

306 ROSS AVENUE – LEADLAY BUILDING
James H. Cadham, 1905



This large warehouse was built in 1905 by successful merchant Harry Leadlay. Leadlay was born in Toronto, Canada West (Ontario), in 1866 and came to Winnipeg in 1886, working for one of the West's largest fur and wool businesses, Toronto Hide and Wool Company, at 298 Ross Avenue. In the early 1900s, he opened his own firm, H. & A. Leadlay. Leadlay did not occupy space in his new Ross Avenue warehouse until 1913, when his new company, Leadlay Manufacturing Company, manufacturers of overalls, sweaters, suspenders and shirts, occupied an entire floor of the building. The company filed for bankruptcy in 1922 and Leadlay retired in 1923, although he and his estate owned the building into the 1960s.

Early tenants included W.L. McKenzie and Company, manufacturing agents, Kingdon Printing Company and the Mooney Biscuit Company and other tenants of the building included: Peel Printing, #310 (1930-1960); Acme Paper Box Company, #310 (1930-1960); Electrical Supplies Limited, #306 (1930-1960); Winnipeg Leather Goods Manufacturing Company, #310 (1970); Central Sportswear Manufacturing Company, #310 (1970s to 1980s); Sabina Sportswear Manufacturing Company, #310 (1970s); and Crown Cap Manufacturing Company, #310 (1980s).

The designer of this warehouse was James H. Cadham (1850-1907). Born near present-day London, Ontario, Cadham left school at the age of 16 to train as a carpenter and came west as a member of the Wolseley Expedition in 1870. Discharged in 1871, Cadham took up the building trade and by the mid-1890s was listed as an architect. His practice flourished and he became one of the City's most prolific late 19th and early 20th century architects, designing dozens of downtown warehouse as well as office buildings, stores and apartment blocks. His better known work includes: W.F. Alloway Building, 179 McDermot Avenue, 1898 (Grade III); Whitla Building, 70 Arthur Street, 1899 (Grade II); G.D. Wood & Company Building (Merchants Building), 250 McDermot Avenue, 1898 (Grade II); Daylite Building, 296 McDermot Avenue, 1899 (Grade II); Imperial Dry Goods Building, 91 Albert Street, 1900 (Grade III); Gregg Building, 52 Albert Street, 1903 (Grade III); Robinson, Little and Company Building, 54 Arthur Street, 1903 (Grade II); Galt Building Annex, 92 Arthur Street, 1903 (Grade II); Bedford (Stobart) Building, 275 McDermot Avenue, 1903 (Grade III); Scott Furniture Building, 272 Main Street, 1904 (Grade III); and Alloway and Champion Building, 667 Main Street, 1905 (Grade III).

The contractors listed were John Alexander Girvin (ca.1853-1931), carpentry and William J. Hodgins (1854-?) for masonry. Both men were born in Canada West (Ontario) and both operated successful contracting companies in the early years of the 20th century.

The five-storey warehouse is built of solid brick with stone accenting resting on a heavy rubblestone foundation and utilizing the mill construction method – square timber posts supporting timber beams attached to the solid brick exterior walls and covered with wood plank flooring.

The exterior includes many common design features found throughout the warehouse district. The main (north) façade begins at grade with rusticated stone cladding rising to the large ground floor windows, interrupted by basement window openings. The original entrances at either end of the façade were set in arched openings; the west entrance has been redesigned. The upper floors are divided into a number of vertical bays with rectilinear windows. All the window openings are embellished with wide, rusticated stone sills and heads. Brick corbelling is used to highlight the otherwise plainly designed flat roofline.

The west wall is completely hidden by the neighbouring building and the upper floors of the east façade are visible and have windows in arched opening with stone sills on each level. Painted signage is also found on this façade. The rear (south) façade includes a raised open loading dock, windows of similar design to the east side openings and a metal fire escape.

On the interior, its use as a clothing manufacturing facility has left most of the space open. Some original ornamental tin ceiling is found on the ground floor and an opening in the west wall on the third floor (protected by a metal fire door) gives access to 312 Ross Avenue.

The building appears to be in good structural condition for its age, its main façade features much of its original finish and design and the building stands in the middle of a block of contemporary warehouses located on both sides of Ross Avenue.

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

Exterior-

- Five-storey brick and stone building with flat roof located on the south side of Ross Avenue, its main façade facing north onto Ross Avenue, its west façade hidden by the neighbouring building, its east façade hidden on the ground floor and its south façade facing the back lane; and
- The front (north) façade with its rusticated stone base, common clay brick walls, its ground floor with two stone arches and windows in rectilinear openings, its upper storeys with banks of windows in rectilinear openings with stone heads and sills and corbelled brick accenting at the roofline;
- The east façade with its painted signage and windows in arched openings; and
- The rear (south) façade with windows and doors in arched openings with stone sills.

Interior-

- Heavy timber structural system; and
- Ornamental tin ceiling.