

L.A.C.A.C. REPORT

Barnes-Fawcett Block **358-366 Queen Street East** Sault Ste. Marie

By-Law:	81-312
Date:	October 16, 1989
G.I.S. record:	X: 704,492.948
	Y: 5,154,476.524



Report Prepared for Designation
Under the Ontario Heritage Act By the Sault Ste. Marie LACAC

April, 1989

*This is an edited copy of the original document
Originals included in the Municipal Heritage Committee Binder – Titled: “Barnes-Fawcett Block”

BARNES- FAWCETT BLOCKS

Construction of the Barnes Block was initiated on Wednesday morning, October 29, 1913. The developer, Theron T. Barnes was a successful “west end” druggist whose business had prospered for some eleven years on the southeast corner of the Queen & Gore Streets intersection. That earlier block, built about 1900 and purchased by Barnes in 1902, is today one of Sault Ste. Marie’s designated heritage buildings.

By his own admission, T.T. Barnes recognized an opportunity to participate in an upward revision of real estate values along Queen Street. He anticipated that the property, which he had purchased from A. Brazeau of Bay Street for \$ 425.00 a foot that year, would double its value by the spring of 1914.

The Barnes Block, in fact, may have been significant, along with the S. W Fawcett and T.J Irwin properties, in completing the infilling of Queen Street. This thoroughfare, Sault Ste. Marie’s main commercial avenue, has a somewhat unusual history, in that development commenced from two poles and moved toward the centre. For many years before 1913 the lots on central Queen Street had been a disgrace to the town, overgrown by weeds and littered with heaps of refuse. One senses a certain satisfaction in the Sault Star’s caption: “Mr. T.T. Barnes started work on new \$8,500. block.” (Oct. 29, 1913, p.1)

The building was designed by Moran and McPhail to house two stores on the ground floor, with offices on the second. Moran and McPhail were two young architects recently settled in town, who one year before had won the right to design the new Central School (Sault Star, May 29, 1912, p. 1, c. 3.). At the same time as they were hired to design the Barnes Block, they were retained by the developer of Wellington Square, Mr. W. Hessen, to realize his concept for this very attractive row of residences (Sault Star, Dec. 18, 1913, p.1, c.2). By February of 1915, McPhail appears to have been working alone, for he is credited with the design for the Algoma Agency and Supply Co., an automobile franchise to be located at Brock and Albert (Sault Star, Feb 13, 1915, p.6 c.2, see Appendix B, this Report). Later, McPhail moved to Windsor, where he designed the largest public school yet constructed in Canada, with 230’ of frontage, 21 rooms, medical and dental examination rooms, rooms for the “mentally deficient,” fresh-air rooms for tubercular students, a gymnasium and auditorium or, in the fashionable educational buzz term of the time, “community centre” (Sault Star, Nov. 5, 1919, p.7, c.1). McPhail had obviously made his mark, for the school met many of the progressive criteria espoused by Dr. Cody, the Minister of Education in the last years of the Hearst Government.

The contractors were Ableson and Wright. Although the contractors estimated that construction would require two months, Mr. Barnes did not open his second drug store in that building until 1915.

Appendix A contains a Report on Land Uses for the Barnes-Fawcett properties.

Prepared by John Abbot and Robert Ewing
February 1, 1989

REPORT ON LAND USES OCCUPYING THE BARNES-FAWCETT BLOCK

(Nos. 358, 360, 362, 364 and 366) Queen Street East, Sault Ste. Marie.

The Barnes-Fawcett Block was constructed in 1913; the 1914 Vernon's City Directory lists occupants for retail space at Nos. 358 and 360 (the Fawcett Block) as well as for No. 362 which gives access to offices and apartments on the second floor. The 1915 Directory lists occupants for Nos. 364 and 366 (the Barnes Block). For convenience the occupants of each civic number will be considered separately; as is true of many downtown retail properties, considerable turnover of uses and therefore short-term occupancy, is evident for all properties with the exception of 366.

#358.

Originally occupied by J.C Richardson, Real Estate, 358's only long-term tenants have been the Singer Sewing Machine Co. between 1927 and 1944 and Tri State Acceptance between 1965 and 1979. At various times, the property has been occupied by clothing stores (merchant tailor, men's furnishing, etc.) confectioners (H. Piner, 1917-22), shoe stores (B.H Garshowitz, 1951-56) and sports stores and is currently the home of Desire Fashions (since 1985). The property is noted as having been vacant in the 1916, 1923-25, and 1945 City Directories.

360.

#360 shows a more consistent pattern of use; though the tenants changed fairly often, the most common retail type was clothing:

1914-16 - Children's Wear

1917-26 - Fancy Goods (Nate Himmel 1920-26)

1927-65 - Ladies' Wear (Nate Himmel, Wray Ltd., Louis Florence, S. Green were some of the retailers)

It was occupied by a Beauty Salon from 1966 to 1977; shoe stores until 1983; and is again a Beauty Salon.

364.

Between 1915 and 1922, #364 was occupied by Fowlie & Co., Jewellers; of most interest, perhaps, in view of the fact that this is the Barnes Block, is the fact that from 1924 to 1928 it was occupied by T. T. Barnes, Optician, from 1931 to 1937 by T.T. and H.R. Barnes, Optometrist (father and son?) and from 1938 to 1950 by H. R. Barnes alone. Other long-term uses included sporting goods and bicycle sales, under different owners, from 1951 to 1967 and maternity wear (Watermelon Seed) from 1974 to 1983. Since 1986 it has been occupied by Wiseway Travel.

366.

#366 displays the most consistent use over time. Barnes owned three drugstores, the other two being at #3 Queen Street East and #138 James Street in the west end. Originally called the Central Drug Store (perhaps in view of its location relative to the rest of the city, it was renamed Barnes Drug Store in 1921 and continued in operation until 1963. The property remained vacant until 1966 when it re-opened as a jewellery store (Sidwell's), a use that continues to the present.

362.

#362, as noted, provides access to the second floor. Until the late 1920's it provided space for professionals, particularly doctors (T. Hutton, J.R McLean, R. Cain) and dentist (J.W Grainger) and for various firms (Manufacturers' Life, Fuller Brush). Later, space was devoted to lower grade occupations, such as dressmakers and beauty parlors, and to apartments, sometimes the homes of the tenants of the first floor stores.

ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

1. T.T. Barnes

The developer, Theron T. Barnes, was a successful "west end" druggist whose business had prospered for some eleven years before he embarked on expanding his enterprises further east along Queen Street. His existing business was housed in a two-storey building located on the southeast corner of the Queen & Gore Streets intersection. That earlier block, built about 1900 and purchased by Barnes in 1902, is today one of Sault Ste. Marie's designated heritage buildings. By his own admission, T.T. Barnes recognized an opportunity to participate in an upward revision of real estate values along Queen Street. He anticipated that the property, which he had purchased from A. Brazeau of Bay Street for \$ 425.00 a foot that year, would double its value by the spring of 1914.

2. Property

The Barnes Block, in fact, may have been significant, along with the S.W. Fawcett and T. J. Irwin properties, in completing the infilling of Queen Street. This thoroughfare, Sault Ste. Marie's main commercial avenue, has a somewhat unusual history, in that development commenced from two poles and moved toward the centre. For many years before 1913 the lots on central Queen had been a disgrace to the town, overgrown by weeds and littered with heaps of refuse. One senses a certain satisfaction in the Sault Star's caption: "Mr. T.T. Barnes started work on new \$8, 500 block." (Oct. 29, 1913, p.1).

3. Building

The building was designed by Moran and McPhail to house two stores on the ground floor, with offices on the second. Moran and McPhail were two young architects, recently settled in town, who one year before had won the right to design the new Central School (Sault Star, May 29, 1912, p. 1, c.3). At the same time as they were hired to design the Barnes Block, they were retained by the developer of Wellington Square, Mr. W. Hessen, to realize his concept for this very attractive row of residences (Sault Star, Dec. 18, 1913, p. 1, c.2). Construction of the Barnes Block started on Wednesday morning, October 29, 1913. The contractors were Ableson and Wright, and although they estimated that construction would require two months, Mr. Barnes did not open his second drug store in that building until 1915.

Although it was obviously designed as a matched pair of buildings, with separate identities appearing on the pediment panels, the Barnes-Fawcett Block was constructed as a single structure. History does not tell us the reason for this approach to the design. The buildings are well proportioned, handsomely modelled and less altered than many others of similar age or more recent vintage on Queen Street. Indeed, it would appear that only the storefronts and their sign have been renewed or replaced. The building treatment is a bolder, if simpler version of the neo-classical revival style employed by the same Architects for their contemporary Wellington Square project. At the street level there are three splayed entrances, a central one accessing the stairs to the second floor offices and two other entrances with pairs of doors leading to the flanking stores. We have no record of the original appearance of this part, nor of the store identification treatment above the windows, but the soffits of two of the splayed entrances exhibit a highly imaginative treatment of tapered panelling which is almost certainly original. A simple continuous cornice and frieze surmounts the store fronts returning on itself at the ends. The storefronts themselves are comfortably terminated by brick pilasters.

The second floor façade is constructed of dark brown brick with the projecting pilasters carried up at each end and a double-width pilaster at the centre. Each half is pierced by four symmetrically paired windows having stone sills and pronounced keystones in their flat-brick-arched heads. This range of windows is surmounted by a continuous and strongly modelled entablature displaying the standard components of architrave, frieze and cornice, the latter supported by regularly spaced, decorative scrolled modillions under the soffit. The entablature follows the projection of the pilasters and here the modillions are replaced by a pair of elegant elongated brackets at the end pilasters and by a double pair at the center one. The entablature is surmounted in turn by six blocking courses of brick with a cut stone cap which is penetrated by the square pediment panels bearing the building names and dates. There is an additional decorative cap over the centre pilaster and stone cavette or cove mouldings flank the pediment panels.

The classical theme follows through in the elegant Roman lettering incised into the stonework of the pediment panels.

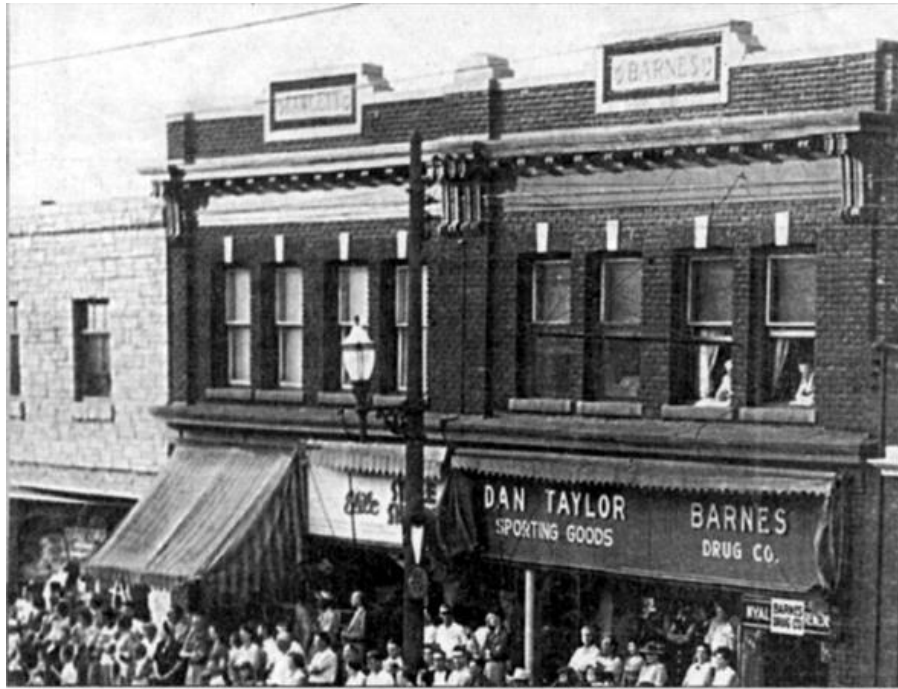
4. **Assessment**

This building merits designation for the following reasons:

- 1) The entire building treatment is carefully conceived and boldly and consistently executed.
- 2) The contrast of dark brick, light stone and painted trim compliments the satisfying proportions of the design and the whole façade forms a splendid composition in which each part reinforces the other.

It is an excellent example of early 20th Century commercial building which deserves to be preserved in its present form and this assessment suggests that this be a condition of designation.

Photo courtesy of Sault Ste. Marie Museum



FILE PHOTO
THE BARNES-FAWCETT block was built in 1913 by Theron T. Barnes, owner of Barnes Drug Store, located on the southeast corner of Queen and Gore streets. Barnes purchased the land in 1913 to expand his enterprises eastward along the Sault's main street. Development of the Barnes Block, along with property owned by S.W. Fawcett and T.J. Irwin, helped clean up some otherwise overgrown empty lots on Queen Street.