

149 PIONEER AVENUE – SCOTT-BATHGATE BUILDING
John Hamilton Gordon Russell (1905 & 1907)



“Nutty Club” is one of Winnipeg’s most famous brands, the logo and mascot, “Can-D-Man” is instantly recognizable to many and its products, from syrup to pink and caramel popcorn, have been found on retail shelves throughout Western Canada for decades. The product line belongs to the Scott-Bathgate Company, founded in Winnipeg in 1903 by Albert Edward Scott (1860-1935) and James Loughrin Bathgate (1872-1934) two recently arrived Southern Ontarians who worked at various wholesale firms prior to their partnership. The company began as commission agents, marketing a variety of cookie and candy lines, from offices at 132 Princess Street.

But like some many other small-scale, newly formed businesses in Winnipeg in the early 1900s, especially wholesalers, business soon outstripped their facilities and an expansion was necessary. The company built the east end of this building, on what was then Notre Dame Avenue East, in 1905, nearly doubling its size with a western addition in 1907. The building was connected to

the Canadian Northern Railway's transcontinental railway line via a Winnipeg Transfer Railway spur line running on the north side of the building and accessed by a raised, open platform. From this building, the company could expand its lines to include soups, nuts, dried fruit and many other foodstuffs. The company incorporated in 1912 and grew steadily into the mid-century. By 1950, the company could boast factories in Winnipeg and Vancouver, B.C. and had branches in Fort William (Thunder Bay), ON, Calgary and Edmonton, AB and Vancouver, B.C.

Locally, when the company began its own manufacturing line in the early 1930s, it required additional space – purchasing 130 and 132 Portage Avenue and 80 Lombard Avenue and building a two-storey garage at 131 Portage Avenue (demolished) to house its 96-vehicle car and truck fleet. In the late 1960s, the company also purchased 130 Galt Avenue, the former T. Eaton Company Printing Plant and Track Warehouse for manufacturing and storage. The company maintains operations in almost all of these buildings today.

The Pioneer Avenue warehouse is built of solid brick with stone accenting and 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 featured rusticated stone accenting around windows and doors and at roof level. Other common elements included: towers, quoins, belt courses, corbelled brick panels, chevrons and flat rooflines, with or without cornices and entablatures. Arched doorways and windows were the most visible design element.

Resting on a solid rubblestone foundation, the structure is built utilizing the popular mill construction method – 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. This was a very popular system in warehouse districts throughout North America because of its sturdiness, the ease of adding additional storeys and its ability to suffer fire damage and not collapse.

The original 1905 factory/warehouse and its 1907 addition are similarly designed on the front (south) façade, with a raised basement clad in rough-cut stone leading to the brick walls of the

superstructure. Basement windows in rectilinear openings and ground floor openings are arched with multiple keystones. Brick corbelling separates the ground floor from the upper storeys where rectilinear window openings are paired on each floor and topped with keystones. The flat roof features corbelled brick and originally a raised parapet (demolished).

The east façade is similar to the front and includes two raised loading doors at the north end. The west façade is almost windowless and the rear (north) façade features a shallow open wood loading platform, metal fire escape, windows in arched openings and a third storey covered bridge connecting the building to the warehouse to the north (originally #132 Portage Avenue East). Only the rear façade does not include painted signage/logos.

On the interior, the original space was organized in the traditional manner- loading/unloading, public and office space on the ground floor, office and public space on the second floor and open storage in the remainder of the building. The building was gutted by fire in 1917 and repairs were completed quickly. Today, the building continues to function as administrative headquarters, warehouse and factory for the company.

The building and addition were designed by noted local architect John Hamilton Gordon Russell (1862-1946). Russell began his Winnipeg practice in 1895, the start of nearly 40 years of work that saw him design hundreds of fine structures of every description. His better known work includes: Adelman Building, 92-100 Princess Street (Grade II); Casa Loma Block, 644 Portage Avenue (Grade II); J.H. Ashdown House, 529 Wellington Crescent (Grade II); and Augustine Presbyterian (United) Church, 444 River Avenue (Grade II).

Contractors for the 1905 building were Malcom Brothers, Saul and Irish built the 1907 addition.

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

Exterior-

- Five-storey brick and stone building located on the northwest corner of Pioneer Avenue and Westbrook Street, its main façades facing south onto Pioneer Avenue and east onto Westbrook Street, its west façade facing a surface parking lot and its rear (north) façade facing a lane;

- The south façade with its raised rusticated stone base with small basement windows and ground floor windows and door in arched openings, its corbelled brick belt course, upper floors with windows with stone accenting in rectilinear openings on floors 2 to 4, and arched on the top floor and a flat roof with corbelled brick accenting and painted signage;
- The east façade with ground floor windows and raised loading doors in arched openings and upper storey windows in arched openings and painted signage;
- The west façade with its painted signage; and
- The north façade with its raised loading platform, windows and doors in arched openings throughout and metal fire escapes.

Interior-

- Heavy timber mill structural system; and
- Examples of ornamental tin ceiling.