

92 & 100 ARTHUR STREET – GAULT BLOCK
George Browne, 1900, 1903



Built in 1900 to accommodate the expansion of Montreal wholesalers A.F. Gault and Company into Winnipeg, the four-storey stone and brick building at 100 Arthur Street was applauded as one of the most commodious warehouses in the City. Designed by architect George Brown of Toronto, the building was based on the “Richardson Romanesque” structures of H.H. Richardson, erected in Chicago during the 1870s and 1880s. The building is an example of the use of masonry construction at its peak, soon to be dwarfed by the masonry-clad steel-framed buildings of the early 20th century.

The original four-storey façade expresses the nature of masonry construction as a “stacking up” process, and indicates the varying wall thickness required at each level to support the weight of the floors above. Within the structure a simple wooden post and beam system is used. The large window openings which provide delighting to the interior were made possible by the advanced state of masonry construction and foreshadow the even larger openings to be offered by steel frame construction.

When in 1903 Gault's expanded their facilities by building a six-storey addition onto the south wall (92 Arthur Street) and adding two storeys to the original structure, architect James H. Cadham approached the project in a manner sympathetic to the original building. For the first four floors of the new building he repeated the order of the original façade, with the addition of a driveway through the building which sheltered the loading docks. For the top two floors required over both buildings he repeated the order of the top floor of the original building. It is virtually impossible to tell that the Gault Building is in fact two separate buildings.