



114 BALMORAL STREET
REV. CLARENCE MacKINNON HOUSE

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114 BALMORAL STREET REV. CLARENCE MacKINNON HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1907

Building Permit: 571/1907

Architect: Horwood, Victor William

Contractor: Northern Construction Company

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

One of the more unique façades in the downtown is this small, three-storey brick building

This 2½-storey home features 38.1-centimetre solid buff-coloured brick walls on a raised rough-cut stone foundation and its footprint measures 11.0 metres square. Final cost of construction was \$6,700 and included 45,000 bricks and 15 cords of stone.¹ Evidence on the building's exterior suggests a porch running along the front (east) of the building and wrapping around onto its south façade was part of the original design. It is unknown when this element was replaced by the present modestly projecting entrance. Brick lain to resemble quoins accent the corners of the front façade. The building is covered by a bellcast hip roof with windowed hipped gable dormers on all four slopes.



Front (east) and south façades, 2007

The south and north façades are plain, with window openings on both floors at the rear. The rear elevation includes a one-storey brick addition.

Stylistically, this home is a reduced example of a foursquare style residence, as seen in its rectangular form, cubic, symmetrical massing and simple, uncluttered detailing. The style was very popular throughout North America and its popularity was heightened by its inclusion in virtually all published residential pattern books of the early 20th century.

Architect V.W. Horwood was born in Frome, Somersetshire, England on February 27, 1878 and came to Canada in 1884, settling with his family in Prescott, Ontario. Horwood's father, a stained glass artist, is credited for having installed the decorative glass in the House of Commons Building in Ottawa. Victor Horwood studied art in New York City, after which he worked in Ottawa in a local architectural firm. In 1904, he came to Winnipeg and set up his private practice. A partial list of his better known local work includes St. Boniface City Hall, 219 Provencher Boulevard (1905, Grade II), Moxam Court, 280 River Avenue (1907), Waldron Court Apartments, 544 Broadway (1909, demolished 1979) and the C.D. Stovel House, 6 Ruskin Row (1910).

In 1911, he was appointed assistant to the provincial architect, Samuel Hooper, and assumed the head position upon Hooper's death only a few months later. As the province's chief architect, Horwood controlled the office during one of its most productive periods and oversaw the construction of some of Manitoba's most spectacular buildings including Brandon's Normal School (1912-1913), Stonewall's Town Hall (1912-1913), Agricultural College, Fort Garry Campus (1913) and Winnipeg's Law Courts (1916).



Front (east) and north façades, 2007

As with the early St. Boniface City Hall, Horwood became embroiled in controversy over his role in the Legislative Building scandal. It was Horwood's suggested changes to the structure's foundation in 1913 that allowed contractors to embezzle from the government. Subsequent Royal Commission hearings and court proceedings determined that Horwood had not only known about the illegal activities, but had perjured himself as part of an early cover-up attempt. Horwood, however, bargained with the courts and was not charged in return for testimony that placed the blame on Premier Rodmond Roblin and three of his cabinet ministers. After the affair, Horwood was dismissed as provincial architect. Horwood has received 20 points from the Historical Buildings Committee.

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Reverend Clarence MacKinnon, pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church (then on Notre Dame Avenue), was the original owner of this home. MacKinnon (also spelt McKinnon), was born in Hopewell, Picton County, Nova Scotia in 1868. He obtained an M.A. degree from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland in 1889 and five years later took his bachelor of divinity from Free Church College. In 1902 he accepted a position at St. Andrews Church, Sydney, Nova Scotia and three years later came west as the pastor of Westminster Presbyterian Church in Winnipeg. In September 1909, MacKinnon accepted the position of principal at the Presbyterian Theological College in Halifax, Nova Scotia, maintaining his ownership of the Balmoral Street home until 1910.²

Next to own the home was Daniel Smith, an architect who had come to the city in 1882. Born in Bristol, Quebec in 1840, Smith joined the Dominion Public Works Department in



Rear (west) façade, 2007

1878 and came west with the department, ultimately becoming the superintendent of Public Works for Western Canada. He remained in this role until 1900 when he retired and began a private practice. Smith died in his home on Balmoral Street on July 12, 1913.³ Although the Smith family continued to own the home into the 1940s, they had moved out of the building by 1920 and rented it to various families. After several short-term owners, John and Josephine Bobiy bought the house in 1948 and converted it into a boarding house, a fate of many large homes in the downtown. Since this time, the home has had a number of owners using the structure as both a boarding house and a single-family dwelling.⁴



Rear (west) and south façades, 2007

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- an example of a single-family dwelling built shortly before World War I;
- its associations- its original connection to Reverend Clarence MacKinnon, pastor at Westminster Presbyterian Church;
- its design- a reduced example of a foursquare style residence;
- its architect- V.W. Horwood was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes greatly to its extensive historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (east) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #571/1907.
- 2 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-091422000 (below as ARo), 1900-1910; Manitoba Free Press, April 5, 1905, p. 12; and Winnipeg Telegram, February 25, 1909, n.p.
- 3 Manitoba Free Press, July 14, 1913, p. 16.
- 4 ARo, 1910-1990; Henderson's Directory, 1910-1990.