



77-79 HALLET STREET ALEXANDER G. MCKENZIE DUPLEX

Date of Construction: ca.1885

Building Permit: N/A

Architect: Unknown

Contractor: Unknown

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

The Point Douglas area is an early labour-settled residential district that, beginning in the latter part of the 19th century, has seen many of its best examples of early 20th century residential structures demolished or replaced by newer homes, warehouses and factories.

The front (south) façade begins at grade with a raised rough-cut stone foundation wall on which sits the red brick veneer superstructure (recently painted).¹ The superstructure is symmetrically designed with bay windows at either end connected by an enclosed porch with wood siding and accenting. In each bay are arched headed windows with stone sills. Windows on the second floor feature the same arched heads and lug sills and are connected by a raised brick band. Wood brackets support the overhanging eaves above and the truncated hip roof is interrupted on the front facing slope by a modest gable dormer. Two brick chimneys also grace the roof.



Detail of front (south) façade, 2007

Because of the close proximity of neighbouring homes, the east and west side elevations are partially blocked from view. Both are clad in common clay brick. The rear wall of the front portion of the building matches the front façade in terms of window design and brick bands are used between the first and second floor windows and to visually connect the upper storey openings. The rear section of the duplex features a simple gable roof, arched and square headed window and door openings, brick cladding and a shed dormer on the east slope of the roof.

The main part of the 2½-storey duplex measures approximately 11.1 x 8.5 metres, the two-storey section at the rear of the building measures 7.5 x 7.8 metres. Ceiling in the structure range from 2.3 metres in the basement to 3.1 metres on the ground floor and 2.1 metres on the upper floor.²

The duplex stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. Beyond the painting of the brick veneer cladding and the architectural elements, this building has not seen major exterior alteration.

The duplex is an example of a reduced Queen Anne style structure. This style borrowed heavily from English architecture of the 15th century, blending classical and medieval motifs into a picturesque form.³ The desired asymmetry was achieved through a number of 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.⁴



Front (south) and east façades, 2007

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.

It is unknown at the present time who designed and built this duplex.



Rear (north) and east façades, 2007

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

This duplex has seen a great deal of change on the interior because of changing use of the structure. When built in the mid-1880s, it was owned by Alexander G. McKenzie, employment unknown, who also owned the duplex next door at 73-75 Hallett Street (demolished ca.1940).⁵ McKenzie only owned the duplexes for approximately a decade. Tenants during this period included Augustus Mills, deputy prothonotary (court clerk – 1888, nine in the household), Rev. C.E. Stafford (1891, nine in household) and J.M. Bliss of Dominion Express (1891, seven in household).⁶ Over the next 100 years, the building saw numerous owners, both resident and non-resident and a wide range of tenants. In 1935, the building was altered to allow for the residency of six separate families within the building, from the 1950s to the 1970s, 10 suites were listed and the 1980s and 1990s saw only five suites listed in locale directories.⁷



Rear (north) and west façades, 2007

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 duplexes in Point Douglas and Winnipeg and its illustration of the type of multi-tenant structure built prior to 1890 and its differing role as it aged;
- its associations- N/A;
- its design- a reduced example of the Queen Anne Revival 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.



Front (south) façade, 1978 (left) and 2003, prior to painting of the original red brick veneer (right)

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No. 14000602000.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 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.
- 4 L. Maitland et al., op. cit., p. 98.
- 5 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 14-000602000 (below as ARo), 1885-1890; and Henderson's Directory, 1885-1890. The building was originally numbered 22-24 Hallet Street.
- 6 Ibid., 1885-1895; and ARo, 1885-1895.
- 7 Ibid., 1895-1990; and Henderson's Directory, 1895-1990.