

545 BROADWAY WILSON HOUSE – (KLINIC COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE)
J. H. G. Russell, 1904



This grand, 2½-storey Queen Anne structure is one of a series of buildings that appeared in a prominent residential district along Broadway, west of the Legislative Building, Fort Osborne Barracks and All Saints Anglican Church, during Winnipeg's pre-World War I development boom.

The house was built in 1904 on the north side of Broadway between Colony and Good streets for Robert R. Wilson of Campbell Brothers and Wilson Company, wholesale grocers.

This form was established in the early 1880s by James Sutherland and brothers Robert J. and William James Campbell. Wilson was a bookkeeper for the company but soon advanced to general manager, partner (1900) and vice-president. The firm, one of Western Canada's largest corporations, reported gross revenues of \$8 million in 1913 and, by 1920, had branches in eight other western centres. Wilson became president in 1927.

His house at 545 Broadway was designed by John H.G. Russell, one of the city's best-known and most prolific architects. Russell moved with his family to Winnipeg from Ontario in 1882. He subsequently studied and worked in the United States, returning to establish a practice in Winnipeg in the mid-1890s. He helped shape the city's warehouse district and also designed major office buildings, Presbyterian churches and houses for business and civic leaders. In 1903, he created a large warehouse at 92-100 Princess Street for the Campbell Brothers and Wilson Company. He designed two additional storeys for this building in 1913 and a second house for Robert Wilson in 1925.

Russell adopted a reduced Queen Anne style, popular in North America at the turn-of-the-century, for 545 Broadway. The project cost more than \$9,000 and involved seven separate contractors.

The house rests on a rusticated stone foundation which gives way to stretcher-style buff brick veneer. Consistent with the Queen Anne style, the design is asymmetrical with a hipped roof, gables, a bay and a porch. There is a well-lit tower at the building's southwest corner, its polygonal roof topped with a pinnacle but minus its original copper ornamentation.

A one-storey, L-shaped porch runs from the main entrance on the front (south) facade to the middle of the eastern (Colony) elevation. It features wooden plinths and unadorned columns joined by a series of ogee arches. Eaves along the porch, tower and main roofs are supported by modestly ornamented wooden brackets. Large gables emerge from the steeply-pitched main roof on both the western and eastern facades. The latter gable appears over a two-storey bay.

Windows vary in size and placement. Most are rectangular with segmented brick arches, rough stone sills and wooden surrounds. Numerous muntin bars create multipaned windows throughout the structure. A pair of round-headed windows occurs in the second storey above the main entrance.

The house is well set back from Broadway. Some of the original landscaping remains. Portable offices and a parking lot are on the west side of the site which once contained a red brick house built in c.1907.

Wilson and his wife remained at 545 Broadway until 1925 when they moved to a new Russell creation at 680 Wellington Crescent. Wilson died in the late 1930s.

A succession of occupants followed in the Broadway house. They maintained the basic integrity of the structure's exterior but greatly modified the interior. The changes reflected the increasing commercialization of the West Broadway area. In 1948, the house was converted to office space, housing at various times provincial government agencies and commercial design firms. Klinik, a non-profit community health centre, has occupied the premises since 1977 but plans to relocate to new facilities on Sherbrook Street.