



66 KINGSWAY AVENUE

WILLIAM WHYTE JR. HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



66 KINGSWAY AVENUE WILLIAM WHYTE JR. HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1907

Building Permit: 1409/1907

Architect: Blair, William Wallace

Contractor: McMillan and Clark

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Another magnificent single-family home built in Crescentwood, one of Winnipeg's early exclusive neighbourhoods.

This 2½-storey house of brick veneer construction sits on a stone foundation and cost \$9,000 to complete, making it one of the more expensive built in Winnipeg in 1907.¹ It contains a wealth of ornamentation, both through the use of varied materials and a multitude of design elements. The front (north) façade features a pedimented front entrance porch with wide, squared columns and detailed eaves. Window openings throughout the façade are varied with both square and round heads. Bay and oriel windows break up wall surfaces and the complex hip roof includes hipped gable ends, numerous dormers and sweeping eaves extended to the ground floor. It is an impressive and conspicuous structure.



Front (north) façade detail, 2009

The home stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and has not suffered from major exterior alteration.

W.W. Blair, designer of this house, was born in Ireland in 1852 and studied architecture at the Academical Institute in Belfast. After graduation, he began a private practice in Middlesbrough-on-Tees, England from 1874-76² before immigrating to Canada, settling in Toronto as well as Hamilton. In 1884 he returned to his mother country as resident engineer for the construction of the Londonderry and Ballymena waterworks systems. After five years he again returned to North America, working until 1905 in Chicago.³ That year he chose to relocate to Winnipeg, and formed a short partnership in 1906 with George W. Northwood under the name Blair and Northwood.⁴ Blair practised in Winnipeg for less than 10 years, but during that time he designed a number of outstanding buildings. The list includes:⁵ Thomas Ryan Warehouse, 44 Princess Street (1906 – designed with G.W. Northwood); Roslyn Apartments, 40 Osborne Street (1908 – Grade II); Warwick Apartments, 366 Qu'Appelle Avenue (1908-1909 – Grade II); Princeton (Kenmore) Apartments, 314 Broadway (1909 – Grade II); Great West Saddlery Building, 113 Market Avenue (1910 – Grade II); M. Fortune House, 393 Wellington Crescent (1911 – Grade III). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.



Rear (south) façade, 2009

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

William Whyte Jr., son of Sir William Whyte, long-time vice-president of the Canadian Pacific Railway, was the original owner of this home. He married Marguerite, the daughter of W.W. Blair, in a wedding that was reported on in newspapers as far away as Edmonton and was described as “one of the most brilliant weddings ever solemnized in the Manitoba capital.”⁶ It is reported that Blair designed the home and then gave it to the couple as a wedding present. Whyte was listed as a Branch Manager for the Huron and Erie Mortgage Corporation and Canada Trust Company and lived in the home until the late 1960s.⁷

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- illustrative of the type of expensive home built in an exclusive Winnipeg neighbourhood in the pre-World War I era;
- its associations- its connections to businessman W. Whyte Jr.;
- its design- an excellent example of a classically-detailed home;
- its architect- W.W. Blair was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (north) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, 1409/1907.
- 2 C.W. Parker, Who's Who in Western Canada, Volume I (Vancouver: Canadian Press Association Ltd., 1911), p. 112.
- 3 Winnipeg Saturday Post, June 8, 1912, p. 38.
- 4 D. Lyon, "Main Street," Report for the Historical Buildings Committee, Appendix D, F-58 and F-62.
- 5 Compiled from City of Winnipeg Building Permits, 1905-15; Winnipeg Saturday Post, June 8, 1912, p. 38; and Historical Buildings Committee files.
- 6 Edmonton Daily, September 9, 1907.
- 7 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-040428000, 1920-1990.