

62 ALBERT STREET – DINGWALL BUILDING
J.H.G. Russell, 1910-11



Donald Ross Dingwall emigrated to Canada in the late 1870s from his native Scotland where he learned the jewelry and watchmaking trade as an apprentice in Montreal. Arriving in Winnipeg during the boom years of the early 1880s, Dingwall established a company to manufacture and sell his exclusive line of men’s and women’s jewelry and watches, said to be “unexcelled for beauty and originality of design, superior and elaborate finish and artistic elegance.”

His business proved to be successful and at the time of his death in 1913, Dingwall was President of Dingwall Limited, Canadian Finance Limited and Canadian Securities Company. He was also vice-president of the Equitable Trust Company and the Ontario, Manitoba and Western Land Company, as well as a director of the Pacific Coast Fire Insurance Company. As was typical for

businessmen in Winnipeg at the time, Dingwall was prominent in Winnipeg society. The Dingwall Trophy was sought by local competitors in the sports of curling and lacrosse.

In 1910, local architect John Hamilton Gordon Russell was engaged by Dingwall to design a warehouse and factory on Albert Street to support the expanding business. Russell was born in Toronto and studied architecture there before moving to the United States, where he practiced in Tacoma and Chicago. He moved to Winnipeg in 1893 embarking on a successful career designing numerous residences, churches, warehouses and commercial blocks. His best-known buildings include the McArthur Building (now Childs) on Portage Avenue (1909); The J.H. Ashdown residence (now Khartum Temple) on Wellington Crescent (1912); and Knox Presbyterian Church on Edmonton Street (1914).

The Dingwall Building was erected at a cost of \$60,000 in two stages. In 1910 the first three storeys were constructed; three additional storeys were added the following year. Angled to face Albert Street's curve, the building was of solid brick on a stone foundation with concrete footings.

The symmetrical façade featured a simplified neo-classical motif on the main level with stone pilasters supporting a complete entablature. The original entranceway with a stone pediment and the large show windows, which were prominent between the pilasters, were removed after a major fire in 1921. Russell reflected the prominent warehouse style of the neighbouring buildings by articulating the upper floors with windows that have segmental heads with stone lintels. The two central round-headed arches with projecting keystones and recessed spandrels provide a skyscraper motif. A stone string course balanced by an elaborate projecting cornice framed the larger windows of the top floor.

The top two floors of the building were used by Dingwall for the manufacture of fine gold and platinum work, diamond settings, silver-smithing and watch repair. The third floor was utilized for Dingwall's wholesale and mail-order trade. A ladies' wear store leased the main floor space while a leather wholesaler was on the second floor.

In 1933, Henry Birks and Sons absorbed D.R. Dingwall Limited and for many years the business was popularly known as Birks-Dingwall.

The McKenzie Clay Jewelry firm (now Clay Law Limited) moved into the old Dingwall factory on the top floor in the late 1930s and have remained. In the post-1945 period, various manufacturer's agents and small businesses have leased space in the Dingwall Building. Max Guberman's Wholesale Shoes, the Nozick Commission Clothing Wholesale, Moffat's Household appliances and the offices of the United Cigar Store have been the principal tenants in recent years.