62 ALBERT STREET

DINGWALL BUILDING

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
M. Peterson (2021)
Winnipeg in the early 1890s was, although few realized it, on the verge of a spectacular era of growth, development and maturity that would create, by World War I, a large, modern city with all the amenities. But this comprehensive growth followed patterns established decades earlier and resulted in specific districts within city boundaries even after this frenzied period of growth.

The real estate and construction boom of the early 1880s was intimately connected to the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) around Winnipeg and onto the western prairies. 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. This development led to the creation of specific districts within the city – residential, commercial and industrial – and their related building-types.¹ 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.

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, partially because of its central location and partially because of the preferential freight rates negotiated with the CPR that made it cheaper for manufacturers to ship their goods to Winnipeg, unload them and then send them west to the growing markets on the prairies. Companies like G.F. and J. Galt Company, Stobart, Eden and Company and J.H. Ashdown were all organized and carrying on business prior to the CPR boom. The bust of 1882, while it seriously affected some parts of the local economy, did not have a devastating effect on the wholesale sector. This was mainly as a result of the expanding regional base of the wholesalers as settlement increased on the prairies and demand for goods grew. The areas east and west of Main Street, however, were undeniably

developing as the warehouse district, slowly through the 1880s and 1890s and then rapidly after 1900 (Plates 1-3).

Another result of the economic expansion that had dramatic effects on the downtown landscape was two-fold: rising profits from commercial ventures meant additional capital for large-scale construction projects coupled with an ever-increasing demand for modern office, warehouse and showroom space. This resulted in many local business owners investing in new buildings.

Successful jeweller Donald Ross Dingwall translated his growing business into a modern facility to house both his own manufacturing and retail operations as well as ample rental space for tenants wishing to locate in the downtown. The three-storey structure at 62 Albert Street was completed in 1910 (Plate 4) and only a year later, another three storeys were added (Plate 5).

**STYLE**

This warehouse is a reduced 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 and featuring rusticated stone accenting around windows and doors and at roof level. Other elements, often based in classical architectural precedent, 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 the style was the use of the arch above openings. Often, straight-topped windows located on the middle storeys were grouped under large arches on the upper floors.² 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 three-storey structure rests on a stone foundation (68.6 cm. along the front façade and 63.5 cm. wide under the other three façades),³ the solid brick walls range from 33.0 to 61.0 centimetres thick and the internal support system is wood beam and post (see Appendix I for additional construction information).⁴

Announced in local papers in late April 1911 that three more storeys were to be added to the Dingwall Building and by mid-June, the new storeys were reportedly close to being finished and occupied.⁵ According to City records, ceiling heights are: basement- 22.9 cm.; main floor- 35.6 cm.; 2nd floor- 30.5 cm.; and 3rd to 6th floors- 25.4 cm.

DESIGN
The building’s original main (east) façade, as designed, was clad in dark red brick above the bush hammered stone cladding the ground floor. The façade was organized into four vertical bays, on the ground floor, these were filled by large plate glass display windows and smaller upper units except for the southern-most opening, which held the entrance. The windows were flanked by plain columns with modest capitals leading to a wide stone belt course. The upper storeys held segmental arched and rectilinear window openings with stone lug sills and radiating brick heads. A complete entablature with galvanized iron cornice and brick and stone capped parapet completed the building. The rear (west) and north elevations included arched windows on all levels, including the basement and a coal chute on the north façade and a raised loading door on the rear façade (Plates 6 and 7). The south elevation likely also contained similar window openings.

The additional storeys added in 1911 were and extension of the fenestration and finishes of the original building (Plates 5 and 8). On the front façade, the architect added a pair of arched

³ Architect’s Plans, Plan #2432/1910.
⁴ City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 608960-12-2, PC 50.
⁵ Manitoba Free Press and Winnipeg Tribune, various editions.
Window openings in the centre two bays on the fourth floor, a modest stone belt course above and then a complete entablature with heavy overhanging metal cornice to highlight the new roof line.

Window units have been sensitively replaced on the front (east) façade (Plates 9 and 10). The original entrance was replaced by an angled metal and glass unit likely in the 1960s (Plate 11) but has more recently been replaced by a wood door sensitive to the original design. The rear and north and south façades have not seen extensive alteration (Plates 12-14).

**INTERIOR**
The original 1910 building featured an open basement with boiler and coal room, the ground floor was unpartitioned except for the shipping office with vault as well as the elevator, in the southwest corner and the entrance foyer and staircase in the southeast corner (Plate 15). The plans for the second and third floor space were similarly undivided.

The addition added three floors and a passenger elevator to the east of the south side staircase (Plate 16).

Significant alterations to the space and finishes have been made to the building over time (Plate 17).

**INTEGRITY**
The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition for its age. It has not suffered extensive exterior alteration to its design, materials or ornamental detailing.
STREETSCAPE
This large, imposing structure has been an important part of the downtown on one of the more intact historic streetscapes of the Exchange District National Historic Site. It greatly contributes to the historical continuity of the area (Plates 18 and 19).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS
Well-known local architect John Hamilton Gordon Russell (1862-1946) was responsible for the design of the Dingwall Building in 1910 and the three-storey addition built the next year (Plate 20). The Ontario-born Russell began his Winnipeg practice in 1895 and over the next decades became one of the city’s busiest designers, responsible for dozens of churches, homes, warehouses and office structures.

Saul and Irish, the well-known local contracting firm, built the original three storey warehouse and the three-storey addition the following year. Brothers-in-law John A. Saul (1861-1939) and William A. Irish (1872-1941) formed a partnership in 1900 that was still operating in 1919, and were responsible for a number of large projects including: Elim Chapel (St. Stephen’s Presbyterian Church), 546 Portage Avenue (1902); Silvester-Wilson Building, 75 Albert Street (1904, List of Historical Resources); Bell Block, 370 Donald Street (1905, List of Historical Resources); Crane & Ordway Building, 93 Lombard Avenue (1906); 149 Pioneer Avenue, Scott-Bathgate Building (1907); La Verendrye School, 290 Lilac Street (1909); the Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street (1910, List of Historical Resources); A. Macdonald Co. Warehouse, 133 Market Avenue (1910, List of Historical Resources); and Westminster United (Presbyterian) Church, 745 Westminster Avenue (1910-1911, List of Historical Resources).

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6 Saul and Irish were responsible for nearly $2 million worth of work in Winnipeg between 1900 and 1913.
J.A. Saul also owned and raced thoroughbred horses in the early 1910s. He died in Winnipeg in 1939.

**PERSON/INSTITUTION**

Donald Ross Dingwall (Plate 21) was born near Halkirk, Caithness, Scotland 1851 and came to Canada as a youth with his family. He apprenticed in the jewellery trade in Lancaster, Ontario before establishing his own business in Port Hope, Ontario in 1878. In 1882, he followed many other Ontarians and came west to Winnipeg. Dingwall operated his first jewellery retail store at 588 Main Street near the Canadian Pacific Railway. Just before the turn-of-the-century, he opened a second store at 424 Main Street and then in the summer of 1910, he moved to Portage and Main, in the McArthur Building, 211 Portage Avenue (Plate 22).

With business booming, Dingwall’s staff numbered approximately 80 by 1910, with local and regional sales people, office staff and manufacturers. That year, Dingwall built the three-storey block on Albert Street to house his firm’s mail order/wholesaling and manufacturing activities on the third floors and rental space on the other two floors. The three additional floors added in 1911 were also used as rental space by Dingwall. The factory was devoted to the manufacture of the Dingwall specialty: fine gold and platinum work, diamond settings, silversmithing and watch repair. The use of high-grade metals and top-quality gems indicate that Dingwall’s (as it was generally called) centred to the top of the market.

D.R. Dingwall was a personable man with an advanced conception of corporate responsibility. Besides his personal involvement in several organizations, his company was also prominent in the non-commercial aspects of Winnipeg society. In both the sports of curling and lacrosse, the

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10. *Winnipeg Tribune*, July 29, 1910, p. 4; *Winnipeg Telegram*, July 28, 1913; and *Henderson’s Directory*, 1882-1915. The original store operated until ca.1915 when it was moved to 614-616 Main Street.
Dingwall Trophy was the highest goal of local competitors. The company donated generously to many local causes as corporate sponsors do today.

D.R. Dingwall died in 1913 but the company remained in family hands. At the time of his death, Dingwall was president of Dingwall Ltd., Canadian Finance Limited and Canadian Securities Co. He was vice-president of the Equitable Trust Co. and the Ontario, Manitoba and Western Land Co. as well as a director of the Pacific Coast Fire Insurance Co. His personal wealth from these business interests and some real estate left a considerable legacy for his wife and five grown children.

In February 1921, a faulty electrical device started a fire, which caused an explosion of stored sulphuric acid (Plates 23 and 24). The fire began on the third floor and seemed to travel downwards but, effectively, the entire Dingwall Building was gutted. The ladies’ wear store on the main floor and leather wholesale on the second floor were totally destroyed. Dingwall’s mail order business was on the third floor while the factory itself was on the fourth and sixth floors. Although the most valuable jewels were safely stored in a vault, the sophisticated machinery used in the manufacture of jewellery and silverware was destroyed. A preliminary estimate put the loss at $100,000.

Nevertheless, the building proved sturdy and the damage was not structural. Dingwall's announced immediately that repairs would be made, the factory had been relocated temporarily and that it was “business as usual”. Carter-Hall-Aldinger rebuilt the interior for an estimated $30,000 that summer and the Dingwall Building re-opened in the fall.

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15 Manitoba Free Press, February 3, 1921.  
16 Manitoba Free Press, February 4, 1921.  
17 City of Winnipeg, Building Permit, #407/1921.
D.R. Dingwall Limited finally sold the Albert Street property in 1942, the building was occupied by a variety of small- to medium-scale businesses, professionals, manufacturers and wholesalers (Plate 25).

**EVENT**
There is no known significant historic event connected with this building.

**CONTEXT**
The pre-World War I period of Winnipeg’s history was one of tremendous growth, in all facets of its economy. While many Eastern Canadian businesses flocked to the capital city to take advantage of this growth, there were also many locally-organized ventures that also expanded rapidly in the early 1900s and beyond. Names like James Henry Ashdown (hardware), Elisha Frederick Hutchings (saddles, harnesses and leather goods), George Frederick and John Galt (groceries, liquors and cigars) and Robert Jones Whitla (wholesale dry goods) became well-known not only on the local stage but regionally and nationally. Dingwall Limited and its founder, D.R. Dingwall, was another of the early 20th century business success stories of Western Canada and its large building on Albert Street is a lasting example of this success.

**LANDMARK**
This building’s size, design, materials and location make it a very conspicuous in Winnipeg’s Exchange District.
APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report
Assessment Record

Building Address: 62 Albert Street
Building Name: Dingwall Building

Original Use: wholesale warehouse
Current Use: office building - studio space

Roll No. (Old): 13060896000 (10084)
R.S.N.: 146693

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

Legal Description: 5/6 St. John, Plan271, part Lot 6: Lot 7

Location: west side between Notre Dame and McDermot avenues

Date of Construction: 1910
Storeys: 6

Construction Type: Ordinary – Mill Frame, solid brick walls, stone foundation

HERITAGE STATUS: GRADE III (March 27, 1985)

Building Permits (Plans available: [CS] Department Storage; [M] Microfilm):
- 2432/1910 [CS] $35,000 (Original); 855/1911 [CS] $25,000 (3 storey addition); 407/1921 [CS] $30,000 (repairs); 1758/1921 [CS] (sprinkler tank); 4115/1945 $11,000 (alterations); 1298/1946 $30,000 (alterations); 4501/1946 $15,000; 5263/1953 [CS] (misc. structure); 392/1955 $2,000 (interior alterations); 961/1988 [CS] $80,000 (alterations); 162820/2001 $15,000 (interior alterations 5th & 6th floors); 211280/2002 $5,000 (interior alterations); 211265/2002 $6,500 (interior alterations); 213111/2002 $29,000 (interior alterations to 6th floor); 339490/2004 $40,000 (interior alterations to 4th and 5th floors); 116236/2006 $80,000 (interior alterations); 138307/2012 $87,500 (interior alterations to 3rd floor);

Information:
- 43 ½ x 85 ½ x 85+ = 358,211 cu. ft.
- Exterior – Red face brick, cut stone to sills, stone basement
- Wall Thickness – 21” (1st & 2nd floors)
- 1941 – Exterior walls fairly good, one crack; floors uneven
- 1947 – Altermations to basement and 2nd floor
- 1947 Inspection – Basement strapped & plastered, fluorescent lighting 1st floor. Exterior stone pilasters cleaned & refaced
- 1951 – asphalt tiles 3rd & 4th floors
- Permit 392/1955 – fluorescent lighting fixtures, wall partitions removed
- 1961 – Building in generally good condition, well maintained.
- 1986 – Building structurally sound. One large crack over loading door. Roof recently redone, some slopes in floors

ARCHITECT: J.H.G. RUSSELL
CONTRACTOR: SAUL & IRISH

---ALBERT STREET---
John Hamilton Gordon Russell

J.H.G. Russell was born in Toronto, Canada West (Ontario) in 1862, the son of a dry goods dealer. After attending school in that city, he went to work for H.B. Gordon, a prominent area architect. Russell was with Gordon from 1878 until his departure for Winnipeg in 1882.¹ From 1886 to 1893, Russell travelled throughout the United States, learning civil engineering, surveying and architecture in centres such as Chicago, Illinois, Spokane and Tacoma, Washington, and Sioux City, Iowa.²

In 1895, two years after returning to Winnipeg, he set up his private practice, coinciding with the city's period of unbridled growth. His designs were (and are) scattered throughout the city, province and Western Canada, covering a variety of building types, sizes, prices and uses. His business continued to be steady during World War I and after, when many architects struggled to find commissions.

Russell was president of the Manitoba Association of Architects (1925) and served for three terms as the president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (1912-15). His chairmanship of the Presbyterian Church Board of Managers³ and his devotion to Presbyterianism partially explain the large number of churches he designed for the denomination in Winnipeg and Western Canada. Russell died in 1946.

A complete list of his designs would be lengthy indeed. Many of his earlier works have been demolished and therefore usually are no longer included in inventories of his portfolio.

³ M. Peterson, op. cit., n.p.
Among his projects were:

Outside Manitoba-
- Mount Pisgah Presbyterian Church, 207 North First Street, Roslyn, Washington, U.S.A. – 1899 (Winnipeg Daily Tribune, June 2, 1899, p. 6)
- Knox Presbyterian - Prince Albert, SA
- Knox Presbyterian - Kenora, ON
- St. Andrews Church - Moose Jaw, SA

Manitoba-
- Starbuck Presbyterian (United) - 1904
- Treherne Presbyterian (United) - 1907-1908 (originally Chambers Presbyterian)
- Pilot Mound Public School
- Killarney Public School
- Foxwarren Public School

Winnipeg-
- Churches-
  - Augustine Presbyterian (United), 444 River Avenue, 1903-1904 (Grade II)
  - Crescent-Fort Rouge Methodist (United), 525 Wardlaw Ave., 1906-1911
  - Westminster Presbyterian (United), 745 Westminster Avenue, 1910-1912 (Grade II)
  - Robertson Memorial Presbyterian (United), 648 Burrows Avenue, 1911
  - Robertson Memorial Presbyterian Institute, Burrows Avenue, 1911
  - Knox Presbyterian (United), 400 Edmonton Street, 1914-1917
  - Home Street Presbyterian (United), 318 Home Street, 1920
  - St. John's Presbyterian (United), 250 Cathedral Avenue, 1923 (Grade III)
  - Riverview Presbyterian (United), 360 Oakwood Avenue, 1925

- Residences-
  - J.H.G. Russell, 237 Wellington Crescent, 1902 (demolished)
  - J.D. McArthur, 159 Mayfair Avenue, 1903 (Grade III)
  - R.R. Wilson, 545 Broadway, 1904 (Grade III)
  - H. Archibald, 176 Roslyn Road, 1909
  - Ormsby House, 119 Campbell Street, 1910
  - J.H. Ashdown, 529 Wellington Crescent, 1913 (Grade II)
  - R.R. Wilson, 680 Wellington Crescent, 1925

- Commercial-
  - Addition to J.H. Ashdown Warehouse, 157-179 Bannatyne Avenue, 1899-1911 (Grade II)
  - Lake of the Woods Building, 212 McDermot Avenue, 1901 (Grade II)
  - Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, 1902 (Grade III)
  - Porter and Company Building, 368 Main Street, 1902-1903 (demolished)
  - McKerchar Block, 600-602 Main Street, 1902-1903
  - Additions to McClary Building, 185 Bannatyne Avenue, 1903 & 1904 (Grade III)
  - Thomson Block, 499 Main Street, 1903 (demolished)
Winnipeg-
Commercial- (continued)
Adelman Building, 92-100 Princess Street, 1903 (Grade II)
Bole Warehouse, 70 Princess Street, 1903
Additions to the Bright and Johnston Building, 141 Bannatyne Avenue, 1903 &
1907 (Grade III)
Silvester-Willson Building, 222 McDermot Avenue, 1904
Green and Litster Block, 235-237 Fort Street, 1904 (demolished)
Franklin Press, 168 Bannatyne Avenue, 1904 (Grade III)
Addition to Daylite Building, 296 McDermot Avenue, 1904 (Grade II)
J.H. Ashdown Store, 211 Bannatyne Avenue, 1904 (Grade III)
Allman Block, 592-594 Main Street, 1904 (List of Historical Resources)
Scott-Bathgate Building, 149 Pioneer Avenue, 1905 & 1907
Porter Building, 165 McDermot Avenue, 1906 (Grade III)
Child's (McArthur) Building, Portage Avenue, 1909 (demolished)
Glengarry Block, 290 McDermot Avenue, 1910 (Grade III)
Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, 1911 (Grade III)
Great West Permanent Loan Company Building, 356 Main Street, 1912
(demolished)
Joseph Maw Block, 280 William Avenue, 1924 (List of Historical Resources)
Eastman Kodak Building, 287 Portage Avenue, 1930 (demolished)

Other-
Gladstone School, Pembina Street, 1898 (demolished)
Casa Loma Block, 644 Portage Avenue, 1909 (Grade II)
Chatsworth Apartments, 535 McMillan Avenue, 1911
YMCA, Selkirk Avenue, 1911 (demolished)
YMCA, 301 Vaughan Street, 1911-1913, with Jackson and Rosencrans of New
York (Grade II)
Guelph Apartments, 778 McMillan Avenue, 1912
Addition to Marlborough (Olympia) Hotel, 321 Smith St., 1921-1923 (Grade II)
Odd Fellows Home, 4025 Roblin Boulevard, 1922
Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Portage Avenue, 1928
Hugh John Macdonald School, William Avenue, 1929
Aurora Court Apartments, 543 Ellice Avenue, n.d.
Central Park Block, 389 Cumberland Avenue, n.d.
Johnson Apartment Block, 524 Sargent Avenue, n.d.
Plate 1 – McDermot Avenue looking west from Main Street, ca.1881. (Photo courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba, "Winnipeg- Streets- McDermot #1").

Plate 2 – The same view approximately two decades later (ca.1903). Large brick and stone warehouses and retail/office buildings have replaced all the residential property in this shot. (Courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba.)
Plate 3 – Looking south along Arthur Street from Bannatyne Avenue into the heart of Winnipeg’s Exchange District west of Main Street, ca.1905. (Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg- Views c1905- 2.)
Plate 4 – Architect’s plans, “Front Elevation,” Plan #2432/1910. (City of Winnipeg, City Clerk’s Department.)
Plate 5 – Architect’s plans, “Front Elevation,” Plan #855/1911. (City of Winnipeg, City Clerk’s Department.)
Plate 6 – Architect’s plans, “Rear Elevation,” Plan #2432/1910. (City of Winnipeg, City Clerk’s Department.)
Plate 7 – Architect’s plans, “North Elevation,” Plan #2432/1910. (City of Winnipeg, City Clerk’s Department.)
Plate 8 – Architect’s plans, “Rear Elevation,” Plan #855/1911. (City of Winnipeg, City Clerk’s Department.)
Plate 9 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, main (east) and south façades, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 10 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, detail of main (east) façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 11 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, detail of main (east) façade, 1974. (City of Winnipeg, Planning Department.)
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Plate 12 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, south façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 13 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, north façade and northwest corner, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 14 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, main (east) and south façades, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 15 – Architect’s plans, “Ground Floor,” Plan #2432/1910. (City of Winnipeg, City Clerk’s Department.)
Plate 16 – Architect’s plans, “Second Floor,” Plan #855/1911. (City of Winnipeg, City Clerk’s Department.)
Plate 17 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, main floor office space, 2003. (M. Peterson, 2003.)

Plate 18 – Albert Street looking south from McDermot Avenue, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 19 – Albert Street looking north towards McDermot Avenue, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 21 – Donald Ross Dingwall (1851-1913), ca.1902. (Reproduced from Representative Men of Manitoba [Winnipeg, MB: The Tribune Publishing Company, 1902].)
Plate 22 – Interiors of D.R. and Dingwall Company, ca.1905. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)
Plate 23 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, after February 2, 1921 fire. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Foote Collection, N1824.)
Plate 24 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, after February 2, 1921 fire. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.)
Plate 25 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, 1969. (Courtesy of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Architectural Survey Collection.)
Plate 26 – Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street, 2019. (G. Cline, 2019.)