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Behind the addition to the 1907 heritage building is a new stairway that had to be built to meet modern fire codes.

# Anti-graffiti system protects new wall

*Integrity of original surface kept intact*

By Carol Sanders

IT may not be the Great Wall but the new, hulking limestone facade at the corner of Main Street and Higgins Avenue is pretty darned good, says the architecture firm that built it.

The giant Tyndall stone "blank canvas" is unsullied by graffiti, and will stay that way, said Craig Smith, an architectural technician at Bridgman Collaborative Architecture which has refurbished the Dominion Bank Building.

"It has a protective coating that

was put on that acts as a film, and any graffiti adheres to the film rather than the surface of the stone," Smith said.

The wall is a clean slate thanks to the anti-graffiti system they purchased from Specialty Construction Products in Winnipeg. The product was invented in Sweden and is used by a number of federal and historical buildings, company owner Joe Solomon said. It maintains the integrity of the original surface while protecting it from graffiti and the damage that can be caused removing it.

The big, windowless extension of the building was made from Tyndall stone removed from the facade of the Winnipeg Convention Centre when it was overhauled nearly a decade ago, Wins Bridgman said.

"It was in the maintenance yard in Assiniboine Park," Bridgman said. His firm had designed the new shelter and washrooms at the duck pond at the Assiniboine Park Zoo and noticed the pile of limestone.

"There was dirt on it because it was lying in a field and the dirt got rubbed into it over the years." They liked the look of it, and bought it for the bank building, he said.

It isn't just another pretty facade, Bridgman said. Behind it, is a new stairway to the second floor of the 1907 heritage building that had to be built to meet modern fire codes, he said.

"In order to develop the second floor, we needed a second means of egress," he said. The 101-year-old bank had one narrowing, winding

wooden staircase at the back.

"We wanted to match the beautiful terra cotta (of the old building), but it would've been impossible," Bridgman said.

"We decided to balance the (limestone) building to the south with our newer addition to the north," he said. "It's become a bit of a landmark," he said, "a character wall. People seem to enjoy it."

Bridgman likes to think of it as one more symbol of Winnipeg's core making a comeback.

"You are no longer in an area thought of as derelict. There are thriving businesses and people who want to be here."

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