

188 PRINCESS STREET – CARNEFAC BLOCK

John Hamilton Gordon Russell, 1901



This two-storey brick building, modest when compared to the massive brick and stone warehouses found elsewhere in Winnipeg's warehouse district, has nevertheless been an important part of the neighbourhood since its construction in 1901.

The block was built by Ontario-born William Griggs Douglas (1863-1936) to house his animal feed business, the Carnefac Stock Food Company, and included warehouse space, a showroom and a retail store.

The original front (east) façade was very different than the present elevation – the original ground floor included an arched doorway at the south end and four large display windows, two on either side of the main entrance to the Carnefac Stock Food Company store. Below each of the display

windows was a panel of what appears to have been wood cladding. A modest corbelled brick band above the display windows divided the first and second floors. The original upper floor has not been significantly altered and included six windows set in plain wooden frames with radiating brick heads and rough-cut stone lug sills. The southernmost bay protruded slightly on the second floor. A pilaster finished the wall on the north end. Above the windows was a band of ornamental brick that led to a plain brick parapet. Significant changes in 1961 and 1980 have redesigned the main floor to its present layout.

The ground floor of the north wall is covered by the one-storey retail store next door and the second storey is unadorned. The present south façade dates to 1980 alterations when two arched entrances and an access ramp were added and all window openings were bricked in. The rear (west) façade of the building is partially covered by a one-storey warehouse; the open wall surface features only one window, now bricked in.

The structure is located on the west side of Princess Street between Elgin and Ross avenues, measures 16.9 x 22.7 metres by 11.3 metres high and rests on a 55.9-centimetre stone foundation. Walls are 43.2 centimetres thick on the ground floor and 33.0 centimetres on the upper floor. Cost of construction, exclusive of the land, was \$14,000. The structure includes oversized wood columns and beams and heavy timber flooring throughout – providing a greater level of support than would normally be the case in a structure of this scale.

Like the exterior, the interior of this block has seen extensive renovation. Originally, the front (east end) of the ground floor was occupied as a retail store, with offices, a walk-in vault, washrooms and a public counter with much of the ceiling clad in ornamental tin. It is likely that the rear of the ground floor was used as storage and for loading/unloading goods. The second floor office space was accessed from stairs in the southeast corner of the building or by an elevator (still in use).

In 1961, the east end was reorganized into a mix of public space with counters and private offices, all accessed from the south end entrance. In 1980, the building was purchased and converted into a social club. The basement was divided into offices, washrooms and recreation

rooms, the ground floor featured washrooms and serving facilities at the south end and an open seating area in the north. The upper floor was divided into kitchen/bar space (west side), washrooms and cloak rooms along the south wall and open seating in the remainder of the space. Little of the interior has changed since this last renovation.

This building is an integral part of the streetscape of Princess Street and is located within the Exchange District National Historic Site.

John Hamilton Gordon Russell (1862-1946) is the architect for this building. Russell came to Winnipeg in the early 1890s after several years of work in the United States and by 1895 had a private practice. His career would span many decades and he was responsible for the design of many of the city's finest commercial, residential, institutional and religious structures. Local contractors D.D. Wood (masonry) and G.A. Mitchell (carpentry) built the structure.

W.G. Douglas, along with brothers Robert A. and Thomas J. Douglas, formed the Carnefac Stock Feed Company which operated out of this building until 1920s. W.G. Douglas was also a City Councillor and chaired the Police Commission, the Board of Health and was Controller of City Works and Bridges. Carnefac Stock Food Company owned the building until 1942, when it was sold to Samuel Koff, manager of the Fort Rouge Jobbing Company. Tenants during this period included Johns-Manville, asbestos shingles and insulation (1929) and Dominion General, jobbers and Northwest Mail Order (1939). By the late 1940s, the building was owned and occupied by Dairy Supplies Limited, who sold it in the 1980s to the Winnipeg Police Athletic Association, converting it into a social hall. Today, the building is used by a congregation as a church and drop-in centre.

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Exterior-

- Two-storey brick and stone building with a flat roof located mid-block on the west side of Princess Street, its main façade facing east onto Princess Street, its north façade partially hidden by the neighbouring building, its south façade facing a back lane and its rear façade facing west and partially hidden by the neighbouring building;
- Front (east) façade with its windows in arched openings with stone lug sills and

radiating brick heads on the second floor and a band of ornamental brickwork leading to the plain brick parapet; and

- The south façade with its windows in arched openings with stone lug sills and radiating brick heads on both floors and the continuation of the roofline ornamentation at its east end.

Interior-

- Original elevator; and
- Heavy timber mill structural system.