



453 MOUNTAIN AVENUE

CYRUS McBEAN HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009



453 MOUNTAIN AVENUE
CYRUS McBEAN HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1882

Building Permit: N/A

Architect: N/A

Contractor: N/A

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This would be considered one of Winnipeg's more uniquely designed small homes. Its early date of construction and the lack of significant exterior alterations make this home even more unique.

The two-storey frame and wood siding clad structure features an ornate full-width open porch with unfluted columns, curved brackets, wood balustrades and a broken pediment above the stairs with an oval window and carved wood patterns. The main door features an oval window beside it and there is also a bay window on the ground floor. The front (south) façade also includes second storey windows in wood frames and decorative wood bargeboard. The complex cross gable roof is hipped in the front.



Front (south) façade, 1978

The building is an excellent example of a Queen Anne style structure.¹ The style borrowed heavily from English architecture of the 15th 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.²

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.

The home stands on its original site, appears to be in fair structural condition and does not appear to have suffered major exterior alteration.

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Carpenter Cyrus McBean (also spelt McBain) was the original owner/resident of this house, along with his wife Mary Ann, son Cyrus James, bookkeeper for his father's business and daughters Jeanette Margaret, teacher at Machray School, and Mary Ann. Interestingly, by 1911, another McBean family (William [also a carpenter] and Annie with children Margaret E., Norman and Jeanette Mary) lives on Mountain Avenue, next door at #445.³ The McBeans stayed in the house at 453 Mountain Avenue until ca.1915 when Alexander Truesdale, grocery broker, is listed at the house.⁴

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 oldest homes still standing in Winnipeg's north end;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early contractor C. McBean and his family;
- its design- an excellent 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 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.
- 2 L. Maitland, op. cit., p. 98.
- 3 Canada Census, 1911.
- 4 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 14-042427100, 1880-1920; and Henderson's Directory, 1880-1930.