

87 KING STREET – ANNE (BLUE RIBBON) BUILDING
J.H. Cadham, 1901



The success of Winnipeg as a commercial center at the turn of the century resulted in numerous expansions of existing wholesale companies. This brick warehouse, built in 1901, housed the Blue Ribbon Manufacturing Company, a division of the G.F. and J. Galt Company. Since 1882, the Galts had operated on Princess Street as a wholesale grocery firm. Its subsidiary packaged and marketed teas, coffees, spices and baking products.

When the building opened in 1901, the property extended to Arthur Street with both building façades being identical. In 1911, when the Blue Ribbon Company moved to larger premises, the building was divided by a brick party wall. Both portions became separate properties. The portion facing King Street was taken over by a wholesale shoe and boot operation, but became vacant through most of the Depression. In time, small wholesale businesses leased individual floors. At present, a dance studio shares the space with a wholesale shoe firm.

James H. Cadham, a local contractor turned architect, received the commission to design the new warehouse. This symmetrical four-storey brick structure hints of a Richardsonian Romanesque style with its rusticated lower level and a massive round-headed stone entranceway. The rest of the façade is treated in a simpler functional manner. The use of giant order pilasters dividing the façade into bay by bay divisions, finished off with segmental arches, recalls a common building motif found in Winnipeg's warehouse architecture of the 1880s. The window heads are also segmental arches with radiating brickwork. A stone lintel is used to tie the paired windows together. Cadham used a corbelled brick cornice to finish off the roof line of the structure.

The Blue Ribbon building is significant in that it illustrates an attempt by its architect to integrate the structure into an existing architectural landscape in the warehouse area. It serves as a companion to the Gault Building next door, which had a six-storey addition on its south wall and two floors added to the original structure, also designed by Cadham two years later.