63 ALBERT STREET

HAMMOND BUILDING

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: R.R. Rostecki (1975)
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.

Forty-four-year-old William J. Hammond had arrived in Winnipeg from Ontario in 1895, an experienced fur dealer and manufacturer. “Hammond the Hatter” as he would become known (Plate 4) soon rose to the top of the local industry and in 1902 built a small retail property on Albert Street that would see a number of additions over the next decade as both Hammond’s wealth and Winnipeg’s economy grew.

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. 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

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promote their businesses and portray the stability of their firms through the design of the structures they occupied.

CONSTRUCTION
The Hammond Building has one of the more unique construction histories of any building in the Exchange District.

It was originally built in 1902 as a non-descript two-storey rental block, measuring approximately 13.4 x 37.2 metres with solid brick walls and stone foundation. Cost of construction was listed at $14,000.

In 1905, two storeys were added to the original building at a cost of $12,500. The building boasted two staircases along the north wall and an elevator along the south wall and a number of “Sample Rooms” on the new upper floors (Plate 5).

In 1907, a five-storey, $35,000 addition was built on the north side of the building, measuring 9.2 x 33.9 metres (Plate 6). Existing records do not describe the addition of a fifth floor on the southern portion of the building, but when the final alteration, a sixth floor on the north portion was completed in 1909, the southern section was already five storeys in height (Plate 7).

DESIGN
Taken as a whole, this building does not present a cohesive design on the main (west) façade. Bay defined by plain brick pilasters hold windows openings that are both triplet and double, segmentally arched on the second floor, rectilinear on the third, fourth and partial sixth floors

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3 City of Winnipeg, Building Permit (below as BP), #620/1902.
4 BP #809/1905.
5 BP #836/1907.
6 BP #1457/1909, cost was listed at $5,000.
and rounded on the fifth floor (Plate 8-10). Continuous and lug rough-cut stone sills are found on all levels and corbelled brick bands top the third and fourth floor openings, the latter also feature heavy rough-cut stone lintels. A metal cornice separates the fourth and fifth floors, stone bands and stone keystones embellish the fifth floor and the metal cornice at the roof line is interrupted where the sixth end rises at the north end of the building. This top floor features windows in rectilinear openings, stone lug sills, corbelled brick and pilasters extending above the flat roof line.

It appears from plans that the original ground floor held only two doors, the main, set under a pedimented hood and one at the south end of the façade (Plate 6). It is unknown when the other entrances were created for the main floor retail shops, but it might have been during the updating of the ground floor which removed the original door and hood. The ground floor entrances were updated in 2019 (Plates 11 and 12).

The side elevations are plainly designed, with a large number of windows on each floor (Plates 13 and 14). The south elevation includes a raised loading door (Plate 15). The rear (east) façade features similar fenestration, two entrances and an open metal fire escape (Plate 16).

Alterations to the building over the years have been substantial on the ground floor of the main elevation, with less replacement on the other façades. A solarium was built as a sixth floor on the south portion of the building.

**INTERIOR**

The building’s interior was designed to provide usable office, storage and display space for a variety of tenants. The finishes were sturdy rather than ornamental and over the years, alterations, as tenancy changed, have occurred (Plate 17).

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7 A permit, BP#3402/1981 was taken out for $50,000 for the “front façade” which may have been when this work was completed, unfortunately no other information is available on this permit.
INTEGRITY

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition for its age, although construction of the parkade to the south did negatively affect the foundation of the building. 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 Hammond Building and all its pre-World War I additions (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.

The contractors used for this building were all well-established local builders who worked on a variety of projects throughout the city:

- Alsip Brothers and J.J. Vopni- 1902
- Gray and Davidson Brothers- 1905
- Hudson Davidson- 1907
- Malcom Brothers- 1909
PERSON/INSTITUTION

William John Hammond (Plate 21) was born in Brampton, Canada West, in 1851, leaving school at the age of 15 to apprentice in the retail fur trade. By 23, he was operating his own hat and fur store in Toronto and in 1895 followed many other Ontarians and resettled in Winnipeg. By the early 1900, he was the only “articled” furrier in Canada and bought furs from area hunters and trappers for export to New York City, NY and London, England. Hammond’s store and factory were located for many years at the corner of Portage and Main in the Nanton Block, 430 Main Street (Plate 22). He died in 1926.

On October 31, 1923, the Hammond Block was gutted by fire (Plate 23). The interior of the building was destroyed from the second floor to the roof. The blaze began in a basement elevator room and quickly spread to the upper levels of the block. Five fire brigades responded to the alarm, and one fireman was injured. The total damage was $168,000. During 1924, the Hammond Block was rebuilt, using W.A. Irish as the contractor and architect Russell to devise the repairs which cost about $50,000. The original type wood-beam and post construction was again used and by the later months of 1924, the structure was once more fully occupied.

Hammond owned the Albert Street block until his death, the Hammond Building Company owned the property into the 1970s (Plate 24).

Tenancy has always been varied in the Hammond Block, dry goods dealers, manufacturers’ agents, shoe and hat manufacturers, government departments, associations and for many years, Heritage Winnipeg.

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10 Winnipeg Tribune, November 1, 1923, p. 1.
11 Manitoba Free Press, November 2, 1923, p. 11.
12 BP #9/1924.
13 City of Winnipeg, Assessment Roll, Roll No. 608760-12-2, PC 40.
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), Donald Ross Dingwall (jewellery and watches) and Robert Jones Whitla (wholesale dry goods) became well-known not only on the local stage but regionally and nationally. W.J. Hammond operated an early and very successful furrier business and this large building on Albert Street bearing his name 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: 63 Albert Street (61-65 Albert St.) Building Name: Hammond Building

Original Use: office building/warehouse Current Use: office building

Roll No. (Old): 608760 (10073)

Municipality: 12 Ward: 2 Property or Occupancy Code: 40

Legal Description: 6 St. John, Plan 586, Lots F/G

Location: east side between McDermot & Notre Dame avenues

Date of Construction: 1902, 1905, 1907, 1909 Storeys: 6 Construction Type: Ordinary - brick

HERITAGE STATUS: GRADE III (July 14, 1980)


SEE NEXT PAGE

Information:

- 37 ½ x 118 ¾ x 71+ = 561,517 cu. ft.
- Exterior – Front clay brick painted red, stone basement. Stone belts between pilasters, stone sills, metal cornice
- 1941 – Building in good condition and well maintained. Floors in south half of building in good condition but out of level.
- 1942 – 3’ wide stairway
- Permit 3711/1950 – new tyndall stone front
- 1951 - some settlement to southeast corner
- 1961 – no structural changes – fairly well maintained
- Permit 603/1964 – new suspended ceiling, lighting and asphalt flooring
- 1989 – “Average condition” for age
- 1992 – Heaving in N.E. corner of basement
- 1997 – Significant structural damage

ARCHITECT: J.H.G. RUSSELL (1902, 1905, 1907, 1909)

CONTRACTOR: ALSIP BROTHERS & J.J. VOPNI (1902); A. GRAY & DAVIDSON BROTHERS (1905); HUDSON DAVIDSON (1907); MALCOLM BROTHERS (1909)

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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 – Advertisement for “Hammond the Hatter”, 1904. (Reproduced from Winnipeg Tribune, August 19, 1904, p. 7.)
Plate 5 – Architect’s plans, “Third Floor Plan,” Plan #809/1905. (City of Winnipeg, City Clerk’s Department.)
Plate 6 – Architect’s plans, “Albert St. Elevation,” Plan #836/1907. (City of Winnipeg, City Clerk’s Department.)
Plate 7 – Architect’s plans, “Albert Street Elevation,” Plan #1457/1909. (City of Winnipeg, City Clerk’s Department.)
Plate 8 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, main (west) façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 9 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, main (west) façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
63 ALBERT STREET – HAMMOND BUILDING

Plate 10 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, main (west) façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)

Plate 11 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, main (west) façade, south entrance, 2019. (G. Menzies, 2019.)
Plate 12 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, main (west) façade, main entrance, 2019. (G. Menzies, 2019.)
Plate 13 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, north façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 14 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, south façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 15 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, loading door, south façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 16 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, rear (east) façade, 2021. (M. Peterson, 2021.)
Plate 17 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, interiors, date unknown. (City of Winnipeg, Planning Department.)
63 ALBERT STREET – HAMMOND BUILDING

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 – William John Hammond, date unknown. (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, September 27, 1926, p. 4.)
Plate 22 – Northwest corner of Portage Avenue and Main Street, no date. Nanton Building at arrow.
(Courtesy of the Winnipeg Firefighters’ Museum.)
Plate 23 – Fire at the Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, October 31, 1923. (City of Winnipeg, Past Forward, Martin Berman Postcard Collection 4874.) Plate 24 –
Plate 24 – Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street, 1978. (City of Winnipeg, Planning Department.)