

Mineral Springs Sanitarium of Winnipeg

The Mineral Springs Sanitarium of Winnipeg was located on the banks of the Red River on DeSalaberry Avenue in Elmwood. It was not a sanitarium in the common sense of the word used today, as it was not an isolation hospital. It would probably be called a health spa now.

Architect P.C. Samwell began construction on the building late in 1911 and it opened in May, 1912 with the Premier of Manitoba speaking at the opening ceremonies. Company officials also in attendance included Messrs. E. Hutchins, President, George A. Glines, Vice President, Archie McMillian, Second Vice President and Dr. A. D. Carscallen, Secretary and Superintendent. The medical director was Dr. A. D. Carstairs. The company also had an office at 322 Donald Street.

The Sanitarium was a three storey building, which included an attic and full basement. The dimensions were 54 feet by 85 feet on property with a river frontage of 600 feet and a depth of 270 feet. The total cost of construction was \$70,000.

The building was created using red brick, limestone trimmings and reinforced concrete. The foundation was constructed with heavy piles to prevent slippage on the riverbank. The bank of the river was terraced to provide for tennis courts and croquet grounds, with a gravel path leading from the building to a wharf and boathouse located at the river's edge. The wharf was used for the boats and for swimming in the river. There were three broad verandahs running the length of the structure on all floors facing the river with a southern exposure from the large windows. Five fireplaces were located within the building.

The interior was finished in hardwood while all the floors were constructed with oak parquet. All of the passageways and halls were soft carpeted and decorated in a most charming manner, looking more like a well-to-do citizen's home than an institution. The whole building was illuminated with electric light fixtures and heated by steam in the winter and electric grates in the warmer months.

The main floor contained the library and reception room which were decorated in dark and light brown with heavy curtains in the window and the rooms contained tables, couches and easy chairs. The main floor also held the general dining room with each table providing for four persons. The doctor's surgery room, waiting room and private office were also located on this floor, along with an electric room containing every conceivable electric healing device. Access to the next two floors was either by the stairs or the elevator.

The second and third floors consisted of the patient rooms, which numbered 35 in all, with no room decorated the same way and each room painted in a different tint. Some of the rooms were arranged so they could be turned into suites, if necessary. Several rooms on each floor boasted private bathrooms, but every patient's room was equipped with an electric fire place. On both floors there was a verandah and on each end there was space for persons who required outside treatment.

The baths were located in the basement. They used spring waters which contained iron, chloradine and other minerals, which was considered the best tonic for nervous breakdowns and stomach problems. The spring water was brought to the surface by a well dug 700 feet deep, but the well did not require a

pump to bring the water to the surface.

The various baths were of assorted types including electric light, continuous baths, vapor, hot spray and needle half baths. These were for the treatment of chronic diseases, nervous disorders, bowel and kidney problems, as well as for men and women who were below par physically. The basement also had an electrical room which housed the x-ray machine and static machine. This room had an electric light capacity equal to 500 candle powers which were used to correct interior complaints by using an electric light bath. The basement also held a private gymnasium for patients undergoing treatment with a special diet. The attendants at the baths were well experienced in their work, many having worked at the best sanitarium in North America.

As the Mineral Springs Sanitarium was a private company catering to well off patients and existing decades before the start of the public medical system, it was unable to survive the beginning of the Great Depression and it closed in 1930. In 1931 the property became Concordia Hospital and existed as such until the opening of the new Concordia Hospital in 1974. The building remained empty for several years until it was demolished in the late 1970s. In the 1980s the property was bought by the Knights of Columbus who built a seniors home on the site.