

**168 BANNATYNE AVENUE – CHATFIELD DISTRIBUTORS
(FRANKLIN PRESS BUILDING)
*J.H.G. Russell, 1904***



Better known for his grand works such as Knox and Westminster Churches and the Ashdown House, this brick office building designed by local architect, J.H.G. Russell shows that he also paid the same attention to scale and detail in smaller structures.

The structure was built in 1904 for a small local company, the Franklin Press, which did job printing, publishing, lithography and carried a full range of office supplies. It was a downtown business that depended on the printing needs of the teeming commercial district. The Winnipeg Free Press in 1904 commented that the printing business was booming and “hardly a printing office in the city has not enlarged or improved their premises in some way during the past season”.

By 1926 the Franklin Press faltered, as one of eighty local companies all chasing after a shrinking market. A wholesale tobacconist then took over the building. During the 1940s and

1950s another office supply company occupied the building. Since 1967, it has been the home of Chatfield Distributors, manufacturer's agents and importers.

Russell's design of the exterior has been modified very little, for the structure has never had any additions. The building is solid brick on a raised foundation of heavy stone. The architect was sensitive to the existing building designs of the warehouse area and continued the format introduced by H.H. Richardson with his Marshall Field Wholesale Store (1885-1887) in Chicago. Three round-headed arches form the façade with radiating brick heads that spring from corbels on the two central pilasters. Then, to balance the vertical emphasis, two metal cornices were attached to the façade. Post and beam construction forms the interior which has a side entrance and a staircase. The inside of the building has been altered a number of times to accommodate changing tenants, but a handsome pressed-metal ceiling (in the front office) has survived.

In a district of large impressive warehouses and office buildings, the small Franklin Press Building is overshadowed, but it is typical of a modest, well-designed building for a local operation at the turn of the century.