



204 COLONY STREET

JAMES A.S. MACKAY HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2008



204 COLONY STREET JAMES A.S. MACKAY HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1904

Building Permit: 488/1904

Architect: Russell, John Hamilton Gordon

Contractor: Waller and Howell

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This substantial, 2½-storey wood frame home has stood in this quiet residential district known as West Broadway for over 100 years.

The front (east) façade is symmetrical in design save for the slightly offset entrance and small window, protected from the elements by a modest hood with wood accents. The paired window openings of the ground floor are set in wide wood frames and the corners are embellished with attached wood pilasters with embellished bases and capitals. Second floor window openings are also framed in wood. A large gable dormer with wood accenting and a small window interrupts the roof.



Front (east) and north façades, 2007

The other three elevations are continuations of the design and materials of the front, although the rear (west) façade includes a one-storey addition and it and the west elevation of the main building are stuccoed.

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. By all appearances, this is a very well kept building that continues to display many of its original details and layouts. Original cost of construction was \$5,000.¹

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.²

Building designer J.H.G. Russell (1862-1946) was born in Toronto, Canada West (Ontario), in 1862, the son of a dry goods dealer. After attending school in that city, he went to work for H.B. Gordon, a prominent area architect. Russell was with Gordon from 1878 until his departure for Winnipeg in 1882. From 1886 to 1893, Russell travelled throughout the United States, learning civil engineering, surveying and architecture in centres such as Chicago, Illinois, Spokane and Tacoma, Washington, and Sioux City, Iowa.



Front (east) and south façades, 2007

In 1895, two years after returning to Winnipeg, he set up his private practice, coinciding with the city's period of unbridled growth. His designs were (and are) scattered throughout the city, province and Western Canada, covering a variety of building types, sizes, costs and uses. His business continued to be steady during World War I and after, when many architects struggled to find commissions. Russell was president of the Manitoba Association of Architects (1925) and served for three terms as the president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (1912-15). His chairmanship of the Presbyterian Church Board of Managers and his devotion to Presbyterianism partially explain the large number of churches he designed for the denomination in Winnipeg and Western Canada. Russell died in 1946.

A complete list of his designs would be very lengthy, included among his more notable local projects would be J.H. Ashdown Warehouse additions, 157-179 Bannatyne Avenue, (1899-1911, Grade II), Lake of the Woods Building, 212 McDermot Avenue (1901, Grade II), Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street (1902, Grade III), Adelman Building, 92-100 Princess Street (1903, Grade II), Franklin Press, 168 Bannatyne Avenue (1904, Grade III), R.R. Wilson, 545 Broadway (1904, Grade III), J.H. Ashdown Store, 211 Bannatyne Avenue (1904, Grade III), Porter Building, 165 McDermot Avenue (1906, Grade III), Child's (McArthur) Building, Portage Avenue (1909, demolished), Casa Loma Building, Portage Avenue (1909, Grade II), Glengarry Block, 290 McDermot Avenue (1910, Grade III), Westminster Presbyterian (United) Church, 745 Westminster Avenue (1910-12, Grade II), Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street (1911, Grade III), YMCA, 301 Vaughan Street, with Jackson and Rosencrans of New York (1911-13, Grade II), J.H. Ashdown, 529 Wellington Crescent (1913, Grade II) and St. John's Presbyterian (United) Church, 250 Cathedral Avenue (1923, Grade III). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.



Front (east) and north façades, 2007

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

James A.S. Mackay was an accountant at G.F. and J. Galt Company when he had this home built for his family. By the later 1910s, he had moved out of the house, although he and then representatives (after 1930), maintained ownership until the mid-1930s. A series of short-term owner followed, including Stefanja Gembaroski, tailoress (1948-1950), Thomas (farmer) and Mary Caha (1951-1956), H.A. Belanger & Rose A. Hammel (1960) and Harry and Christine Pincura, retired (1970).³



Rear (west) and north façades, 2007

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- an excellent example of the type of residential structure built at the turn-of-the-century in a comfortable downtown neighbourhood;
- its associations- N/A;
- its design- an excellent example of the foursquare style;
- its architect- J.H.G. Russell was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes greatly to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (east) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #488.1904.
- 2 Information from <http://www.realviews.com/homes/forsq.html>.
- 3 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-091606000, 1905-1990; and Henderson's Directory, 1905-1990.