



600 BROADWAY
BICKLE COURT

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



600 BROADWAY BICKLE COURT

Date of Construction: 1909

Building Permit: 1655/1909

Architect: Bridgman, Charles S.

Contractor: Dolmer, J.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Although it was listed as a double dwelling in the original City of Winnipeg Building Permit, this structure was actually divided into three double dwellings, addressed as 150 & 154, 156 & 158 and 160 & 162 Spence Street, as well as having a single entrance onto Broadway.

The front (east) façade faces Spence Street and is divided into three distinct and matching sections through a series of projecting and recessed areas. This elevation features two-storey glazed porches, columned landings, gable ends with half-timbering and stone accenting, cross gables, dormers all animating the dark brick cladding of the superstructure. The south façade is plain, with a series of unmatched windows on all three levels, the north, facing Broadway, includes a raised entrance and porch combination similar to those found on the Spence Street. The rear of the structure is finished in common clay brick.



Front (north) façade, 2009

This structure was designed with elements of the Tudor Style, popular throughout Winnipeg and North America from the 1890s until World War II, although the decades of the 1920s and 1930s saw an explosion in Tudor Style residential construction on this continent. The style is loosely based on a number of late Medieval English structures ranging from thatch-roofed cottages to grand mansions. In North America, the style developed several distinctive elements - ornamental half-timbering, steeply pitched roofs, front facing gables, and stucco, masonry or masonry-veneered walls.¹

The most common feature of Tudor homes is a steeply pitched central roof with cross gables. Tall, narrow windows in multiple groups, and massive chimneys crowned by chimney pots, are other common elements. About half of all examples of the style contain decorative (non-structural) half-timbering with stucco or brick infill.²

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and has not suffered major exterior alteration, even though part of the structure has been converted into retail space.

Architect C.S. Bridgman was a well-known and prolific architect who practised in Winnipeg for over 30 years. He was born in Toronto, Ontario on February 14, 1875, moving with his family at an early age to nearby London, Ontario, where he received his early education.³ Deciding on a career in architecture, Bridgman moved to New York where he graduated from Atelier Masguray in 1891. For the next twelve years he worked as an architect in that city, before coming to Winnipeg in 1903.⁴

Bridgman spent the next 35 years in Winnipeg, designing buildings of all scales and descriptions. In 1938, at the age of 63, he retired, moving back to London, Ontario. During



Front (north) façade, 2009

World War II, he was called into service, assisting in the construction of Air Training Stations throughout central Ontario. He apparently enjoyed this return to work, because after the war he took up his profession again, this time in partnership with his brother, Gordon Bridgman. Retiring again at the age of 80, Charles Bridgman died in London on October 17, 1965, leaving behind three daughters.⁵

A list of large, more well-known structures designed by C.S. Bridgman would include:⁶ St. Luke's Anglican Church, 130 Nassau Street North (1904 & 1909 alterations); Anvers Apartments, 758 McMillan Avenue (1912 – Grade II); Highgate (originally DeBary) Apartments, 626 Wardlaw Avenue (1912 – Grade II); Gaspé Apartments, 601 Broadway (1917); Canadian Ukrainian Institute Provista, 777 Pritchard Avenue (foundation 1918, superstructure 1921 – Grade II); and Dawson-Richardson Publishing Company warehouse, 171 McDermot Avenue (1921 – Grade III). He has been given 10 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

The developer/owner of this property led an extremely interesting life, although he was owner for only a short period of time (they lived at #156 Spence Street).⁷

Robert S. Bickle (1882-1949) was an accomplished tenor who toured the United States and Canada with his wife, Martha Powell before deciding to settle down. In 1906, he established the R.S. Bickle Company in Winnipeg, sellers of fire equipment, after having worked as the Canadian representative for an American fire equipment firm. Over the next several years, Bickle sold several horse-drawn chemical carts and self-propelled fire



Front (north) façade, 2009

apparatus to towns throughout Western Canada (Bickle sold the City of Calgary its first motorized fire engine). In 1913, the operation was transferred to Woodstock, Ontario with Bickle and his wife moving to Chicago, Illinois and the firm left in the hands of his brother W. Russell Bickle. R.S. Bickle moved to Woodstock to join the firm in 1919 and retired from it after World War II.⁸

From 1916-1935, the block was owned by the St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church and over the years has been occupied by a variety of tenants, single and married, with a variety of backgrounds. The ground floor of the building is now used for retail space.

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- an unusual multi-tenant structure, luxuriously built and detailed to match the residential neighbourhood in which it was built in the pre-World War I era;
- its associations- its connection to R.S. Bickle, influential fire equipment dealer;
- its design- an excellent example of the Tudor Style;
- its architect- C.S. Bridgman was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- defines an important intersection and contributes greatly to the historic streetscape of two major arteries within its neighbourhood, West Broadway; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (north) and east façades, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 V. and L. McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), p. 358.
- 2 Ibid., pp. 355-356.
- 3 Winnipeg Free Press, October 27, 1965.
- 4 Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906; and Canadian Architect and Builder, Vol. 17 (1904), Issue 5, p. 85.
- 5 Winnipeg Free Press, October 27, 1965.
- 6 Compiled from City of Winnipeg Building Permits, 1903-1926; and Western Canada Contractor and Builder, Vol. 27, No. 6 (June 1930), p. 46. Permits after 1926 rarely list architect and contractor, and many of the originals have been destroyed or misplaced.
- 7 Canada Census, 1911.
- 8 Biographical information from Candian Fire Truck Archives at <http://www.firetruckarchive.ca/companies/kinghist.htm> (no date); W. McCall, "The Bickle Story," report for the Ontario Fire Buffs Association found at www/home.cogeco.ca/~phc/bicklestory.htm (no date); and City of Saskatoon, www.city.saskatoon.sk.ca/org/clerks_office/archives/gallery/exhibit/fire/bickle.htm, 2000.