

368 EDMONTON STREET
Johann Schwab, 1901



Constructed in 1901, this duplex is one of the few residential buildings that still remains in an area that has undergone significant changes. Central Park, created in 1893 with its tennis courts and bandshell, was a prestigious downtown neighborhood with numerous apartment blocks and private dwellings built around it.

The house was built for business partners Martin Hoover and Alfred Town, who owned the Hoover and Town Clothing Store on Main Street. The partnership dissolved and the duplex was sold in 1908. Subsequent owners until the 1920s were middle-class, for houses on Edmonton Street with a view on Central Park continued to command high prices. As the suburbs grew in the southern part of the city, this district became home for working-class people. Clerks, a machinist and a salesman represented the occupations of the tenants of the duplex.

Hoover and Town had chosen a relatively unknown architect, Johann Schwab, to design their duplex. Newly arrived in the city in 1901, little is known about Schwab whose architectural

career in Winnipeg lasted to about 1911. His identified work consists of a large store and residential block for Dr. Trick on Main Street (1903), the German Society Building in Point Douglas (1904), and the Lauzon Block, which was a meat market and office block on William Avenue (1905).

The buff-coloured brick duplex was built at a cost of \$8,000 and rested on a stone foundation 18 inches thick anchored on stone footings.

A steeply pitched roof of irregular shape with two dominant front-facing gables, cutaway bay windows and other devices to avoid a smooth-walled appearance, characterize this house as belong to the Queen Anne Style. The variety of textures and masses all contribute to the desired decorative effect. Inspired by British architect Norman Shaw (1831-1912), the style was a mixture of English Medieval and Flemish Renaissance and tried to capture a British rural flavour. Building designs in the Queen Anne Style were popularized in North America through building design publications such as George Palliser's *Modern Buildings' Pattern Book* and occurs in examples ranging from modest cottages to high-style landmarks.

An elaborate porch, a section of which still remains, was placed between the matching bay windows on the corners of the main floor. A carved sunburst motif in the pediment of the porch is repeated in the tables of the roof. Ornate balustrades above the bay windows and central porch, now removed, gave an air of urban elegance. Matching cutaway windows on the second floor are framed by elaborately carved brackets.

The steep hip roof, broken by large matching gables at the front corners of the house contains a wealth of detail. Elaborate brackets, sunburst motifs, scalloped shingles and a variety of mouldings: all contribute to the exuberance of the Queen Anne Style. The central dormer gable with a small pyramidal roof and iron crestings (now missing) along the roof line contributed to the variety of elements of the design.

Despite massive interior alterations, the exterior has retained much of its early features.