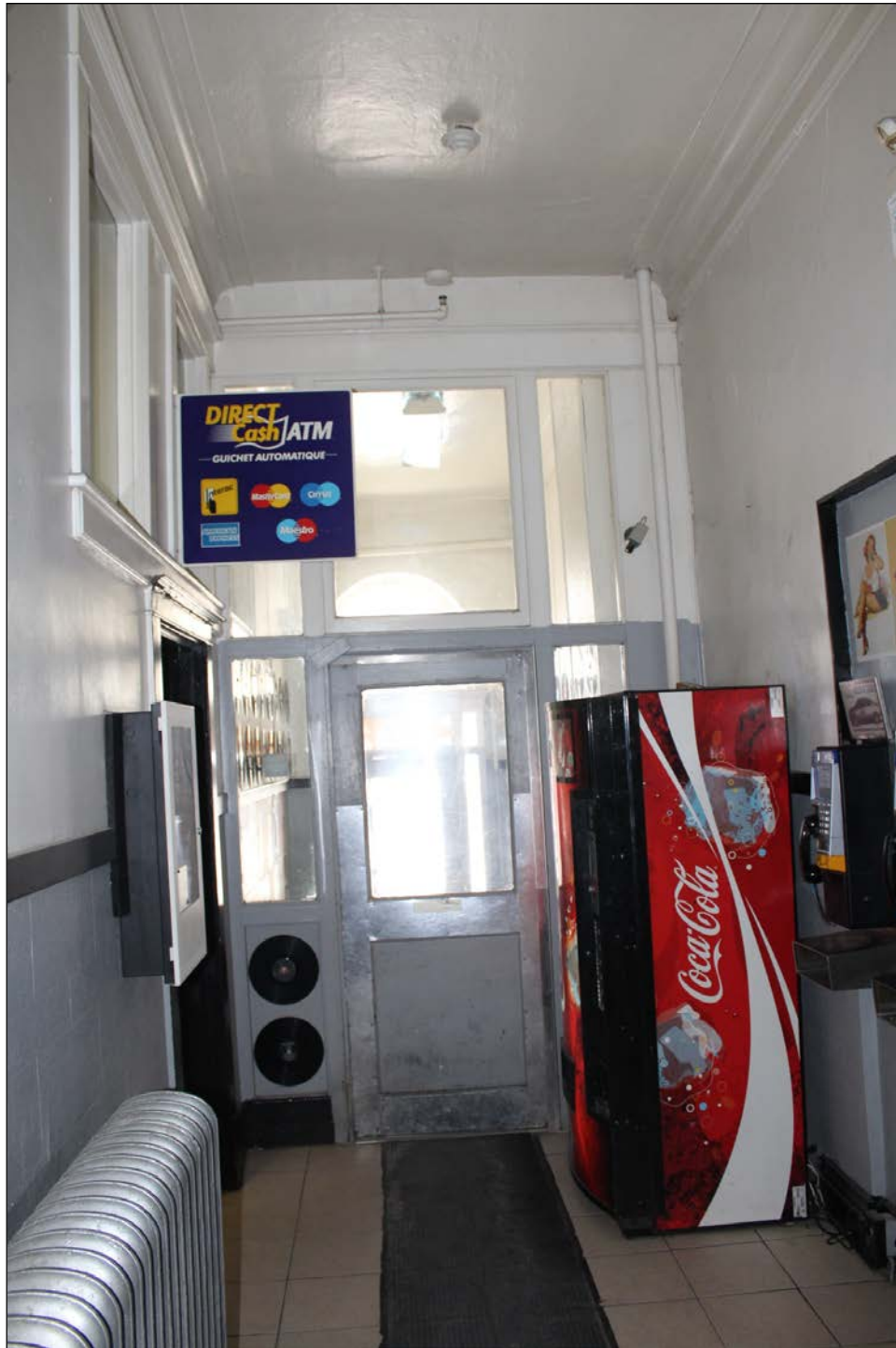


Plate 15 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, main floor lobby, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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Plate 16 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, stairs to the third floor, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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Plate 17 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, 4th floor suite, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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Plate 18 – Garrick Hotel, 287 Garry Street, front (west) façade with original second and third storey balconies, 1978. (City of Winnipeg.)

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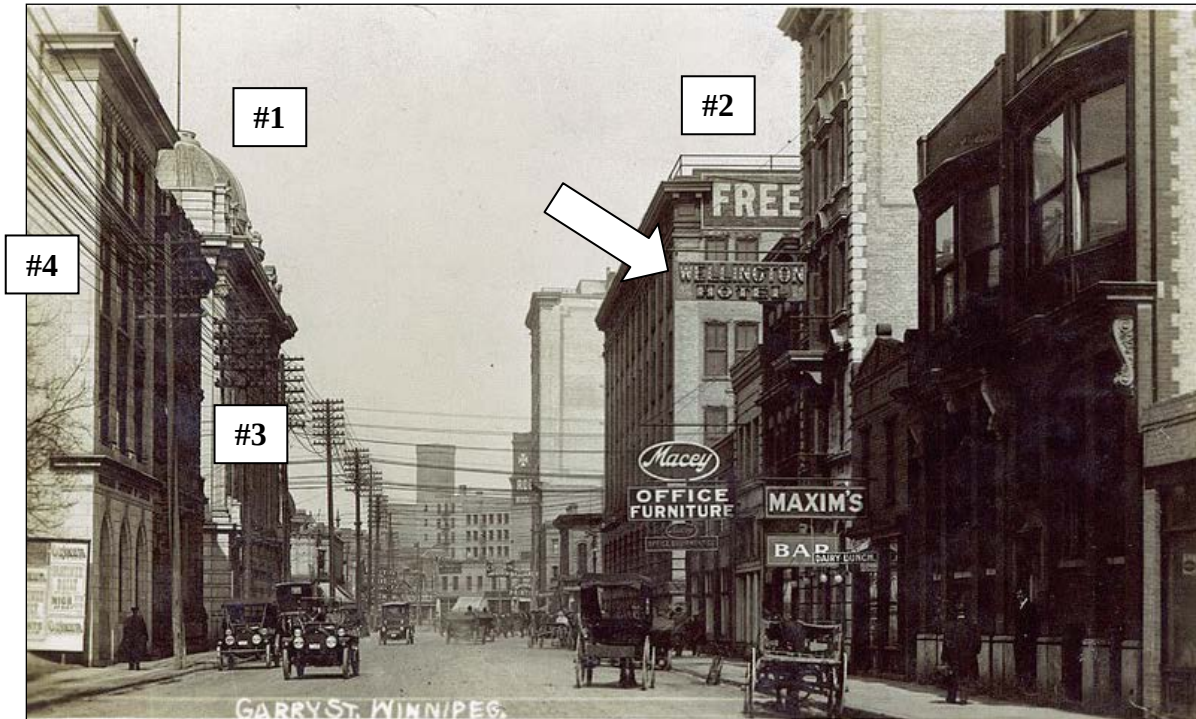


Plate 19 – Garry Street looking north toward Portage Avenue, ca.1910. The Wellington Hotel sign is on the right (arrow), other notable buildings include: #1- Bank of Nova Scotia, 254 Portage Avenue (completed 1910); #2- Free Press Building, 250 Portage Avenue (built 1905 – demolished); #3- Canada Permanent Building, 298 Garry Street (1909); and #4- Belgica Block, 290 Garry Street (1911). (Reproduced from University of Alberta Libraries, Peel's Prairie Provinces, Prairie Postcard No. PC001912.)

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Plate 20 – Garry Street looking north (top) and south (bottom), 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

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Plate 21 – 494 College Avenue, ca.1907, with members of the Biollo family in front.
(Reproduced from Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of WWII, online version [www.italiancanadianww2.ca], Columbus Centre of Toronto, 2012, picture courtesy of Mary Biollo Doyle.)

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Plate 22 – 494 College Avenue, front (north) and west façades, 2009. (M. Peterson, 2009.)



Plate 23 – Newspaper advertisement announcing the renaming of the Wellington Hotel into the Garrick Hotel, 1922. (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, July 20, 1922, p. 18.)