

**311 ROSS AVENUE – PAULIN-CHAMBERS BUILDING**  
*James H. Cadham, 1899; Frank R. Evans, 1904 & 1910*



This front portion of this large brick and stone warehouse was built in stages between 1899 and 1910 as the business it housed expanded – mirroring the expansion of Winnipeg’s economy during this period.

The site was originally occupied by a frame industrial bakery built in 1882 for the W.B. Chambers Company that ran along what would become Paulin Street at Ross Avenue. This Ontario biscuit and candy manufacturer had established a bakery in Winnipeg in 1876. In 1883, J.H. Chambers joined with another baker, William H. Paulin, to form Paulin and Company and then Paulin-Chambers. This firm added a basement to the original structure and built a large, four-storey addition in 1899 (presently the southeast portion of the building). The Company saw

major expansion over the next 25 years, operating warehouses to the West coast and employing 200 people in their Winnipeg factory. To make room for this growth, an addition storey was added to the 1899 building and in 1910, the original 1882 structure was demolished to make way for a new five-storey addition. In 1920, a sixth floor was added to both and several other buildings were completed at the north end of the structures in 1938, 1946, 1949 and 1975.

The front factory/warehouse building is a reduced example of Winnipeg's warehouse district's most popular style – the Romanesque Revival style. Used throughout North America from the 1880s well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, elements include the use of brick and stone, raised basements, minimal ornamentation, flat rooflines and arched openings. The front (south) façade of the Paulin-Chambers Building exhibits many of these exterior elements: rough-faced stone cladding on the raised basement, solid brick walls, heavy rough-cut stone sills and heads, modest brick ornamentation and flat roof. The west façade is a continuation of the front elevation, although on the west side, window openings are arched, stone heads are replaced by radiating brick and the stone sills are continuous between the attached brick pilasters.

The interior, because of the varied ages of the buildings and their additions, is a mixture of materials, finishes and structural systems. And because of its different uses over the years, the interior has both altered and original sections and much of the original open warehouse space remains.

The 1899 building was designed by James H. Cadham (1850-1907), one of the City's most prolific late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architects. The 1904 and 1910 work was designed by Frank R. Evans (1865-1949), who worked in the City from 1900 to the early 1930s. The 1899 contractors were J.H. Girvin and P. Burnett. Burnett built the 1904 addition (with T.E. Ames) and the 1910 addition.

The Paulin-Chambers Company merged with several other major bakeries in 1926 to form the Canadian Biscuit Company, Ltd., although the Paulin-Chambers name continued to be used and operated out of the Ross Avenue building into the 1970s. Most recently, it was used by the City of Winnipeg as a storage facility.

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

Exterior-

- Six-storey brick and stone structure with its main façade facing south onto Ross Avenue, its west onto Paulin Street, its north façade partially hidden by additions and its east façade facing a back lane;
- Its main (south) façade with rusticated stone base, main floor entrance, brick pilasters, windows in rectilinear openings with stone sills and lintels on the first to third floors, arched openings the fourth and fifth floors, brick corbelling on the fourth and fifth floors, stone belt course below the fifth and sixth floor windows, modest sixth floor and flat roof;
- West façade with rusticated stone base, large main floor loading doors, flat brick pilasters, stone belt courses, corbelled brick, windows in arched openings and painted signage on the sixth floor;
- East façade with an open metal fire escape, main floor loading doors, painted signage and windows in arched openings on the upper floors; and
- The visible upper portions of the rear (north) façade with windows in arched openings on each floor.

Interior-

- Examples of mill and steel structural system.