

**428 MOUNTAIN AVENUE**

**T.D. STURGEON HOUSE**

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



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## 428 MOUNTAIN AVENUE T.D. STURGEON HOUSE

**Date of Construction:** 1907

**Building Permit:** 1122/1907

**Architect:** Mislner, Jacob (owner)

**Contractor:** Mislner, Jacob (owner)

### ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

One of the more unique façades in the North End is this solid brick single-family home built in the middle of an extensive residential district.

The base for this structure is provided by the rusticated stone foundation rising a short distance above grade to the cream-coloured brick walls. A rounded, open veranda fills the entire front (north) façade and wraps around part of the east elevation. The porch is accented with unfluted wooden columns connected by a wooden balustrade, overhanging eaves with wooden dentils and a shingled pediment above the steps to the main door. The northeast corner of the structure includes a turret topped by a steeply pitched conical roof and round pinnacle with an octagonal base and flared bottom.



Front (north) façade detail, 2008

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Windows throughout the house are unmatched and set in plain wooden frames. Ground and second-floor openings are round-headed with stone lug sills and radiating brick heads. The exception is the diamond-shaped window on the west side which lights the entrance foyer. The small windows in the gable ends and corner turret are arched and set in heavier wooden frames. The gable roof is multi-levelled and includes a cross gable on its eastern slope and ornamental shingles clad the gable ends.

The Sturgeon House continues to stand on the original sizeable property and appears to be in good structural condition. Exterior alterations to the structure have been confined to the rear portion and therefore do not affect the Mountain Avenue façade.

The house is a fine example of the Queen Anne Revival style as applied to a residential structure.<sup>1</sup> The style borrowed heavily from English architecture of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, blending classical and medieval motifs 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.<sup>2</sup>

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.



Northeast corner turret, 2008

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Jacob Missler is listed on the original City of Winnipeg Building Permit as the owner, contractor and architect of the house. Missler, like many other period contractors, built and/or owned a number of structures as speculative properties and most of his work appears to have been completed in the North End.

#### HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Missler sold the house to Thomas D. Sturgeon shortly after its completion.<sup>3</sup> Sturgeon was a farmer from the Melita area in the extreme southwest corner of the province. The Sturgeon family was prominent in Melita and the original town hall (since demolished) was named in their honour. Thomas Sturgeon also operated a hardware business in the village of Melita in the late 1890s.<sup>4</sup> As befitting such an important family and businessman, his Melita home was a large wood structure that was an eclectic grouping of Victorian gingerbread, classical columns and a Second Empire tower.

The family moved into the Mountain Avenue house in 1908, remaining its occupants until ca.1913 when they left for California. Although Sturgeon lived away from Melita for many years, he returned frequently, possibly to attend to his business interests or to meet with remaining members of his family,<sup>5</sup> none of whom presently live in the area.<sup>6</sup>

City of Winnipeg records concerning ownership of the house in the late 1910s are confused, although it appears that Sturgeon owned both #428 and #430 Mountain Avenue until 1920 and resided at both addresses for parts of this period. In 1921, ownership of 428 Mountain Avenue was transferred to long-time tenants C.H., J.R. and G.B. Adderson, all carpenters.



Front (north) and east façades, 1996

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Other tenants during the 1912-20 period include James Yeo, another Melita-area resident who moved to Winnipeg,<sup>7</sup> and Lawrence D. Smith, a lawyer who practised in the city with partner B.B. Dubiński.<sup>8</sup>

In 1922, the house was sold to the Adam Bangart family. Bangart was a foreman with the Canadian National Railways. He had a large family and several of the adult members also lived at the house, including Annie, Frederick C. and Kate Bangart. Following a vacancy for part of 1933, Bangart resumed occupancy of the house in 1934.

Bangart died ca.1937 and the house was then sold to a Neepawa-area farmer, R.C. Newell, and Jessie Harris, the latter residing in the home. In 1942, new owners Frank Przednowek (Beausejour farmer) and Mary Golembiowski, both non-residents, converted the house into a duplex. In 1944, it was again sold, coming into the hands of carpenter Harry Milovitch who owned the property into the 1980s.<sup>9</sup>



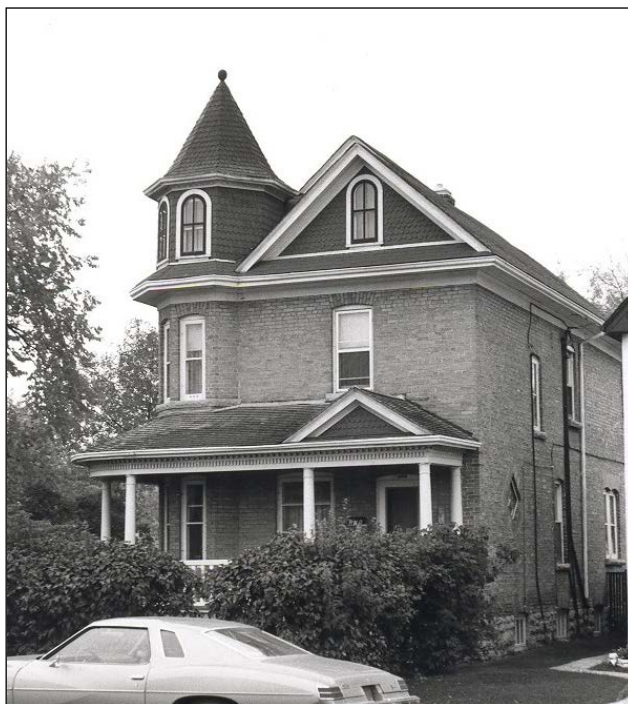
Front (north) and east façades, no date

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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 North End's fine single family dwellings from the pre-1910 period and illustrative of the type of home built by a prominent family;
- its associations- its long-term connection to influential famer/businessman T.D. Sturgeon;
- its design- an excellent example of the Queen Anne style;
- its architect- J. Missler was a known 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 (north) and west façades, 1978

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ENDNOTES:

- 1 Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, 1991), p. 17; L. Maitland et al., A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), p. 102; and L. Maitland, The Queen Anne Revival Style in Canadian Architecture (Ottawa, ON: Environment Canada, 1990), p. 64.
- 2 L. Maitland et al., op. cit., p. 98.
- 3 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 14042366400 (below as ARo), 1907-1910.
- 4 Melita's Tales and Trails, 1879-1967 (Melita, MB: The Women's Institute, ca.1967), p. 39.
- 5 Melita Enterprise, October 30, 1912.
- 6 Staff of Melita town offices, in conversation with the author, April 17, 1996.
- 7 Melita's Tales and Trails, op. cit., p. 163.
- 8 ARo, 1912-1920.
- 9 Ibid., 1920-1990