

408 WELLINGTON CRESCENT

DR. CHARLES A. MacKENZIE HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



408 WELLINGTON CRESCENT DR. CHARLES A. MacKENZIE HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1909

Building Permit: 369/1909

Architect: Atchison, John Danley

Contractor: Brown, S.

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

This is another of the fine, single-family dwellings built on the west side of Wellington Crescent, one of Winnipeg's premier streets prior to World War I.

The front (east) façade features a dark brick ground floor and a second floor clad in stucco with half-timbering details. Windows are large and unmatched and part of the front projects. There is a one-storey bay window at the south end of the façade. The north façade holds the raised main entrance located in a brick and concrete porch with gabled cover.

The building stands on its original site, appears to be in good structural condition and other than the replacement of some of the original window units, has not suffered major exterior alteration. The home was expensively built at \$15,000.¹



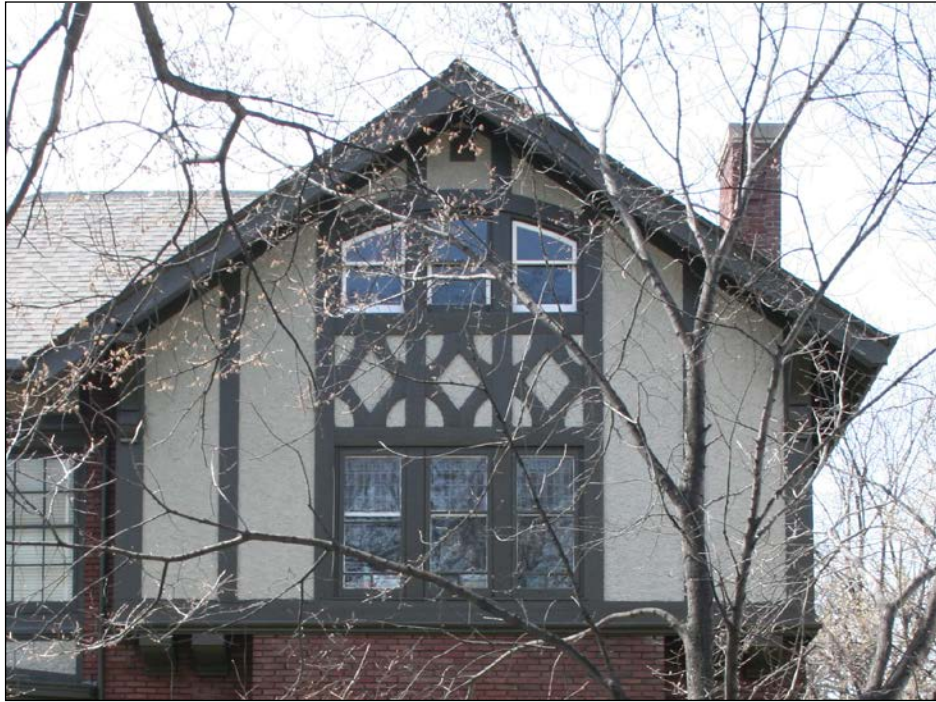
Front (east) and north façades, 2009

This apartment block is designed in the Tudor style, most popular in the design of single family dwellings constructed throughout Winnipeg and North America from the 1890s until World War II, although the decades of the 1920s and 1930s also 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.²

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.³

J.D. Atchison, designer of this home, was born in Monmouth, Illinois in 1870. Educated in Chicago, he studied architecture at the Chicago Art Institute and the Chicago Manual Training School.⁴ In 1895, he opened his own practice in Chicago that continued until the early 1900s. He worked on the staff of the World's Columbian Exposition and for the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad. His commissions brought him to Winnipeg and by 1905 the city's prosperity and future prospects prompted him to relocate his business there.⁵

A list of some of the more prominent local buildings designed by J.D. Atchison over his career includes: Wardlaw Apartments, 544 Wardlaw Avenue (1905, Grade II), Kennedy Building (Mitchell-Copp), 315 Portage Avenue (1906, Grade II), Dennistoun House, 166 Roslyn Road (1908, Grade III), N.W.C.T.A. Building, 291 Garry Street (1908, Grade III), Paterson Block, 54 Donald Street (1909, Grade II), Oldfield, Kirby and Gardner Building, 234



Front (east) façade detail, 2009

Portage Avenue (1909, Grade II), Canada Permanent Building, 296-98 Garry Street (1909, Grade II), Maltese Cross Building, 66 King Street (1909, Grade III), Chamber of Commerce Building (Great-West Life Building), 177 Lombard Avenue (1911, Grade II) Carlton Building, 354 Portage Avenue (1912, Grade III), Boyd Building, 388 Portage Avenue (1912, Grade III), Union Tower, 191 Lombard Avenue (1912-13, Grade II), Merchants' Bank Branch, 1386 Main Street (1913, Grade III), Curry Building, 233 Portage Avenue (1915, Grade II) and the Bank of Hamilton Building, 395 Main Street (1916-18, Grade I).⁶

Atchison also designed structures in other western provinces. He won the design competition for the Moose Jaw City Hall, c.1912-13 (not built) and planned the Moose Jaw Collegiate (1908-10), Saskatchewan Presbyterian Boys' College and Principal's Residence (1911-12), and Hammond Building, Main St., Moose Jaw (1912). In 1923, Atchison left Winnipeg for Pasadena, California, and continued to practice there, adopting the Spanish Colonial style for his residential work. He died in 1959.⁷ He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.



Side entrance detail, 2009

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Dr. Charles A. MacKenzie, noted Winnipeg physician, was the original owner of the home. Born in Kirkfield, Ontario in 1870, he came west at the age of 17 and worked in the medical department of the Great Northern Railway. He set up a private practice in Winnipeg in 1902 and is credited with helping to found the Medical Arts Building group (he was its first president).⁸ He and his wife (they had two daughters) lived in the house until his death in 1953.⁹

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- an excellent example of a pre-World War I era mansion built in one of Winnipeg's finer residential neighbourhoods;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early and influential doctor C.A. MacKenzie;
- its design- an excellent example of the Tudor style;
- its architect- J.D. Atchison was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes greatly to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (east) façade, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #369/1909.
- 2 V. and L. McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984), p. 358.
- 3 Ibid., pp. 355-356.
- 4 Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906, p. 55; and F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: S.J. Clarke, 1913), Vol. II, p. 374.
- 5 F.H. Schofield, op. cit., p. 374.
- 6 Compiled from City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Files; J. Wade, Manitoba Architecture to 1940 (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 1976); Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906, p. 55; Winnipeg Tribune, December 21, 1907; and F.H. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 374-75.
- 7 The Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation, Historic Resources Branch, 1985), pp. 8-11.
- 8 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12040030000, 1920-1990.
- 9 Winnipeg Free Press, April 6, 1953, p. 29.