

43 BOYLE STREET – CHARLES ELLIS BOARDING HOUSE
Unknown, 1900



This large, wood clad residential structure is located in the heart of Point Douglas, one of Winnipeg's earliest residential districts that became a centre of industry after the locating of the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) down the middle of the Point in the early 1880s. Much of the early residential building stock was replaced by factories and warehouses and the remaining homes were sold to immigrant workers and their families who chose to live close to their jobs along the CPR line.

Besides single-family dwellings and terrace, one of the most popular forms of residential structures in late-19th and early 20th century Winnipeg was the boarding house. Charles Ellis, a civil engineer by trade, owned several structures in Point Douglas, duplexes, terraces and single-family homes that he used as income property. In 1900, he built this "English" style boarding house

at the corner of Dewdney Avenue and Boyle Street, advertising to the growing numbers of immigrant workers from the British Isles that were arriving in the City.

The Ellis Boarding House is a remarkable intact, example of the building type as it was constructed in the early 1900s. The exterior still features many of its original elements, including the horizontal wood siding, wide wood window frames, gable ends with circular windows, ornamental bargeboard and turned wood finials and pendants and a two-storey bay window on the building's south façade. The original open entrance porch in the northeast corner of the building features wood balusters.

On the interior, the same level of originality exists, from the original entrance door with hardware and transom, to the hardwood floors, baseboards with inside corner posts and main staircase with ornate newel post and wood bannister. Other unique features of the interior include original wood room doors and frames marked with roman numerals, remnants of the original room numbers and original lighting in the second floor hallway.

This structure was built as a boarding house and also as the home of Charles (1844-1921) and Isabella (ca.1856-1944) Ellis and their six children. The Canada Census for 1901 lists 17 separate boarders, all of British background, living in this house as well as the Ellis Family. Charles Ellis died in the home in 1921, his widow 23 years later. Two daughters, Isabel and Jean Ellis (both teachers), continued to live at 43 Boyle Street (along with sister Jessie until her death in 1947) until the late 1970s. They also continued to own the income property built by their father in the early 1900s – 54-56 and 57 Boyle Street and 42 and 55-57 Dewdney Avenue. The structure now functions as a single-family dwelling.

The importance of the Ellis Boarding House stems from its age, its state of originality, its connection to an important and early part of Winnipeg's developmental history and its important place in its neighbourhood. It is an early and now rare example of a building type – the boarding house – that was extremely popular throughout the City.

Elements of the building that would require approval if alterations were planned are:

Exterior:

- The large, wood clad structure resting on a raised rubblestone foundation at the foot of Boyle Street on the south side of Dewdney Avenue on the banks of the Red River
- The main (north) and west façades with their rectangular window openings with ornamental wood framing and gable ends with circular window, bargeboard and apex finial/pendant
- Open, one-storey entrance porch in the northwest corner with corner post and turned wooden balusters
- The south façade with its wood framed windows and two-storey bay with wood framed windows and roof embellished with bargeboard and finial/pendant

Interior:

- Main entrance door with transom and original hardware
- Main staircase to the second floor with turned newel post and wood balustrade
- Original light fixtures in the second floor hallway
- Details including ornamental woodwork on both the main and second levels: hardwood floors, wooden door and window frames, baseboards with inside corner posts and original doors