

Home Sweet Home – Our Story

Kay Four Properties Inc.
1901 Main Street, Winnipeg MB



The three most important things that people require are food, shelter and clothing. Kay Four Properties has been proudly providing shelter in safe and affordable apartment rentals for more than 60 years. Our company started with a different name in the 1950's as an apartment builder and developer but by the 1970's we became a real estate holding and property management company. We take pleasure in saying that we are in our fourth generation of family ownership.

Our mural celebrates Canada, Manitoba, Winnipeg and our staff and tenants through one of the most formative decades of our company's history, the 1970s. During the 1970's our president graduated university, was married, his children were born, and he received his CA designation. It's also the decade in which our president first started working as our company's public practice accountant. In addition, during the 1970's, every apartment building we built was designed and built to remain in our family.

Our mural recognizes the people and places that make our country, province, city, and our company so special. We commissioned renowned mural artist Mandy Van Leeuwen to create this unique and vivid mural which depicts important events in the 1970's, and in the years before and after. Mandy and Franklin Fernando brought this hundred foot long mural to life on our south facing wall.

In the centre of the mural is a shelf and a key rack. The keys are an extremely important element in our mural. They are the keys to our business success, our clients, our tenants. Our tenants each have their own Winnipeg and Manitoba story and they are as unique as the key chains in our mural. The objects in the mural and on the shelf celebrate our cherished memories while the key chains celebrate where many of our tenants came from.

There are ten sets of keys on the wall, most of which have attached key chains with a symbolic element celebrating the heritage of our tenants and many of our staff. There is room for more sets of keys and some keys do not yet celebrate an identity. In future years we will add more key chains to this story as our city grows through more international immigration.

Starting from the Main Street side, the key chain symbols include:

- Taj Mahal – We have tenants who arrived from India and proudly have a key chain featuring the Taj Mahal.
- Dream Catcher – Some of our tenants are First Nations born. We felt it important to recognize their ancestry and our relationship with our First Nations brothers and sisters and their ancestral land on which we operate.
- Nesting Dolls – Many of our tenants or their parents or grandparents moved here from Eastern Europe. Our president's family arrived from Poland in the late 1940's. Many Eastern European nations appreciate nesting dolls so this would remind them of their ancestry.
- Pakistani Slipper – Several of our tenants are from Pakistan and may have a colourful slipper to remind them of their previous home.
- Aztec Sun Calendar – We have tenants who hail from Central and South America or Mexico which were the homelands of the Aztec and Mayan people.
- Map of Africa – This map of Africa is comprised of beads in the colours found in the flags of the more than 50 countries on the African continent and could easily be found on our tenants' key rings.
- Teddy Bear / RCMP Uniform – The RCMP is iconically Canadian. Our tenants may consider themselves as only Canadian or perhaps they just have a playful side, so they have a key chain with a stuffed bear.

- Jeepney – With Winnipeg’s population of more than 70,000 Filipinos, it is quite possible that many our tenants rode in a Jeepney before they moved to Winnipeg from the Philippines. The Jeepney is a very famous vehicle in that country and we have heard that the only Jeepney in North America is found in Winnipeg.
- Portuguese Rooster – Portugal is the most westerly country in Europe. Our tenants from Western Europe have fond memories of Portugal’s famous rooster.

We have many photos and depictions on the mural. Starting from the Main Street side of the mural and looking east we find:

- ❖ Our logo and address. This helps people travelling north on Main Street find our office. Our logo features the sun rising over Winnipeg and of course, our apartment buildings.
- ❖ The Canadian flag. We are extremely proud to be living in the best country in the world and we celebrate our country with our flag.
- ❖ The name of our mural comes from this Home Sweet Home poster that many of us find in our homes.
- ❖ A photo of hard working immigrant family in their corner store. This is a photograph taken in the grocery store owned and operated in Winnipeg by our president’s parents, Chaim and Manya Katz, along with his uncle Max Stern who was his father’s business partner. After surviving the Holocaust, they sought a new and better life in Canada. This picture celebrates the spirit of what makes Canada so great. Hard working immigrants making a better life for themselves, their children and grandchildren and through their efforts, all of Canada.
- ❖ The Golden Boy. The most famous symbol of Manitoba which speaks of the past, current and future prosperity of our province. It too is an immigrant having arrived from France and then placed on top of the Manitoba Legislature on November 21, 1919.
- ❖ A 1962 Cadillac convertible. Our company traces its beginnings to another family of hard working immigrants, Sam Chwaiewsky and his sons, Al and Amos. One of our president’s fondest memories is when his sister’s fiancé, Al Chwaiewsky, picked him up in this Cadillac convertible and drove him to the construction site of an apartment building that was being built in St. Vital. That building was sold in the 1960’s but today, more than 50 years later, we manage that property for the family that bought it.

- ❖ The Hudson's Bay Company Store in Downtown Winnipeg. Winnipeg, originally Fort Gibraltar and Upper Fort Garry, was built as a fur trader post, and most of the fur traders worked with the Hudson's Bay Company, the world's oldest operating company. This building, an icon in Winnipeg, celebrates our province's history and shows that hard work will lead to long term success.
- ❖ A Folklorama Passport. Winnipeg is the most culturally diverse city in Canada. The annual Folklorama Festival celebrates the homelands and cultures of our immigrant and indigenous communities and started in 1970, the decade we celebrate in this mural. Our tenants likely came from a country or culture that is represented in Folklorama. Not only do we attend different pavilions every year, but many of our staff and our tenants have been volunteers for Folklorama during its fifty year history.
- ❖ The Countess of Dufferin. Winnipeg is the transportation hub of Canada whether by rail, truck transport or air. The Countess of Dufferin was first steam locomotive in Western Canada and this train engine is today located in the Winnipeg Railway Museum. We honour our transportation heritage with this image.
- ❖ A burlap bag. One of the most important industries in our province is agriculture. The photo of the Countess of Dufferin sits on an old burlap bag. These bags held seeds of grain which grew into the crops that fuel Manitoba's economy.
- ❖ Sun Crest soda bottle. This soda, bottled in North Winnipeg, is one of our many memories growing up in the north end of Winnipeg.
- ❖ A Cassette tape. The Guess Who, our home grown, Canadian Music Hall of Fame inductees, found international success and put Winnipeg on the map with their prairies sounds and rhythms.
- ❖ A 1970s era Plymouth Barracuda. This vehicle is located on the only moving element in our mural. It is painted on a door that moves when it opens or closes. We pay homage to Joe Rewucki, his family and Eastern Chrysler that stood where our office is now located. This two-door pony car was sold from our building. This very car may have been driven in through our overhead door when it came for oil changes back in the 1970's.
- ❖ Salisbury House Restaurant. The little red roof restaurant, unique to Winnipeg, is where our president and many of our staff spent a lot of their youth. In fact, he brought his girlfriend, now wife, to this very Sals location on Main and Matheson, where they would meet friends and eat Chocolate donuts and drink the best coffee in Winnipeg. Many of our company's managers used to walk there during and after school for lunch, dinner and treats. Sals is truly a Winnipeg institution

and is so very important to many of our employees and tenants. We still frequent this location, not only for the nostalgia, but for the great nips and fries and unforgettable Red Velvet Cake. We thank Bryan Scott for use of his photo.

- ❖ Boys on the Street. On the 1970 calendar hanging in our mural is a photo that we found in a wonderful book of North End Winnipeg photos by John Paskievich. Mr. Paskievich generously allowed us to reproduce this photo. This type of playfulness was typical of north end boys who grew up in this part of town. Winnipeg is home to many kind police officers and playful children, something we are all very proud of.
- ❖ Last but certainly not least is a photo of Joe Rewucki handing over the keys to a new Chrysler truck right in front of this very wall. This again celebrates North Winnipeg but more importantly the heritage of our office building. We must always remember our past as it defines our future and we would not be here today had Mr. Rewucki not built this building all those years ago.

We hope that you enjoy Home Sweet Home as much as we do and encourage you to share its story with your family and friends.

We thank the very talented Mandy Van Leeuwen and Franklin Fernando, Take Pride Winnipeg, Dulux Paints, Herc Rentals, Folklorama, Salisbury House, Bryan Scott, John Paskievich and our staff for helping us bring our memories and our heritage to life.

Finally, we thank the most important people in our company, our tenants, for making a Kay Four Properties apartment their **Home Sweet Home**.