



42 BALMORAL STREET

JABEZ MILLER HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2008



42 BALMORAL STREET JABEZ MILLER HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1909

Building Permit: 1027/1909

Architect: Northwood, George W.

Contractor: Watson, R.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Another of the large, well-designed and modestly ornamented single-family dwellings on this south block of Balmoral Street is this home built in 1909 for a local accountant.

This solidly-built, 2½-storey brick home sits on a raised, rusticated limestone base; its front (east) façade includes a full-width open porch supported by unfluted wood columns connected by plain wood balustrades atop large rough-cut stone bases. The dentilled cornice leads to the wood railing of the open second storey deck. Windows on both floors, like throughout the rest of the house, feature stone lug sills and oversized carved stone heads. The bellcast-hipped roof is interrupted on the front and rear slopes single windowed dormers and on the north slope by two windowed dormers. The north and south elevations are similar to the front, windows with stone heads and sills on both levels. The rear (west)



Front (east) and south façades, 2007

façade originally included a one-storey section that has now been added to with a second storey, top deck and attached enclosed fire escape.

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. The building's original layout and materials have not been seriously altered or replaced over time.

This home is a good example of a foursquare style structure, one of the most popular styles used for residential architecture in North America from the late 1880s until the 1930s. Its square massing and boxiness made it affordable to build and perfect for small urban lots where space was at a premium. The roofline was usually pyramidal or hipped and a front porch and small dormer on the second floor were familiar details. Usually built without the benefit of an architect, the foursquare was often detailed by the owner and could be highly ornamental or very plain. On the interior, the foursquare featured a second floor with four square rooms above three square rooms and an entrance hall with stairs tucked unobtrusively to the side on the first floor.¹

George W. Northwood (1876-1959), a distinguished World War I veteran, designed this structure. Northwood came to Winnipeg in 1905 as a graduate of McGill University and began his professional career. Following his time in military service, he joined with another veteran, Cyril W.U. Chivers (1879-1969), the pair practicing as Northwood and Chivers into the 1930s. The list of major work produced by Northwood includes the North Bank Branch, Portage Avenue at Sherbrook Street (1908, demolished), Crescent Court Apartments, 207 Hugo Street North (1908), Lancaster Apartments, 401 Stradbrook Avenue (1909), Bannatyne Apartments, 543 Bannatyne Avenue (1910), S.E. Richards House, Wellington Crescent (1911), Richards-Brown Warehouse, 132 James Avenue (1912), Minto Armouries, 969 St.



Front (east) and north façades, 2007

Matthews Avenue (1913) and Pantages (Playhouse) Theatre, 180 Market Avenue (1913, Grade II). Examples of the partners' work includes the Canadian Wheat Board Building, 423 Main (1929), second pavilion at the Assiniboine Park and Zoo (1929-30), Riverbend School for Girls, Junior School (1930), Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge, 200 Woodlawn Street (1931, Grade II), members of the design board for the Civic Auditorium, 444 St. Mary Avenue (1932), Bank of Toronto Branch on Academy Road (1934) and members of the design board for the Federal Building, 269 Main Street (1935). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.



Northwest corner detail, 2007

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Jabez Miller, the original owner of this house, came to Winnipeg in 1882 and joined with D.R. Dingwall to found Dingwall Jewellers. He occupied the position of secretary-treasurer and then vice-president for many decades prior to the company's take-over by Birks in 1933.² He was presented with a magnificent crystal jardinière on his 40th anniversary with the company that was donated to Manitoba's Government House in 1992 by three of his grandchildren.³ Jabez and Mary Miller lived in the home until its sale in 1945 to J.L. (carpenter) and Marit Vick, who only lived in the home for two years. Henry Lobel Sr. and his wife Elizabeth were listed as owners and occupants in the 1950s and 1960s and it was during this time that the building was converted into a boarding house with seven rooms. Teachers, clerks, labourers, office staff and students were some of the many tenants of the house.⁴



Rear (west) façade, 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 for an influential and well-to-do family shortly before World War I;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early and influential businessman J. Miller;
- its design- an excellent example of a foursquare home;
- its architect- G.W. Northwood 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 Information from <http://www.realviews.com/homes/forsq.html>.
- 2 K.O. MacLeod, The First Century: the Story of a Canadian Company (Montreal: unknown, 1979), p. 28.
- 3 Information from www.lg.gov.mb.ca/history/house/main/salon2.html, no date.
- 4 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-091405000, 1910-1990; and Henderson's Directory, 1910-1990.