



144 YALE AVENUE

THOMAS RUSS DEACON HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – DECEMBER 2009



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## 144 YALE AVENUE THOMAS RUSS DEACON HOUSE

**Date of Construction:** 1912

**Building Permit:** 1151/1912

**Architect:** Kelly, George H. (owner)

**Contractor:** National Construction Company

### ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Another of the magnificent mansions built in the pre-World War I era in one of Winnipeg's most desirable residential developments – Crescentwood.

The front (north) façade is symmetrical with a central entrance placed in a large open two-storey portico with unfluted wood columns and wood balustrades on the ground floor as well as on the second storey deck. The solid brick home rests on a raised stone foundation and cost \$10,000 to complete.<sup>1</sup> Windows on this elevation are large, square headed and accented with wide stone heads and stone lug sills. The bellcast hip roof is interrupted on its front slope by a large dormer window with hide detailed eaves. Large brick chimneys are located on the east and west sides of the roof. A carport is located on the west side of the home with a second storey screened porch above.



Front (north) and east façades, 2009

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

The house has many elements of the Classical Revival style. Popular in North America from 1900-30, the style ranged from simple, small-scale neo-classical structures, such as this building, to Beaux-Arts Classicism with its grand scale and heavy ornamentation, for example the Legislative Building.<sup>2</sup> Elements of the classical revival style include columns, pediments, flat, unadorned roof lines, symmetrical facades, and Greek or Roman orders. Door and window openings are often lintelled rather than arched, although both spanning methods can be present.<sup>3</sup>

The use of classical elements, especially for public buildings, became a popular ornamental device for banks, other financial institutions, railway stations, commercial buildings and office blocks. Because of Winnipeg's importance in the early growth of western Canada's economy, the city became the headquarters of many firms doing business throughout the West. These firms often chose classically-inspired ornamentation to portray an image of respectability and stability. Many excellent examples of the style, representing both early and late phases of its popularity, adorn a wide range of structures.



Front (north) and west façades, 2009

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HISTORICAL INTEREST:

George H. Kelly, manager of Winnipeg Garage Limited and later proprietor of McCulloch Skate Works, was the original owner of the house. He lived in the mansion for less than 10 years and sold the property to Thomas R. Deacon (1865-1955), president of Manitoba Bridge and Iron Works.<sup>4</sup> Born in Perth, Canada West (Ontario), Deacon worked in lumber camps in Northern Ontario as a young man as well as on survey crews in the Rocky Mountains. He obtained a civil engineering degree in 1891 and after several years in Rat Portage (now Kenora), Ontario which included a year as its acting mayor, he moved to Winnipeg in 1902. Here he co-founded Manitoba Bridge and Iron Works with H.B. Lyall. He was elected to City Council and beginning in 1906 was the major proponent of the Shoal Lake Aqueduct. He was elected mayor in 1913 and won re-election the following year and helped get the Shoal Lake project completed. He was also widely known for his anti-union activities and his strikebreaking tactics were well documented. He was often used as an example of an unfair employer by union leaders during the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike.<sup>5</sup> Deacon lived in this house until his death in 1955.



Front (north) façade detail, 2009

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RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- another of the fine Crescentwood mansions built during its peak development years just before the onset of World War I;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early and influential businessman and politician T.R. Deacon;
- its design- an excellent example of the Classical Revival style;
- its architect- N/A;
- 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 (north) façade, 1978

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ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #1151/1912.
- 2 Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, n.d.), p. 18.
- 3 Ibid., p. 18.
- 4 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12040118000, 1920-1990.
- 5 C. W. Parker, editor, Who's Who in Western Canada: A Biographical Dictionary of Notable Living Men and Women of Western Canada, Vol. 1 (Vancouver, BC: Canadian Press Association, 1911); George Bryce, A History of Manitoba: Its Resources and People (Toronto, ON: The Canadian History Company, 1906); Pioneers and Prominent People of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Canadian Publicity Company, 1925); and J.M. Bumsted, Dictionary of Manitoba Biography (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 1999)