



3791 VIALOUX DRIVE
ROBERT C. SMITH HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



3791 VIALOUX DRIVE ROBERT C. SMITH HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1914

Building Permit: N/A

Architect: Unknown

Contractor: Unknown

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This house is one of the oldest in Charleswood, pre-dating most of its modern development.

The house stands on the south bank of the Assiniboine River facing north towards the river, highlighting its construction during the period when the river was as or more important than the rudimentary roadway system as a means of transportation.

The structure is clad in horizontal wood siding on the ground floor and ornamental shingles on the second floor. Windows are square headed and feature ornamental wood shutters. The unusual bellcast-hipped roof also features side facing dormers with similar roofs.



Rear (south) façade, 2009

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. It does not appear that major exterior alterations have been completed on the building.

This home is a good example of a Foursquare style structure, 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.¹

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Records for this area are not complete or numerous but it appears that the original owner of this house and the surrounding land was market gardener Robert C. Smith. Smith and his wife Jessie are listed on the property until ca.1940; by 1945 the property is owned by Harold Douglas and Ethel Phylis Barbour. British-born Physician Dr. William Rupert Welply (1912-1970) and his wife Margaret I. Welply (1914-1973) were owners/residents in the 1950s and 1960s. The couple had moved to Winnipeg in 1951, Dr. Welply joining the staff of the Manitoba Clinic.²



Rear (south) façade, 1978

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 single-family dwellings in West Winnipeg and a good example of the type of home being built in the ;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early Charleswood market gardeners, the Smiths;
- its design- a good example of the Foursquare style;
- its architect- N/A;
- its location- built at the river, this home is virtually hidden from view; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.

ENDNOTES:

¹ Information from <http://www.realviews.com/homes/forsq.html>.

² Wepley biographical information from http://www.paulturner.ca/Phillips/Whelpley_Hayes_Hosford/welpley_hayes_hosford-dossier.htm; Winnipeg Free Press, July 2, 1970, p. 39; and City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 01001640600, 1920-1990.