



64 BALMORAL STREET

W.R WATSON HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2008



64 BALMORAL STREET W.R. WATSON HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1907

Building Permit: 1881/1907

Architect: Simmons, A. (owner)

Contractor: Simmons, A. (owner)

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This 2½-storey single-family dwelling features a wealth of ornamental and design details that make it one of the more unique structures on this southern block of Balmoral Street.

The front (east) façade begins at grade with a raised foundation, met by the stucco-clad superstructure. The second floor is covered in shingles, as is the front facing gable end and dormer. The top of the bay window interrupts the eaves above the second storey windows and set in the large dormer is three small windows in wood frames. Perhaps the most unique feature of the front façade is the screened porch – attached to the front and running the entire length of the north side. Classically detailed, it includes squared, unfluted columns with carved heads and bases and a completed entablature and pediment. The home's entrance is found at the west end of the porch.



Front (east) and north façades, 2007

The north façade, beyond the porch, features a bay window of similar design to the front and a side-facing gable. The south façade is plain; the rear (west) elevation features an irregularly shaped one- and two-storey lean-to and a hipped gable roof.

The house stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and does not appear to have suffered major alteration to its original layout or building materials.

A. Simmons was a local contractor working in the decade before World War I. Alone, as Simmons and Lennerton and as Simmons Brothers, he was responsible for the design and construction of small- to medium-sized homes through the city. He disappears from the City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books after 1913.¹

This home is a good example of the Queen Anne style. This style borrowed heavily from English architecture of the 15th century, blending classical and medieval motifs into a picturesque form.² The desired asymmetry was achieved through a number of combinations of porches, bay windows, projecting wings, balconies and other devices. Roofs were usually irregular and complex, with dormers, gables and ornamental chimneys. Variations in materials and colours were also used to animate the façades. Given this freedom of design, however, accomplished designers were still able to create balance in the structures, offsetting busy surfaces by placing calmer elements nearby.³

The popularity of the style in Canada began in the 1880s and lasted until World War I. On the prairies, pre-1900 examples of the style were not numerous because large-scale development occurred after the turn of the century. Post-1900, it was quickly adopted for use in the growing residential districts, especially the more affluent neighbourhoods where its showy qualities were greatly admired.



Front (east) and south façades, 2007

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

This home was built as a rental property by small-scale local contractor A. Simmons, the first owner was real estate agent W.R. Watson and the early tenant was James G. Dagg, of Dagg and Robertson, railway contractors. Florist H.E. Philpott owned and lived in the home in 1916 and there was a large greenhouse on the property. By 1921, Philpott lived in Minneapolis, MN while continuing to own the house. Mary A. Forsyth is listed as the owner and occupant from 1950 into the 1960s. It was used in the 1980s by Kia Zan Incorporated, a Buddhism-based residential alcohol and drug treatment centre for youths.⁴



Rear (west) and north 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- N/A;
- its design- a good example of a Queen Anne style home;
- its architect- A. Simmons was a known local contractor;
- 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 Ledger Books, 1899-1926.
- 2 Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg: Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, 1991), p. 17; L. Maitland et al., A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1992), p. 102; and L. Maitland, The Queen Anne Revival Style in Canadian Architecture (Ottawa: Environment Canada, 1990), p. 64.
- 3 L. Maitland et al., op. cit., p. 98.
- 4 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-091412000, 1910-1990; and Henderson's Directory, 1910-1990.