

238 PRINCESS STREET

COCKSHUTT PLOW COMPANY BUILDING

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
April 2019

This building embodies the following heritage values as described in the *Historical Resources By-law*, 55/2014 (consolidated update July 13, 2016):

(a) Built in 1902 with the upper three storeys added in 1906, this warehouse is an early addition to Winnipeg's Warehouse District and an important part of the Princess Street streetscape;

(b) It is associated for nearly 50 years with the Cockshutt Plow Company, an international farm equipment manufacturer;

(c) It was designed by local architect S. Frank Peters built by contractors Robert Watson and John Girvin;

(d) It is an excellent example of the Romanesque Revival style, popular throughout the warehouse district;

(e) It is a conspicuous building on its busy corner location; and

(f) The building's exterior has suffered little alteration.

238 PRINCESS STREET – COCKSHUTT PLOW COMPANY BUILDING

Winnipeg in the early 1890s was on the verge of a spectacular era of growth, development and maturity that would almost completely change the City by World War I. But this comprehensive growth followed patterns established a decade earlier and resulted in specific districts within city boundaries even after this frenzied period of growth.

The real estate and construction boom of the early 1880s was intimately connected to the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) around Winnipeg and onto the western prairies. Land prices in the small capital city skyrocketed, the population soared and solid brick structures began replacing the small wooden shacks that dotted the mud streets and avenues. Perhaps more important, however, was the beginning of the segregation of the various sectors of the city – residential, commercial and industrial – and their specific buildings.[1] The huge advance in land prices along Main Street north of Portage Avenue necessitated the replacement of the earlier residential development (Plate 1) with large commercial structures. Investors chose to locate near one of the most important buildings, City Hall, from which would come assistance in advancing both singular business interests and those of the community at large.

Commercial interests, both local and from Eastern Canada, were quick to locate in this area. The city rapidly assumed the role of wholesale hub for all of Western Canada. Companies like R.J. Whitla, Stobart, Eden and Company, George D. Wood and J.H. Ashdown were all organized and carrying on business prior to the CPR boom. The bust of 1882, while it seriously affected some parts of the local economy, did not have a devastating effect on the wholesale sector. This was mainly as a result of the expanding regional base of the wholesalers as settlement increased on the prairies and demand for goods grew. The areas east and west of Main Street, however, were undeniably developing as the warehouse district, slowly through the 1880s and 1890s and then rapidly after 1900 (Plate 2).

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1 R.R. Rostecki, "The Growth of Winnipeg, 1870-1886," unpublished M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1980, pp. 112-114.

Princess Street, located just west of the City Hall/Market complex, developed as one of the city's premier thoroughfares (Plate 3), supported by the construction of the CPR's Princess Street Spur, which, beginning in 1902, ran along the west side of Princess Street from the CPR mainline to William Avenue and beyond. This line gave businesses on the north side of the street year round access to the transcontinental line, simplifying their shipping and receiving activities.

In 1902, Ontario farm implement manufacturer Cockshutt Plow Company, which had been operating a branch in the City since the early 1890s, announced the construction of a large warehouse (Plate 4).[2] Excavation soon followed and by late fall, the structure, noted as being "the largest implement warehouse in Western Canada"[3] was operational (Plate 5).

STYLE

This warehouse is an excellent example of the Romanesque Revival style, very popular in warehouse districts throughout North America from the 1880s well into the 20th century. In the 1880s, the style was influenced greatly by American architect H.H. Richardson (1838-1886) and was often referred to as Richardsonian Romanesque.[4] The buildings were nearly always solid brick with a raised basement and featuring rusticated stone accenting around windows and doors and at roof level. Other elements included towers flanking the main façade, quoins, belt courses, corbelled brick panels, chevrons and flat rooflines, with or without cornices and entablatures. The most obvious feature of the style was the use of the arch above openings. Often, straight-topped windows located on the middle storeys were grouped under large arches on the upper floors.[5] Although the style was applied to private residences and on large public buildings, in Winnipeg it was almost exclusively used in the warehouse district, where the designs were somewhat more subdued. The massiveness and sturdiness of the style appealed to wholesalers

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2 Manitoba Free Press, 1890-1900; and July 25, 1902, p. 12.

3 Manitoba Free Press, October 4, 1902, p. 3.

4 L. Maitland et al., A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), p. 84.

5 Ibid., p. 84; and Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, 1991), p. 14.

looking to promote their businesses and portray the stability of their firms through the design of the structures they occupied.

CONSTRUCTION

The building measures approximately 24.4 x 35.7 metres and is built of solid brick with stone accenting, located on the southwest corner of Princess Street and Alexander Avenue. The original four-storey structure cost $50,000 to complete in 1902.[6] The upper three floors were added in 1906 (Plate 6), designed by the same architect and built by John McQuarrie at a cost of $25,000.[7]

This warehouse was built using the most common construction method of the time – the mill system – 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 George D. Wood and Company Warehouse is one of many mill construction structures in the Exchange District.

DESIGN

The front (east) façade begins at grade with a rusticated stone base rising a short distance and leading to the common clay brick walls of the superstructure (Plate 7). The stone walls are interrupted by squat, square headed basement windows. The centrally located entrance is arched and accessed by a short flight of stairs. On both sides of the door are pairs of large, display windows in rectilinear openings. A modest cornice separates the ground floor from the upper storeys. The upper three floors are divided into five bays, rectilinear openings on the second and third floors give way to arched openings on the fourth floor (Plate 8). Wide smooth-cut stone

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6 City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #695/1902.

7 BP #2773/1906. The company also built a small, frame and metal clad stable in 1904 west of the Princess Street warehouse (BP #1647/1904, $500).

spandrels and stone lug sills highlight the openings. A modest brick and stone cornice is found above these arches, marking the original roofline of the 1902 structure (which included a raised brick and stone parapet (Plate 5).

In 1906, the upper three storeys were added and it appears, from published renderings and photographs, that the fenestration was significantly different than the original (Plate 6). While following the bays from below, the window openings were considerably smaller. Openings were arched with ornamental heads on the fifth and sixth floors and rectilinear on the top floor. The north façade openings appear to be in their original configuration (Plate 9) while the east openings have been changed, enlarging the openings and embellishing them with pilasters, wide brick spandrels and stone sills (Plate 10). No permits or published account of these alterations to the east façade have been located.

The roof of the addition is finished with a more prominent metal cornice.

The building's other main façade, facing north onto Alexander Avenue, is a continuation of the east façade (Plate 9). Ground floor window openings are smaller and there are raised loading doors at the west end of this floor. The original fourth floor brick cornice runs the entire length of this façade, as does the seven floor cornice. The upper floor window openings, as previously mentioned, are smaller, arched and finished with stone keystones.

The lower four floors of the south façade are covered by the neighbouring building while the upper three floors are windowless and include painted signage (Plate 11). The rear (west) façade includes the same raised stone foundation wall, two large raised metal loading doors and a metal fire escape (Plate 12). The second to fourth floors have paired windows in arched openings with stone lug sills while the upper three floors include the same short arched window openings with keystones found on the upper floors of the north façade.

INTERIOR

As described in the local newspaper, the interior of the building was designed with much of the ground floor utilized for showroom space, the rear (west) end used for shipping and receiving and finished with an electric freight elevator.[8] Business offices were located on the second floor and the top floors were used as warehouse space.

Because of the nature of the stock being stored in the building, special consideration was given to the strength of the structure – the square wood beams, posts and flooring are substantial (Plates 13 and 14).

Today, the basement is used for storage and the mechanical equipment. The ground floor features retail space in the front (east) and the shipping/receiving area to the rear with a pair of large two-sided freight elevators (Plates 15 and 16). An unusual feature of the elevator shaft is a staircase along the west wall that runs to the top floor of the building (Plate 17). Metal clad fire doors originally gave access at each floor; some of these elements are still present (Plate 18).[9]

The second floor contains some of the original office wood and glass partitioning (Plate 19) and the upper floors are open storage, as originally designed (Plates 20 and 21).

INTEGRITY

Today the building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and has not suffered extensive exterior alteration to its main façade.

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8 Manitoba Free Press, October 4, 1902, p. 3.

9 The building's main stairs, located on the south wall, only runs from the basement to the third floor.

STREETSCAPE

This warehouse is an integral part of two streetscapes, Princess Street and Alexander Avenue and is located just north of the boundary of the Exchange District National Historic Site. It is found in the midst of several contemporary warehouse structures (Plate 22).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

The architect for the Cockshutt Plow Company Building was S. Frank Peters (Plate 23) who came to Winnipeg from Toronto in 1892 and set up a private practice (see Appendix II for biographical information). He was the designer of many fine buildings in the city and has been given 20 points by the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings and Resources Committee.

Contractors listed on the original City of Winnipeg Building Permit were Robert Watson and John Girvin.

PERSON/INSTITUTION

The Cockshutt Plow Company was formed in Brantford, Ontario in 1877 as the Branford Plow Works, run by James G. Cockshutt (ca.1851-1885) with 5 employees.[10] The company grew on the strength of Cockshutt's ability to improve the design of implements, its J.G.C. Riding Plow (Plate 24), invented in 1882, became known as the "plow that opened the west" because of its popularity on the prairies.[11]

The company's success led to its incorporation as the Cockshutt Plow Company in 1883 with a 50-man workforce. Founder J.G. Cockshutt died of tuberculosis in 1885 but his brothers and father continued the business. By 1903, the company's Brantford factory covered 9 hectares. In

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[10] G. Muir, "Bits & Pieces of Brantford's History – The History of the Cockshutt Family," Brantford Library website, www.brantford.library.on.ca, no date; and William H. Cockshutt, "A Chronicle," International Cockshutt Club Inc. website, www.cockshutt.com, 2004.

[11] Manitoba Agricultural Museum website, http://ag-museum.mb.ca/visitor-information/artifacts/horse-machinery/cockshutt-jgc-riding-plow/. The plow remained in the company's catalogue, virtually unchanged, until 1931.

1910, expansion through acquiring other companies increased Cockshutt Plow's manufacturing line and international exports. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the company continued to innovate, making it one of the most popular agricultural manufacturing in North America, its line included tractors, tillers, combines, etc. The company was bought in an "unfriendly stock market take-over" in the late 1950s. The new owners promptly sold off the divisions of the company and the Cockshutt name was retired in 1962.[12]

In Manitoba, the company opened its first Winnipeg branch in 1891 with a staff of six,[13] under the able management of Brantford-born Ezra Arthur Mott (1869-1951, Plate 25), who remained the face of the company in Western Canada for many decades.[14] Its early showroom was found at 152-154 Princess Street, where it remained until its move to its own headquarters at 238 Princess Street in 1903. The company remained in the building until it opened its new facilities at 1340 Notre Dame Avenue in 1951.[15]

Ownership of the Princess Street property transferred to the T. Eaton Realty Company who occupied space in the warehouse. By 1970, the present owners, J. Werier and Company, were the owner and occupant of the building.[16] This local firm was started by Joseph Werier (ca.1870-1956, Plate 26), Russian-born Jewish immigrant who settled in Winnipeg in 1903. His wholesale business, which began as a general store in the North End in the mid-1920s, was located at 764 Main Street from the 1930s to the 1960s.[17] The business was taken over by Werier's son Samuel (1910-1993) after Joseph's death in 1956.[18]

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12 W.H. Cockshutt, op. cit.; and G. Muir, op. cit. The company was employed during both World Wars in munitions manufacturing.

13 Winnipeg Free Press, May 29, 1951, p. 10.

14 "Mott, Ezra Arthur," in Memorable Manitobans, Manitoba Historical Society website, http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/mott_ea.shtml, 2010.

15 Winnipeg Free Press, May 29, 1951, p. 10.

16 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 13-080145000, 1910-1990.

17 Winnipeg Free Press, May 1, 1937, p. 4 and June 15, 1984, p. 51; and M. Peterson, "764 Main Street, Stuart Machinery Company Warehouse 'The Yellow Warehouse'," report for the Historical Buildings Committee, May 2012, p. 7.

18 Winnipeg Free Press, June 15, 1984, p. 51.

EVENT

There is no known significant historical event connected with this building.

CONTEXT

This structure is a perfect illustration of the early 20th century growth of Winnipeg. A regional company, in this case in the agriculture sector, looked to expand into the fertile markets of Western Canada. It set up its new headquarters in the region's premier city, Winnipeg, utilizing its political, financial and most importantly, its railway connections to further its business. Success was nearly immediate, its need for modern facilities necessitating the construction of a large warehouse in the heart of the expanding warehouse district and then additional storeys were added only three years later as demand outstripped the capacity of the new building. This was a story retold throughout the district by a wide range of companies selling everything from tea to luggage to wood stoves.

LANDMARK

This is a massive building, located on a busy downtown intersection and is conspicuous in the area.

Historical Buildings & Resources Committee
THE CITY OF WINNIPEG

APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report

Building Address: 238 Princess Street

Building Name: Cockshutt Plow Company Building

Original Use: warehouse

Current Use: mixed (retail/warehouse)

Roll No. (Old): 13080145000 (801450-12-2)

R.S.N.: 155564

Municipality: 12 Ward: 2

Property or Occupancy Code: ---

Legal Description: 9/11 St. John, Plan 32037, Lot 31 (subject to easement for spur track)

Location: southwest corner Alexander Avenue

Date of Construction: 1902 + 1906

Storeys: 7

Construction Type: Mill

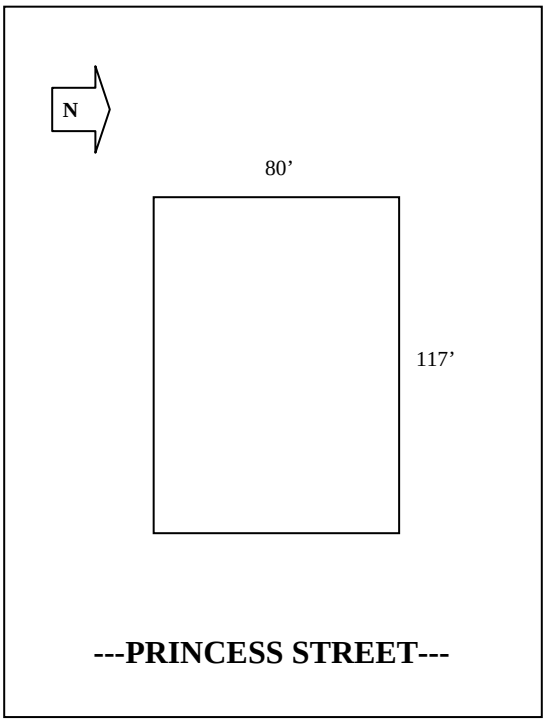
Heritage Status: ON NOMINATED LIST

Building Permits (Plans available: **[CS]** City Storage; **[M]** Microfilm):
- 695/1902 $25,000 (original – 4 storeys); 2773/1906 $50,000 (additional 3 storeys); 2390/1943 **[CS]** (addition)

Information:

- 80 x 117

- ceilings: B- 9’; 1st- 12.5’; 2nd- 10.5’; 3rd- 10’; 4th- 9’; 5th & 6th- 9.5’; 7th- 11-12’



APPENDIX II

S. Frank Peters

Peters was born in Yeovil, Somerset, England on November 7, 1847[1] and was educated in London, Ontario, graduating with a civil engineering degree from Toronto University. He began his own architectural practice in London, Ontario in 1872 and in 1881 moved to the larger opportunities in Toronto.[2] In 1885, Peters took his first trip west as commander of a company of the 7th Fusiliers regiment of London, Ontario. The company formed part of the government response to the Riel Rebellion and Peters lost an arm in the conflict.[3]

Peters moved to Winnipeg in 1892 and set up a practice that was to include his brother, W.A. Peters, by 1902.[4] Throughout his career, S.F. Peters was a strong advocate of the development of a Canadian design, separate from the American and European standards. In a 1910 speech made to the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Peters dismissed the newly popularized skyscrapers as "cooping up a mass of hard workers."[5] He preferred classical detailing, however many of his designs, especially warehouses, borrowed liberally from the Richardsonian Romanesque style. He served as the first President of the Manitoba Association of Architects.

An incomplete list of Peters' buildings includes:[6]

Wesley College (co-designed by George Browne), now part of the University of Winnipeg, 515 Portage Ave. (1896)
Ashdown Warehouse, 157-179 Bannatyne Ave. (1896) - Grade II
F.W. Alloway Building, 179 McDermot Ave. (1898) - Grade III
London Building, 432 Main St. (1898)
McClary Block, 185-187 Bannatyne Ave. (1899) - Grade III

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1 Neepawa: An Architectural Walking Tour (Winnipeg, MB: Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, 1987), n.p. Below as Neepawa.

2 "A Group of Winnipeg Architects," in Canadian Architect and Builder, Volume X (January 1897), p. 4.

3 The Year Past, 1983, (Winnipeg, MB: City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee, 1984), p. 33.

4 Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906, p. 55.

5 S.F. Peters, "Architecture in the West" in Construction, Volume III (October 1910), p. 78.

6 List compiled from City of Winnipeg, Building Permits; Neepawa, op. cit., n.p.; "Winnipeg Architects," Binder of the City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Officer; and various newspaper articles compiled by the author.

S.F. Peters designs, continued:

Manitoba College of Pharmacy, 422 Notre Dame Ave. (ca.1899)
Gilmer Block, 329 Donald Street (1900)
Cockshutt Plow Warehouse, 238 Princess St. (1902-1903)
W.L. Alexander House, Colony St. (1903)
Town Hall, Strathclair, MB (1904)
Miller & Richard Type Founders Building, 121 Princess St. (1904) – Grade III
Massey-Harris Building addition, 294-296 William Ave. (1904)
Manitoba Club, 194 Broadway (1905)
Nanton Building, 203 Portage Ave. (1905) – demolished
Ezra Mott House, 139 Middle Gate (1911)
Cornish Library, 20 West Gate (1914) – Grade II

He died in Winnipeg in 1926.[7]

[7] Neepawa, op. cit., n.p.

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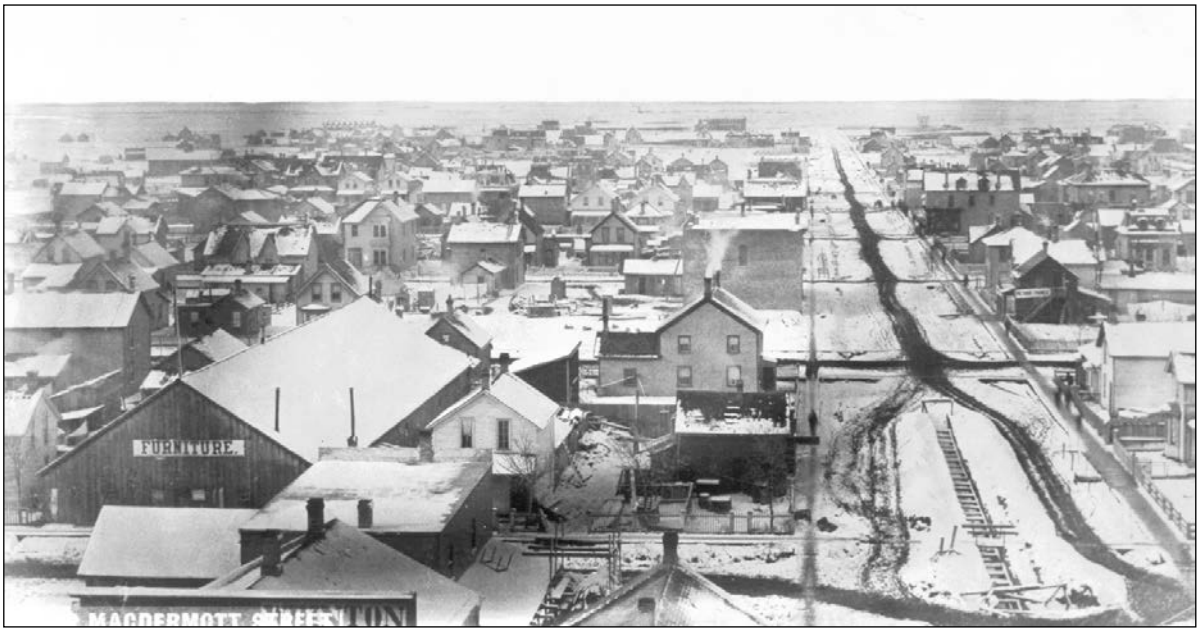


Plate 1 – McDermot Avenue looking west from Main Street, ca.1883. (Courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba.)



Plate 2 – Warehouse District, ca.1905, showing the scale of development over the previous 20 years. (Courtesy of the Archives of Manitoba.)

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Plate 3 – Princess Street looking south from Ross Avenue, ca.1903, the street filled with horse-drawn vehicles. (M. Peterson Collection.)

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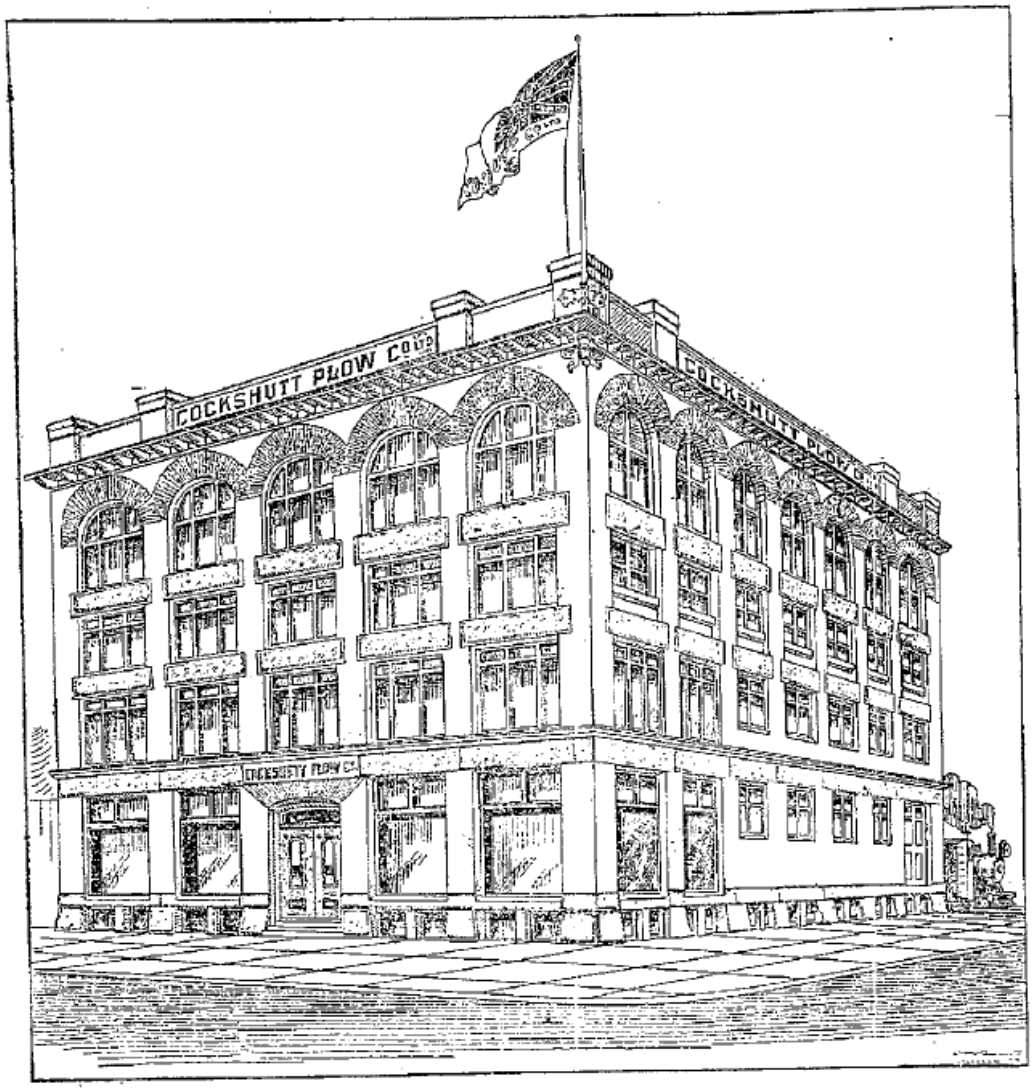


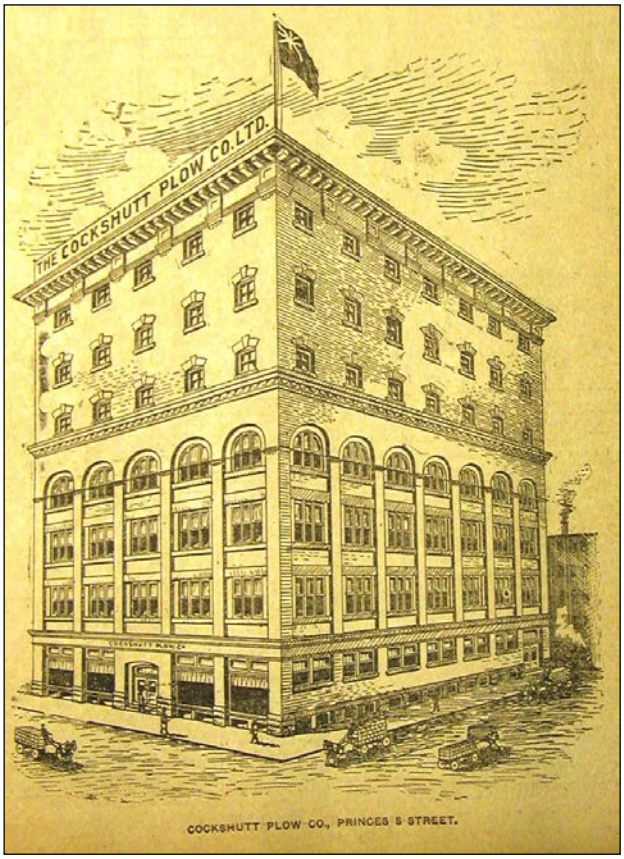
Plate 4 – Architect's drawing of the new Cockshutt Plow Company Building, Princess Street.
(Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, October 4, 1902, p. 3.)

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Plate 5 – Newly completed Cockshtt Plow Company Building, Princess Street, ca.1903. (Reproduced from William A. Martel and Sons, Illustrated Souvenir of Winnipeg [Winnipeg, MB: Authors, ca.1903], p. 53.)

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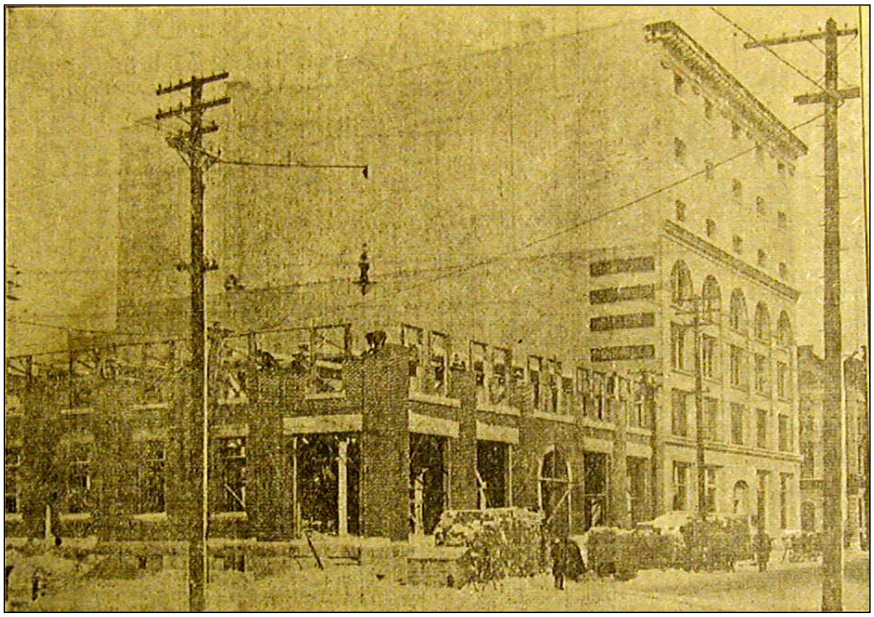


Plate 6 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, architect's drawing and image of three-storey addition, 1906. (Reproduced from Manitoba Free Press, December 6, 1906.)

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Plate 7 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, front (east) façade, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

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Plate 8 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, detail of front (east) façade, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

238 PRINCESS STREET – COCKSHUTT PLOW COMPANY BUILDING



Plate 9 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, north façade, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

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Plate 10 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, detail of front (east) façade, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

238 PRINCESS STREET – COCKSHUTT PLOW COMPANY BUILDING

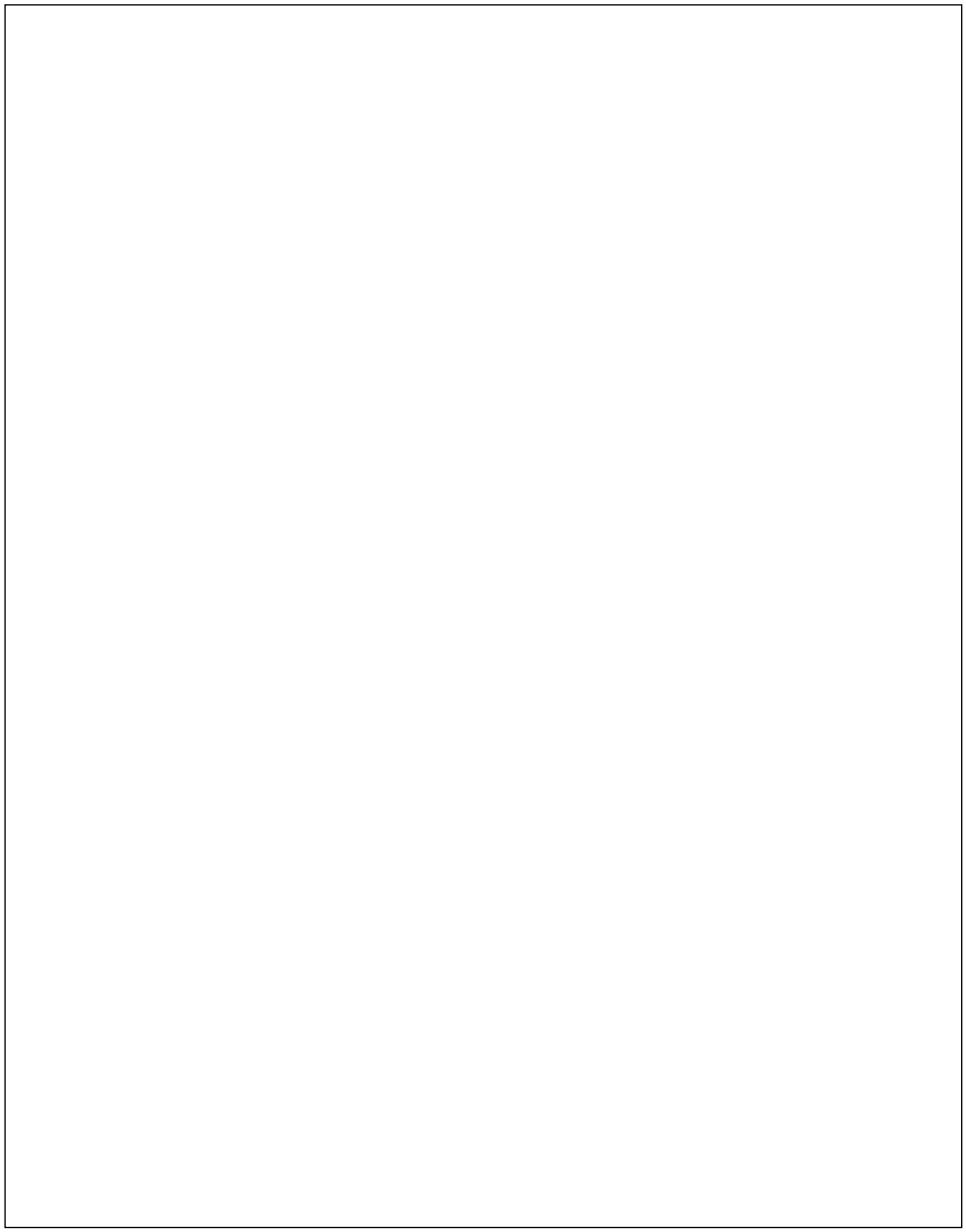


Plate 11 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, showing the visible portion of the south façade, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

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Plate 12 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, rear (west) façade, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 13 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, basement post, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 14 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, basement beam and post construction, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 15 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, main floor retail space, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 16 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, main floor shipping and receiving area with freight elevators, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 17 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, two views of the elevator shaft staircase, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 18 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, metal clad fire door, elevator shaft staircase, third floor, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 19 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, second floor office partitioning, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)



Plate 20 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, fourth floor, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

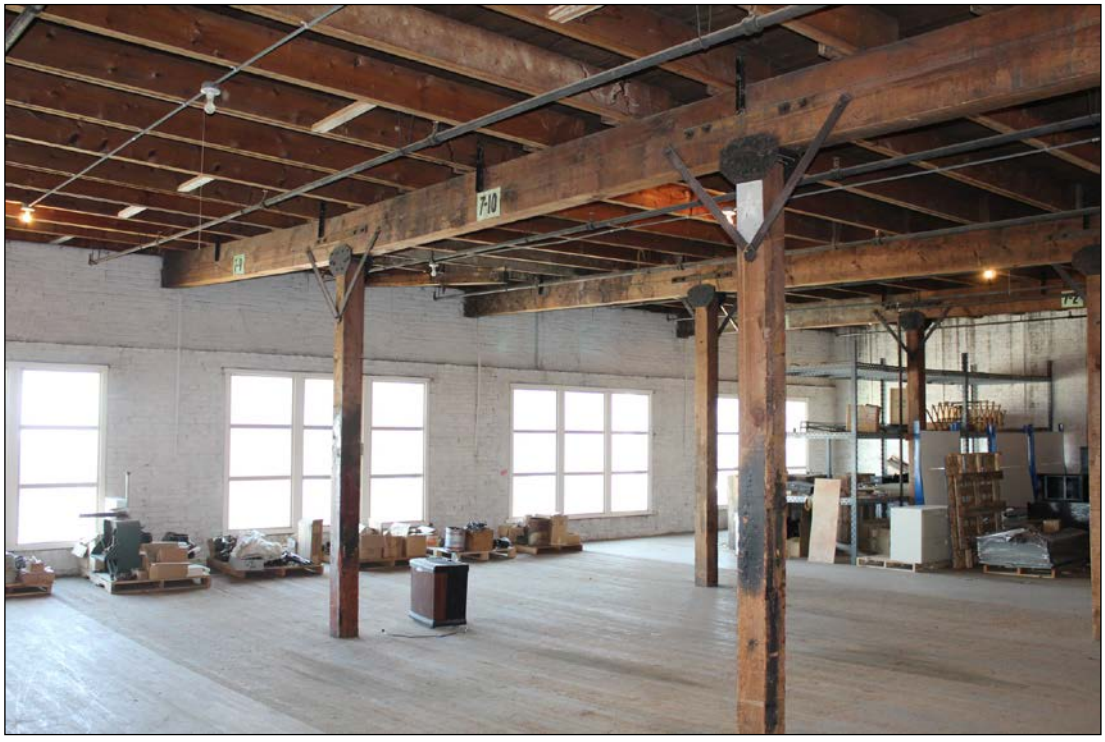


Plate 21 – Cockshutt Plow Company Building, 238 Princess Street, seventh floor, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

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Plate 22 – Princess Street, looking south from Logan Avenue, 2019. (M. Peterson, 2019.)

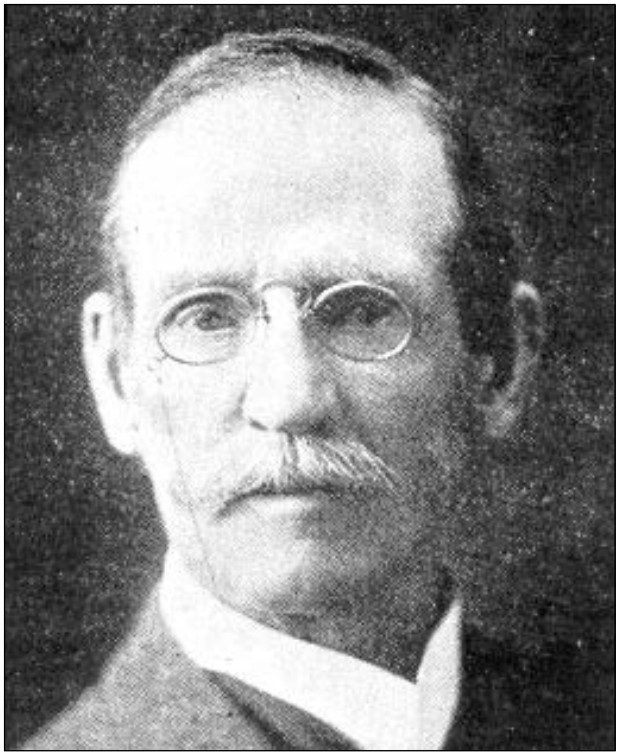


Plate 23 – S. Frank Peters (1847-1926), ca.1916. (Reproduced from Who's Who and Why in Canada, 1915-1916.)

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Plate 24 – J.G.C. Riding Plow, no date. (Manitoba Agricultural Museum website, http://ag-museum.mb.ca/visitor-information/artifacts/horse-machinery/cockshutt-jgc-riding-plow/.)



Plate 25 – Ezra Arthur Mott, ca.1902. (Reproduced from Representative Men of Manitoba, 1902 [Winnipeg, MB: Tribune Publishing Company, 1902] online version, Manitoba Historical Society.)



Joseph Werier Dies On Visit To Los Angeles

JOSEPH WERIER

Plate 26 – Joseph Werier, ca.1956. (Reproduced from Winnipeg Free Press, March 1, 1956, p. 39.)