511 STRADBROOK AVENUE

JOHN DAVIDSON AND LILLIAN CAROLINA CLARK HOUSE
(ST. LUKE’S ANGLICAN CHURCH RECTORY)

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009
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Date of Construction: 1906
Building Permit: 2157/1906
Architect: Russell, John Hamilton Gordon
Contractor: De Jurkowski, L.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This large, 2½-storey brick veneer home rests on a raised stone foundation and is located on the north side of Stradbrook Avenue, just east of St. Luke’s Anglican Church.

Unusual features of the home include the two-storey bay window at the southwest corner and the stepped gable above. The roof is hipped and complex, with small dormers and cross-gables, and the windows are original and feature multi-paned and single units. The large entrance porch includes an open second storey porch. There is extensive cracking in the brick walls at the structure’s northwest corner. There is an enclosed entrance porch on the building’s west side.
The structure stands on its original site and is exhibiting uneven foundation settlement problems. It has not suffered major exterior alterations.

This home is a reduced example of a Queen Anne style residence. The style borrowed heavily from English architecture of the 15th century, blending classical and medieval motifs into a picturesque form. The desired asymmetry was achieved through a number of 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.

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.

Building architect J.H.G. Russell was born in Toronto, Canada West (Ontario), in 1862, the son of a dry goods dealer. After attending school in that city, he went to work for H.B. Gordon, a prominent area architect. Russell was with Gordon from 1878 until his departure for Winnipeg in 1882. From 1886 to 1893, Russell travelled throughout the United States, learning civil engineering, surveying and architecture in centres such as Chicago, Illinois, Spokane and Tacoma, Washington, and Sioux City, Iowa.
In 1895, two years after returning to Winnipeg, he set up his private practice, coinciding with the city's period of unbridled growth. His designs were (and are) scattered throughout the city, province and Western Canada, covering a variety of building types, sizes, costs and uses. His business continued to be steady during World War I and after, when many architects struggled to find commissions.

Russell was president of the Manitoba Association of Architects (1925) and served for three terms as the president of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (1912-15). His chairmanship of the Presbyterian Church Board of Managers and his devotion to Presbyterianism partially explain the large number of churches he designed for the denomination in Winnipeg and Western Canada. Russell died in 1946.

A complete list of his designs would be very lengthy, included among his more notable local projects would be J.H. Ashdown Warehouse additions, 157-179 Bannatyne Avenue, (1899-1911, Grade II), Lake of the Woods Building, 212 McDermot Avenue (1901, Grade II), Hammond Building, 63 Albert Street (1902, Grade III), Adelman Building, 92-100 Princess Street (1903, Grade II), Franklin Press, 168 Bannatyne Avenue (1904, Grade III), R.R. Wilson, 545 Broadway (1904, Grade III), J.H. Ashdown Store, 211 Bannatyne Avenue (1904, Grade III), Porter Building, 165 McDermot Avenue (1906, Grade III), Child's (McArthur) Building, Portage Avenue (1909, demolished), Casa Loma Building, Portage Avenue (1909, Grade II), Glengarry Block, 290 McDermot Avenue (1910, Grade III), Westminster Presbyterian (United) Church, 745 Westminster Avenue (1910-12, Grade II), Dingwall Building, 62 Albert Street (1911, Grade III), YMCA, 301 Vaughan Street, with Jackson and Rosencrans of New York (1911-13, Grade II), J.H. Ashdown, 529 Wellington Crescent (1913, Grade II) and St. John's Presbyterian (United) Church, 250

Front (south) and east façades, 2009
Cathedral Avenue (1923, Grade III). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

John Davidson Clark (also found as Clarke), a parishioner of St. Luke’s Anglican Church, took out two City of Winnipeg Building Permits in 1906, #2052 and #2157. The first was for Lot 101, the second for Lot 100. It appears from the “Permit Ledger Book” for 1906 that the building planned for Lot 100 was actually built on Lot 101 and that no house was built on Lot 100 (St. Luke’s Church Sunday School, built in 1914 and 1915, now sits on part of Lot 100). A newspaper article states that Clark sold his house to the church in 1913 (Manitoba Free Press, May 17, 1913, p. 5), although City of Winnipeg records do not reflect this until two years later. Clark’s wife, Lillian Carolina, is listed as the owner during this period (originally known as 53 Stradbrook Place).

St. Luke’s parish used the property as its rectory for many years.³
RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- a fine example of a large, single-family dwelling built in the pre-World War I era in one of Winnipeg’s fast growing suburbs;
- its associations- its long-term connections to St. Luke’s Anglican Church;
- its design- a reduced example of the Queen Anne style;
- its architect- J.H.G. Russell was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes greatly to the historic streetscape of its Fort Rouge neighbourhood; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.

ENDNOTES:

2 L. Maitland, op. cit., p. 98.
3 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12031752000, 1920-1990.