



74 BALMORAL STREET

JAMES L. NEILSON HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2008



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Date of Construction: 1905

Building Permit: 1458/1905

Architect: Neilson, J.L. (owner)

Contractor: Neilson, J.L. (owner)

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This single-family home sits in the midst of an early 20th-century residential development, its brick-veneered cladding, unique detailing and 2-storey height all add to its conspicuousness on this block.

Resting on a raised stone foundation, the front (east) façade begins with a wide set of wood stairs atop which is a full-width open pedimented porch. Sitting on the high, carved bases are pairs of round, unfluted columns that include simple heads. Plain wood balustrades connect the bases. A simple door framed by large windows complete the ground floor. The second floor features two sets of Palladian windows, both with stone lug sills and a keystone above the central arched opening. The medium-pitched hipped roof includes a large gable dormer holding another Palladian window.



Front (east) and south façades, 2007

The north façade includes a plain door, several small windows, an attached chimney and a small gable dormer. The south façade includes a two-storey bay window and a gable dormer. The rear (west) elevation features a two-storey stuccoed addition with wood stairs for access.

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and has not suffered severe exterior alteration or replacement of original elements, layout or materials.

The original owner is listed in the City of Winnipeg Building Permit as the home's architect and contractor, it may well be that he followed a fairly common practice of the time and found plans for the home in a published plan book or catalogue.

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



Front (east) and north façades, 2007

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

James L. Neilson, of J.L. Neilson and Company (machinery agents), is listed as the owner of this house until 1940 when it was sold to the Great-West Life Assurance Company. In the 1950s it was the home of Henry (Black and White Taxi driver) and Ottelie Reich, in the 1960s and 1970s to Stephen (porter at the Traders' Association Building) and Stella T. Dayholos and in the 1980s to Roger F. (sales manager for International Cabinets) and Linda J.D. Wishart.²



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 early in the 20th century;
- its associations- its long-term connections to businessman J.L. Neilson;
- its design- an excellent example of a foursquare home;
- its architect- N/A;
- 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 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-091414000, 1910-1990; and Henderson's Directory, 1910-1990.