494 SPENCE STREET

WILLIAM HORNER HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2009
Date of Construction: 1905
Building Permit: 999/1905
Architect: Horner, William (owner)
Contractor: Horner, William (owner)

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This solid brick, 2½-storey single-family home sits on a raised stone foundation and cost $4,500 to complete in 1905. Outstanding features of the front (east) façade include its stone framed main entrance, the bracketed eaves and the large, gable dormer with Palladian-style window and ornamental shingles. The hip roof features another gable dormer on the north and south slopes. It is likely that the building also included some type of wood porch across the front, either partial or full-width, but if such an element existed, it had been removed by the late 1970s.

The is a good example of a Foursquare style house, one of the most popular styles used for residential architecture in North America from the late 1880s until the 1930s. Its square massing and boxiness made it affordable to build and perfect for small urban lots where space was at a premium. The roofline was usually pyramidal or hipped and a front porch...
and small dormer on the second floor were familiar details. Usually built without the benefit of an architect, the foursquare was often detailed by the owner and could be highly ornamental or very plain. On the interior, the foursquare featured a second floor with four square rooms above three square rooms and an entrance hall with stairs tucked unobtrusively to the side on the first floor.²

William Horner was the architect and contractor for this house. Horner was born in Newby, Wiske, Yorkshire, England in 1860 and apprenticed as a bricklayer and mason before emigrating to Canada. He arrived in Winnipeg at age 21 and set up a practice as a contractor. Working alone and with partners (including W.J. Hodgkins), Horner, like many of his colleagues, built a number of homes for sale throughout the City prior to World War I.³ Some of his larger contracts included:⁴ Drewrys’ Brewery, Redwood Avenue – alterations & additions (1904-10) – demolished; F.W.S. Crispo House, 52 Balmoral Street (1905); Ripstein Block, 180 Logan Avenue (1906); James Ryan Jr. House, 99 Middle Gate (1910); George F. Galt House, 460 Wellington Crescent (1910) – demolished; and Union Bank of Canada Branch, 646 Logan Avenue (1910). Horner died in Winnipeg on October 21, 1916.⁵

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and has not suffered from major exterior alterations.
HISTORICAL INTEREST:

William Horner, local contractor, and his family moved into this house after it was built, which by 1911 included wife Sarah, sons William and Gordon, daughter Marjorie and a nephew and his daughter. After his death, his widow lived in the home until the early 1920s when it was occupied by Alfred G. Lockwood, a packer working at Macdonald’s Consolidated.6

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 at the turn-of-the-century;
- its associations- its long-term connections to local contractor W. Horner;
- its design- an good example of the Foursquare style;
- its architect- W. Horner 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.
ENDNOTES:

1. City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #999/1905.