312 ROSS AVENUE

TREES-SPRIGGS BUILDING
This building embodies the following heritage values as described in the *Historical Resources By-law, 55/2014* (consolidated update July 13, 2016):

(a) This warehouse, completed in 1905, is an example of the dozens of large, well-built warehouses needed in Winnipeg to handle the manufactured goods travelling from the Eastern Canadian factories to the growing markets in Winnipeg and further west;

(b) It was originally associated with the important saddle and harness manufacturing sector;

(c) It was designed by James H. Cadham, one of the warehouse district’s busiest architects and is an excellent example of the Romanesque Revival style;

(d) Built of solid brick on a rubblestone foundation with a square timber beam/post internal structure, the warehouse is representative of contemporary construction methods;

(e) It is an important contributor to its pre-World War I warehouse district streetscape; and

(f) The building’s main façade has suffered little alteration.
312 ROSS AVENUE – TREES-SPRIGGS BUILDING

The growth of Winnipeg’s warehouse district in the early 1880s, spurred on by the completion of Canada’s first transcontinental railway, the Canadian Pacific, was a process of creation – solid brick warehouses began replacing the small wooden shacks that dotted the mud streets and avenues east and west of Main Street (Plates 1 and 2). Various districts of the city – residential, commercial and industrial – and their specific buildings established and became the foundation of the growth in the early 20th century. The huge advance in land prices along Main Street north of Portage Avenue necessitated the replacement of the earlier residential development with large commercial structures. Investors chose to locate near one of the most important buildings, City Hall, from which would come assistance in advancing both singular business interests and those of the community at large.

The second growth phase, from 1900-1914, was characterized by expansion. Especially in the warehouse district, local, national and international firms recognized the geographic and economic importance of locating in Winnipeg, resulting in the construction and/or enlargement of dozens of warehouses both on the more established area west of Main Street (Plate 3 and 4) and the new area to the east (Plate 5). Approximately $5 million was spent on the construction and enlargement of warehouses in what is now the Exchange District between 1900 and 1914, housing such successful ventures as R.J. Whitla, G.F. and J. Galt, Stobart, Eden and Company, George D. Wood, A.F. Gault and Company and J.H. Ashdown.

In 1905, Ontario-based wholesale saddle and harness maker Trees-Spriggs moved to ensure they had ample room for their business by constructing a large brick and stone warehouse on Ross Avenue in the heart of the City’s burgeoning warehouse district.

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2 City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1900-1914.
STYLE
The warehouse is an excellent example of the Romanesque Revival style, very popular in warehouse districts throughout North America from the 1880s well into the 20th century. The buildings were nearly always solid brick with a raised basement clad in rusticated stone, a material often used for accenting around windows and doors and at roof level. Other elements included towers flanking the main façade, quoins, belt courses, corbelled brick panels, chevrons and flat rooflines, with or without cornices and entablatures. The most obvious feature of these structures was the use of the arch above windows and doors. Often, straight-topped windows located on the middle storeys were grouped under large arches on the upper floors. Although the style was applied to private residences and on large public buildings, in Winnipeg it was almost exclusively used in the warehouse district, where the designs were somewhat more subdued. The massiveness and sturdiness of the style appealed to wholesalers looking to promote their businesses and portray the stability of their firms through the design of the structures they occupied.

CONSTRUCTION
The original City of Winnipeg Building Permit calls for a five-storey warehouse, solid brick with stone accenting resting on a heavy rubblestone foundation (see Appendix I for construction information). The building is located just west of Princess Street on the south side of Ross Avenue, measures approximately 13.4 x 33.6 metres and cost $30,000 to build. Wall thicknesses were listed as 66.0 centimetres in the basement (stone), 55.9 centimetres on the ground floor (brick), 43.2 centimetres on the second and third floors (brick) and 33.0 centimetres on the fourth and fifth floors (brick). Ceiling heights were given as 2.7 metres in the basement, 4.0 metres on the first floor, 3.7 metres on the second, 3.4 metres on the third and 3.1 metres on the top two floors.

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5 City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #1576/1905.
This warehouse was built using a system of heavy wooden beams and posts supporting wooden joists connected to the solid brick exterior walls. It did not provide the same level of strength as the mill system which was employed by the majority of warehouses in the district, but still provided more than adequate support for the materials housed in the building.

**DESIGN**

The front (north) façade begins at grade with a rusticated stone base that rises to the level of the ground floor windows (Plate 6). Basement windows in rectilinear openings are located in this raised stone base. Entrances, in arched, rusticated stone openings with keystones, are located at each end of the ground floor. Two large windows in rectilinear openings are also found on the ground floor. The upper floors are divided into four vertical bays, each holding a pair of matched windows in rectilinear openings and all with rusticated stone lug sills and heads. Brick corbelling is used above the fifth floor windows of the middle bays and at the flat roofline (Plate 7).

The east wall is completely hidden by the neighbouring building, the Leadlay Building, 306 Ross Avenue, constructed at the same time and very similar in design to this warehouse. Much of the west façade is also covered by the neighbouring building; the top storey features windows in arched openings (Plate 8).

The rear (south) façade faces onto the back lane. Oddly shaped, the east end is built flush with the neighbouring building with paired windows in arched opening and stone sills on each floor and an open metal fire escape. The west end extends outward and features two raised loading doors in arched openings and windows in arched openings on all upper floors (Plate 9).
INTERIOR

Arranged similar to other contemporary warehouses, the basement would have held the heating equipment and storage space; the upper floors would have included office and general warehouse areas. At one time, doorways were opened on the third and fourth floors to allow access to 306 Ross Avenue to the east. The fourth floor opening is now closed, the third floor opening still includes the sliding metal fire door (Plate 10).

Today, much of the space remains in its original state. There are examples of the original wood and glass partitioning, much of the original wood floor is intact, floors are generally open and there are original wood and glass elements on the northeast corner staircase (Plates 11-14).

INTEGRITY

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in fair structural condition for its age. Alterations to the exterior have been minimal, with some original door and window units replaced or boarded up on the main façade.

STREETSCAPE

The Trees-Spriggs Building is an important contributor to an intact, turn-of-the-century streetscape that includes: its neighbour, the Leadlay Building, 306 Ross Avenue; the Toronto Hide & Wool Company Building, 200 Princess Street; the Boyce Carriage Company Building, 318 Ross Avenue; the Paulin-Chambers Building, 311 Ross Avenue; and the McLaughlan Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street (Plates 15-17).

Although the boundary of the Exchange District National Historic Site was drawn to exclude this building, it would, nonetheless, be considered an integral part of Winnipeg’s historic warehouse district.
ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

The designer of this warehouse was James H. Cadham (1850-1907). Cadham was one of the City’s most prolific late 19th and early 20th century architects, designing dozens of downtown warehouse as well as office buildings, stores and apartment blocks throughout the city (see Appendix II for biographical information). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

The contractors listed were J.A. Girvin and P. Burnett.6

John Alexander Girvin was born near Goderich, Canada West (Ontario) in 1853 (also given as 1851), coming to Winnipeg in May 1877 where he first worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway. He formed his own business; later organized as the J.A. Girvin Company. He died in Winnipeg on May 6, 1931.7 Among his larger local commissions were:8

- Central Congregational Church, Hargrave Street (1882) – demolished
- Y.M.C.A. Building, 276 Portage Avenue (1900, with P. Burnett) – Grade II
- Bank of Hamilton, 395 Main Street (1901, with P. Burnett) – demolished
- Tees & Persse Co. Warehouse, Princess St. (1904, at Point Douglas Ave.) – demolished
- Miller, Morse & Co. Building, 317 McDermot Avenue (1904, with P. Burnett)
- Leadley Warehouse, 306 Ross Avenue (1905)
- Fairchild Company Warehouse, 110 Princess Street (1907) – Grade II
- W.R. Allen House, 6 Roslyn Road (1907) – Grade III
- G.F. & J. Galt Warehouse, 334 McDermot Avenue (1909)
- Enderton Block, Portage Avenue (1909) – demolished
- Foley Brothers Warehouse, 185-187 Market Avenue (1918, alterations) – demolished
- Congdon Marsh Building, 86-88 Princess Street (1920, 2 additional storeys) – Grade III
- Tees & Persse Warehouse, 315 William Avenue (1924, alterations)

Philip Burnett was born in England in 1848 and immigrated to Canada in 1872 and arrived in Winnipeg in 1879. He worked as a mason and contractor by the early 1890s and the 1901 Census of Canada lists Burnett, his wife Mary E. and six sons and one daughter in the city, with his three eldest sons, William J., Philip J. and David W. all working as bricklayers, likely for

6 BP #1576/1905.
8 Compiled from Manitoba Free Press, various dates; author’s files; and Ledgers, 1899-1926.
their father. Burnett’s career in Winnipeg was extremely busy, working the City’s finest architects and building some of its landmark structures. He moved to Victoria, B.C. ca.1911 and died there in 1936. 

A list of his larger contracts would include:

- McDougall Memorial Methodist Church, 939 Main Street (1891)
- William A. Black House, 22 Edmonton Street (1893)
- Ogilvie Mills, Higgins Avenue (1895-1910) – demolished
- McIntyre Block, 416 Main Street (1898) – demolished
- G.D. Wood & Company Building, 250 McDermot Avenue (1898) – Grade II
- Paulin-Chamber Company Building, 311 Ross Avenue (1899-1904, with J. Girvin and 1910)
- Y.M.C.A., 276 Portage Avenue (1900, with J. Girvin)
- Bank of Hamilton Building, 395 Main Street (1901, with J.A. Girvin) – demolished
- Vulcan Iron Works, 120-150 Sutherland Avenue (1901-1910)
- Strathcona Block (Fort Garry Court Apartments), 160 Main Street (1902) – destroyed by fire
- McLaughlin Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street (1902-1906)
- Stobart & Sons Block (Bedford Block), 281 McDermot Avenue (1903) – Grade III
- Bright & Johnston Block (Mackenzie Block), 141 Bannatyne Avenue (1903, with S.B. Ritchie) – Grade III
- Kemp Building, 111 Lombard Avenue (1903 with S.B. Ritchie)
- Time Building, 333 Portage Avenue (1904) – destroyed by fire
- Miller, Morse & Co. Building, 317 McDermot Avenue (1904, with J.A. Girvin)
- Boyce Carriage Company Building, 318 Ross Avenue (1905)
- Ogilvie Flour Mill, Fort William (Thunder Bay), ON (1905)
- Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue (1905 with J. Girvin)
- Albany Apartments, 91 Edmonton Street (1906) – demolished
- Frost and Wood Warehouse, 230 Princess Street (1906) – Grade III
- Henderson Block, 332 Bannatyne Avenue (1910) – Grade III
- Ashdown Warehouse, 167 Bannatyne Avenue (1910 and 1911 additions) – Grade II

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9 Census of Canada, 1901.
11 Compiled from Historical Buildings and Resources Committee files; Manitoba Free Press; City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1926; and author’s files.
This building was originally owned by Trees-Spriggs Company, saddle and harness makers. This eastern-Canada firm was founded as Samuel Trees & Co. Saddlery and Harness in Toronto in 1866 and expanded to Whitby and Hamilton, Ontario. By 1900, it was Toronto’s largest manufacturer/distributor of harnesses, the same year it expanded by opening a branch in Winnipeg, located at 148 Princess Street and run by Henry Spriggs (1849-1919), a British-born merchant who came to Canada in 1873.

Beyond Trees-Spriggs Company, other early tenants included Ganong Brothers Limited, candy manufacturers, #314 (1910-1950), the Melotte Cream Separator Company, #312 (1910) and Richards and Brown, commission merchants, #314 (1910). An important part of the popularity of this warehouse to prospective tenants would have been the 1905 construction of a spur railway line of the Canadian Pacific Railway nearby (Plate 18).

By the early 1920s, Trees-Spriggs had expanded into footwear (Plate 19) and the building became known as the Trees Building by 1930. Ownership remained with the Trees family until 1948 when the property was sold to Samuel Dirnfeld, manufacturer of novelties, who remained owner until at least the early 1970s. Other long-time tenant of the building included the Hazelwood Davis Company, wholesale candies, #312 (1920-1960), McBride Cannem Hudson Limited, jobbers and brokers, #314 (1930-1950), Young Ideas Limited, #312 (1950), Imperial Paints and Supplies and Imperial Abrasive Enterprise, #314 (1970). The present occupant, Bill Worb Furs, has been in the building for many decades, having relocated from their original location on Princess Street near Ross Avenue (Plate 20) when that structure collapsed in the mid-1990s.

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13 Canada Census, 1901 and 1906. Also gives his arrival in Canada as 1871.
EVENT
There is no known important historical event connected with this building.

CONTEXT
This large warehouse is an extant example of Winnipeg’s major early 20th century expansion phase that lasted from 1900 to World War I. This expansion included every facet of the city’s economic, political and social sectors and transformed it into a leading North American centre. The warehouse district was crucial to this expansion. Warehouses like the Trees-Spriggs Building, located just off a major downtown thoroughfare, Princess Street, and connected to the transcontinental railway system by a spur line, were found throughout the downtown.

The fact that it was used as a rental property for many decades is another part of the history of the area – successful businessmen investing profits into the safe local real estate sector.

LANDMARK
This large building is located on a relatively quiet downtown street but would be familiar in the neighbourhood.
APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Building Address: 312 Ross Avenue (#312-314)  Building Name: Trees-Spriggs Building

Original Use: warehouse  Current Use: warehouse

Roll No. (Old): 13071828000 (12164)  RSN: 155613

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

Legal Description: 9W St. John, Plan 1537, Lots 9/10

Location: south side west of Princess Street

Date of Construction: 1905  Storeys: 5 & B

Heritage Status: NOMINATED LIST

Construction Type: brick and stone foundation

- 1576/1905 $30,000 (original); 1625/1948 [CS] (interior alterations); 124299/2015 $25,000 (new concrete basement floors)

Information:

- 44 x 110’

ARCHITECT: CADHAM, JAMES H.

CONTRACTOR: GIRVIN, JOHN A. & BURNETT, PHILIP
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.¹ 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.²

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.³ 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, 311 Ross Avenue, 1899
McIntyre Block, 416 Main Street (contractor – demolished)
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, 206-210 Princess Street, 1902 & 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

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.

Manitoba Free Press, September 23, 1875, p. 3.
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
Leadley Building, 306 Ross Avenue, 1905
Manitoba Medical College, Bannatyne Avenue (corner Emily Street), 1905 – demolished
Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue, 1905
J.H. Cadham House, 336 River Avenue, 1906
Grose and Walker Warehouse, 261 Stanley Street, 1906
Plate 1 – McDermot Avenue looking west from Main Street, ca.1881. Note the extensive number of homes in the area. (Archives of Manitoba.)

Plate 2 – The same view of McDermot Avenue as in Plate 1. This ca.1910 photograph shows the change in the area over 30 years. (Archives of Manitoba.)
Plate 3 – Princess Street, filled with substantial warehouse buildings, looking north from McDermot Avenue, ca.1903. (M. Peterson Collection.)

Plate 4 – Busy Princess Street looking south from Ross Avenue, ca.1903. (M. Peterson Collection.)
Plate 5 – Bannatyne Avenue East, looking west towards Main Street, ca.1903. The Ashdown Warehouse is on the right. (Courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba, N3585.)
Plate 6 – Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue, front (north) façade, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 7 – Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue, detail of roofline of front (north) façade, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

Plate 8 – Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue, rear (south) and west façades, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 9 – Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue, rear (south) façade, 2019. This building and its neighbour, 306 Ross Avenue, connect to the right of the double arched windows (arrow). (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 10 – Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue, 3rd floor doorway with sliding metal fire door, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)

Plate 11 – Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue, ground floor Bill Worb display area, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)
Plate 12 – Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue, 2nd floor, original glass and wood partitioning, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)

Plate 13 – Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue, 3rd floor warehouse space, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)
Plate 14 – Trees-Spriggs Building, 312 Ross Avenue, northeast corner staircase, fifth floor, 2018. (M. Peterson, 2018.)
Plate 15 – Ross Avenue looking west, 2016. Buildings on the block: #1- Toronto Hide & Wool Company Building, 200 Princess Street (built 1893); #2- Leadlay Building, 306 Ross Avenue (built 1905); #3- 312 Ross Avenue, Trees-Spriggs Building (built 1905); #4- Boyce Carriage Company Building, 318 Ross Avenue (built 1905)- now part of The Boyce Lofts on Ross, 316 Ross Avenue; #5- Paulin-Chambers Building, 311 Ross Avenue (built 1899-1920); and #6- McLaughlan Carriage Company Building, 208 Princess Street (built 1902). (M. Peterson, 2016.)
Plate 16 – South side of Ross Avenue west of Princess Street – note the apartment block, The Boyce Lofts on Ross, 316 Ross Avenue, completed at the west end of the block, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 17 – Ross Avenue looking east, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)
Plate 18 – Winnipeg Fire Atlas, Vol. II, Sheet 237 (December 1917), Trees-Spriggs Building at arrow. (City of Winnipeg.)
Plate 20 – Winnipeg Fur Exchange Ltd., 180-182 Princess Street, no date. (City of Winnipeg.)