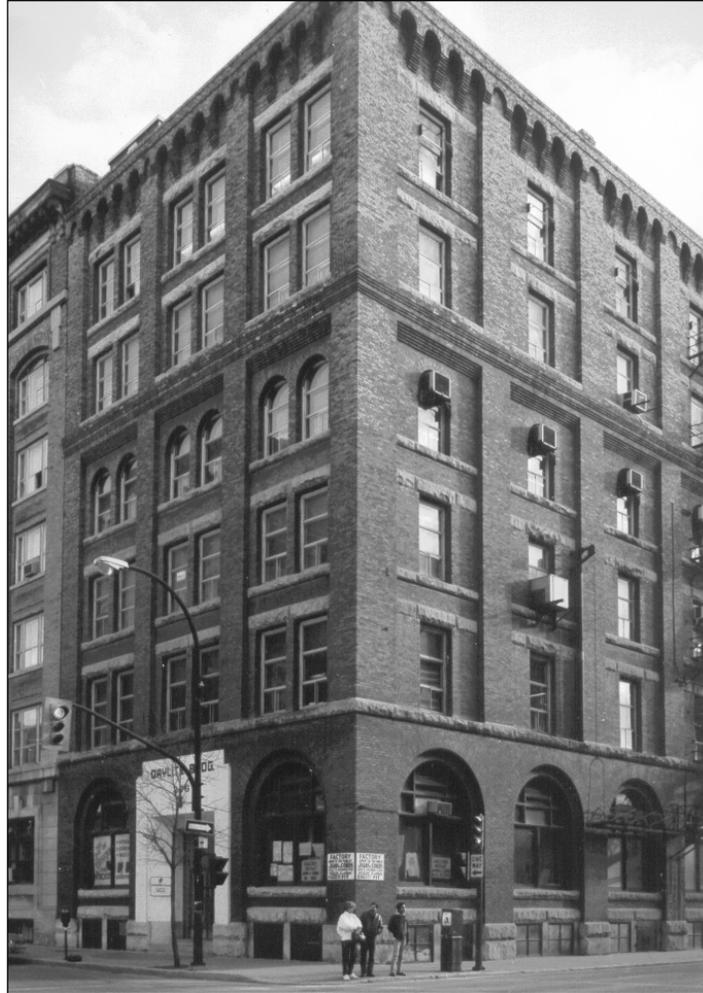


296 McDERMOT AVENUE – DAYLITE BUILDING
J.H. Cadham, 1899; J.H.G. Russell, 1904



Improved economic conditions, coupled with introduction of a favourable railway tariff, encouraged construction of the Daylite Building as a speculative investment for John Duncan McArthur, a Winnipeg-based railway contractor, property developer, and manufacturer-distributor of lumber and other building materials.

McArthur's Daylite project coincided with an economic upturn in the latter 1890s, spurred by gold discoveries, increased investment, improved wheat trade, and renewed efforts to stimulate prairie settlement. New market opportunities also had arisen as a result of the Canadian Pacific

Railway's Tariff 490 (1897-98) which permitted lower through rates on shipments of goods purchased in Eastern Canada even if these were stopped in Winnipeg, broken down, repacked and reshipped several months later. This concession reinforced Winnipeg's position as the central clearing-house in the western wholesale trade.

Originally four storeys high, the Daylite Building was designed and constructed in 1899 by James H. Cadham on the southeast corner of McDermot Avenue and Princess Street in the western half of the warehouse district. Cadham was an Ontarian who had come to Winnipeg with Wolseley's 1870 Red River Expedition and subsequently worked as a local contractor and self-trained architect specializing in large warehouses, offices and stores. His portfolio included the Rat Portage Lumber Company, University of Manitoba Medical College, and more than a dozen key buildings or additions along Main Street and in the warehouse district.

The Daylite is in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. It has a raised stone foundation, ordinary joint construction, and red brick facing that contrasts with rough-hewn Tyndall stone trim. Brick arches surround the large main-floor windows along the north (McDermot) and West (Princess) façades. Three bays of paired windows appear at the upper levels along McDermot, while seven bays of single windows face Princess. The bays, separated by pilasters, rise to stepped brickwork and brick belts at the fourth floor. Arched heads are used to highlight the fourth-storey windows facing McDermot. Stone sills, lintels, and a string that wraps around the building above the main floor relieve the design's austerity.

John H.G. Russell, who along with Cadham was a principal architect of the warehouse district, planned a two-storey addition to the Daylite in 1904. Built by S.G. Browne, the addition repeats the pattern established by Cadham on the second and third floors. It is finished with a series of arched and stepped brick corbels supporting the cornice.

Two companies shared the Daylite upon its completion. About 60 per cent of the space was occupied by the Ames Holden Shoe Company of Montreal, known later as Ames Holden McCreary Ltd. Wholesale Shoes. This firm, managed locally by A.L. Johnson, specialized in

foot and hand-wear suited to prairie and northern climates. By 1904, Ames Holden owned the Daylite; it appears to have occupied the building until c.1918.

The other original tenant was the Bole Drug Company, founded in c.1897 by D.W. and W.W. Bole and subsequently Western Canada's principal drug distributors. D.W. Dole, a Toronto-trained pharmacist, operated an advanced manufacturing, warehouse, wholesale and mail order business. His various departments, each supervised by qualified chemists, were efficiently organized for production and distribution, while his 'system of speaking tubes' facilitated communication between departments and the firm's business office. Bole, who also served as a school trustee (1896) and Member of Parliament (1904-08), relocated to new premises at 70 Princess in 1903.

In recent years, the Daylite has provided warehouse and factory space to various tenants, mainly in the needle trade. The primary change in the building's exterior has involved relocation of the main entrance from Princess to the centre of the McDermot façade where the double wooden and glass doors are surrounded by glass blocks and a rectangular opening of painted concrete blocks.