



321 McDERMOT AVENUE

**WESTERN GLOVE BUILDING
(FORMER FINNIE AND MURRAY BLOCK)**

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings Committee

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BACKGROUND:

The City of Winnipeg grew from a modest settlement at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers to become a leading Canadian city in the late nineteenth century. The main source of Winnipeg's amazing growth was its location. Positioned between the large manufacturing interests in central Canada and the rapidly increasing consumer population of the Canadian prairies, Winnipeg became the warehouse depot of western Canada. Wholesalers of every description took space in Manitoba's capital from the 1870s to World War I. In addition, many manufacturing interests also came to Winnipeg to take advantage of its growth and expansion. One such enterprise was the Finnie and Murray Manufacturing Company. This firm began in 1910 with the partnership of two Winnipeg businessmen, David N. Finnie and George C. Murray. For two years this clothing import and manufacturing concern operated from the former Miller-Morse Block at 86 Princess Street.¹ In 1912 however, Carter-Hall-Aldinger Contractors built the new structure for the company at 321 McDermot Avenue designed by G.W. Northwood costing \$81,500.²

STYLE:

This building is based on the Edwardian Commercial Style, that being an emphasis on base and attic portions of the building while exhibiting little ornamentation elsewhere.

CONSTRUCTION:

This five storey building of brick/mill construction measures 66' x 100' and is approximately 75' high. It has stone foundation. Ashlar limestone is used for sills and ground floor highlights, red menomini brick is used for the south and east elevations and yellow ochre brick for the north and

west walls. The floors to the third floor are 2 x 6" laminated planks with the upper two floors being 2 x 4" laminants. The roof is tar and gravel and support for the structure is achieved through 16" square timber beams and posts.³

DESIGN:

Emphasis on ground level is created through rustication while upper level ornamentation includes red brick herringbone-patterned rectangles with raised central limestone diamonds. Corbelled brick and sets of three corbelled brick brackets complete the transition from attic to brick cornice. Northwood's design also includes doors at the southeast corner opening on both McDermot Avenue and Adelaide Street and leading to a common entranceway. The north wall has only a few small windows while the west elevation has none at all. Windows on the south and east elevations are paired for basement and second through fifth floors, while the main level utilizes single openings.

INTERIOR:

Access could not be gained but activities within the building are relatively unchanged from the 1912 business and one can assume the interior is also relatively unchanged.

INTEGRITY:

1) Occupies original site; 2) Has suffered little alterations; 3) Building in good structural condition.

STREETSCAPE:

The Finnie and Murray Block is a good representation of the type of building associated with Winnipeg's manufacturing interests. Office space, warehouse and manufacturing spaces are all provided in the structure and it is situated in the truly commercial area of early 1900s Winnipeg.

ARCHITECT:

The architect is Major George W. Northwood (1876-1959), a Winnipeg veteran of World War I (see Appendix I for biography). The contractors, Carter-Halls-Aldinger, is a Winnipeg firm responsible for many buildings in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the Canadian West.

INSTITUTION:

Finnie and Murray Limited continued their clothing activities at 321 McDermot Avenue until 1922 when the partnership dissolved and the company became Murray's Limited. By 1927, this company had left the building and the structure housed four businesses: Western Glove Works, the Garry Press Ltd., the Weekly News and the Jewish Post. Western Glove and the Garry Press remained in the building along with other tenants until the early 1950s when the Garry Press left.⁴ Western Glove Works is presently occupying the building though it is vacating the premises in favour of space on Logan Avenue.

EVENT:

There is no significant event connected with this structure.

CONTEXT:

The Finnie and Murray or Western Glove Block was the first warehouse to be built west of Adelaide Street which marked the western boundary of the warehouse district prior to 1912. The fact that such a new company was able to erect such an elaborate and expensive structure is reflective of the capital available in the city during this period of growth.

LANDMARK:

This building is of little conspicuousness due to its removed location.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Henderson's Directory 1911, 1912.
- ² City of Winnipeg, Building Permit, 161/1912. In the late 1960s the official address of the block was changed to 86 Adelaide Street. (Henderson's Directory).
- ³ City of Winnipeg, Assessment Records, Roll No. 610080, Code 50, Ward 2.
- ⁴ Henderson's Directory 1910-1986.

APPENDIX I

George W. Northwood

Major G.W. Northwood was born in 1876 and came to Winnipeg in 1905. He had graduated from McGill University and formed an architectural partnership with another World War I veteran, Brigadier Major C.W.U. Chivers (1879-1969) that same year. The firm of Northwood and Chivers was responsible for many of Winnipeg's outstanding buildings, including:

The Canadian Wheat Board Building, 423 Main Street (1929)
Civic Auditorium, 444 St. Mary Avenue (1932)
Federal Building, 269 Main Street (1935)
The second Assiniboine Park and Zoo Pavilion (1929-30)
Bank of Toronto Branch, Academy Road (1934)
Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge, 200 Woodlawn Avenue (1931)
Several residences, including C.C. Henback and Rev. C.W. Gordon

Major Northwood died in 1959 after many years of distinguished work, including the presidency of the Manitoba Club, a seat on the Board of the Manitoba Association of Architects and a member of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada.¹

¹ "Obituary Notices," Winnipeg Free Press, 15 December 1959 and the Winnipeg Telegram, 15 December 1959.

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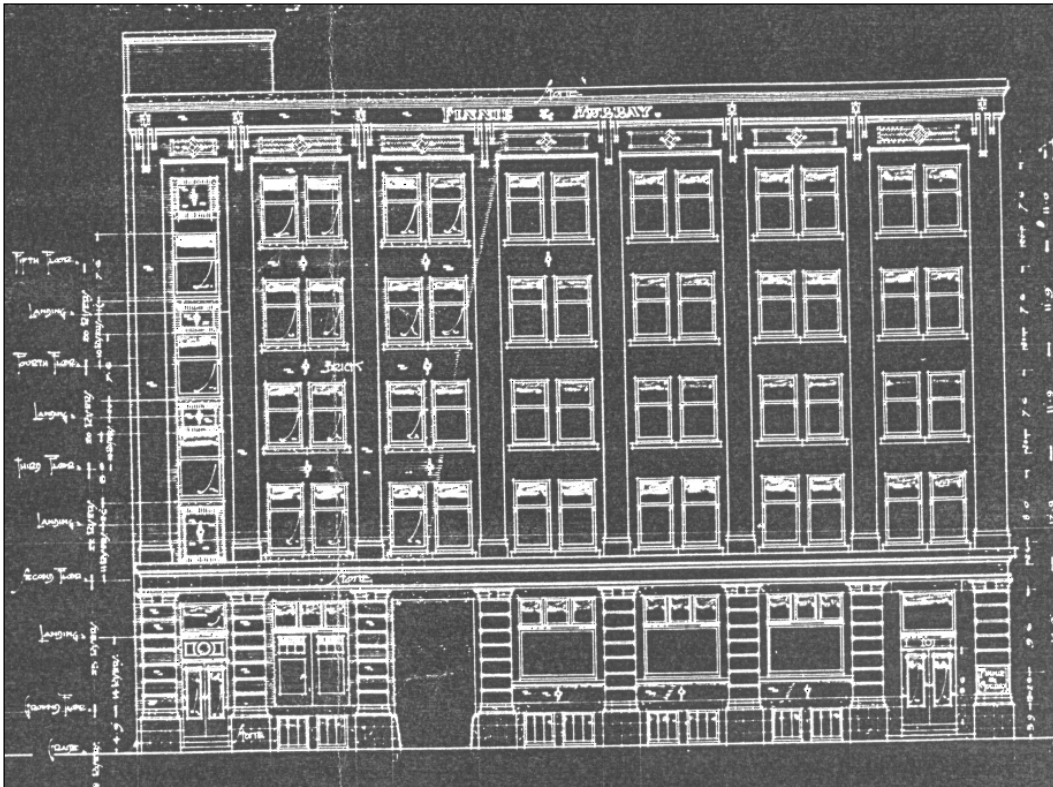


Plate 1 – Architect’s Plans, “Elevation on McDermot,” 1912. (City of Winnipeg Archives, Plan #161/1912.)



Plate 2 – G.W. Northwood, 1932. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, N690.)

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Plate 3 – Advertisement, Henderson's Directory, 1915, p. 104.



Plate 4 - Western Glove Building, 321 McDermot Avenue, 1970. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Architectural Survey.)