



101 LORNE AVENUE S. ROSS HOUSE

Date of Construction: 1881

Building Permit: N/A

Architect: Unknown

Contractor: Unknown

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

One of the dwindling number of Second Empire style single-family dwellings from the pre-1900 era still standing.

This two-storey structure is clad in horizontal wood siding, the front (south) façade features a full-width open porch with delicately turned wood posts. Small windows set in plain dormers interrupt the mansard roof. The house stands on its original site. Neglect has caused the deterioration of exterior elements and the building now stands vacant and boarded up.

This house was an excellent example of a Second Empire style building that became popular in Canada by 1870. The style had its beginnings in France in the early 1850s and Paris exhibitions in the 1860s popularized it in England from where it moved to the United



Front (south) and west façades, 2009

States and Canada. It has been described as a more modernistic approach to design than Gothic or Italianate, although architects often utilized elements of the latter in Second Empire works.¹

In eastern Canada, especially southern Ontario, this style first came to prominence in public buildings. From government buildings the style was applied to commercial structures and finally into house designs. Here owners wanted to show their relative affluence and the style quickly became a statement of this status and power.

This style, however, failed to become as prominent in Winnipeg and further west because of the short duration of the period's popularity. After 1880 Second Empire architecture became much rarer and only a few of this type of design were built after this date. For most of the West, this date preceded serious housing construction by several years, if not a decade or more. Therefore there are only a few western examples remaining.

The most prominent detail of a Second Empire building is the mansard or double roof. While visually appealing, this roof-type also was more practical than traditional patterns because it allowed more living space on the upper level. Other features usually found on such structures are dormer windows on the step slope, moulded cornices with decorative brackets below and a generous use of Italianate details. One or two storey bay windows were also often added and iron cresting was another ornamental feature. Porches were usually added, making the residence asymmetrical. Rusticated stone often completed this type of home at grade.

It is unknown at this time who designed and built this home.



Front (south) and east façades, 2009

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

Samuel Ross, stonecutter and masonry inspector for the Canadian Pacific Railway beginning in 1889, was the original owner of this home. He died in his home on August 1, 1903² and the home was sold to Robert Gillis, bookkeeper, who rented it out to various tenants including David J. Ross, printer with McIntyre Brothers (1901) and son of Samuel and Anna Ross.³ In the early 1910s, Herman Shapera, tobacconist with a store at 794 Main Street, is listed as the owner/resident.⁴

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- one of the older homes found in one of Winnipeg's earliest residential districts, Point Douglas;
- its associations- N/A;
- its design- an excellent example of the Second Empire style;
- its architect- N/A;
- 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, 1978

ENDNOTES:

- 1 V. and L. McAlester, A Field Guide to American Houses (New York, N.Y.: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), p. 242.
- 2 Winnipeg Tribune, August 4, 1903, p. 10.
- 3 Canada Census, 1901.
- 4 City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 14-000736000, 1885-1920; and Henderson's Directory, 1885-1930.