

# Winnipeg Free Press

## Hidden gem will soon shine bright

### TWO PHASES DOWN, ONE TO GO FOR RESTORATION OF HISTORIC INGLIS BUILDING

By: Murray McNeillCommercial Real Estate

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The restoration of one of the downtown's hidden gems — the historic Inglis Building at 291 Garry St. — is almost complete. The first phase of the multi-year restoration project involved extensive renovations to the interior of the two-storey structure, which is also sometimes referred to as the North West Commercial Travellers' Association Building.

The second phase was the restoration of the building's striking terracotta facade, which features six lion heads topped by a massive shield and crest on the parapet.



WAYNE GLOWACKI / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

John McDonald, pres. & CEO Metric Marketing, poses in front of the historic Inglis building at 291 Garry St.

Now, the only thing left to do is to give the back wall a facelift at some point, the president of Metric Marketing — the Winnipeg company that owns the building — said in an interview.

"We feel it could be fixed up a little bit back there, and possibly put in some signage," John McDonald said.

He noted there is a surface parking lot across the back lane from the building, so people emerging from the Fort Street entrance to Winnipeg Square have a clear view of the building.

"So it would be a perfect way to get some added exposure for the company," he added.

McDonald said they're not in any hurry, but hope to have the work on the back wall done sometime within the next couple of years.

He noted that the company spent about \$250,000 on the interior renovations, which were done after it acquired the 6,300-square-foot building in 2012.

"When we bought the building, it was basically just four walls and a wood floor," he said.

He declined to reveal how much was spent on the exterior restorations, which were done by Alpha Masonry Ltd., under the supervision of Wins Bridgman, of Bridgman Collaborative Architecture.

"But it was a pretty big project from a financial point of view, and we definitely wouldn't have been able to do it without some of the heritage grants," he said.

Bridgman said the City of Winnipeg, the provincial government and CentreVenture Development Corporation all chipped in some grant money to help with the project.

"So to me, this is a tremendous success story," he added.

He said it was a "wonderful" project to work on because of the beauty and historical significance of the building's facade.

"It has extraordinary terracotta. It is one of the (city's) most diverse facades, in terms of the different types of terracotta (that were used)," he said.

"It's a very small facade, yet it has a tremendous breadth in terms of the kinds of imagery it has, the kinds of decorations, and just how extravagantly beautiful and important the terracotta is."

The restoration work involved cleaning, re-pointing and re-glazing the facade, replacing damaged terracotta and re-caulking the windows and doors.

Parts of the top cornice, crest and parapet, which had suffered water damage over the years, were also repaired, and new metal flashing was installed to help prevent future water damage.

Although the work only took about 2½ months to complete, Bridgman said it took about eight months to plan it all out.

Metric Marketing relocated to the south side of Portage Avenue from the Exchange District, and McDonald said it's been encouraging to see all of the new development that's taking place in and around Graham Avenue.

"The Pint has been a very welcome building, and once SkyCity Centre (retail/office/condominium tower) gets going... that will also be good for the area," he said.

"And then of course there's the Artis building with its apartments, and all the Chipman stuff and what they're doing," he added, referring to the \$400-million, four-tower True North Square development under construction three blocks to the west.

McDonald said he's looking forward to the new residential towers opening because of all of the new residents they will bring to the downtown.

"I hear of some young people who are interested in moving downtown, and if I was younger it's something I would love to experience," he said.

The city's second Mary Brown's Famous Chicken & Taters restaurant celebrated its official grand opening on Saturday.

The restaurant has been open for business since the summer, but the company waited to announce it and to hold the official grand opening.

The new outlet is located at Unit 30, 2870 Pembina Hwy.

The city's first Mary Brown's opened about two years ago at 1615 Regent Ave. West, which is the Kildonan Crossing Shopping Centre.

Winnipegger Tom Chen owns the Pembina Highway franchise, and he said in a written statement he was excited to join the Mary Brown's chain.

"I still remember the first time I went to Mary Brown's in Ontario. I couldn't believe the size of each piece of chicken on the Big Mary sandwich. I knew right away that's what we needed in Winnipeg," he said.

The Mary Brown's chain started in Newfoundland in 1969 and now has 140 locations in Canada. The food it serves is marinated, cut and cooked in small batches in each store. Menu items include the Big Mary Sandwich, taters, chicken pop-ins and bone-in chicken.

Know of any newsworthy or interesting trends or developments in the local office, retail, industrial or multi-family residential sectors? Let real estate reporter Murray McNeill know at the email address below, or at 204-697-7254.

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*Read more by **Murray McNeill** Commercial Real Estate.*

#### HISTORY

Updated on Monday, November 6, 2017 at 7:42 AM CST: Photo added

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**BLACK AND BLUE,  
DRIVING FOR GOLD**

 **OBSERVER6**  
20h


I think I have more respect for Nichols as

**CITY'S AMAZON BID  
'WELL WORTH THE**

 **23729977**  
15h

If anything at least it was a good practice,

**CHARLESWOOD  
CORRIDOR QUESTI**

 **user-68904**  
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the pay-roll?He s

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## Business

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