

PSB

The City of Winnipeg Public Safety Building

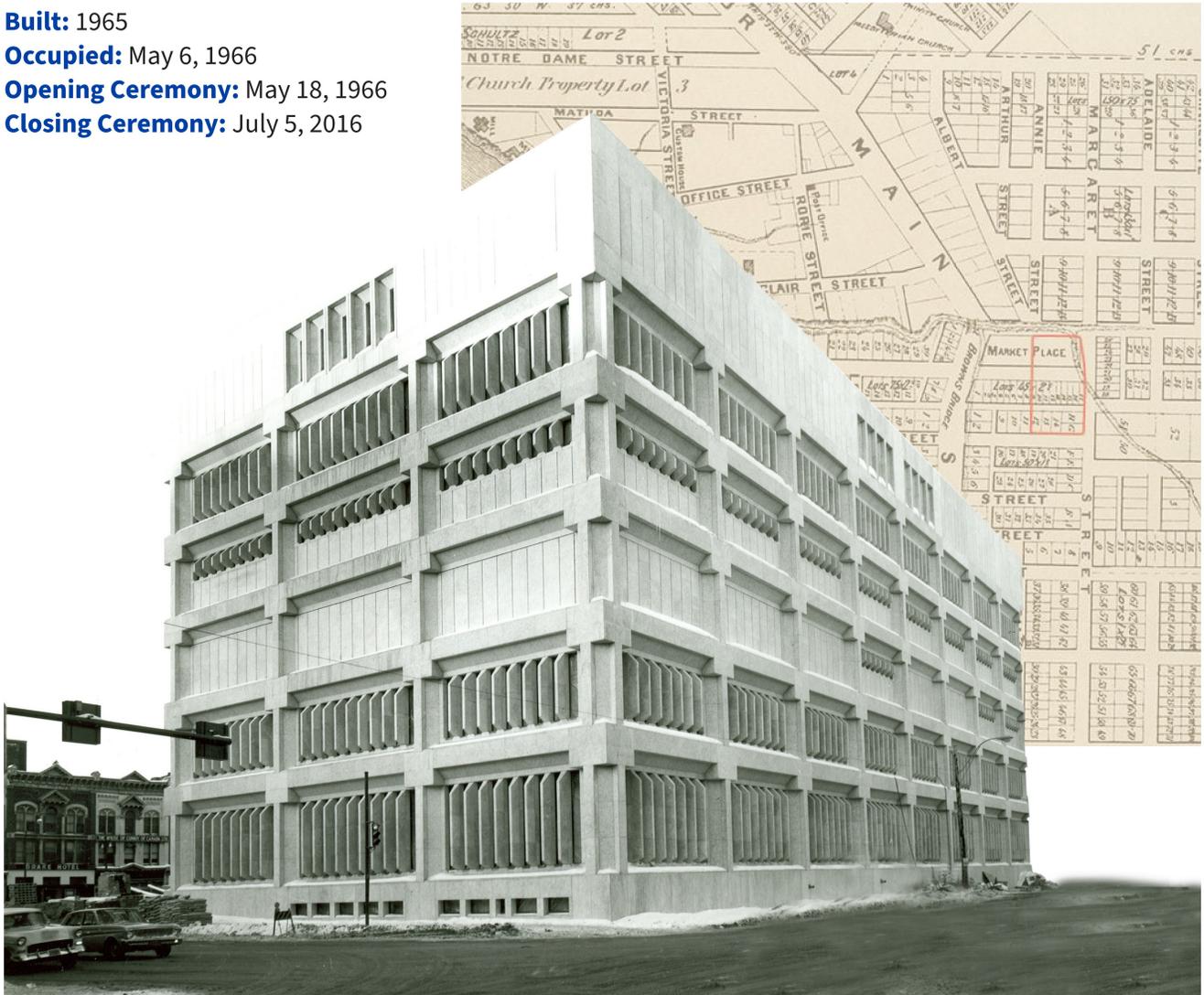
By Secretary Rod Hutter

Built: 1965

Occupied: May 6, 1966

Opening Ceremony: May 18, 1966

Closing Ceremony: July 5, 2016



In 1908, the Winnipeg Police Force moved into their new Central Police Headquarters (A Division) located on the SW corner of Rupert Street and Louise Avenue. They worked out of this building for many years as the force increased in size to meet the demands of a rapidly growing city. By the early 1960s, the station had become overcrowded and dilapidated with numerous complaints about the terrible conditions both the officers and arrested

persons had to endure. Though money was tight, the City commenced planning for a new building with the concept of amalgamating all emergency services into one location, on land adjacent to the City Hall Council and Administration buildings.

This considered property was originally owned by the family of Alexander Ross, a Scottish-born fur trader who emigrated to Upper Canada (Ontario) somewhere around 1805. Ross was prominent in



establishing trading posts for the John Jacob Astor's Pacific Fur Company (1811), which was acquired by the North West Company (in 1813), and later merged with the Hudson's Bay Company (in 1821). After exploring large territories for the Hudson's Bay Company in both the present-day USA and Canada, ROSS eventually settled in the Red River Colony where he served as the Sheriff, Postmaster and member of Council.

From our own history, Winnipeg was incorporated as a City on November 8, 1873, however elections were not actually held until January 5, 1874. It was later, on June 7, 1875, when 3rd generation members of the Ross family donated a one-half hectare portion of their original 100-acre river lot to the fledgling city for the purposes of establishing a market. The donation came with a condition, that the land would always be kept and used for civic purposes, otherwise ownership would revert back to the family. This land, bounded by present-day William

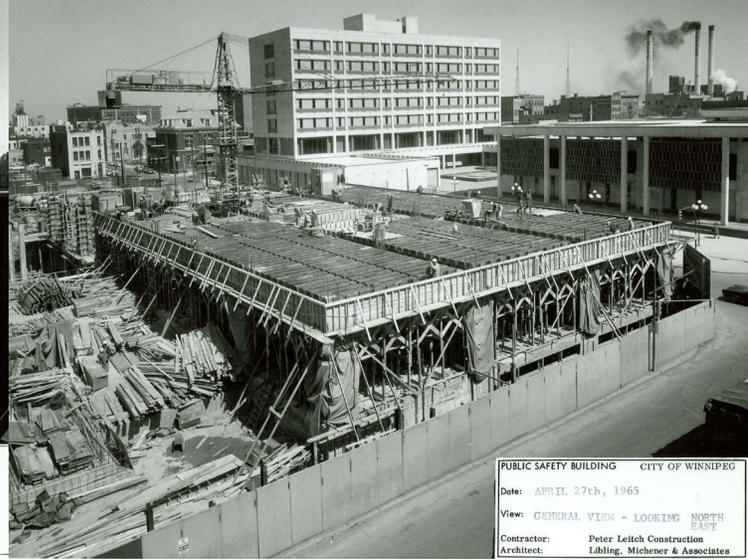
Avenue on the south, Princess Street on the west, Main Street on the east, and what used to be Market Avenue on the north, initially became home to the second City Hall (planned in 1883 and built by 1886), and the "Old Market Square" (built in 1889 where the PSB was later constructed). The market building was torn down in 1964/1965 when the area was restructured for the Public Safety Building.



The second City Hall was a large Victorian style building fraught with structural problems and would often be referred to as the "Gingerbread House". This was demolished in 1962 to make way for the current City Hall Building that was



PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING
 Date: January 25th, 1965
 View: EXCAVATION, LOOKING EAST
 Contractor: Peter Leitch Construction
 Architect: Libling, Michener & Associates



PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING CITY OF WINNIPEG
 Date: APRIL 27th, 1965
 View: GENERAL VIEW - LOOKING NORTH EAST
 Contractor: Peter Leitch Construction
 Architect: Libling, Michener & Associates

completed in 1964 at the cost of about 8.2 million dollars. Afterwards on December 21, 1964, Winnipeg City Council awarded a contract for the construction of the new Public Safety Building and Civic Parkade at a cost of \$4.8 million.

The PSB was designed by Libling Michener & Associates and the majority of its construction occurred throughout 1965. The building architecture was classified as the “brutalist style of modernism”, a design starting to emerge with other prominent Winnipeg buildings of that time. Similar structures in this classification included the new City Hall, the Centennial Concert Hall, the Museum of Man and Nature/Planetarium, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Royal Canadian Mint, and the original Winnipeg International Airport. Emulating this style, the PSB was designed as a fortress and certainly looked like one.

The PSB contained the new “999” emergency service, along with modernized Police Communications and the municipal fire-alarm dispatch centre, which all combined to provide emergency servicing for the whole Metropolitan area of Greater Winnipeg.

In addition, the building also contained 4 court rooms, cell block/detention areas for 145 men and 32 women, a modern garage, and crime investigation facilities. The 6-storey “airconditioned offices” accommodated the Detective, Morality, Traffic and Patrol Divisions, along with the Central Registry, Court offices, Fire and Police administrative offices, Signal Department, Corps of Commissionaires, and an office set aside to

accommodate a proposed new Juvenile Division. The new building was considered to be “well located, well designed, and functionally planned to meet Police requirements” in a modern time.

Initially, the PSB floorplan and occupancy consisted of:

- 7th Floor: elevator Penthouse
- 6th Floor: mechanical/ventilation and maintenance offices (west side), storage rooms (east side)
- 5th Floor: Police Executive, administration and internal affairs (east side), Fire Executive, administration and Fire Prevention (west side), and Cafeteria (NE corner)
- 4th Floor: men’s Jail (ranges and pens), intake, and drunk tank
- 3rd Floor: Court Rooms x 4 and Women’s Jail
- 2nd Floor: Bureau of Police Records (BPR-south end from elevators), Crime Division (west side), Vice Division (known as the Morality Division-east side) which also included offices for the proposed Juvenile Division)
- Main Floor: Station Duty, 999 emergency Services, Superintendent and Inspector offices (south end), Traffic (east side from elevators to north end), Fire communications (SE corner), Police communications (SW corner), Clerk of the Courts, Magistrates and cashiers (west side from the elevators to the north end)
- PSB Basement: Locker rooms (NE corner and east side), Div 11 (north end), City Signals (south end) Electrical Rooms – SW corner,



PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING CITY OF WINNIPEG
 Date: JULY 29TH, 1965
 View: GENERAL VIEW, LOOKING SOUTHWEST FROM TOP OF CIVIC OFFICES BLDG.
 Contractor: Peter Leitch Construction
 Architect: Libling, Michener & Associates



PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING CITY OF WINNIPEG
 Date: FEBRUARY 28TH, 1966
 View: 5TH FLOOR - SOUTH END - OFFICES
 Contractor: Peter Leitch Construction
 Architect: Libling, Michener & Associates

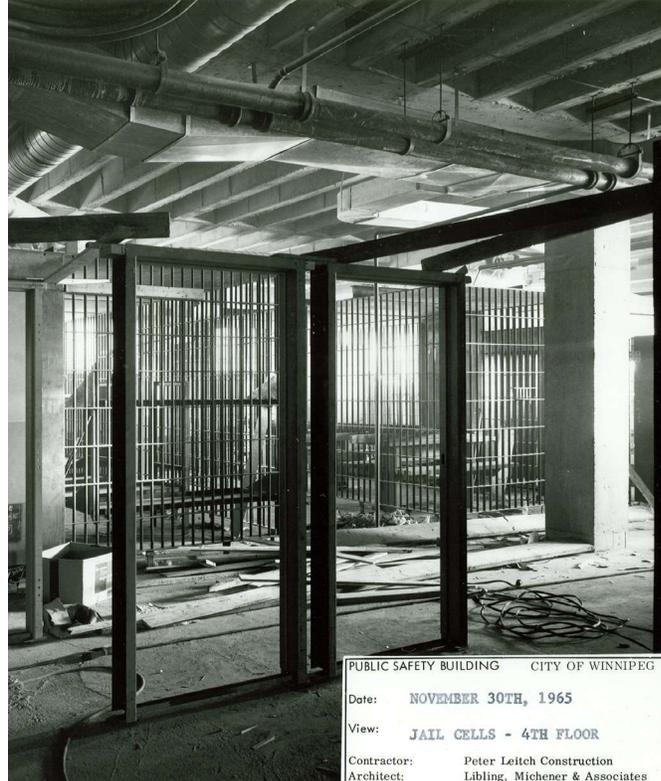
Caretakers – South end Quartermaster stores (west side)

- Parkade Basement: vehicle Parking, shooting range, garage staffed with mechanics and city signals (north end)

As all the civic departments moved into the PSB after its opening, the building instantly filled to maximum capacity - right from the very beginning.

Over the next few years profound changes occurred within the building which remained congested. The Police Garage relocated to 55 Princess. The Signals department moved out as well and the Police Court Unit eventually took over their offices. The communications centre moved to the 6th Floor, and growing reliance on computers and related systems gave rise to the I.T. department who also set up within office space on the 6th floor.

The opening of the new Provincial Remand center in October of 1992 sealed the fate of the jails located on the 3rd and 4th floors which were decommissioned. After a massive renovation during 1999/2000, the 4th Floor became home to the Bureau of Police Records (south end), the new Communications Centre (west side), and Direct Voice Entry, along with administrative offices and a boardroom (east side). The third floor became Division 11 General Patrol (west side), and Division 41 (east side) which consisted of Youth Division, Sex Crimes, Child Abuse and Missing Persons. Traffic Division took over the entire east side of the main floor while the west side became station duty, the Police Information Offices/Media Room, and Division 30 Building Services.



PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING CITY OF WINNIPEG
 Date: NOVEMBER 30TH, 1965
 View: JAIL CELLS - 4TH FLOOR
 Contractor: Peter Leitch Construction
 Architect: Libling, Michener & Associates



PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING CITY OF WINNIPEG
 Date: DECEMBER 30th, 1965
 View: SECOND FLOOR, WEST SIDE
 Contractor: Peter Leitch Construction
 Architect: Libling, Michener & Associates



Quartermaster Stores moved out into a satellite building on Notre Dame, and the Tactical Support Team took over their former offices in the basement. The Fire Department also moved from the 5th floor, and their executive office spaces were taken over by the WPS Street Crime Unit along with the Internet Exploitation Unit (ICE).

Aside from overcrowding and congestion, the PSB also suffered from another design shortcoming that ultimately marked the beginning of its end. In reality, the building was actually doomed right from the start and saw the exterior limestone cladding degrading over the years. Due to moisture seeping in between the cladding, and the relentless freeze-thaw cycles of the Winnipeg climate, the steel anchors holding the limestone sections began to corrode, break, and separate the exterior panels from their braces. Stone sections began to fall away resulting in the application of steel strapping to help keep the panels in place. To eliminate the immediate risk of persons being struck by falling stone, in 2006 the city enclosed the sidewalk around the PSB with a sheltered walkway at the cost of \$100,000.

Several factors complicated the PSB problem and limited options for the property that could be explored or considered by the city.

Construction

The PSB had 2 significant problems, the corroding steel anchors holding the limestone cladding on the exterior, and the levels of asbestos used within the interior. To renovate the building would be extremely expensive, complicated, and time-consuming.

Civic Parkade

The Civic Parkade also suffered from design flaws. Over the years the concrete began to delaminate, fall apart, and become unsound. This required the installation of heavy steel bracing to maintain structural integrity of the parkade. The rate of degradation however began to surpass the shoring efforts which resulted in the eventual closure of the parkade and ensured its future demolition. Concrete issues also affected the tunnel system which joined the parkade to the PSB, Council Building and Administration Building. Cracks and leaks were constantly repaired, however the tunnel eventually became unstable and had to be closed down.

Campus Concept

What was supposed to be a great strength turned out to be a weakness for development. City Hall was built based on the campus concept where buildings and infrastructure were all linked together. Backup heating and electrical systems for the PSB, Council and Admin buildings were located in the Parkade basement and upper floors. The PSB and Civic Parkade were directly adjoined by the common underground garage and tunnel systems. No one area could be severed from the other without extensive (and expensive) changes to key infrastructure and renovation.

Land Donation

As the land was originally donated to the city with the condition it always be used for civic purposes, and since both the Council Building and Administration Building were already situated on this land, it would have to be sub-divided to



separate it from the PSB and parkade. Any division and offer for sale would need to involve the Ross family descendants of which there were 19 identified members.

It is interesting to note, where many buildings in the exchange and market districts were over 100 years old, structurally sound, and being extensively renovated and repurposed, the Public Safety Building and Civic Parkade reached the end of their viable lifespan within 50 years.

In 2009, the City purchased the former Canada Post Building at 245 Smith Street with the intention of renovating the warehouse and mail processing plant to become the next Police Headquarters Building. This endeavour would later see its own fair share of rising costs and controversy.

The building and redevelopment of the HQ building neared completion in 2016 which saw the gradual migration of Police units to their new Headquarters. As in the past, satellite offices were closed and everything moved into the one central location. With all transitions completed, the PSB officially closed with a ceremony held on July 15, 2016.

It took another 4 years to clear out and prepare the PSB and attached Civic Parkade for demolition. The asbestos abatement and demolition contracts were awarded to Rakowski Cartage and Wrecking.



Winnipeg Police Headquarters since inception:

Winnipeg Police Station

William/Main
1874 - 1883

Winnipeg Police Court Building

223 James
1883 - 1908

Winnipeg Police Central Police Station

Rupert/Louise
1908 - 1966

Winnipeg Police Public Safety Building

151 Princess
1966 - 2016

Winnipeg Police HQ Building

245 Smith
2016 - Present



Demolition of the Civic Parkade and PSB proceeded with the following timeline:

MAY 6, 2019

Demolition permit secured for the Civic Parkade and PSB. Overall costs to demolish the Civic Parkade and PSB along with readying the land for development estimated at 9.7 million.

JUNE 3, 2019

Contract awarded for the abatement of hazardous materials in the Civic Parkade. Work to begin on June 6 and expected to conclude within 4-6 weeks.

JULY 24, 2019

Abatement of hazardous materials in the Civic Parkade nearing completion with the same work commencing in the PSB.

SEPTEMBER 12, 2019

Control of the property turned over to the demolition contractor.

JANUARY 8, 2020

Discovery of additional asbestos materials in the PSB extends the abatement timeline by 3 months to October 2020. Soft-stripping of partitions and fixtures in the PSB ongoing.

JANUARY 21, 2020

Exterior demolition commences on the north side of the Civic Parkade.

MARCH 23, 2020

Demolition of the above grade structure of the Civic Parkade is complete.

APRIL 29, 2020

Abatement efforts in the PSB completed. Unforeseen work relating to hydro infrastructure, signal controls and water service delays the start of PSB demolition.

JUNE 2, 2020

Removal of demolition material from the PSB commenced.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2020

PSB removed to grade level and demolition of the basement commences.

NOVEMBER 12, 2020

Last of the site work ongoing. Placement of final gravel topping and installation of gravel fence.

NOVEMBER 30, 2020

DEMOLITION COMPLETE

The demolition of the PSB and Civic parkade marked the end of an era, and the land is now essentially at the same state it was in 1964 after the demolition of the Market Building. The next stage for this property is still undecided. The City of Winnipeg plans to retain the land, and Centre Venture has been chosen to explore and present options for future civic owned development.