

**121 PRINCESS STREET – MILLER AND RICHARD TYPE FOUNDERS BUILDING
(WESTERN ELEVATOR AND MOTOR COMPANY BUILDING)
*S.F. Peters, 1904-05***



Situated adjacent to the Maw & Co. Garage on Princess Street, this utilitarian retail-office-storage building is an integral part of a turn-of-the-century commercial streetscape in the warehouse district southwest of City Hall.

Architect S. Frank Peters chose the two-part commercial style for the structure which retains much of its original design and materials.

After graduating in civil engineering from the University of Toronto, the English-born Peters practised for several years in Ontario before opening an office in Winnipeg in 1892. Over the

next two decades, he participated in the city's pre-World-War-I development boom, designing such buildings as the Ashdown Warehouse, the London, F.W. Alloway and McClary blocks, the Bank of Montreal at Osborne Street and Stradbrook Avenue, and the Cornish Library in Armstrong's Point. His brother, W.A. Peters, joined the practice in 1902.

The modestly ornamented, four-storey building is on the east side of Princess between Bannatyne and William avenues. Rising from a rubble-stone foundation, its clay-brick walls encompass the squared timber beams and posts of the mill construction method commonly used in city ware-houses until the introduction of steel supports. To finish the front (west) façade, corbelled brick-work leads to a metal cornice and a brick parapet with stone trim.

Consistent with the two-part commercial style, Peters employed various features to distinguish the main floor from the upper storeys of the façade. While the top three floors are symmetrically designed, the first level is asymmetrical due to the addition of a second entrance at the south end (121 Princess). As well, a metal cornice separates the first and second storeys, while large openings at grade contrast with sets of six single windows along the upper levels.

The first-floor openings now contain glass bricks instead of display windows, thus eliminating visual access to the interior from the street. Above, the windows are double-hung, enclosed by modestly carved wooden surrounds, and topped by radiating brick-work. Openings on the second and third floors have segmented heads, while those along the fourth storey have flat heads. Plain brick sills appear under the main-floor windows. Sills on the upper storeys consist of smooth-cut stone, including a continuous string under the fourth-floor openings.

Interior elements include rough fir floors and uncovered brick walls save for the use of panelling in the retail space on the main level. The front part of both the first and second floors holds office and retail facilities; the remainder of the space has been used for storage. The original layout of the two upper storeys has been retained.

The building was occupied in 1905 by the Miller and Richard Company which supplied metal type and printers' machinery. This firm originated in Scotland and subsequently established a base in eastern Canada. It expanded to Winnipeg in response to the city's flourishing printing

and publishing trade which needed ready access to specialty equipment and repair services. The firm remained in the building until 1931 when it left the city.

Another original occupant, the printing and bookbinding enterprise of Douglass-McIntyre Company, did not move from 121 Princess until the early 1940s.

The Western Elevator and Motor Company, and the Power and Mine Supply Company, moved into 123 Princess in 1933. For most of the period since its purchase from the Richard family in 1942, the building has been owned by one of these firms. However, Western Elevator sold the site in c.1984 and the two firms have relocated to another part of Winnipeg.