



100 ROSLYN ROAD

BLACKSTONE APARTMENTS

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: Murray Peterson
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100 ROSLYN ROAD - BLACKSTONE APARTMENTS

By the early 1900s, Winnipeg was in the midst of the most far-reaching and sustained period of growth in its history. The effects on the physical landscape of the community were enormous. In the city's downtown, for example, infill construction, the demolition of older structures and erection of larger, more permanent buildings greatly increased the density of development. Much of this activity followed spatial patterns established before the turn-of-the-century which had created specific banking, warehouse and commercial districts.¹ Similarly, empty lots along streets in older residential neighbourhoods began to fill as the demand for housing increased.

Demand for residential space resulted in one of the unique features of Winnipeg's urban landscape is the apartment block. It was during the city's most dramatic growth period between 1900 and World War I that this residential building type came to prominence. Nowhere in Canada, and only in a handful of centres across the continent, were apartment block so numerous and popular.² It was a combination of factors that support this development: the weather, the fact that apartment blocks provided a steady return on investment, and the availability of a pool of renters – travelling salesmen and new arrivals looking for low maintenance accommodations.

The type of apartments being built in the city was also a factor. In other North American centres, tenement houses, poorly designed and unsafe blocks were located in impoverished areas, giving apartment blocks in general a bad reputation. In Winnipeg, however, City Council moved quickly to ensure this type of apartment was not built. A by-law was enacted in November 1909 which made the construction of frame blocks and any block over three storeys in height prohibitively expensive to build. While the by-law was passed as a means of protecting tenants from unsafe living conditions, it also discouraged tenement slums and promoted better designed and built blocks. The three-storey brick apartment block that today can still be found in every neighbourhood

¹ M. Peterson, "36 Roslyn Road - J.C. Falls House," report for the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee, January 1994, p. 1.

² See M. Peterson, "The Rise of Apartments and Apartment Dwellers in Winnipeg (1900-14) and a Comparative Study with Toronto," in Prairie Forum, Volume 18, No. 2 (Fall 1993), pp. 155-164.

was a direct result of this by-law.

One area that witnessed tremendous growth before and after 1900 was Fort Rouge. What had been a scattered settlement of French-speaking, agriculturally-based families in the 1870s became the City of Winnipeg's Ward One in 1882. Properties close to the Assiniboine River attracted wealthy businessmen and public figures who sought the quasi-rural lifestyle offered by the area combined with its proximity to the downtown.

Numerous mansions, situated on extensive, well-manicured grounds, were built during this period, especially along one of the neighbourhood's seminal streets – Roslyn Road. These homes were filled with a “Who's Who” of Winnipeg – judges, lawyers, doctors and businessmen. As the 20th century progressed, however, the face of Roslyn Road changed and the opulent mansions were replaced by multi-tenant apartment blocks.

In 1927, another medium-sized block known as the Blackstone Apartments (Plate 1) was built on Roslyn Road, on the south side east of Osborne Street, with an appearance designed to fit into the neighbourhood and compliment the older single-family dwellings.

STYLE

The Blackstone Apartments feature elements of both the Tudor Revival Style and the Spanish Colonial or Mission Revival Style. Elements of the former include ornamental half-timbering, steeply pitched irregular roofs, front-facing gables, asymmetrical massing and stucco, masonry or masonry-veneered walls.³ There are many examples of the style in the City of Winnipeg applied to both single-family dwellings and larger buildings (Plate 2).

Elements of the Spanish Colonial or Mission Revival Style on the building include the arched

³ V. and L. McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 358; and L. Maitland, et al, A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), p. 156.

openings, the coloured stucco and flat surfaces. This style of architecture is rare in Winnipeg (Plate 3).

CONSTRUCTION

This three-storey block with raised basement was built in 1927 for \$45,000.⁴ The building measures 13.1 x 30.8 metres and rests on a concrete foundation.⁵

DESIGN

The front (north) façade is symmetrically designed (Plate 4) with a central entrance covered with an ornate metal and glass hood attached to the main building with chains (Plate 5). The main entrance is gained through a raised doorway framed by sidelights and topped by a stone panel holding the carved word “BLACKSTONE”. The east and west ends of the façade rise higher than the central portion (which features two triplet windows with small sidelights) and are finished with hipped gable roofs (Plate 6). Brick archways with metal gates are located at both the northeast and northwest corners (Plate 7) and appear in a simplified form in the original plans (Plate 8). All openings are rectilinear, although some ground floor openings on the front and side elevations feature arched brickwork.

The entire façade, as well as the east and west elevations, are finished in a combination of dark brick accented by painted stucco (Plates 9 and 10). Brick is used to clad the ground floor, to frame window openings, accent corners and as decorative trim. The rear (south) façade features common clay brick cladding and an open wood fire escape (Plate 11).

Comparing the present exterior to the original drawings, it does not appear that major alterations have occurred over the years.

⁴ City of Winnipeg, Building Permit, #838/1927.

⁵ Architect's Plans, #838/1927.

INTERIOR

According to the original 1927 plans, the block was designed with 18 suites.⁶ All suites were designed with a living room, kitchen with small dining area and bathroom and either one or two bedrooms. The two-bedroom suites were placed at the south end of the floor. In the basement, the south end held lockers, a large laundry area and the boiler room.

The plans also show a service entrance on the east side of the building leading to an interior staircase. The kitchens of the suites on the east side of the building had direct access to this staircase, the west side one-bedroom suites had a small hallway alcove with doorways leading to the kitchens and the kitchens of the south end two-bedroom suites had access to the rear stairs (Plate 12). Deliveries could be made through these “back doors.”

The block today appears to have many of its original layouts and finishes intact (Plates 13-16).

INTEGRITY

The block stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition for its age and does not appear to have suffered major exterior alteration.

STREETSCAPE

Roslyn Road, once lined with luxurious mansions, has undergone considerable change in the 20th century. Initially, development entailed infill housing and apartment block construction as some of the larger pieces of property were subdivided. Later in the century, many of the older homes, having been passed down or purchased from the original owners, were demolished to make room for large, high-rise apartment blocks. The Blackstone Apartments remain as one of the oldest multi-tenant blocks on Roslyn Road (see Appendix II for list of area apartment blocks).

⁶ Although plans for the upper two floors do not exist, it was common that all upper floors had the same layout.

Today, the east end of Roslyn Road is filled with a variety of structures (Plates 17 and 18).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTOR

Charles S. Bridgman (1875-1965), was the designer of this block. Born in Ontario and trained in New York City, Bridgman came to Winnipeg in 1903, spending more than three decades here designing a diverse group of buildings. He has been given 10 points by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

The contractor for the building was William Moxam (1882-1950), a well-known contractor, part of a large family of local builders. Moxam's father, Emanuel M. (1854-1943), a cabinetmaker by trade, brought his family to Winnipeg in 1904 from their birthplace in Foresters Falls, Ontario (small town northwest of Ottawa), including his wife and children (4 daughters and 5 sons in 1901).⁷ Sons (and twins) William and John A. (1882-1941) soon formed Moxam Brothers, contractors while another son, Francis "Frank" (1885-1966) worked in real estate. Moxam Brothers' early activity was almost exclusively in the residential sector, building homes for resale, most in the West and North ends.⁸

By 1911, John A. Moxam had moved to Calgary, AB to found the Moxam Realty and Construction Company, Ltd., and William carried on as a contractor in the city (as did his father). William formed the Moxam Construction Company by the late 1910s, operating for more than a decade. By the mid-1940s, he was working as the Assessor for the Municipality of St. Andrew's and died in 1950.

⁷ Biographical information on the family from: Canada Census, 1891, 1901, 1906, 1911, 1916; Winnipeg Free Press, December 12, 1941, p. 8; Selkirk Enterprise, May 4, 1950, p. 3; Calgary Heritage Authority, Building Summary 05-103, online; Winnipeg Free Press, May 1, 1950, p. 26; Winnipeg Tribune, October 8, 1943, p. 19; "Moxam, John," Manitoba Historical Society, Memorable Manitobans, online (http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/moxam_j.shtml), 2011; and Calgary, sunny Alberta, the industrial prodigy of the great West (Calgary, AB: Jennings Publishing Co., 1911), p. 132.

⁸ City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1926.

A list of some of John A. Moxam's known projects would include:

Moxam Court Apartments, 280 River Avenue (1906-1907)
 Waldron Apartments, 544 Broadway (1909) - demolished
 Avenue Theatre, 349 Portage Avenue (1910) - demolished
 Macmillan Court Apartments, 469 Kennedy Street (1910) – demolished
 Mac's Theatre, 585 Ellice Avenue (1912)
 Glenburn Apartments, 891 Corydon Avenue (1912)
 Scotia Block Apartments, 105 Scotia Street (1917)
 Oxford Apartments, 317 Furby Street (1928)
 Harvard Apartments, 196 Furby Street (1929)

PERSON

William Moxam owned the property but sold it upon completion to the Equitable Trust Company.⁹ From 1933 into the 1950s, Lonsdale Investments Limited owned this property (it was renamed LI Limited in 1956). The property was managed by The Smith Agency, which advertised a one-bedroom suite in the new block for \$70/month.¹⁰

H & S Holdings Limited owned the property from 1960 into the 1990s.¹¹

Tenants of the block have included a variety of tenants: managers, business owners, railway employees, office workers and salesmen. One interesting trend in the early years was the fact that the block was home to a high percentage of "Mrs." – seven out of 18 in 1930 and 6 out of 18 in 1941.¹²

⁹ Winnipeg Free Press, May 31, 1928, p. 4. Charles E. Simonite, local real estate agent brokered the \$100,000 deal and then was forced to sue Moxam for his commission on the sale.

¹⁰ Manitoba Free Press, September 5, 1927, p. 16 and August 9, 1930, p. 32. A two-bedroom rented for \$90/month in 1930.

¹¹ City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12032470100, 1920-1990.

¹² Henderson's Directory, 1930 & 1941.

EVENT

There is no known significant historic event connected with this block.

CONTEXT

This multi-tenant block was built just before the dramatic world-wide economic downturn of the late 1920s and 1930s. Winnipeg's growth, severely limited until after World War I, saw the good annual construction values of the early 1920s diminish as the decade progressed. The Blackstone Apartments were part of the redevelopment of Roslyn Road from an exclusive neighbourhood of large, single-family dwellings to a more densely populated area with multi-tenant housing.

LANDMARK

The unusual design and ornamentation of this apartment block would heighten its conspicuousness in the neighbourhood.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Assessment Record

Building Address: 100 Roslyn Road

Building Name: Blackstone Apartments

Original Use: apartment block

Current Use: apartment block

Roll No. (Old): 12032470100

RSN: 143167

Legal Description: 41 St. Boniface, Plan 27423, Lot 20, Plan 314, Block 2

Location: south side between Osborne and Bryce streets

Date of Construction: 1927

Storeys: 3 & basement

Heritage Status: **ON NOMINATED LIST**

Construction Type:

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

- 838/1927 [CS] \$45,000 (original); 163446/2015 \$42,000 (replace exterior wooden stairs)

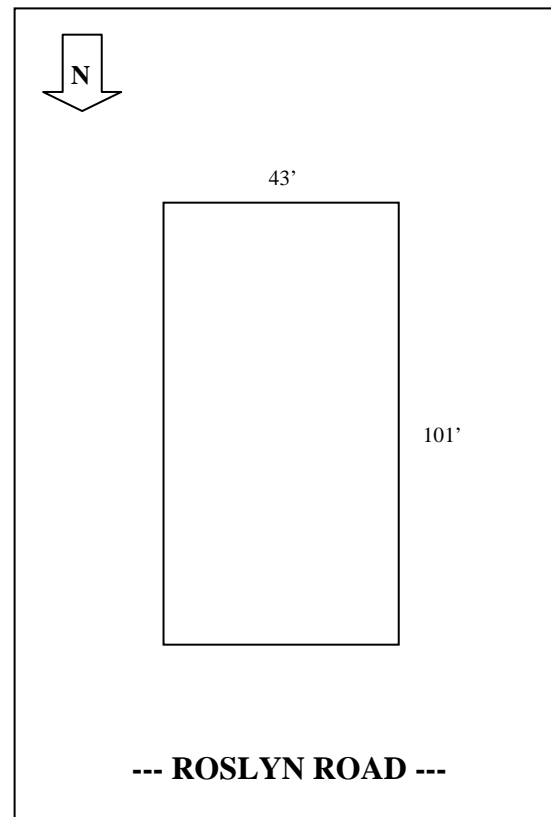
Information:

- 101' x 43'

- 14" concrete foundation walls

ARCHITECT: CHARLES S. BRIDGMAN

CONTRACTOR: WILLIAM MOXAM (OWNER)



APPENDIX II

Charles S. Bridgman

C.S. Bridgman was a well-known and prolific architect who practised in Winnipeg for over 30 years. He was born in Toronto, Ontario on February 14, 1875, moving with his family at an early age to nearby London, Ontario, where he received his early education.¹ Deciding on a career in architecture, Bridgman moved to New York where he graduated from *Atelier Masguray* in 1891. For the next twelve years he worked as an architect in that city, before moving to Winnipeg in 1903.²

Bridgman spent the next 35 years in Winnipeg, designing buildings of all scales and descriptions. He was also involved in the Manitoba Association of Architects, named to its executive council in 1926.³ In 1938, at the age of 63, he retired, moving back to London, Ontario. During World War II, he was called into service, assisting in the construction of Air Training Stations throughout central Ontario. He apparently enjoyed this return to work, because after the war he took up his profession again, this time in partnership with his brother, Gordon Bridgman. Retiring again at the age of 80, Charles Bridgman died in London on October 17, 1965, leaving behind three daughters.⁴

A list of large, more well-known structures designed by C.S. Bridgman would include:⁵

St. Luke's Anglican Church, 130 Nassau Street North (1904)
Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Cross, Chambers Street corner Alexander Avenue (1905)
T.L. Waldon House, 97 West Gate (1907)
St. Giles Presbyterian (United) Church, 294 Burrows Avenue (1908) – Grade III
Westmount Apartments, 998 Main Street (1908)
Metcalf Block, 511 Pembina Street (1909)
Osborne River Block, 100 Osborne Street (1909)
R.T. Riley House, 90 East Gate (1909)

¹ Winnipeg Free Press, October 27, 1965.

² Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906; and Canadian Architect and Builder, Vol. 17 (1904), Issue 5, p. 85.

³ Manitoba Free Press, January 27, 1926, p. 5.

⁴ Winnipeg Free Press, October 27, 1965.

⁵ Compiled from City of Winnipeg Building Permits, 1903-1926; and Western Canada Contractor and Builder, Vol. 27, No. 6 (June 1930), p. 46. Permits after 1926 rarely list architect and contractor, and many of the originals have been destroyed or misplaced.

C.S. Bridgman designs (continued):

Bickle Court, 600 Broadway (1909)
Riverview Apartments, 27 Balmoral Place (1910)
Anvers Apartments, 758 McMillan Avenue (1912) – Grade II
Brussels Apartments, 150 Lilac Street (1912)
Highgate (originally DeBary) Apartments, 626 Wardlaw Avenue (1912) – Grade II
Regal Court Apartments, 152-154 Maryland Street (1912)
I.S.K. Weber House, 283 Yale Avenue (1912)
George Craig House, 225 Dromore Avenue (1912)
Robert McKay House, 205 Dromore Avenue (1912)
Regal Court Apartments, 152 Maryland Street (1912)
Redwood Apartments, 205 College Avenue (1913)
W.A. Hossie House, 66 Waterloo Street (1913)
Business Block for W.B. Chambers, 1156 Main Street (1913)
Riverview Hotel, 322 Nairn Avenue (one storey addition, 1913) – destroyed by fire 1918
Ellice Avenue Block Apartments, 468 Sherbrook Street (1914)
Aquila Apartments, 519-521 William Avenue (1914)
Gaspé Apartments, 601 Broadway (1917)
Minneapolis Threshing Company Warehouse, 701 Henry Avenue (1917)
Hamblin Manufacturing Building, 320 Osborne Street (1918)
Canadian Ukrainian Institute Provista, 777 Pritchard Avenue (foundation, 1918; superstructure, 1921) – Grade II
Dawson-Richardson Publishing Company Warehouse, 171 McDermot Avenue (1921) – Grade III
St. Edward's Convent, Yarwood Avenue (1922)
Sparling Apartments, 217 Sherbrook Street (1925)
Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road (1927)
Beacon (formerly the Strand) Theatre, 561 Main Street (alteration and upgrades, 1930) – demolished
Town Hall, Manitou, MB (1930)
Sargent Park Pool, filtration system (1932)
Ripstein Block, 180 Logan Avenue (conversion into residential, 1938)

**APPENDIX III
ROSLYN ROAD APARTMENT BLOCKS**

NUMBER	NAME	AGE	NO. OF STOREYS	NO. OF SUITES	COST
#1	Locarno Apartments	1929	3 & 4	37	\$300,000
6	Lilly Apartments (house conversion)	1914	2.5	19	\$20,000
7	Gannon Apartments	1957	3	30	\$150,000
16	The Shelldrake	1958	3	20	\$100,000
21	Twenty-One Roslyn Road Apartments	1979	12	112	\$1,600,000
26	Marquis Apartments	1958	3	21	\$125,000
29	Roslyn on the River	1988	8	23	Unknown
43	Blair House	1957	5	40	\$300,000
50	Riverborne-Roslyn Place	1992	4	40	Unknown
51	Saigon Apartments	1952	3	25	\$115,000
71	Penthouse Towers	1960	10	99	\$1,000,000
80	Rossmore Apartments	1929	3	25	\$100,000
81	Shorecrest Plaza	1959	3	60	\$320,000
90	The Terraces of 90 Roslyn	1985	3.5	14	\$560,000
99	Roslyn Manor	1958	3	66	\$225,000
100	Blackstone Apartments	1927	3	18	\$45,000
139	London Towers	1965	8	31	\$310,000
151	Dorset House	1965	7	24	\$237,000
176	Manor Apartments (house conversion)	1909	2.5	6	\$18,000
188	Nassau House	1966	10	34	\$350,000
230	Sussex House	1965	14	111	\$1,100,000
246	Imperial Place	1968	12	117	\$1,038,000
270	Canterbury House	1967	12	142	\$1,400,000
300	Fountain House	1963	13	180	\$1,800,000

OTHER AREA APARTMENT BLOCKS

ADDRESS	NAME	AGE	NO. OF STOREYS	NO. OF SUITES	COST
40 Osborne Street	Roslyn Apartments	1908-09	5	36	\$208,000
1 Evergreen Place	No. One Evergreen Place	1970	29	221	\$2,962,000
7 Evergreen Place	Evergreen Towers	1981	26	183	\$7,760,000
11 Evergreen Place	(originally Hycroft Towers)	1984	26	185	\$5,740,000

100 ROSLYN ROAD – BLACKSTONE APARTMENTS



Plate 1 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, front (north) façade, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

100 ROSLYN ROAD – BLACKSTONE APARTMENTS



Plate 2 – Two excellent examples of the Tudor Revival Style: Top- Grosvenor Court, 161-165 Stafford Street (built 1909); and Bottom- Robert R. Scott House, 29 Ruskin Row (built 1914). (M. Peterson.)

100 ROSLYN ROAD – BLACKSTONE APARTMENTS



Plate 3 – Two of the few examples of the Spanish Colonial/Mission Revival Style architecture in Winnipeg: Top- Pasadena Apartments, 220 Hugo Street North (built 1912); and Bottom- Buena Vista Apartments, 40 St. Mary's Road (built 1929). (M. Peterson.)

100 ROSLYN ROAD – BLACKSTONE APARTMENTS



Plate 4 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, front (north) façade, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

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Plate 5 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, detail of front (north) entrance hood, 2017.
(M. Peterson, 2017.)

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Plate 6 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, detail of front (north) façade, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

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Plate 7 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, arch and gate at northeast corner, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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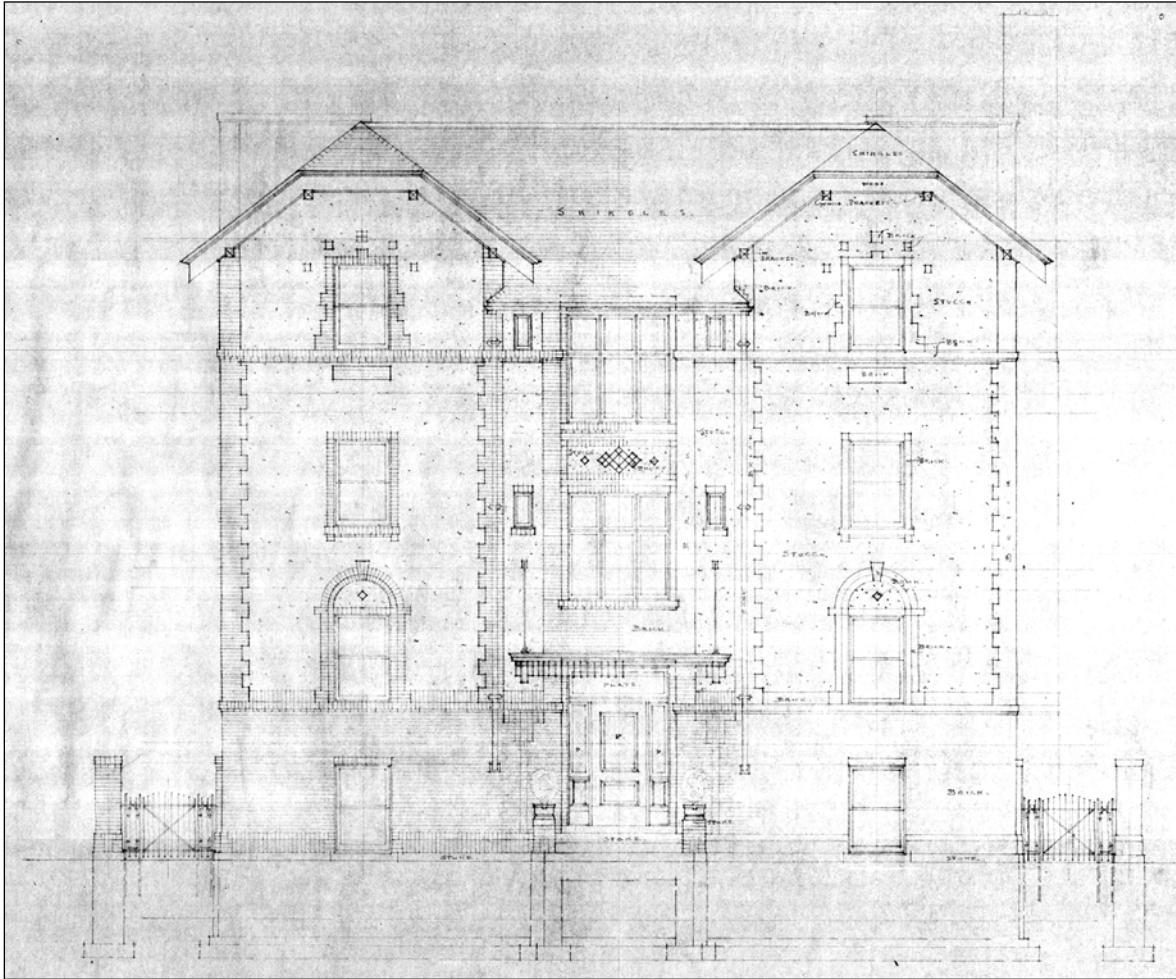


Plate 8 – Architect's plans, "Front Elevation," Plan #838/1927. (City of Winnipeg.)

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Plate 9 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, front (north) and east façades, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

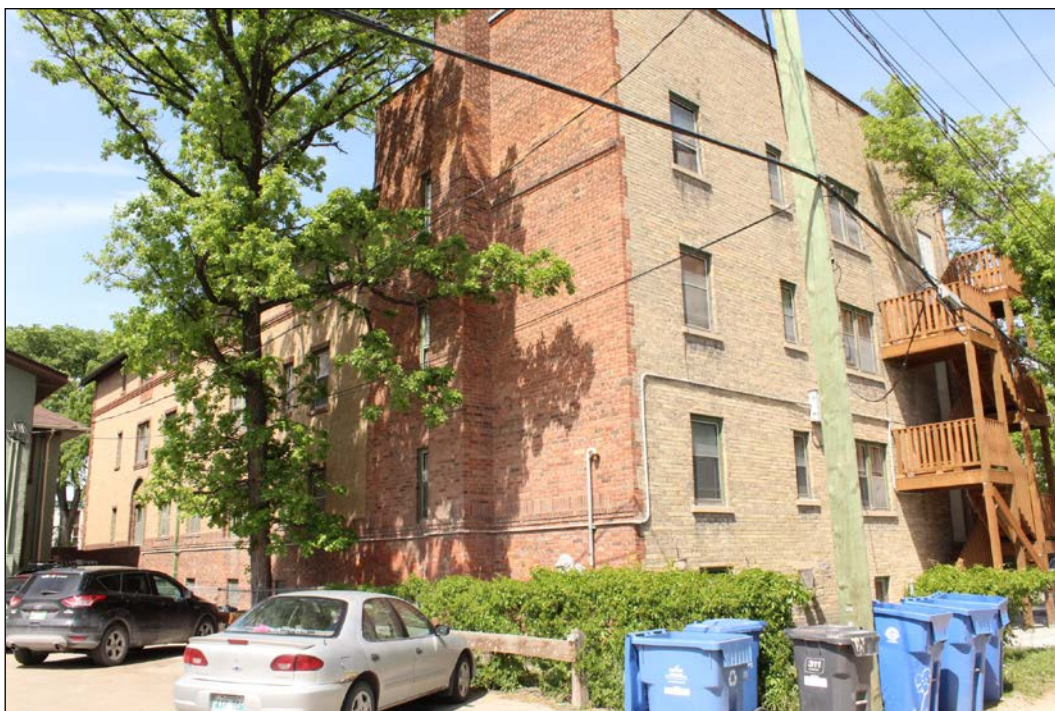


Plate 10 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, rear (south) and west façade, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

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Plate 11 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, rear (south) façade, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)

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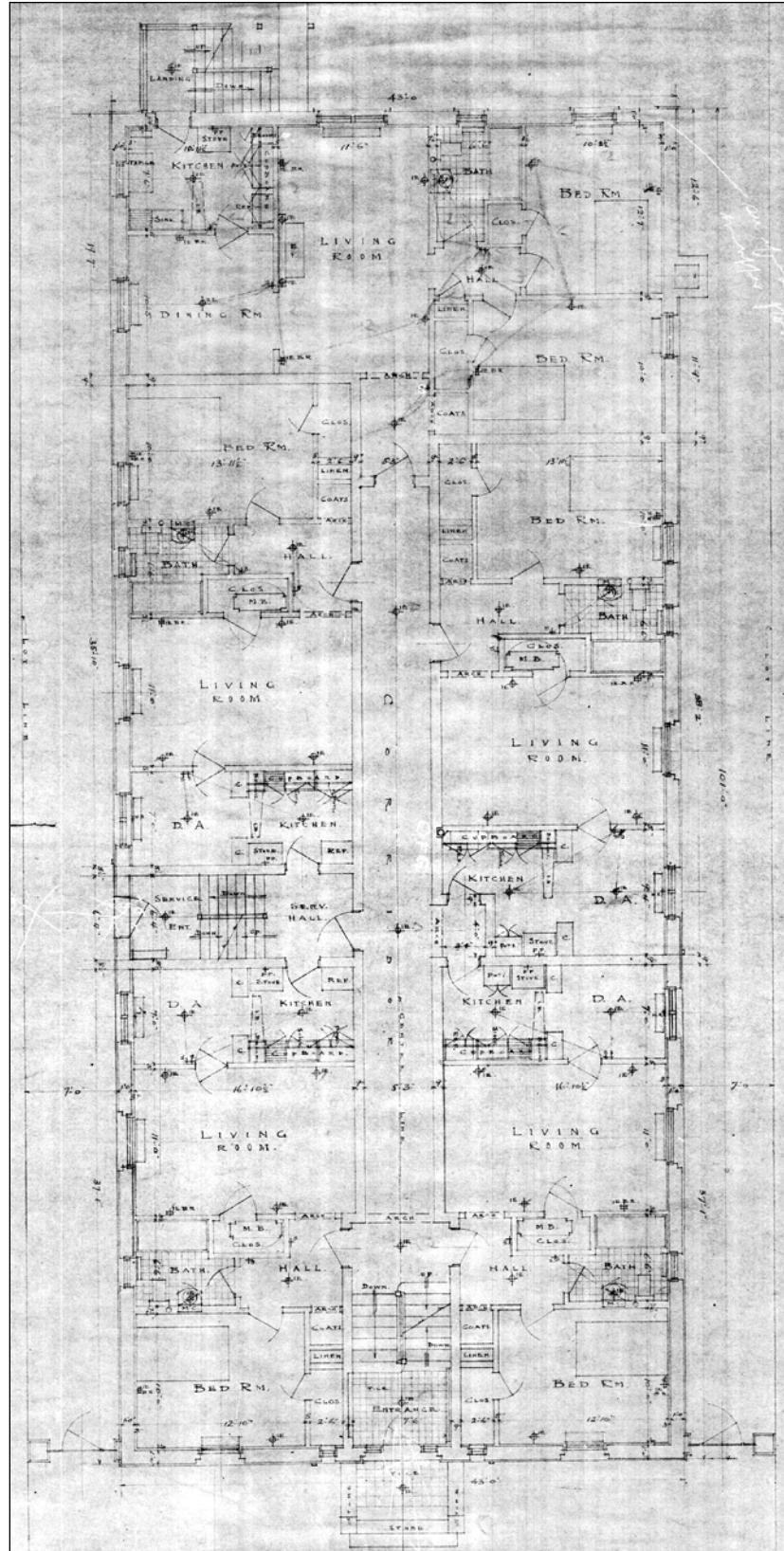


Plate 12 – Architect's plans, "First Floor Plan," Plan #838/1927. (City of Winnipeg.)

100 ROSLYN ROAD – BLACKSTONE APARTMENTS



Plate 13 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, entrance foyer, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

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Plate 14 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, main staircase, 2017. ([M. Peterson, 2017.](#))

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Plate 15 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, main floor suite living room with brick fireplace, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

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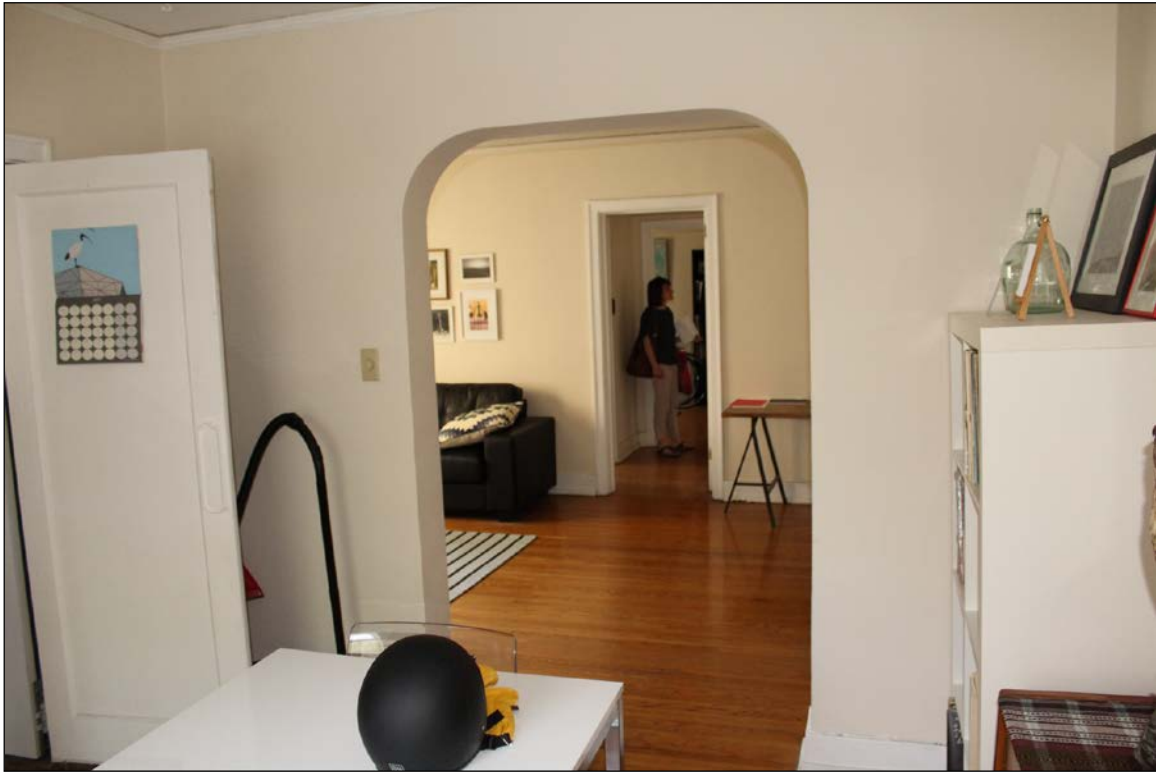


Plate 16 – Blackstone Apartments, 100 Roslyn Road, main floor suite, 2017. (M. Peterson, 2017.)

100 ROSLYN ROAD – BLACKSTONE APARTMENTS



Plate 17 – Looking east along Roslyn Road from Osborne Street, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)



Plate 18 – Looking west along Roslyn Road towards Osborne Street, 2016. (M. Peterson, 2016.)