227 OXFORD STREET

BENJAMIN BILLINGSLEY SMITH HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009
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Date of Construction: 1914
Building Permit: 1902/1914
Architect: Dunbar, R. (owner)
Contractor: Dunbar, R. (owner)

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Built at a cost of $10,000, this fine 2-storey brick veneer and stucco home has been an integral part of its River Heights neighbourhood for nearly 100 years.

The front (east) façade is asymmetrical, the main entrance located at the north end of the home. This entrance, accessed via a short flight of stone and concrete steps, includes an arched hood supported by unfluted columns. The middle portion of the home features a wide, gently arched bay. The ground floor is clad in brick, the upper storey in stucco. Windows are square headed and plain throughout. The modest gable roof is interrupted on the front slope by a gable end above the arched bay and a small hipped gable dormer window.
The side elevations continue the cladding of the front façade and the north side includes a second entrance.

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

According to the original City of Winnipeg Building Permit, the original owner, R. Dunbar, was responsible for the home’s design and construction.
HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Although the original City of Winnipeg Building Permit lists R. Dunbar as the owner, the home was sold shortly after completion to Benjamin B. Smith. Smith was born in Quebec in 1882 and came to Winnipeg at the age of 20. Along with a brother, he founded the development firm and property managers, Smith Agencies in 1910. By 1925, the house was occupied by William McCullough, manager of the McCullough Drug Company and during the 1940s it was home to the Hon. Judge E.A. McPherson, Chief Justice of the Court of Kings Bench. In the 1980s and 1990s, it was home to David W. (president of Diamond and Company) and Ruby Bennett.\(^1\)

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 well-appointed, pre-World War I era single-family home built in one of Winnipeg’s finer neighbourhoods;
- its associations- its connections to businessman B.B. Smith;
- its design- N/A;
- 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 (east) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

1 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 610000-12-2, 1920-1990.