

87-89 PRINCESS STREET – DOMINION ELECTRIC (HEMISPHERE) BUILDING
Green, Blankstein, Russell, 1959



This is an unusual block, located on one of Winnipeg's warehouse district's premier thoroughfares, Princess Street.

The north end of the building was completed in 1893, originally numbered 89 Princess Street. It was owned by the Canadian Rubber Company of Montreal, PQ and the three-storey brick and stone warehouse was built. In 1906, two additional storeys were added to the building. To the south, another warehouse was built in 1901 for Kilgour-Rimer, boot and shoe wholesaler. 87 Princess Street was four storeys tall but 1906 work brought the structure to six storeys.

In 1928, #89 was gutted by fire and demolished to grade and the basement filled in. #87 was reduced to three storeys in 1936. In 1945, a new three-storey building was built on the 89 Princess Street site and recladding 87 Princess Street for the new owner/tenant, Dominion Electric, designed by Green Blankstein and Russell.

In 1932, Green Blankstein and Russell formed an architectural partnership that would become one of a handful of influential design teams working in Winnipeg in the mid-20th century. Although this is comparatively minor contract, the company was responsible for iconic buildings such as: Shaarey Zedek Synagogue, 561 Wellington Crescent (built 1949); Main Post Office, 266 Graham Avenue (1954); Polo Park Shopping Centre, Portage Avenue (1958); Assiniboia Downs, 3975 Portage Avenue (1958); and Winnipeg City Hall and Administration Building, 510 Main Street (1962-1965). They were also responsible for the planning of the groundbreaking Wildewood Park residential development in the mid-1940s.

The building utilizes some of the 1901 building (foundation walls and some exterior walls) as part of the present building. The main façade (west) features a centrally-placed raised main entrance and a smaller entrance at its south end. All openings are rectilinear. The rear of the building includes arched window openings, raised basement windows and raised loading doors.

Major renovation work was completed in the early 2000s to create upper level residential space. Many of the original window units were replaced and the roof was partially removed to create open balcony space.

The Dominion Electric Company and Great West Electric and Radio Company were the two main tenants of the rebuilt 1945 building. Dominion Electric remained until the late 1970s, replaced by Hemisphere Importers.

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

Exterior-

- three-storey brick and stucco building with a flat roof, occupying its mid-block location, its main façade facing west onto Princess Street, its north wall covered by the neighbouring building, the south wall partially covered by the neighbouring building and the rear façade facing east onto the back lane;
- front (west) façade with its windows and doors in rectilinear openings and the central entrance with metal canopy;
- painted commercial signage on the south façade; and

- rear (east) façade with raised loading doors and windows in rectilinear and arched openings.

Interior-

- painted signage on the ground floor brick wall in interior of north commercial suite.