208 PRINCESS STREET

McLAUGHLIN CARRIAGE COMPANY BUILDING

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
September 2015
This building embodies the following heritage values as described in the *Historical Resources By-law, 55/2014* (consolidated update July 13, 2016):

(a) Its date-of-construction, 1902, makes it an excellent example of an early 20th century warehouse in Winnipeg and its 1906 addition an example of the type of business expansion common in the city during that period;

(b) Its original and long-term owner, McLaughlin Carriage Company, was an important international carriage and automobile manufacturer/retailer;

(c) It was designed by architect James H. Cadham, one of the city’s most prominent warehouse designers;

(d) It is a good example of a solid brick and stone, mill construction warehouse designed in the Romanesque Revival style;

(e) It is an integral part of its north Princess Street streetscape; and

(f) Many of the design features and materials of the main (south and east) façades are intact.
Winnipeg in the early 1890s was, although few realized it, on the verge of a spectacular era of growth, development and maturity that would almost completely change it by World War I. But this comprehensive growth was far from random. Specific districts that had been established a decade earlier provided the basic pattern for this frenzied period of growth.

The real estate boom of the early 1880s was intimately connected to the early construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), Canada’s first transcontinental railway, west of Winnipeg. Land prices in the small capital city skyrocketed, the population soared and solid brick structures began replacing the small wooden shacks that dotted the mud streets and avenues. It was also the beginning of the segregation of the various sectors of the city – residential, commercial and industrial – and their specific buildings.1 The huge advance in land prices was especially noticeable along Main Street north of Portage Avenue. Here the small residential properties were consolidated into larger blocks of land and replaced by increasingly massive commercial structures (Plates 1 and 2).

Commercial interests, both local and from Eastern Canada, were quick to locate in this area. The city rapidly assumed the role of wholesale hub for all of Western Canada. Companies like R.J. Whitla, Stobart, Eden and Company, George D. Wood and J.H. Ashdown were all organized and carrying on business prior to the CPR boom.2 With this development came a maturation of the retail and wholesale sectors. The bust of 1882 did not end this development, but rather strengthened it by removing the excess and inexperienced entrepreneurs, by reducing the surplus stock and by hardening attitudes towards credit.3 The area, however, was undeniably developing as the warehouse district, slowly through the 1880s and 1890s and then rapidly after 1900.

3 R.R. Rostecki, op. cit., p. 113.
The period 1900-1914 was one of nearly unbridled growth for Western Canada’s premier city. Winnipeg was the centre of all regional activity and was one of the fastest growing urban centres in North America. As the core of the warehouse district filled with new buildings or additions, companies purchased property and built further and further from this core.

Princess Street had always been one of the district’s most important thoroughfares (Plate 3) and in 1902, another Eastern Canadian firm company, a carriage manufacturing business growing rapidly and expanding its Canadian presence, chose a lot at the corner of Princess Street and Ross Avenue to build a showroom and storage facility (Plate 4) and only four years later doubled its size with a large addition.

**STYLE**

This warehouse was designed in the Romanesque Revival style⁴ that became popular in warehouse districts throughout North America from the 1880s into the 20th century and was enthusiastically embraced in Winnipeg’s Exchange District. The style found extensive use in the 1880s under the tutelage of American architect H.H. Richardson (1838-1886) and is often referred to as Richardsonian Romanesque.⁵

The style is recognizable by its use of strong, rough textures, its massiveness, the flatness of the elevations, the rhythmic placement of windows and the use of the rounded arch. While it was used for the design of homes, commercial structures and even schools (for example, Wesley College [University of Winnipeg], 515 Portage Avenue, built 1896 – Plate 5), it came to be the style of choice in the warehouse district where its sturdy appearance portrayed stability and strength.

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⁴ See The Exchange District National Historic Site of Canada, Commemorative Integrity Statement (Winnipeg: Parks Canada, 2001), Table 1, p. 39.

Examples of the style are extremely prevalent in the Exchange District, from some of the earliest warehouses, e.g. the Peck Building, 33 Princess Street, built 1893-1894 (Plate 6), to later structures such as the Anne (Blue Ribbon) Building, 88 Arthur Street, built in 1901 (Plate 7). By the end of the decade, examples of the style were more subdued.

CONSTRUCTION

The original 1902 warehouse was located on the lot at the northwest corner of Princess Street and Ross Avenue and measured 15.3 x 29.1 metres (see Appendix I for construction information). Cost for the structure was $20,000.6 Four years later, an addition was built on the north side of this building, measuring 15.1 x 29.1 metres and costing $20,700.7 Both buildings rest on a heavy stone foundation. Interestingly, the buildings do not appear to be tied in to each other, the beams of the original building run east to west, the addition north to south. This has led to some separation/cracking at the join on both the front and rear façades (Plate 8).

In 1911, a serious fire broke out in the building which, according to the report, was “crammed from roof to basement with buggies, wagons and vehicles of every description.”8 Repairs cost $3,000.9

The original building and the addition were built using the most common construction method of the time – the mill system – a square timber beam and post support network where beams were attached to the solid brick exterior walls and covered by wood plank flooring and often a hardwood finish. This was a very popular system in warehouse districts throughout North America because of its sturdiness, the ease of adding additional storeys and its ability to suffer fire damage and not collapse. The McLaughlin Carriage Company Building is one of many mill construction structures in the Exchange District.

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6 City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #727/1902.
7 BP #1998/1906.
8 Manitoba Free Press, March 4, 1911, p. 28.
9 BP #161/1911.
DESIGN
The front (east) façade begins at grade with a rusticated stone base, a continuation of the rubblestone foundation on which the building rests. The entire building is divided into six bays (Plate 9) by unadorned brick pilasters that end in arches above the third storey windows (Plate 10). The bays of the original building are thinner than the 1906 bays and middle bays in both portions of the building are thinner than the outside bays.

The ground floor features a familiar layout, numerous entrances with large display windows beside. This area has seen significant alteration as tenants changed and modernized their premises. The second and third floors appear to be almost unaltered from their original design. The paired windows in arched openings of the second and third floors feature stone lug sills and in many instances their original wood window units and transoms. Above the larger arches over the third storey windows is delicate brick drip moulding. The flat roof is embellished by corbelled brick below a brick cornice and parapet.

The north façade abuts the neighbouring building. The south façade features a continuation of many of the elements of the front façade: rusticated stone base, six bays topped by wide arches with brick drip moulding and the same brick elements at the roofline (Plate 11). This elevation also includes a metal fire escape with landings on the second and third floors and faded painted signage. The rear (west) façade features windows and main floor loading doors in arched openings on all three floors and a metal fire escape (Plate 12); the 1906 addition boast many more window openings that the older section.

INTERIOR
It is known that the ground floor was used as showroom space (Plate 13) and according to a 1906 newspaper account there was storage space in the upper floors for 65 carloads of carriages.10

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10 Manitoba Free Press, December 6, 1906, p. 25.
Over the years, interior alterations have been extensive as new owners and tenants have made improvements and altered space to suit their needs, although the original layout appears to be intact.

Today, the entire building is used for storage with work areas on each floor and a small office at the front of the 1906 section. Many elements of the original interior are still present, including: wood grill on the freight elevator, exposed wood beam and post system, raised loading/unloading area at rear of ground floor, walk-in safe on ground floor of 1902 building, metal fire doors for openings between the two buildings, and ornamental tin ceiling on the first and second floors of the 1902 building (Plates 14-17).

**INTEGRITY**

The building stands on its original site. Movement of the buildings has caused some cracking and deterioration of the bricks along the south side is evident. Some alteration has occurred on the ground floor to windows and doors, but the upper floors appear to be virtually unchanged from their original design.

**STREETSCAPE**

This building has occupied an important corner in the north end of Winnipeg’s warehouse district for over 100 years. It is an important contributor to the area and its block (Plates 18 and 19) and is found just outside the north boundary of the Exchange District National Historic Site.

**ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS**

James H. Cadham, Ontario born architect, designed this block and its addition, as well as many buildings in Winnipeg’s early warehouse district. Cadham was one of a number of self-trained designers who worked in Winnipeg in the late 19th century, Cadham being one of the most prolific, his contracts for the 1900-1907 period totalled nearly $1.8 million[^1] (see Appendix II for

[^1]: City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1900-1907.)
biographical information). He has received 20 points from the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

Local contractor Philip Burnett was responsible for the construction of both the original building and the 1906 addition.

PERSON/INSTITUTION
The McLaughlin Carriage Company began operations in Oshawa, ON in 1876 headed by Robert McLaughlin (1836-1921). In 1892, he took on his sons George and Robert Samuel (1871-1972); the latter ultimately took control of the firm (Plate 20). The company expanded and opened a Winnipeg branch as part of its Western Canada expansion in the late 1890s. In 1902, the company built its showroom/warehouse for its wide variety of wagons, sleighs, carriages, and related products.12

Also at this time, the automobile was evolving and competing against the horse and buggy for supremacy on the roads. The McLaughlin Company cautiously entered the sector and in 1907, acquired the rights to assemble Buick vehicles in Canada. The McLaughlin Motor Car Co., incorporated as a subsidiary of the carriage business, produced its first 154 cars in Oshawa in 1908 and was soon a major force in the industry.13 The Princess Street facility began advertising automobiles (Plates 21 and 22) and the company built a large garage just south of Portage Avenue on Maryland Street in 1909 that stood for 90 years (Plate 23).

The McLaughlin Motor Car Co. continued to expand (the McLaughlin Carriage Company was sold off in 1915),14 and in 1918 it merged with the Chevrolet Motor Car Company of Canada to

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13 Ibid., pp. 97-130; and D.M. Lyon, “275 Maryland Street – McLaughlin Carriage Company Garage (Carter Motors Ltd./Murray Chevrolet Oldsmobile),” report for the Historical Buildings Committee, April 1999.
14 “Generations of GM History,” General Motors website, no date.
form General Motors of Canada, Limited, with R.S. McLaughlin as its president (he also served as vice-president of the American parent company).\textsuperscript{15}

McLaughlin Motor remained in the Princess Street building until moving its operations to the Maryland Street garage in 1924 (although it continued to own the property until 1942).\textsuperscript{16} After almost 10 years of vacancy, the Princess Street facility opened as a soup kitchen, the Princess Street Dining Hall, serving transients and Depression-affected people.\textsuperscript{17} It was estimated that 5,300 single men on relief were fed in Winnipeg in 1936.\textsuperscript{18}

In 1942, the building was taken over by Beatty Brothers Limited, founded by George and Matthew Beatty in Fergus, Ontario in 1874 as a farm implement manufacturer. The business expanded and through acquisitions of other companies, its product line grew to include a wide variety of machinery.\textsuperscript{19} In Manitoba, the company first settled in Brandon ca.1912, moving to Winnipeg ca.1917 at Notre Dame Avenue and Midland Street. They were also headquartered at 316-318 Donald Street before the move to 208 Princess Street, where they remained until ca.1960 (Plate 24).\textsuperscript{20}

Corson Investments Limited became the new owner of the property and in the 1970s and the building was occupied by Corson Investments (real estate), Park Leather Limited, clothing manufacturers, Northern Shoe Company and Beaver Headwear Limited.\textsuperscript{21} Carter’s Auction occupied part of the building in the 1990s, Black’s Auction in the early 2000s and more recently has been used for storage.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{16} \textit{City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls}, No. 714830-12-2 (Old No. 12118), PC 50 (below as ARo), 1910-1950.
\bibitem{18} \textit{Winnipeg Free Press}, April 1, 1937, p. 24.
\bibitem{20} \textit{Winnipeg Free Press}, various dates.
\bibitem{21} ARo, 1900-1990; and \textit{Henderson’s Directory}, 1910-1990.
\end{thebibliography}
EVENT
There is no known significant historic event connected with this building.

CONTEXT
This large warehouse and showroom was built shortly after the start of the 20th century, a time of great expansion for Winnipeg. The City’s warehouse district, established in the early 1880s, filled with massive structures from the late 1890s to World War I. The establishment of spur lines on both sides of Main Street simplified the loading and unloading of freight cars bringing manufactured goods from the East for sale in the West.

The fact that the original owner doubled the size of the original building just 4 years after construction is an example of the type of financial success enjoyed by the majority of businesses that were founded locally or located branch offices here.

LANDMARK
This building’s subdued ornamentation limits its conspicuousness in the neighbourhood.
APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Building Address: 208 Princess Street (206-210)  
Building Name: McLaughlin Carriage Co. Bldg.

Original Use: warehouse  
Current Use: storage

Roll No. (Old): 714830 (12118)  
R.S.N.: 155560

Municipality: 12  
Ward: 2  
Property or Occupancy Code: 50

Legal Description: 9/11 St. John, Plan 32037, Lot 72 and 9\textsuperscript{W} St. John, Plan 24, Lot 40 (Old: 9\textsuperscript{W} St. John, Plan 24, south 1’ of Lot 38: Lot 39: Lot 40)

Location: northwest corner Ross Avenue

Date of Construction: 1902 + 1906  
Storeys: 3

Construction Type: Mill

Heritage Status: ON NOMINATED LIST

- 727/1902 $20,000 (original); 1998/1906 $20,700 (addition); 1163/1942 [CS] $10,000 (interior alteration to second floor); 7001/1951 [CS] $200 (alterations); 837/1964 $200 (alterations); 2836/1965 $100 (interior alterations); 8370/1965 (interior alterations); 7524/1972 $1,300 (renovate #210 for private club); 8473/1972 $100 (steps at rear); 8873/1972 $500 (interior alterations); 7724/1975 $3,000 (interior alterations); 8298/1976 $900 (fire escape)

Information:
- 99.5’ x 95.5’ x 50’ = 475,113 cu. ft.

South Section (1902):
- Front – rubblestone foundation to grade, quarry-face ashlar base, balance common brick, stone sills, brick heads
- South – rubblestone to grade, quarry-face ashlar base, balance common brick
- Rear – rubblestone to 4’, balance common brick
- Walls: Basement- 30” rubblestone (front), 26” (rear, S, N)  
  1\textsuperscript{st}- 27” brick (front), 17” brick (rear, S, N); 2\textsuperscript{nd}- 13” brick (front, S), 17” brick (rear, N); 3\textsuperscript{rd}- 13” brick throughout

North Section (1906):
- same as south section except north wall is party wall
- 1942 alterations- some new flooring, electrical and heating & some redecorating

---PRINCESS STREET---
APPENDIX II

James Henry Cadham

James H. Cadham was born near London, Canada West (Ontario), on August 31, 1850, the son of Thomas and Eliza Cadham, both English-born settlers of the area. Thomas operated a sash, door and blind factory in London. J.H. Cadham left public school at the age of 16 to learn the carpenter’s trade. In 1870, Cadham answered the call to arms in Eastern Canada by the Dominion government to protect its rights in the recently ceded territory that would become the Province of Manitoba. He was a private in No. 1 Battalion under Captain Cooke, part of the 1,200-man force that included 400 British Regulars and 800 Ontario and Quebec militiamen and would become known as the Wolseley Expedition.

Cadham arrived with the rest of the force in late August to find the uprising led by Louis Riel and his followers had ended. Cadham, unlike many of the other militiamen, decided to stay after his discharge on March 4, 1871 and began working as a carpenter and contractor, under the name Blackmore and Cadham. Little is known about his early work in the city, although he apparently had enough experience by the mid-1890s to begin practice as an architect. In this capacity, Cadham had a profound effect on Winnipeg’s skyline. He was responsible for many warehouses in the district before and after 1900. So highly regarded was Cadham that builders would often consult him about a new structure even though he was not the architect of the building. He was an ardent hunter and was a Mason and a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Cadham continued to work up until a few weeks before his death from pneumonia on December 10, 1907. He left a wife, three sons and two daughters.


3 Manitoba Free Press, December 11, 1907, p. 5.
A partial list of his work includes many of the Exchange District’s most outstanding structures:

Merchants Bank, Main and Post Office Street (now McDermot Avenue), 1875 (carpenter with Mr. Blackmore) – demolished
Paulin, Chambers & Co. Biscuit Factory, Ross Avenue, 1899
McIntyre Block, 416 Main Street (contractor – demolished)
McLaughlin Carriage Building, 206-210 Princess Street, 1902 & 1906 addition
W.F. Alloway Building, 179 McDermot Avenue, 1898 (Grade III)
Whitla Building, 70 Arthur Street, 1899
G.D. Wood & Company Building (Merchants Building), 250 McDermot Avenue, 1898
Daylite Building, 296 McDermot Avenue, 1899 (Grade II)
Imperial Dry Goods Building, 91 Albert Street, 1900 (Grade III)
G.F. Stephens Warehouse, 176 Market Avenue, 1901 (and additions) - demolished
Alloway & Champion Block, Portage Avenue, 1901 (demolished)
Moss (Kantor) House, 218 Roslyn Road, 1901
Arthur (Blue Ribbon Company) Building, 88 Arthur Street, 1901
Jerry Robinson Department Store, 49 Albert Street, 1902
McLaughlin Carriage Building, 208 Princess Street, 1902 and 1906 addition
Gregg Building, 52 Albert Street, 1903 (Grade III)
Elim Chapel (St. Stephens Presbyterian Church), 546 Portage Avenue, 1903
R.J. Whitla Factory, 371 Hargrave Street, 1903
Dingle and Stewart Warehouse, 263 Stanley Street, 1903
Robinson, Little and Company Building, 54 Arthur Street, 1903 (Grade II)
Prairie Lumber Company Warehouse, foot of Henry Avenue, 1903
Rat Portage Lumber Company Warehouse, 101 Higgins Avenue, 1903
Gaylord Block (Kemp Building), 111 Lombard Avenue, 1903
Winnipeg Saddlery Building, 284 William Avenue, 1903
Galt Building Annex, 92 Arthur Street, 1903 (Grade II)
Bedford (Stobart) Building, 275 McDermot Avenue, 1903 (Grade III)
Scott Furniture Building, 272 Main Street, 1904 (Grade III)
Stobart Company Overall Factory, 327 Cumberland Avenue, 1904
G. Velie Warehouse, 183-87 Portage Avenue E, 1904
Miller, Morse and Company Warehouse, 317 McDermot Avenue, 1904
Telfer Brothers Warehouse, 156 Lombard Avenue, 1904
Avenue Block, 261 Portage Avenue, 1904

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4 Compiled from local newspaper building lists, 1874-1908; The Exchange District. Part 1: A Property Survey (Winnipeg, MB: City of Winnipeg, 2001); and City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1900-1907.
5 Manitoba Free Press, September 23, 1875, p. 3.
6 Manitoba Free Press, March 14, 1899, p. 3.
J.H. Cadham designs (continued):

M. Fortune and Company Block, Smith Street, 1904
G.F. and J. Galt Building, 103 Princess Street (addition), 1904
Alloway and Champion Building, 667 Main Street, 1905 (Grade III)
Genser’s Furniture Building, 289 Portage Avenue, 1905
West Hotel, 786 Main Street, 1905
H. Leadley Warehouse, 298 Ross Avenue, 1905
Manitoba Medical College, Bannatyne Avenue (corner Emily Street), 1905 – demolished
Trees, Spriggs Company Warehouse, 312 Ross Avenue, 1905
J.H. Cadham House, 336 River Avenue, 1906
Grose and Walker Warehouse, 261 Stanley Street, 1906
Plate 1 – Looking west up McDermot Avenue from Main Street, 1881.  (Archives of Manitoba, N19876.)

Plate 2 – The same view of McDermot Avenue, 21 years later.  (Archives of Manitoba.)
Plate 3 – Princess Street looking south from Ross Avenue, ca.1903, the street filled with horse-drawn vehicles. (M. Peterson Collection.)
Plate 4 – The McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, Princess Street, shortly after construction, ca.1903. (Reproduced from William A. Martel and Sons, Illustrated Souvenir of Winnipeg [Winnipeg, MB: Authors, ca.1903], p. 67.)
Plate 5 – Wesley or United College (University of Winnipeg), 515 Portage Avenue, ca.1905. It was built in 1895-1896, designed by George Browne and S.F. Peters. (Photograph courtesy of R.R. Rostecki.)
Plate 6 – 33 Princess Street, Peck Building, built 1893, C.H. Wheeler, architect. (City of Winnipeg, 2005.)

Plate 7 – 88 Arthur Street, Anne (Blue Ribbon) Building, built 1901, J.H. Cadham, architect. (City of Winnipeg, 2014.)
Plate 8 – McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street, cracks in the front (east) and rear (west) façades, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 9 – McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street, front (east) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Plate 10 – McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street, detail of front (east) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 11 – McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street, rear (west) and south façades, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Plate 12 – McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street, rear (west) façade, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 13 – Picture of the McLaughlin Carriage Company showroom, 208 Princess Street, 1916. (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, February 12, 1916, p. 44.)
Plate 14 – McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street, ground floor, 1902 section with raised area at rear (west), 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Plate 15 – McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street, second floor, 1902 section, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 16 – McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street, ground floor, 1906 section, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Plate 17 – McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street, third floor, 1906 section, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 18 – Princess Street looking south, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)

Plate 19 – Princess Street looking north, 2015. (M. Peterson, 2015.)
Plate 21 – Advertisement for the McLaughlin-Buick Model “C” Roadster, 1909. (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, February 20, 1909, p. 7.)
Plate 22 – McLaughlin Carriage Co. advertisement for the McLaughlin-Buick automobile, with showrooms at 204-212 Princess Street, 1915. (Reproduced from Henderson’s Winnipeg Directory.)
Plate 23 – McLaughlin-Buick Garage, 275 Maryland Street during 1999 demolition; built 1909, architect J.D. Atchison, front (west) façade. (D.M. Lyon, 1999.)
Plate 24 – Beatty Brothers Limited advertisement, 208 Princess Street, 1956. (Reproduced from Winnipeg Free Press, April 25, 1956, p. 8.)