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## 83 KINGSWAY AVENUE E.H. HEATH HOUSE

**Date of Construction:** 1907

**Building Permit:** 376/1907

**Architect:** Rugh, Herbert Bell

**Contractor:** Farquhar and Grant

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Costing \$8,500 to complete in 1907,<sup>1</sup> this 2½-storey frame, single-family home is one of the larger, more expensive houses completed that year.

The most distinguishing feature of this home is its massive unfluted 2-storey columns with their understated bases and heads. These columns support the overhanging eaves of the upper storey and accent the front porch, open on the ground floor and glazed on the second. The roof is simple with a front-facing dormer. Windows throughout the front (south) façade are square-headed, filled with multi-paned units and set in plain wood frames. It is reported that the front door and sidelights, complete with carved faces and garland, were originally from the Royal Alexandra Hotel (demolished in 1971).<sup>2</sup>



Front (south) façade detail, 2009

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This structure is one of Winnipeg's better examples of the Georgian Revival style. The style has been described as the most popular revival style of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Canada, used mainly in residential architecture and still popular today.<sup>3</sup> Influential New York City architects McKim, Mead and White, who utilized elements of the style to design residences for their most affluent clients, promoted the style in the early 1900s.<sup>4</sup> The style is based on English and Dutch colonial architecture from the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Distinguishing characteristics of the style include a symmetrical façade with a centrally located entrance as its focal point. Classical elements and detailing such as pediments, cornice-like eaves, Palladian windows, columns and porticos are common. Roofs could be hipped or gambrel-shaped and exterior cladding ranged from wood to brick and stone to stucco.<sup>5</sup>

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

Architect H.B. Rugh practiced in Winnipeg from 1904 to ca.1912, and in that time established himself as one of the city's finest architects, although his forte appears to have been designing middle- to upper-income homes. Born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa on May 16, 1879, he took his formal training at the Armour Institute of Technology in Chicago, Illinois, graduating in 1901. He then went to work in Racine, Wisconsin, relocated to Michigan two years later and came to Winnipeg in 1904.<sup>6</sup> Rugh's work over the next eight years was varied and extensive and included factories, apartment blocks, office buildings and dozens of houses,<sup>7</sup> many of their plans found their way onto the pages of trade magazines like Construction.<sup>8</sup> Rugh's houses used a variety of styles including Georgian, Tudor and



Front (south) and east façades, 2009

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Colonial in his pursuit of the “picturesque.” He also experimented with various materials, including concrete block, rough-cast plaster and terra cotta.

In 1912, Rugh became the local representative of the Montréal firm Ross and MacFarlane. He oversaw the construction of both the Fort Garry Hotel, 1911-12 (his name is found on the City of Winnipeg Building Permit)<sup>9</sup> and the now demolished King George Municipal Hospital, Morley Avenue, 1912.

An incomplete list of his major local projects would include: Wesbrook and Fairchild Warehouse, 110 Princess Street (1907 – Grade II); Y.W.C.A. Building, Ellice Avenue (1908); Hotel Fort Garry, 222 Broadway (1911-1913 – Grade II, supervising architect); King George Municipal Hospital, Morley Avenue (1912 – supervising architect, demolished).<sup>10</sup>

#### HISTORICAL INTEREST:

E.H. Heath, owner of the E.H. Heath Publishing Company, lived in this house until ca.1920. Heath’s company published a variety of material, including the Canadian Thresherman and Farmer. The Thornton family was the next to occupy the home, Charles H. Thornton was owner of C.H. Thornton and Company. Also listed in the home in 1920 were Clare, Conon and John.<sup>11</sup> In the 1930s, it was the home of Charles D. Roblin, son of former Premier Sir Rodmond Roblin and father of former Premier Duff Roblin. The home was duplexed in 1955.



Rear (north) and west façade, 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- illustrative of the type of expensive home built in an exclusive Winnipeg neighbourhood in the pre-World War I era;
- its associations- its connections to businessman E.H. Heath;
- its design- an excellent example of the Georgian Revival style;
- its architect- H.B. Rugh was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes to its historic streetscape; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.



Front (south) façade detail, 1978

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ENDNOTES:

- 1 City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #376/1907
- 2 Crescentwood Walking Tour (Winnipeg: Manitoba Historical Society, 1992).
- 3 L. Maitland et al, A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), pp. 152-153.
- 4 Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, 1991), pp. 26-27.
- 5 Ibid., p. 26.
- 6 Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906, p. 55; and Who's Who and Why in Canada, 1913, p. 712. Information supplied by Robert G. Hill, Editor of the Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950.
- 7 City of Winnipeg Building Permit Ledger Books (below as Ledgers), 1900-1915.
- 8 See, for example, Construction, March 1910, July 1910, July 1914 and June 1915.
- 9 City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #3033/1911.
- 10 Ledgers, 1904-1912; and M. Peterson Building Database.
- 11 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12-040438000, 1920-1990.