



Ritchie Building

46 Princess Street, Saint John, New Brunswick, E2L, Canada

Formally Recognized: 1982/03/18



Ritchie Building - Contextual view



Ritchie Building - Storefront



Ritchie Building - Windows

OTHER NAME(S)

n/a

LINKS AND DOCUMENTS

[Website for the Trinity Royal Preservation Area of the City of Saint John](#)

[Official website for the City of Saint John](#)

CONSTRUCTION DATE(S)

LISTED ON THE CANADIAN REGISTER: 2008/01/14

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

The Ritchie Building is a large three-storey, brick, Italianate commercial building with stucco covering located on the southwest corner of Princess and Canterbury streets in the Trinity Royal Heritage Preservation Area of the City of Saint John.

HERITAGE VALUE

The Ritchie Building is designated a Local Historic Place for its association with its original owner and designer, The Honourable Sir William Johnstone Ritchie, for its association with the practice of law in the City of Saint John and for its architecture.

Born in Nova Scotia, in 1813, The Honourable Sir William Johnstone Ritchie was called to the Nova Scotia Bar in 1837 but moved to New Brunswick to begin a law practice in Saint John in 1838. By the early 1840's, he had built up the most extensive and lucrative practice that anyone had ever enjoyed in the City of Saint John. In 1865, he became Chief Justice of New Brunswick, and then years later, he was named a Puisne Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. In 1879, John A. MacDonald made Ritchie the Chief Justice of Canada. In 1884, he was appointed deputy to Governor General Lord Lansdowne. While in Saint John, he owned a number of properties and his love for architecture was well known. He planned the buildings he would like to build, including the Ritchie Building. Sir William Johnston Ritchie died at Ottawa in 1892 at the age of 78. His tenure as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was 13 years and 8 1/2 months, a Canadian record that has yet to be surpassed. His wife was founder and first president of the Ottawa chapter of the National Council of Women of Canada.

Sir William Ritchie purchased the building that stood on this lot in 1843 and practised law until 1853 when he had the Old Ritchie Building built on this site. It is said that the Old Ritchie Building was a fine specimen of architecture, ahead of its time as a centre for lawyers. In 1874, the building was destroyed by fire and subsequently rebuilt, only to be lost again in the Great Saint John Fire of 1877. This present structure was built shortly after the fire on the same site. The Ritchie buildings that were previously

located on this site were noted landmarks and this present building maintained that prestigious image. The foundations and walls of the previous building are believed to have been utilized in this structure. It was an important location for the “who’s who” of Saint John’s barristers and judges that also housed short hand reporters and accountants. The building contained a large studio space on the third floor used by photographers. The Saint John Law Society also had rooms in this building. At the time of construction, the brick façades were covered with a thin cement parging, scored to look like stone. When the cement parging was removed many years later, the low grade bricks were exposed and property owners re-covered the brick with parging. Many exterior elements such as cornices and tracery were eliminated but the elements that remain still express a fine example of commercial Italianate architecture from the rebuilding period in Saint John following the fire in 1877.

Source: Planning and Development Department - City of Saint John

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

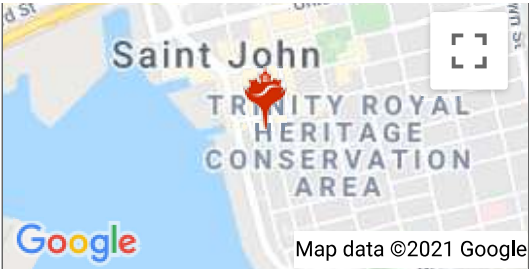
The character defining elements that describe the Ritchie Building include:

- rectangular three-storey massing filling entire lot;
- cement parging;
- quoins;
- vertical sliding wood windows;
- large roof-line cornice with central parapet atop a projecting bay;
- two large triple-set windows with segmented arches and sills with corbel brackets on the top floor;
- Roman arch windows with projecting headers and sills with corbel brackets on the second floor;
- two-storey Roman arch window in central bay with keystone, rosette and a balustrade spandrel between floors ;
- stepped storefront that compensates for the incline of the street;
- segmented arch storefront windows;
- dentils at storefront cornice;
- pilasters dividing the storefront;
- central entranceway consisting of a wood door with glass panels, sidelights, and transom window;
- modillions in the arch over the Roman arch central entranceway.

1 RECOGNITION

1 HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



NEARBY PLACES



Armstrong Building

074 Prince William Street, Saint John, New Brunswick

The Armstrong building is a four storey brick commercial building with Greek elements on the corner...



Commercial Palace

12-14 King Street, Saint John, New Brunswick

The Commercial Palace is a four storey brick commercial building on the western block of King...