

230 PRINCESS STREET – FROST AND WOOD WAREHOUSE
J.H. Cadham, 1906



As western settlement mushroomed in the early 1900s, so too did Winnipeg’s pivotal role as a regional supply and distribution centre for all types of goods. The city’s downtown, in turn, was physically transformed as new warehouses and railway lines were built to accommodate the growing demand.

The warehouse district initially was concentrated around City Hall/Market Square (in the Main-Princess-William-James area) and on nearby streets such as Albert, McDermot and Bannatyne. After 1900, however, the district quickly expanded to the north, west and east, often displacing houses or other established land uses. The northwest corner of Princess Street and Pacific Avenue joined that expansion when the Frost and Wood Company Ltd., a farm implement manufacturer, erected a four-storey warehouse on the site in 1906.

Ebenezer Frost and Alexander Wood of Smith Falls, Canada West (Ontario), organized their firm in 1846. Over time, it grew into one of the country's largest implement dealers. Its Winnipeg branch opened in c.1890 in the Grain Exchange Building, 164 Princess Street.

To plan its new structure, the company hired James Henry Cadham, one of a handful of architects who were instrumental in shaping the warehouse district at the turn of the nineteenth century. Cadham (1850-1907) was born near London, Canada West, and trained as a carpenter. He came to Manitoba as a militiaman in the Wolseley Expedition, organized by Canadian authorities in response to the Red River Rebellion of 1869-70. Upon discharge from service, Cadham began to work in the local building trade and by the mid-1890s was practising architecture as well.

The Frost and Wood Warehouse was built by contractor Philip Burnett for some \$50,000. It is of mill construction with a rubblestone foundation, thick brick walls, an interior frame of large wooden beams and posts, and vertically laid plank floors. The front (east) and south façades are clad in red brick, with contrasting rough-cut stone at the base and as window trim. The rear (west) wall consists of common clay brick. To the north is a party wall shared with 238 Princess Street.

The finished elevations, which are designed in the Romanesque Revival style, display strong vertical and horizontal lines through the use of brick pilasters, large rectangular windows, heavy stone sills and lintels, and a corbelled brick cornice. The five-bay front façade features display windows along the first floor and paired openings on the upper levels. The main pedestrian entrance is elevated and recessed within a round arch. The nine-bay south wall is dominated by single openings. Its first floor includes a display window at the east corner and a round-arched loading door near the west end. The rear elevation has several segmental-arched windows with stone sills and two loading doors.

Few major changes have been made to the structure over the years. Front and rear entrance/loading areas have been altered, interior showroom space has been modernized,

and there is a small office area on the second floor. The rest of the interior retains much of its original layout and finishes.

The Frost and Wood Company was taken over by the Cockshutt Plow Company of Brantford, Ontario, in a process that began in 1909. The Frost and Wood name soon disappeared from local directories, but the firm continued as owner of record for 230 Princess Street until the mid-1940s. Its successors included the Manitoba Co-operative Wholesale Ltd., Federated Co-operatives Ltd., Eastern Smallware and Stationary Ltd., and Williams Restaurant Supply Ltd. (later known as Williams-Cassidy's Restaurant Supply). The building was vacant as of spring 2002.