448 SHERBOOK STREET
THORSTEIN ODDSON HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1905
Building Permit: 3088/1905
Architect: Oddson, Thorstein (owner)
Contractor: Oddson, Thorstein (owner)

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Built at a cost of $4,000\(^1\) and heavily ornamented, the Oddson House is one of the more visually conspicuous single-family dwellings in the neighbourhood.

The frame home rests on a stone foundation and is clad in horizontal wood siding. The front (east) façade includes a corner tower with domed roof and turned wood finial, a front facing gable with ornamental bargeboard and pendant and a plain overhanging roof to protect the main entrance, likely a replacement for a more ornate original veranda. A two-storey bay window is found on the south façade, as is another decorated gable end. Most of the windows throughout the home have been replaced with newer units.

The building is an excellent example of a Queen Anne style structure.\(^2\) 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.³

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 and appears to be in good structural condition and has not suffered from major exterior alteration.

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

This home was the owned and occupied by the Oddson family, another of the influential Icelandic families that settled in Winnipeg’s West End after 1900. Thorstein Oddson owned Thorstein Oddson and Company, real estate and investment brokers and also in the house were his wife Rachael (also as Rakel), four daughters and one of his two sons (Thory, who also worked for his father). The family remained in the home until the
1920s. Born in 1864 in Iceland, Oddson immigrated in 1888 and settled in Selkirk, Manitoba. In 1901 he moved into Winnipeg and set up his business.

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- one of many modest single-family homes built throughout Winnipeg just prior to and just after 1900, its level of ornamentation comparable to its neighbours in the area;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early and influential Icelandic family, the Oddsons;
- 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 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #3088/1905.


3 L. Maitland, op. cit., p. 98.

4 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 13-050093100, 1900-1930; and Henderson’s Directory, 1900-1930.