



887 GROSVENOR AVENUE

SAMUEL GROFF HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



887 GROSVENOR AVENUE SAMUEL GROFF HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1907

Building Permit: 1486/1907

Architect: Unnamed

Contractor: Andrews and Son

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This well-detailed single-family home is located in one of Winnipeg's more exclusive residential neighbourhoods of the pre-World War I era.

This frame, 2½-storey house rests on a stone foundation and was built at a cost of \$5,500. Thin horizontal wood siding is used to clad the structure, wooden window frames are plain and there is no entrance porch.¹ A two-storey bay window is located on the front (south) façade. Undoubtedly the most ornamental feature of the home is its roof, a complex combination of truncated hip with cross gables and a corner tower with domed roof. A Palladian window is located in the front facing gable.

The building is a good example of a Queen Anne style structure.² The style borrowed heavily from English architecture of the 15th century, blending classical and medieval motifs



Front (south) façade detail, 2009

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.³

The popularity of the style in Canada began in the 1880s and lasted until World War I. On the prairies, pre-1900 examples of the style were not numerous because large-scale development occurred after the turn of the century. Post-1900, it was quickly adopted for use in the growing residential districts, especially the more affluent neighbourhoods where its showy qualities were greatly admired.

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Local land developer E.W. Andrews built this and many other neighbourhood homes as investment property. This house was sold to R.C. MacGregor, who rented it to Samuel Groff, owner of S. Groff and Son (Bertson), commission merchants, and his wife Martha. The couple ultimately bought the property and lived there until the late 1920s when it was transferred to their daughters Clara (teacher), Addie (teacher) and Alberta (spinster), who remained at the address until 1954.⁴



Front (south) façade, 1978

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- an example of a larger single-family home built in Winnipeg in the pre-World War I era;
- its associations- N/A;
- its design- a good example of the Queen Anne style;
- its architect- N/A;
- its location- contributes greatly to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.

ENDNOTES:

¹ City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #1486/1907.

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 Rolls, Roll No. 12-022994000, 1910-1960; and Henderson's Directory, 1910-1950.