

**208 PRINCESS STREET – McLAUGHLIN CARRIAGE COMPANY BUILDING**  
*James Henry Cadham (1902 & 1906)*



The McLaughlin Carriage Company began operations in Oshawa, ON in 1876 headed by Robert McLaughlin (1836-1921) and joined, in 1892 by sons George and Robert Samuel. The successful company opened a Winnipeg branch as part of its Western Canada expansion in the late 1890s. In 1902, the company built this modern showroom/warehouse facility on the northwest corner of Ross Avenue for its wide variety of wagons, sleighs, carriages, and related products and then, because of expanding business, completed a large addition to its north end in 1906. A year later, the company acquired the Canadian rights to assemble Buick vehicles, producing its first 154 cars in 1908 in Oshawa. The Princess Street building quickly began selling cars out of its ground floor showroom. The McLaughlin Motor Car Company was an industry leader and in 1918, when it merged with the Chevrolet Motor Car Company of Canada to form General Motors of Canada, Limited, R.S. McLaughlin was named its president as well as serving as vice-president of the American parent company.

This building and its addition are built using the mill construction method, solid brick walls, square timber beams and posts and wood plank flooring. It was a very common system found in most pre-World War I warehouses throughout Winnipeg's downtown. The original 1902 warehouse measured 15.3 x 29.1 metres and cost \$20,000 to complete. The 1906 addition was only slightly smaller, 15.1 x 29.1 metres, and cost \$20,700. The buildings are not tied in to each other; the beams of the original building run east to west, the addition north to south which has led to some separation/cracking at the join on both the front and rear façades.

Stylistically, the warehouse features the arched openings, heavy massing, rough brick and stone textures, flat roofline, rhythmic window placement and modest accenting of the Romanesque Revival style, extremely popular in Winnipeg's warehouse district from the 1890s to World War I.

The main façade, facing east onto Princess Street begins at grade with a rusticated stone base. The upper floors are divided into bays by brick pilasters ending in arches with drip moulding above the top storey window openings. The ground floor bays hold display windows and raised entrances and rough cut stone accents window openings on all levels. The flat roofline is embellished with corbelled brick. Many of the original wood-frame window units are still present on this façade and the south elevation, which continues much of the design and layout of the front façade. The south side also includes a metal fire escape. The rear (west) elevation features loading doors in arched openings, arched window openings on all three levels and a metal fire escape.

On the interior, the ground floor was used as a showroom for carriages and then automobiles, with raised loading/unloading space at the rear of the building. The upper two floors were used for storage. Today, the building is used entirely for storage and many of the finishes and layouts have not been altered.

James H. Cadham (1850-1907), Ontario-born architect, designed this block and its addition. Cadham, who had worked as a carpenter, came west in 1870 as a soldier in the Wolseley Expedition, deciding, like many in the ranks, to remain after his 1871 discharge. He began working

as a carpenter and contractor and by the mid-1890s had added architect to his activities. Over the next decade, Cadham was one of the city's most prolific designers, especially in Winnipeg's rapidly expanding warehouse district. Often, his expertise was sought by other architects and builders. He died at the height of his profession from pneumonia on December 10, 1907.

Local contractor Philip Burnett was responsible for the construction of both the original building and the 1906 addition.

McLaughlin Motors remained in the Princess Street building until moving its operations to the Maryland Street garage in 1924 (although it continued to own the property until 1942). The building was next used in the 1930s as the Princess Street Dining Hall, a soup kitchen organized to serve transients and Depression-affected people. Beatty Brothers Limited, farm equipment manufacturer, occupied the building in the 1940s and 1950s. In the 1970s and the building was occupied by Corson Investments (real estate), Park Leather Limited, clothing manufacturers, Northern Shoe Company and Beaver Headwear Limited. Carter's Auction occupied part of the building in the 1990s, Black's Auction in the early 2000s and it has most recently been used as a storage facility for a local business.

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

Exterior-

- Three-storey brick and stone building with flat roof located at the northwest corner of Princess Street and Ross Avenue, its main facades facing east onto Princess Street and its south onto Ross Avenue, its north facade hidden by neighbouring building, and its west facing the back lane;
- The front (east) facade with its rusticated stone base, ground floor display windows and doors in rectilinear openings, the upper floors divided by brick pilasters connected by wide arches with brick drip moulding, the upper floor windows in arched openings and the flat roof with corbelled brick accenting;
- The south facade with its windows in arched openings, brick pilasters connected by wide arches with brick drip moulding and corbelled brick accenting at the roofline; and
- The rear (west) facade with windows in arched openings on all three floors, main floor loading doors in arched opening and metal fire escape.

Interior-

- Heavy timber mill structural system: and

- Ornamental tin ceilings on the ground and the second floor of the south section of the building and original wood grill of the freight elevator.