



MILLENNIUM

C E N T R E

### **Millennium Centre History**

When the former Canadian Bank of Commerce building, located at 389 Main Street, became vacant in 1969, the monumental and imposing grandeur that lay beyond the massive ornate bronze doors came to be admired but largely ignored. One of the grandest architectural buildings in North America was to remain vacant for over thirty years.

The twentieth century had brought new prosperity and Winnipeg emerged as the prairies' financial centre. Winnipeg was at that time touted to become the "Chicago of the north" and the financial centre of Western Canada. With many banks deciding to expand their facilities along a downtown section of Winnipeg, the area became known as "bankers row."

In 1889, the Canadian Bank of Commerce demolished a building known as the Bannatyne Block at 389 Main Street. They hired the prestigious architectural firm of Darling and Pearson of Toronto, and built what was then a smaller version of the current structure. Frank Darling and John Andrew Pearson were responsible for designing many of Canada's major public buildings.

The building erected in 1889 was subsequently demolished in 1906, with the front façade dismantled stone by stone and reassembled as part of a CIBC bank in Regina. In 1911, again with the firm of Darling and Pearson, and assisted by Charles H. Wheeler of Winnipeg, the current building was erected on the same site. It is in the beaux-arts classical style and is still considered to be one of the most magnificent bank buildings in North America. It is located just off Winnipeg's famous intersection of Portage and Main, and within the boundaries of the Exchange District. The Exchange District was designated as a National Historic Site in 1997.

The present building opened in 1911 and was used by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce until 1969 when the bank moved to the nearby Richardson Building. In 1970, public outcry and subsequent action by Winnipeg's City Council prevented the building (along with the Hamilton Bank located next door) from being demolished to make way for a parking lot. In 1979 the building was designated a Grade I Heritage building by the City of Winnipeg.



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In 1999, the building was no longer deteriorating, but required a real use and purpose and it was suggested as a millennium project to the Winnipeg Millennium Council.

The Winnipeg Millennium Council consisted of a group of volunteers who encouraged Winnipeg and Manitoba organizations to initiate projects that would impart a lasting tribute to the past and at the same time welcome and embrace the new millennium. The preservation and restoration of the building became an endorsed project of the Winnipeg Millennium Council.

In 2000, the building was generously donated by Marwest Management Canada Ltd. to the newly formed 389 Main Street Heritage Corporation. The building was renamed The Millennium Centre and held its official opening in June 2002.

The board of directors of the 389 Main Street Heritage Corporation determined that limited renovations would move forward with the funding being provided by the W.H.& S.E. Loewen Foundation.

Now, the Millennium Centre is successfully managed by The Storm Catering with the main floor Celebration Hall the site of many celebratory events.

## **The Storm Catering**

The Storm Catering is owned and operated by the Mitch and Jennifer Rouire.

Rob Waters is the Executive Chef.

The Storm is also the exclusive caterer of a second unique venue in the City of Winnipeg: Fort Gibraltar. Between these two sites, and a growing number of outside caterings, The Storm coordinates approximately 500 events a year, which has led the company to build a strong and successful reputation throughout Manitoba.