



## 54 BALMORAL STREET

### PAUL ULRICH HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – FEBRUARY 2008



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## 54 BALMORAL STREET PAUL ULRICH HOUSE

**Date of Construction:** 1911

**Building Permit:** 1904/1911

**Architect:** Northwood, George W.

**Contractor:** Cross, W.W.

### ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Large and visually impressive is this 2½-storey solid brick and stone single-family dwelling.

The symmetrically designed front (east) façade is highlighted by the full-width, two-storey open porch with squared posts with carved heads and plain bases. The railings on both floors have been replaced with sympathetically designed elements. Centrally located in the porch is the main entrance with a large window to the north and a bay window to the south. The upper floor features another door framed by large windows. All four corners of the building include brick laid to mimic quoins. The bell-cast hipped roof includes windowed dormers on all four slopes.



Front (east) and south façades, 2007

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The north and south façades are similarly designed with numerous plain openings on both floors. The rear (west) elevation includes a wood fire escape.

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.<sup>1</sup>

The building stands on its original site and appears to be in good structural condition. Alterations over the years do not appear to have seriously affected the original layout and materials and consist mainly of window replacement. Some openings have been converted from windows to doors and have since been changed back or boarded up, especially on the rear façade. The cost of construction for this home, \$13,500, make it the second-most expensive built on this block of Balmoral Street prior to 1926.<sup>2</sup>

George W. Northwood (1876-1959), a distinguished World War I veteran, designed this structure. Northwood came to Winnipeg in 1905 as a graduate of McGill University and began his professional career. Following his time in military service, he joined with another veteran, Cyril W.U. Chivers (1879-1969), the pair practicing as Northwood and Chivers into the 1930s. The list of major work produced by Northwood includes the North Bank Branch, Portage Avenue at Sherbrook Street (1908, demolished), Crescent Court Apartments, 207



South façade, 2007

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Hugo Street North (1908), Lancaster Apartments, 401 Stradbrook Avenue (1909), Bannatyne Apartments, 543 Bannatyne Avenue (1910), S.E. Richards House, Wellington Crescent (1911), Richards-Brown Warehouse, 132 James Avenue (1912), Minto Armouries, 969 St. Matthews Avenue (1913) and Pantages (Playhouse) Theatre, 180 Market Avenue (1913, Grade II). Examples of the partners' work includes the Canadian Wheat Board Building, 423 Main (1929), second pavilion at the Assiniboine Park and Zoo (1929-30), Riverbend School for Girls, Junior School (1930), Women's Tribute Memorial Lodge, 200 Woodlawn Street (1931, Grade II), members of the design board for the Civic Auditorium, 444 St. Mary Avenue (1932), Bank of Toronto Branch on Academy Road (1934) and members of the design board for the Federal Building, 269 Main Street (1935). He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.



Rear (west) and north façades, 2007

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HISTORICAL INTEREST:

This home was, for many years, lived in by Paul Ulrich, retired real estate agent. In 1929 it was sold and converted into a boarding house. In the 1970s it was owned and used by the Zeta Iota chapter of Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity.<sup>3</sup>



Rear (west) façade, 2007

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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- an example of a single-family dwelling built for an influential and well-to-do family shortly before World War I;
- its associations- its long-term connections to real estate agent P. Ulrich;
- its design- an excellent example of a foursquare home;
- its architect- G.W. Northwood was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes greatly to its extensive historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (east) façade, 1978

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ENDNOTES:

- 1 Information from <http://www.realviews.com/homes/forsq.html>.
- 2 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, 1904/1911 and City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books, 1899-1926.
- 3 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-091409000, 1920-1990; and Henderson's Directory, 1920-1990.