



1015 WELLINGTON CRESCENT

JAMES M. GILCHRIST HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



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Date of Construction: 1932

Building Permit: 292/1932 (Plans at City Storage)

Architect: Cubbidge, Arthur E.¹

Contractor: Gass, J.B.²

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Built during the worldwide economic downturn, this is a relative new member of the finely detailed mansions built on Crescentwood's premier thoroughfare, Wellington Crescent.

This home features a wealth of ornamentation including the designs within brick walls, half-timbering details, round, turret-like dormers, a stone framed main entrance, large brick and stone chimneys, pointed arches, stone drip moulding, a one-storey frame bay window (west side) and many other elements. A four-stall garage is located behind the house close to the river.

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



Front (south) and west façades, 2009

Tudor style homes were constructed throughout Winnipeg and North America from the 1890s until World War II, although the decades of the 1920s and 1930s saw an explosion in Tudor-style house construction on this continent. The style is loosely based on a number of late Medieval English structures ranging from thatch-roofed cottages to grand mansions. In North America, the style developed several distinctive elements - ornamental half-timbering, steeply pitched roofs, front-facing gables, and stucco, masonry or masonry-veneered walls.³

The most common feature of Tudor homes is a steeply pitched central roof with cross gables. Tall, narrow windows in multiple groups, and massive chimneys crowned by chimney pots, are other common elements. About half of all examples of the style contain decorative (non-structural) half-timbering with stucco or brick infill.⁴ This house was designed by A.E. Cubbidge, a well known local designer. Cubbidge was born in Maidstone, England in 1881, receiving his architectural training in London. In 1907 he moved to Winnipeg, becoming associated with local architect John Woodman. His partnership with Woodman lasted until 1923 when Cubbidge went out on his own. He was present at the inaugural meeting of the Manitoba Association of Architects in 1914, was on its council for 12 years, its vice president in 1931 and president of the Association in 1932. He died in 1953.⁵

An incomplete list of structures designed by Cubbidge includes: Public Press Building, 290 Vaughan Street (Woodman and Cubbidge, 1917, Grade III); School for Birtle, Manitoba, (Woodman and Cubbidge, 1920); General Byng and General Steele Schools, Fort Garry, Manitoba, (Woodman and Cubbidge, 1921); T. Eaton Company Limited Store (1927); E.J Smith House (1929); St. Paul's College Extension (1932); and addition to Misericordia Hospital, (date unknown).⁶



East façade, 2009

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

This home was originally owned and occupied by James M. Gilchrist and his wife Florence. Gilchrist was the vice-president of Searle Grain Company, a major Western Canadian firm founded in 1921 and through mergers and acquisitions in the 1930s and 1940s grew to become Canada's largest private elevator operator. In the late 1960s the company amalgamated with several others to form the Federal Grain Company.⁷

In the 1950s through to the 1970s, the dwelling was home to Gilbert McCrea and Marjorie Eaton.⁸ G.M. Eaton was born in Toronto, Ontario in 1915, grandson of Timothy Eaton. He entered the family business in 1935 and work for the company until 1963, assuming a number of management positions including: Director the T. Eaton Co.; the T. Eaton Co. Maritimes Ltd.; the T. Eaton Co. of Montreal; the T. Eaton Co. Western Ltd.; the Canadian Department Stores Ltd.; the T. Eaton Realty Co. Ltd.; the T. Eaton Co. Saskatchewan Ltd.; and Director the T. Eaton Life Assurance Co. He died in 1985.⁹



Rear (north) façade, 2009

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- a rare, 1930s era single family dwelling built in the Crescentwood neighbourhood;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early and influential businessman J.M. Gilchrist and the Eaton family;
- its design- an excellent example of the Tudor style;
- its architect- A.E. Cubbidge was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes greatly to the historic streetscape of its neighbourhood; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (south) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 Winnipeg Free Press, March 19, 1932, p. 25.
- 2 Winnipeg Free Press, March 26, 1932, p. 29.
- 3 V. and L. McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), p. 358.
- 4 Ibid., pp. 355-356.
- 5 Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal, Vol. XXX, (March 1953), p. 87.
- 6 Compiled from BP, Winnipeg Tribune, May 18, 1944; Western Canada Contractor and Builder, July 1920, October 1922, September 1923 and May 1927; J. Wade, op. cit.; and M. Peterson, "300 Carlton Street - Free Press Building," Report for the City of Winnipeg, Historical Buildings Committee, Appendix I.
- 7 Information from "The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan" at http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/searle_grain_company.html (no date)
- 8 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12042770100, 1930-1990; and Henderson's Directory, 1930-1990.
- 9 Biographical information from <http://www.aircadetmanitoba.com/biographies.html#Eaton>.