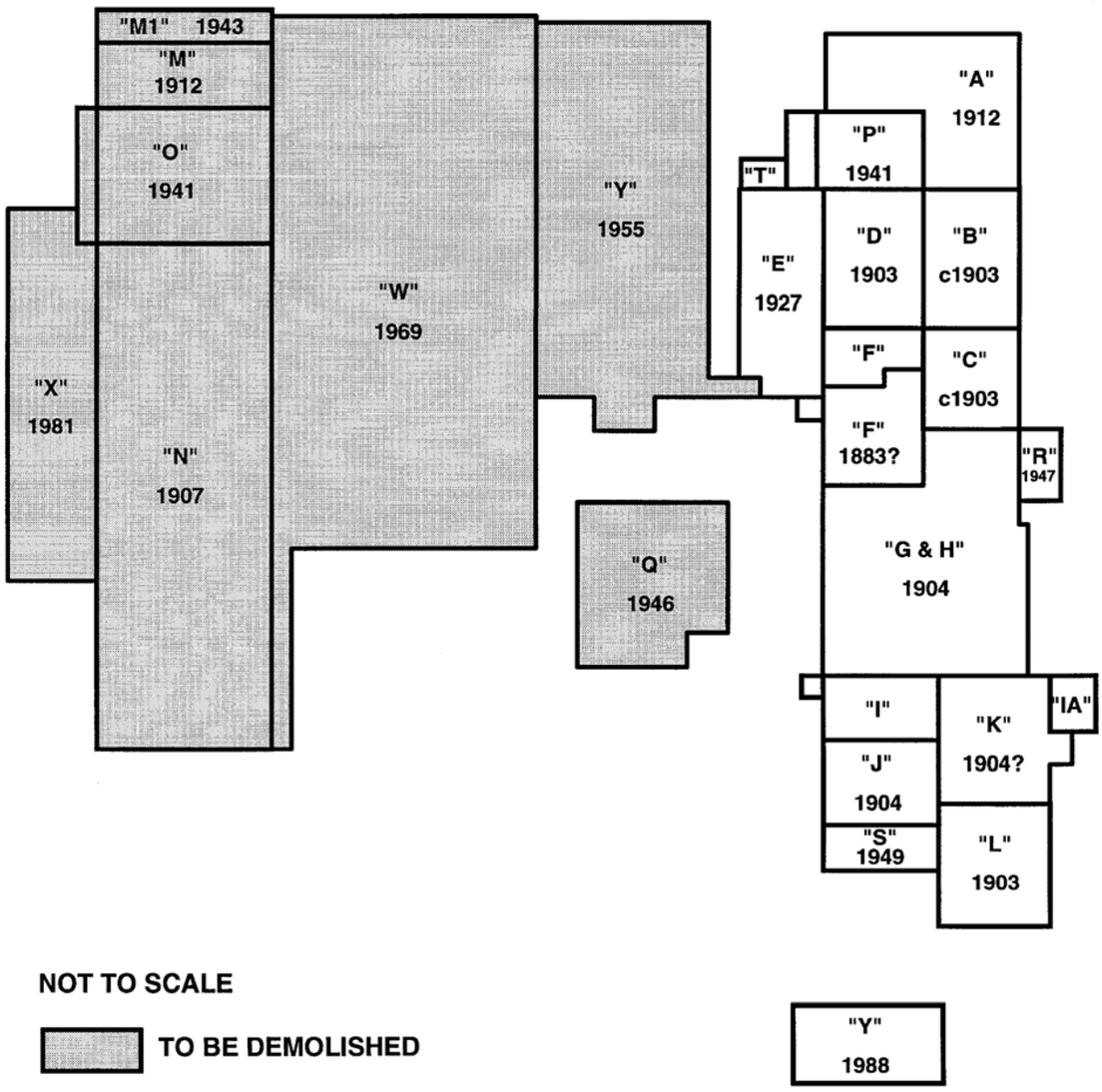
83 - Schedule "A" referred to in Clause 1 of the Report of the Committee on Planning and Community Services dated October 28, 1997

65 REDWOOD AVENUE
MOLSON'S BREWERY
SITE PLAN



Schedule "B" referred to in Clause 1 of the Report of the Committee on Planning and Community Services dated October 28, 1997

HISTORY

The Drewry's (Molson's) Brewery site located on the west bank of the Red River north of present-day Redwood Avenue was first developed for beer-making in 1874 by Captain William Herchemer and his partner, Batkin. The two-storey wood frame facility housed two brewing kettles and relied on horse-generated power. It was one of the city's earliest, but not its first commercial brewery. The business faltered financially and closed in 1876.

Productions resumed after Edward L. Drewry leased the property in May 1877. Over the next few years, he expanded the Redwood Brewery to include a deep well, beer cellar with a thick ice roof, additional buildings, and steam-generated power. In 1881, he bought the site, including some 1.38 hectares (3.4 acres) of land, from Alfred Boyd.

Drewry (1851-1940) went on to establish one of the province's dominant beer-making enterprises, his main competitor being McDonagh and Shea Ltd. He also became a Winnipeg alderman (1883-84), member of the Manitoba legislature (1886-88) and chairman of the Public Parks Board (1893-97).

Born in England, Drewry was taken to the United States as a youngster. After his family arrived in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1857, his father entered a brewing partnership known as Drewry and Scotten (later Drewry and Sons). Edward trained in the business, then managed a brewery in Pembina, Dakota Territory, from 1874 until his move north.

As Manitoba's population increased, so too did the markets for beer and Drewry's need for new production facilities. From 1881 through to the late 1890s, his brewery grew to include ice houses, beer vaults, a malt house and kiln, a three-storey brew house, more boiler and steam engine capacity, stables, a large windmill, a three-storey aerated water factory, and a grain elevator. These facilities were of wood frame construction except for an 1883 brick-on-stone ice house with underground lager vaults. Little is known about who was employed to design and build the structures.

Common to industry practices, Edward and his partner-brother Frederick William Drewry (1855-1928) also invested in the hotel and bar trade as a means of ensuring ample retail outlets for their products.

The years 1902 to 1913 saw extensive redevelopment of the Redwood site, including replacement of several original buildings by more substantial brick structures with concrete floors and interior supports of iron or steel. Among the additions were a cold storage building (1903), new boiler (1903) and brew (1904) houses, a bottling department (1904) that later became a lager cellar and rack room, a second bottling house and chemical laboratory (1907), stables (1907, 1910), a garage (1907-09), storage buildings (1910, 1912), and a barrel factory (1912). Existing structures also were improved and/or expanded.

To accommodate all this, Drewry bought another 3.44 hectares (8.5 acres) from Boyd in 1903. This extended the holding to Main Street where Drewry maintained his own house, greenspace and two other dwellings, including a log structure known as Redwood Store/House built in c.1857.

The Redwood Brewery was sold in 1924 to local investor G. Montagu Black and others. It subsequently was known as The Drewry's Ltd. until 1950. These were hard times for the liquor business and prohibition in 1916-23 was followed by continued restrictions on the retail distribution of beer in Manitoba. Consumption rose in the late 1920s, but then fell during the depressed 1930s, forcing brewers to produce well below capacity. They also had to provide financial aid to prop up the hotel/bar trade.

In this context, few improvements were made to the Redwood plant. Indeed, a major loss occurred in 1929 when the 1881 malt house burned. New investment did not resume until beer markets revived during World War II. Drewry's built a cash-and-carry store on Main Street (1941) and a large workshop (1945-46). The firm also added a spent malt room (1949) to its brew house and upgraded the bottling plant, boiler house and cooler room. Some of this work was directed by architects Northwood and Chivers. The main contractors were Lailey and Co., Boland Brothers and Commonwealth Construction Co.

Drewry's and Shea's Winnipeg Brewery remained Manitoba's main beer-makers into the late 1940s. Moreover, between them, they owned or exercised control over three of the other four firms in the industry. In 1949, however, Drewry's was taken over by a Vancouver-based organization in which E.P. Taylor held a strong interest and subsequently was renamed the Western Canada Breweries Ltd. Shea's faced a similar fate in 1952-53 when it came under the control of the Labatt Brewing Co. of Ontario. More consolidations followed. Carling Breweries (Manitoba) Ltd. (later Carling O'Keefe) took over the Redwood site in 1957, followed by Molson Breweries Ltd. in 1989.

Schedule "B" referred to in Clause 1 of the Report of the Committee on Planning and Community Services dated October 28, 1997 (continued)

A fermentation and storage building was added to the complex (1955), then expanded (1969). A warehouse (1960) and an office building (1986) also were built. Demolition activity included removal of Redwood House in the early 1940s, Drewry's home in 1951 and the beer store in 1974. The Main Street frontage, in turn, was sold and redeveloped in stages. Among other removals were a dwelling designed by Charles S. Bridgman, a fireproof stable planned by Herbert Matthews and F.F. LeMaistre, a brick garage, wood-frame stable, and metal storage building, all dating from the early 1900s.

Molson closed the Redwood plant on August 1, 1997. Until then, this probably was the oldest continuously used industrial site in Winnipeg, if not Manitoba, and one that retained its original function. Because of the brewery's efficiency, it outlived its competitors to become the province's last producer of national brand beers.

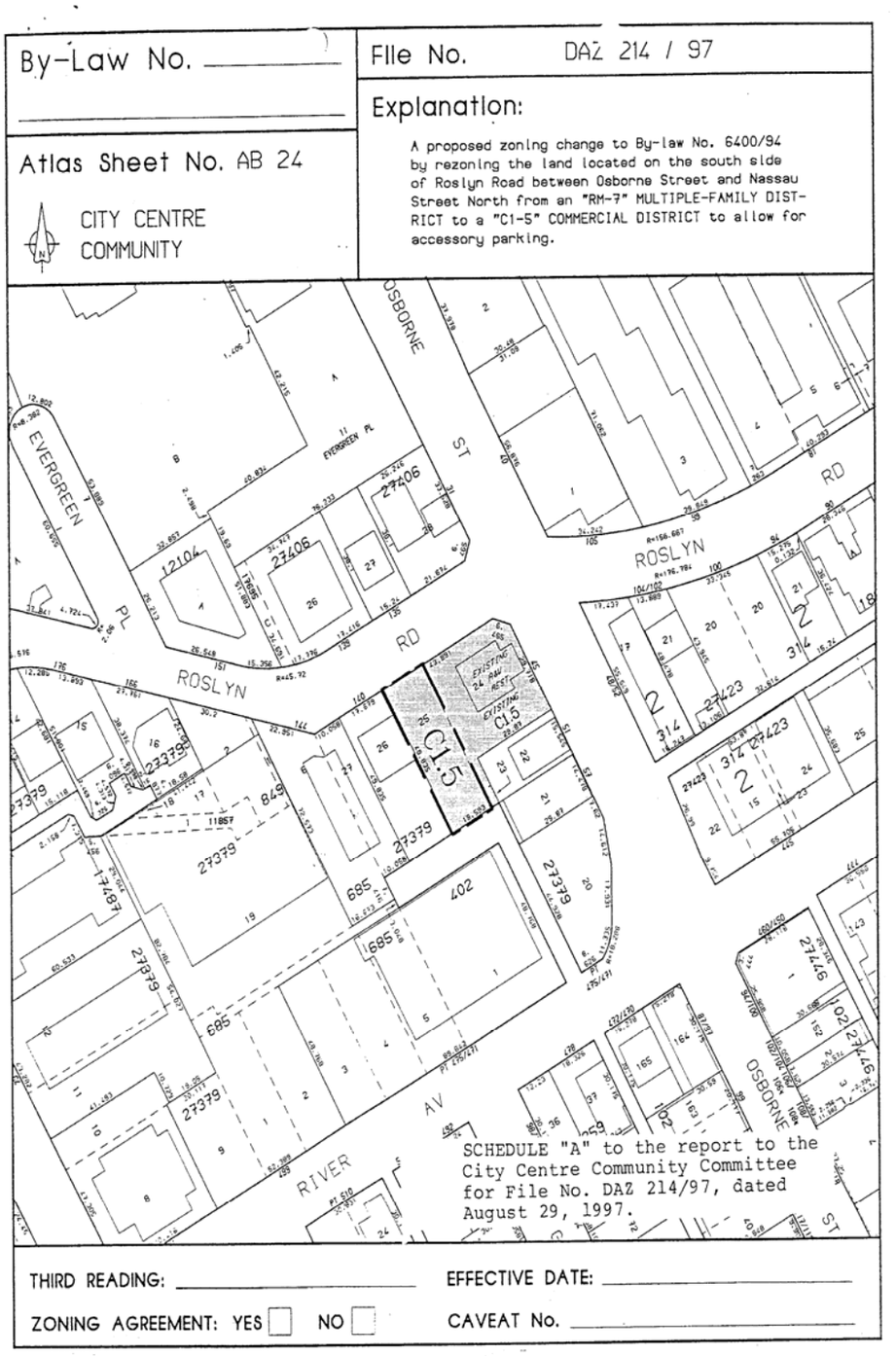
Drewry's 1883 brick ice house is believed to be the only pre-1900 facility left on the site. It stands in an altered state in the middle of a bank of buildings on the complex's east (river) side. The other Drewry-era structures that possess the most integrity are the:

Boiler House (1903), built by Edward Cass; designer unknown. It was extended to two storeys in 1913.

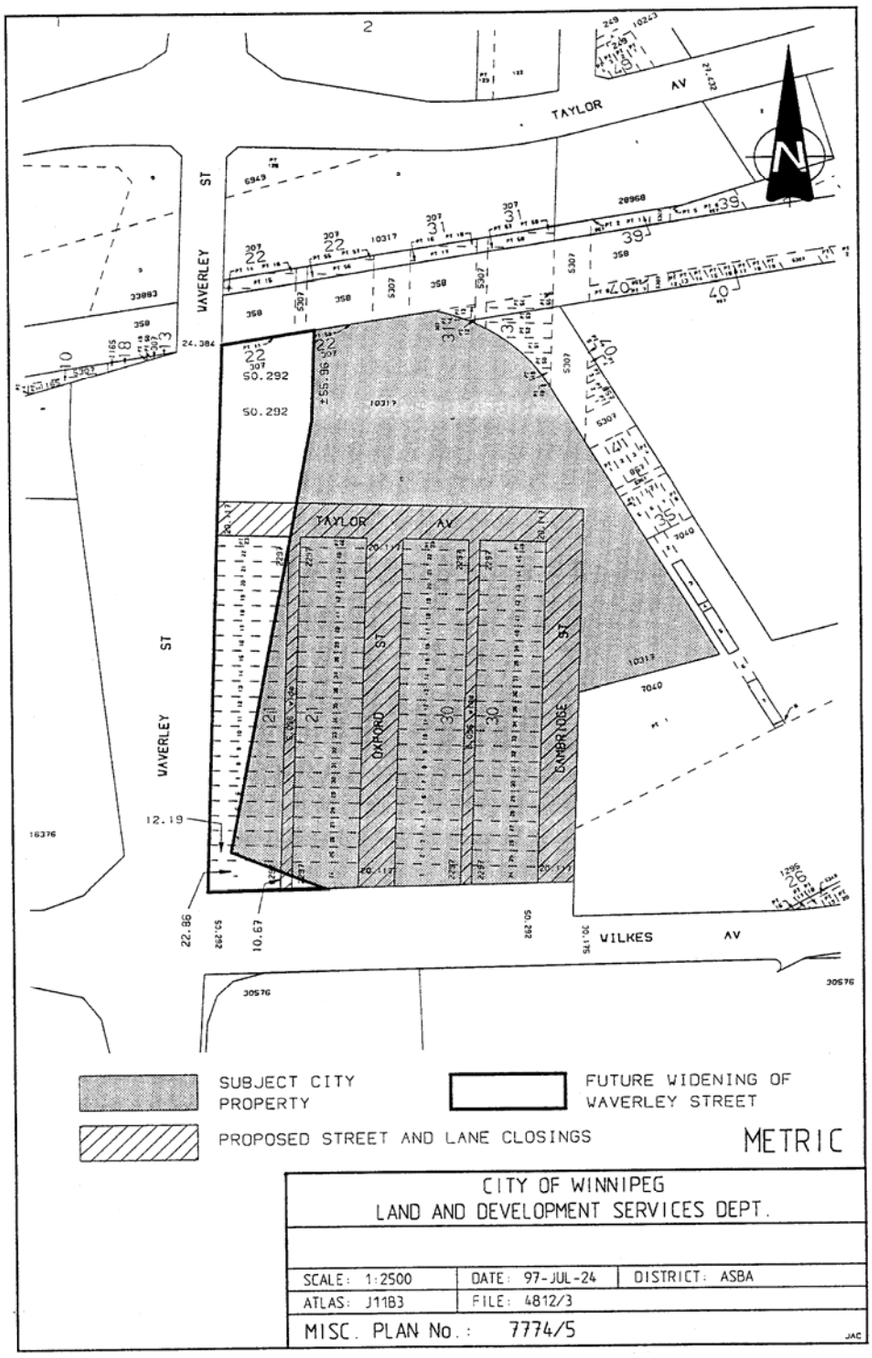
Brew House (1904), designed by Westner and Co. of Chicago and built by the Manitoba Construction Co., a firm owned by contractor Thomas Kelly. This four-storey, Renaissance-style building is typical of North American brewery architecture. Its arched windows, corbelled brickwork and crenellated Norman tower are intended to make it the showpiece of an otherwise utilitarian complex.

Bottling House (1907) designed by Kaestner or Kastner (possibly Westner) and Co. of Chicago. The contractor, William Horner, did other projects for Drewry's in 1904-13. This two-storey building with a three-storey centre pavilion is complementary to, but more subdued in styling than the brew house.

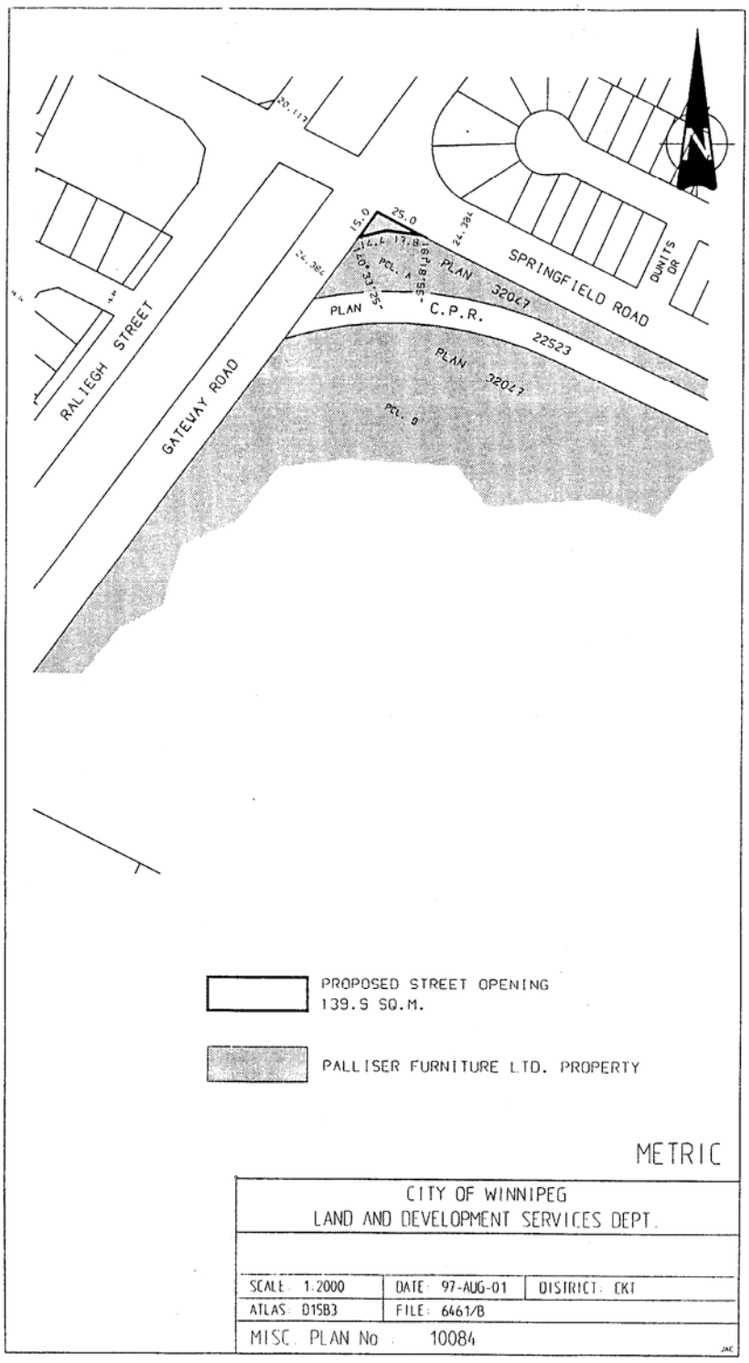
84 - Schedule "A" referred to in Clause 3 of the Report of the Committee on Planning and Community Services dated October 28, 1997



85 - Schedule “A” referred to in Clause 6 of the Report of the Committee on Planning and Community Services dated October 28, 1997

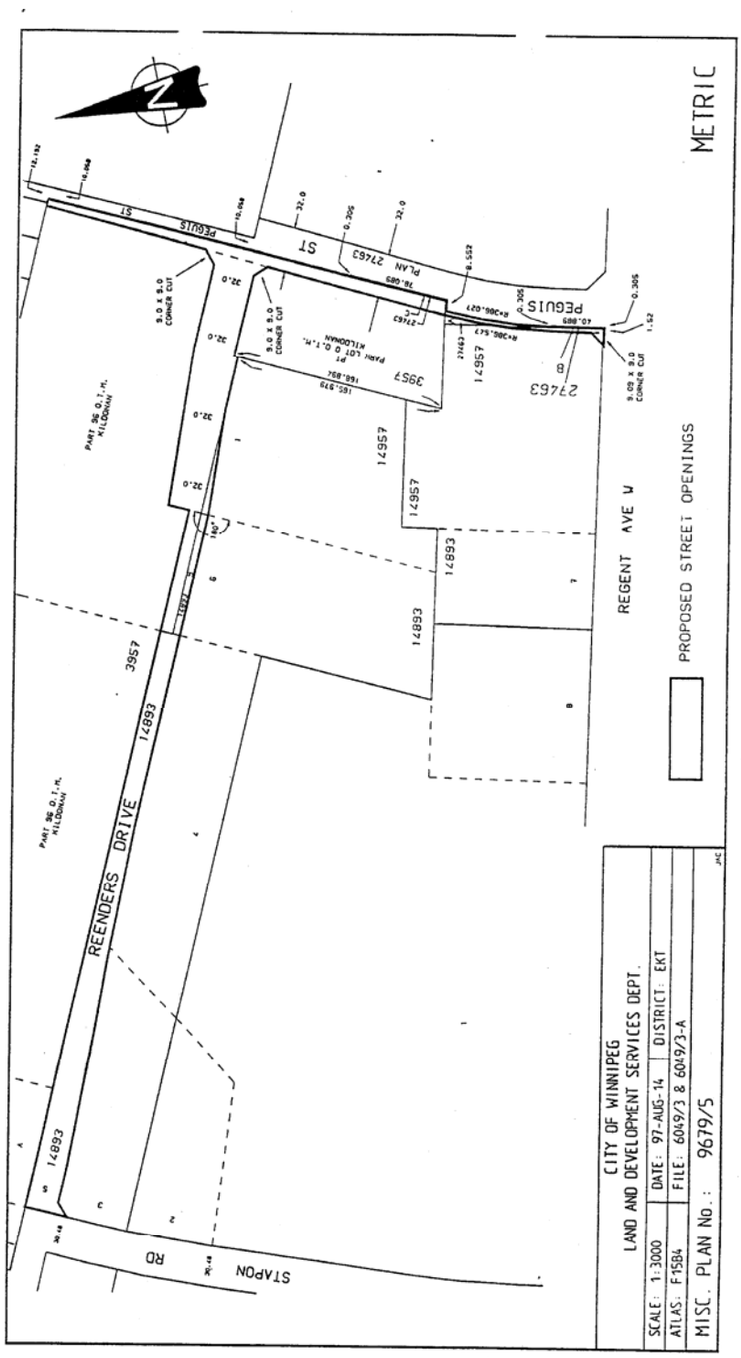


86 - Schedule “A” referred to in Clause 7 of the Report of the Committee on Planning and Community Services dated October 28, 1997



SCHEDULE “A” FOR THE REPORT TO
THE EAST KILDONAN-TRANSCONA
COMMUNITY COMMITTEE FOR FILE
NO. DAO 12/97
DATED: SEPTEMBER 25, 1997

87 - Schedule “A” referred to in Clause 8 of the Report of the Committee on Planning and Community Services dated October 28, 1997



SCHEDULE “A” FOR THE REPORT TO
THE EAST KILDONAN-TRANSCONA
COMMUNITY COMMITTEE FOR FILE
NO. DAO 13/97
DATED: SEPTEMBER 24, 1997