

123 BANNATYNE AVENUE – MARSHALL-WELLS WAREHOUSE
J.J. McDiarmid, 1900



With the rise of Winnipeg as the largest commercial center between the Lakehead and the West Coast, the Marshall-Wells Company, the third largest hardware merchant in the United States, saw a golden opportunity to establish themselves in Western Canada. A number of prominent Winnipeg businessmen bought into the branch operation which was soon to become a major competitor throughout the Canadian West. Marshall-Wells still operates hardware stores in towns and cities across the prairies that were originally stocked from the Winnipeg base.

The commission for the warehouse, built in 1900, was given to James J. McDiarmid, a local contractor turned architect, who also designed the Donald H. Bain Warehouse immediately east of it. The business venture was extremely successful for by 1906, Marshall-Wells had outgrown this structure and had moved on to a larger facility. The building continued to function as a warehouse, with its open spaces shared by a variety of smaller firms, including such companies as the Gurney North-West Foundry and later the Manitoba Cooperative Honey Producers. In 1958, a wholesale grocery, the Max Waldhorn Company, acquired the warehouse and used it for

nearly two decades. The building has recently been purchased and is undergoing renovations to convert it to office space.

McDiarmid designed a solid brick building on a stone foundation, with the interior of heavy wood construction. All four floors have windows on three sides allowing natural daylight to the spacious floor space inside. Continuous use as a warehouse has left it in its original open state. The style of the building continues in the motif seen in Winnipeg's warehouse structure with its rusticated stone in the arch-heads and also the stone sills and lintels around the windows. In addition, the thickness of the brick wall is emphasized by the articulated brick motifs in the spandrel areas.

Together with its neighbouring buildings, this handsome brick warehouse is one of the most notable in the city. Bannatyne Avenue is fortunate to have a series of buildings, designed by the same architect, still standing side by side, contributing greatly to the character of the street.