



151 ANNABELLA STREET

DORIS VENNETTE HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2008



151 ANNABELLA STREET DORIS VENNETTE HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1910

Building Permit: 2004/1910

Architect: Vennette, D. (owner)

Contractor: Day labour

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This is a modest 2-storey residential structure that became part of an organized red light district in Winnipeg's Point Douglas area.

This structure is presently undergoing renovations after having stood empty for most of the last decade. The frame structure now rests on a newer concrete foundation¹ and is presently clad in insul-brick. Windows and doors are being replaced throughout. The truncated hipped roof is interrupted on the front (west) slope by a plain gable dormer.

Both side elevations feature plain windows on both levels. The rear (east) façade includes a one-storey frame lean-to.



Front (west) and south façades, 2007

The building is one of thousands of simply designed, comfortable single-family dwellings built throughout the city after the turn of the century. Like many others in the area, it is being renovated as part of neighbourhood redevelopment.

Built in 1910, the building measures approximately 6.7 x 7.9 metres and cost \$2,200 to complete.²



Rear (east) and north façades, 2007

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Doris Vennette has been linked to this property and reportedly operated a brothel out of this building in the 1920s. Annabella Street (originally known as Rachel Street) and McFarlane Street, were converted into an organized “Red Light District” in the early 20th century by Winnipeg’s police department in an attempt to control the problem. The scheme did not succeed and most of the houses were closed by World War I,³ although it is reported that the Vennette House continued to operate into the 1920s and City records have her listed as the owner until 1921.⁴

After Vennette’s departure, Mary Watkins, hairdresser, owned and lived in the home and from 1932-45 it was home to painter Adam Zarzecki. From the 1950s to the 1980s, Stephen and Mary T. Tkaczuk owned and lived in the house. S. Tkaczuk was a mechanic by trade.⁵



Rear (east) façade, 2007

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

Under the Historical Buildings By-law, this building meets a number of important criteria:

- its historical importance- one of a group of pre-World War I single family dwellings in the Point Douglas area of Winnipeg and one used as part of an early 20th century “officially sanctioned” prostitution district;
- its associations- its early connection to D. Vennette, known prostitute madame;
- its design- N/A;
- its architect- N/A;
- its location- contributes to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- N/A



Front (west) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #157028/2006.
- 2 BP #2004/1910.
- 3 “Walking Tour of North Point Douglas,” Manitoba Historical Society, no date.
- 4 James H. Gray, Red Lights on the Prairies [Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1972], p. 58; and City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 14000208000, 1910-1930.
- 5 Ibid., 1930-1990.