

**104 PRINCESS STREET – WAREHOUSE**  
*W. Brydon and B.R. Robertson*  
*(Contractors), 1885, D. Smith, 1904*



This five-storey brick warehouse and the smaller building beside it share a common foundation and history. Built in 1885 as a speculative venture by the Confederation Life Association, this building had a twin section where the three-storey building is now located.

The tender for the solid brick building on a foundation of stone was let by William Brydon and B.R. Robertson, a partnership of general contractors and suppliers of business materials who may have also provided the plans for the building, a popular practice in Winnipeg at the time.

Originally only three storeys high with large storefront windows, the building was divided into two symmetrical sections separated by a party wall. The southern portion was leased to Hodgson, Sumner and Company, a wholesale firm dealing in dry goods, small wares and fancy

goods. Sutherland and Campbell, a wholesale grocery firm occupied the other half of the building. These were pioneer enterprises, primarily supplying goods for the homesteaders that were pouring through the only urban centre the west. The warehouse district steadily built up around this enterprise as Winnipeg grew in size and stature.

The simple utilitarian design of the building featured projecting pilasters that gave a bay-by-bay surface division with decorative courses of brick providing a horizontal balance. Each portion of the main façade featured large plate-glass windows with recessed doorways and exposed basement windows. A brick parapet with gothic pilaster caps terminated the upper section.

In 1904, a two-storey addition was made to the building based on the plans of architect D. Smith whose only other known works include the Canadian Moline Plow Co. warehouse, and an addition to the Kilgour-Rimer block, all c.1903. The original cornice was removed and the bays were extended up two floors. The rectangular storefront windows and doorways were replaced by large round-headed arches.

Completed in 1905, the enlarged building became the home of the Consolidated Stationary Company Ltd., who were wholesale suppliers of a variety of notions, wrapping papers, fancy goods, pipes and sporting goods.

During the next thirty years there was a rapid turnover of small businesses in the twin sections. In the mid-1930s, the Men's Relief Registration office was located here. Unemployed single men, many of whom had come to the city from farms and mines, were assigned to various relief construction projects and bush camps.

In March 1945, chemicals stored by a paint supply firm exploded causing a massive fire in the north portion of the structure. Despite the tremendous efforts of firemen, this section of the building was gutted and collapsed. A three-storey brick warehouse was built on the 1885 foundations in 1950. In recent years, the building has been used as warehouse space for a furniture business.