

111 LOMBARD AVENUE – KEMP BUILDING (GAYLORD BLOCK)

*James H. Cadham, 1903 & 1906 (southwest addition);
James McDiarmid, 1911 (southeast addition)*



Build of solid brick, this large warehouse has been part of the east Exchange District since its construction in 1903.

The block was originally the home of Kemp Manufacturing Company, a metal goods manufacturer founded in Toronto, Ontario in 1885. In the late 1920s it amalgamated with two other large firms to create General Steel Wares Limited, which occupied this warehouse into the 1950s.

The warehouse was built in three sections, highlighting the success of the business in the region and its need to expand its headquarters to keep up with the growing demand for its products. The northeastern portion (facing McDermot Avenue) was built first, with a raised stone basement and six storeys of solid brick superstructure with regularly placed, arched windows

with stone lug sills and entrance and loading doors. A metal fire escape is also found on the north façade.

The first addition to the building occurred in 1906 to the southeast corner of the original. Facing Lombard Avenue, it includes recessed square headed window openings below arched brickwork above the top floor windows and corbelled brick at the roofline. Stone is used to accent windows and doors. The final addition was made on the east side of the 1906 addition to double its width to over 32 metres. The additions have left the east side of the building an irregular shape with uninterrupted and windowed areas. The west side holds only five small windows.

The rough textures, flat roofline, stone accenting and arched openings are typical of the Romanesque Revival style, very popular in warehouse districts throughout North America from the 1880s well into the 20th century. The building employs 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 – a very popular system because of its sturdiness, the ease of adding additional storeys and its ability to suffer fire damage and not collapse. One unusual aspect of the Kemp Building’s construction is the use of steel I-beams in some of the newer areas.

Most of the interior of the building has remained unaltered, open warehouse space can be found throughout. Because of the numerous additions, large doors have been opened to give access to all parts of the building; these openings utilize steel fire doors to protect against the spread of fire.

James H. Cadham, Ontario born architect, designed this warehouse and the 1902 addition. Cadham was one of a number of self-trained designers who worked in the city in the late 19th century, Cadham being one of the most prolific.

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Exterior:

- The south facing warehouse with main façade fronting Lombard Avenue
- Irregular plan with exposed, roughly-dressed limestone block base and common brick superstructure
- Regularly placed recessed and transomed windows of the south facade, including roughly-dressed limestone sills and square lintels up to the fifth floor, segmental arched windows on the top floor, capped by a corbelled brick cornice
- Regularly placed arched window openings with roughly-dressed limestone sills throughout
- Details throughout including pilasters, bands of corbelling, loading bays, fire escapes, etc.

Interior:

- Volumes of open space indicative of warehouse construction
- Exposed beam and post structural system
- Plank wood flooring