

165 McDERMOT AVENUE – GALPERN BUILDING
J.H.G. Russell, 1906



Known to Winnipeggers for many years as the Galpern Candy Factory, this large brick warehouse is located in the commercial district east of Main Street at the intersection of Rorie Street and McDermot Avenue. The building is at the eastern terminus of a substantial turn-of-the-century streetscape on the north side of McDermot Avenue and although it is larger in scale than its neighbours, its size makes it a visual anchor as well as a bridge to the larger warehouses and commercial structures along Rorie Street.

The building was constructed in 1906, for James Porter and Company, a crockery and china wholesale firm. This company, like all of Winnipeg's other wholesalers, bought merchandise

from manufacturers in eastern Canada, the United States or Britain according to price, quality or tradition and then sold the goods through their own retail outlets or other retailers or distributors in Winnipeg and across the prairies. Bulk shipments of china and crockery for domestic use would arrive by train, be sub-divided into lots and then shipped west.

Local architect John H.G. Russell was commissioned to design new facilities for James Porter and Company to replace their cramped quarters on Main Street. Russell was born in Toronto and studied architecture there before moving to the United States where he practiced in Tacoma and Chicago. He moved to Winnipeg in 1893, embarking on a successful career designing numerous residences, churches, warehouses and commercial blocks. His best known works include the McArthur Building (Child's) on Portage Avenue (1909); the J.H. Ashdown residence (Khartum Temple) on Wellington Crescent (1912); and Knox Presbyterian Church on Edmonton Street (1914).

Russell's design for the six-storey Porter Building stands out in contrast to the round arched Richardsonian Romanesque styled warehouses that predominate in the district. A rusticated limestone base is contrasted with smooth limestone that accentuates the ground level. Dressed limestone is also used on the exaggerated lintels and string courses. The symmetrical brown tapestry brick façade has a three bay division that is reflected in the tripartite window divisions and the transom lights. The attic storey has brick masonry coursed in a rusticated pattern then capped with a string course and a dentilled cornice. When it was near completion, the Porter warehouse was described in the *Manitoba Free Press* as "one of the handsomest business blocks in the City."

The firm of James Porter and Company remained in the building until it closed its doors in 1943. The building was then shared by Sanford Evans and Company, a firm that dealt in research and statistics; and the Galpern Candy Company, a family business that was started in the early years of this century. In the mid 1980s the building was vacant. A nightclub that extends from the building next door now occupies the main floor.