



**586 BROADWAY**  
**S. H. FOSTER HOUSE**



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## 586 BROADWAY S. H. FOSTER HOUSE

**Date of Construction:** 1908

**Building Permit:** 1265/1908

**Architect:** Foster, S.H. (owner)

**Contractor:** Foster, S.H. (owner)

### ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

In 1908, contractor S.H. Foster designed and erected two adjacent houses the south side of Broadway between Balmoral and Spence streets, one of which, 586 Broadway, he occupied until 1914.

The 2.5-storey structure, built for \$5,000,<sup>1</sup> has a stone foundation, wooden beam and post superstructure, prominent gable roof and cladding of wood siding and shingles. A raised two-storey open porch with wooden balustrades extends across the front (north) façade. Its upper level is supported by unfluted wooden columns with plain bases and voluted heads and is accessed via a second-storey door. Above in the gable end is a distinctive recessed balcony with wooden columns, centre door and angled multi-pane windows. Other design highlights include bracketed eaves and bay windows on the side (east and west) walls.



Front (north) façade detail, 2004

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The building is a good example of a Queen Anne style structure.<sup>2</sup> The style borrowed heavily from English architecture of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, blending classical and medieval motifs into a picturesque form. Asymmetry was achieved through 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.<sup>3</sup>

The home was designed and built by its original owner, local contractor S.H. Foster. Little is known about Foster professionally at this time; it appears that he remained a small-scale builder during the period he was connected with this house.

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and has not suffered from major exterior alteration.





Rear (south) façade, 2004

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#### HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Rather than sell or rent the premises, designer/builder S.H. Foster, who had formerly lived on Gertrude Avenue, chose to live in this house until 1914. It was sold that year to Lieutenant-Colonel Jeffrey E. Hansford.<sup>4</sup> Hansford was born in Quebec in 1865, receiving his education in public schools as well as Stansted College, Quebec, and Ontario's Toronto University and Osgoode Hall. He was called to the Ontario bar in 1888 and practised in the Toronto area for 15 years. In 1905, however, Hansford moved to Manitoba, was called to its bar the following November and became the senior partner in the firm Hansford, Dalglish and Davis.<sup>5</sup> He had a long and distinguished military career and was gazetted as Lieutenant-Colonel of the 203<sup>rd</sup> Battalion on February 5, 1916. He died on August 18, 1932.<sup>6</sup>

The Hansford family (there were three daughters) lived in the house until the late 1920s, when the Union Trust Company took over ownership. From 1937 to 1952, the house was owned and occupied by James Michael Mercury.<sup>7</sup> Mercury was born in Greece on September 29, 1891, immigrated to Rochester, New York, with brother Nicholas in 1906. He moved to Winnipeg in the late 1920s and joined brother George in operating Gramma's Fruit Market (later re-named Gramma's Fruit, Flower and Candy Market) at 433 Portage Avenue (corner Vaughan Street). He was an active member of the Greek community in Winnipeg and served as the president of its society in 1952. Listed in the Henderson's Directory in 1943 were George and James M. Mercury, both residing at 586 Broadway and John, living at 817 Sherburn Street. J.M. Mercury died on May 28, 1981 and was survived by brothers Nicholas, John and George.<sup>8</sup>



Front (north) façade, 1978

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Nicholas Sr. and Helen Mercury were listed as owners/residents of 586 Broadway from 1953-61.<sup>9</sup> The Henderson's Directory for 1957 listed Leon Mercury, barrister at Parker, Tallin and Co., Michael, employee at Gramma's Fruit Market, and Nicholas Sr. and Helen at 586 Broadway. James Mercury and John Mercury and his wife Evangeline, all of Gramma's Fruit Market, were at 81 Queenston Street. Helen Mercury was listed as the sole owner of 586 Broadway from 1965-87. In 1991, Leon N. Mercury and Michael N. Mercury were both listed as half-owners of the property, which presently includes law offices on the ground floor.<sup>10</sup>

#### RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- illustrative of a modest, single-family home built in Winnipeg in the pre-World War I era;
- its associations- its connections to S.H. Foster and J.E. Hansford;
- its design- a good example of the Queen Anne style;
- its architect- S.H. Foster was a known practitioner;
- its location- contributes to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.

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ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #1265/1908.
- 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, op. cit., p. 98.
- 4 City of Winnipeg Assessment Roll, Roll No. 12-091437000 (below as ARo), 1908-1915.
- 5 Winnipeg Tribune, August 18, 1932, p. 3; and F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba (Winnipeg: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1913), Vol. III, pp. 270-73.
- 6 Winnipeg Tribune, August 18, 1932, p. 3.
- 7 ARo, 1920-52.
- 8 Winnipeg Free Press, June 1, 1981, p. 37.
- 9 ARo, 1953-61.
- 10 Ibid., 1961-91.