



626 BROADWAY
THOMAS D. ROBINSON HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



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THOMAS D. ROBINSON HOUSE**

Date of Construction: 1891

Building Permit: N/A

Architect: Unknown

Contractor: Unknown

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This simple, boxy stuccoed residence was originally built as a single-family dwelling but was duplexed.

The front (north) façade is flat, no porch or veranda livens up this elevation. The pair of entrance doors is located at the west end of the façade and the square headed windows of the first and second floors feature lug sills. The medium-pitch hip roof includes a shed dormer on the front (north) slope and two brick chimneys. The remainder of the building is plainly designed with few architectural details. It was built to be sturdy and serviceable rather than ornamental.

This home is a reduced 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



Front (north) and west façades, 2006

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

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. The stuccoing of the exterior and the creation of two entrance doors has affected the appearance of the home.

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Coal and wood fuel dealer Thomas D. Robinson was the original owner of the house.² Robinson was born in Canada West (Ontario) in 1838 and came to Winnipeg in 1888 to open a retail coal business that grew to include lumber shortly after. The company became T.D. Robinson & Sons, Limited, the largest operation of its kind in the city by the 1920s. He married Elizabeth Copeland and the couple had four sons and a daughter. They moved into a home on Vaughan Street from this house. He died in 1930.³



Front (north) façade, 1978

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- one of the older homes in the neighbourhood, dating to the pre-expansion era of Winnipeg and Western Canada of the early 1890s;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early businessman T.D. Robinson;
- its design- a reduced example of the Foursquare style;
- its architect- N/A;
- its location- contributes to its historic streetscape in West Broadway; and
- its integrity- N/A.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ Information from <http://www.realviews.com/homes/forsq.html>.
- ² City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-090988100, 1895-1930.
- ³ Pioneers and Prominent People of Manitoba (Winnipeg: Canadian Publicity Company, Publishers, 1925).