



120 SCOTT STREET
HORATIO F. FORREST HOUSE “THE OAKS”

City of Winnipeg
Historical Buildings Committee
Researcher: M. Peterson
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In the 1840s, the area now known as Fort Rouge was sparsely settled, the main occupants were Métis families engaged in some combination of farming, freighting, the buffalo hunt, and/or other labour.¹ The Métis would continue to live in the area up to and beyond the creation of the Province of Manitoba in 1870.²

After 1870, the area, known as St. Boniface West, slowly began to attract non-Métis interest from developers, businessmen and well-to-do families who sought its ‘ruralness.’ Within the decade many of the original Métis land owners had moved on, further west along the Assiniboine River. Development was slow at first but by the late 1870s there were a number of homes in the area and large tracts had been surveyed into city lots. This development was intensified by the coming of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in the early 1880s and the resulting rise in population and by the construction of two bridges over the Assiniboine River in 1880-81 (crossing at the foot of Main Street) and 1881-82 (at Osborne Street). It was the beginning of the modern urbanization of St. Boniface West.³

In 1886, City records show the land on the east side of Scott Street (it was known as Maria Avenue in 1888 and 13th Avenue South in 1892) was vacant and owned by Elizabeth Clarke of England. The next year, the same records show H.F. Forrest had purchased the land and built his family a fine new house and called it “The Oaks.”⁴

¹ D.M. Lyon, “History of the Osborne Village Development Area: Part A,” report for the Historical Buildings Committee, November 2003, pp. 9-11.

² W.L. Morton, Manitoba: A History, Second Edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 145. A census of the new province’s described the population as: 11,963 total residents, 82 per cent of whom were mixed-blood Métis or ‘country-born’ (i.e., Anglophones of aboriginal-European descent).

³ D.M. Lyon, op. cit., pp. 223-226.

⁴ City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 317910-12-1 (below as ARo), 1886-1887.

STYLE

This building is an example of the Queen Anne Revival style, one of the most popular of all the residential architectural styles from the 1880s until World War I.⁵ At its best, the style was known for its picturesqueness; a seemingly unconnected, unbalance attempt to fill or cover all flat surfaces on every façade. Bay windows, towers, wrap-around porches, irregular rooflines, dormers, cross gables, ornamented chimneystacks, projecting wings, balconies and varied materials and colours were applied in combination to animate the structures.

It was used in most districts of Winnipeg on both small and large dwellings. Table 1 is a list of Queen Anne Revival dwellings designated by the Historical Buildings Committee. Of that list, only four have remained single-family dwellings (Dalnavert, 61 Carlton Street, would be included). In terms of exterior ornamentation and detailing, the Forrest House on Scott Street would fit somewhere in the middle of the list, not as detailed as Dalnavert, Bernard House, 454 Edmonton Street or the Clinic Building, 545 Broadway, but more complex architecturally than the Ashdown House, 121 Kate Street, Monk House, 134 West Gate or the Harris House, 26 Edmonton Street. The Forrest House would also be the oldest Queen Anne Revival style homes save for the Kelly Residence on Adelaide Street (1882) and the William Ashdown House (1882).

CONSTRUCTION

According to City of Winnipeg records, the Forrest House rests on rubblestone foundation walls, the ground floor of brick veneer construction with a frame second floor. The building measures approximately 9.1 x 8.5 x 8.5 metres – over 700 cubic metres of interior space.⁶

⁵ L. Maitland, et al., A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), pp. 98-99.

⁶ City of Winnipeg Assessment Record, Roll No., 12031791000.

TABLE ONE
DESIGNATED QUEEN ANNE STYLE HOUSES (SORTED BY AGE)

ADDRESS	NAME	YEAR BUILT	GRADE	COMMENTS
88 Adelaide St.	Kelly House	1882	III	Offices
121 Kate St.	William Ashdown House	1882	III	Single-family dwelling
444 Logan Ave. (moved from 232 Bell Ave. in 1987)	Penrose House	1894	III	Single-family dwelling
61 Carlton St.	H.J. Macdonald House ("Dalnavert Museum")	1895	I	Museum
134 West Gate	Monk House	1895	III	Single-family dwelling
368 Edmonton St.	Duplex	1901	III	Offices
26 Edmonton St.	J.W. Harris House	1902	III	Offices
137 Scott St.	Graham House	1902	III	Offices
454 Edmonton St.	Benard House	1903	III	Offices
545 Broadway	Klinic Building	1904	III	Health care facility/offices
55 Hargrave St.	Glines House	1906	III	Apartment block

DESIGN

The front (west) façade begins with a raised stone foundation wall, a feature that wraps around the entire building (Plate 1). Up a short flight of stairs is an enclosed entrance porch, finely detailed with delicate wood accenting, ornamental glasswork and wood doors (Plate 2). Two small areas of brick on either side of the roof peak where it meets the brick veneer walls (Plate 3) indicate that this porch may have been added after construction, although plans and/or photographs have not yet been discovered to verify this assertion. Whether it is original or not, the entrance porch is an ornamentally complex and important element of the building today. To the south of the entrance is a projecting section rising the entire height of the building and ending in a front facing gable with wooden finial. Triplet windows are found in the foundation wall and on the ground and second floors, a large single window in the gable end. The brick walls of the front façade are laid with a recessed course every fifth row, livening the elevation (found on all but the rear elevation). A line of bricks laid with recessed crosses marks the division between the first and second floors and is found on the front and north and south façades (Plate 4). The frame cladding of the second floor is embellished above the entrance porch by carved wood accenting and a small section of fish scale shingling, which is also repeated as a decorative element at the eaves.

The north façade includes a continuation of the cladding of the main façade and also features a pair of small basement windows, an arched entrance at the south end and an arched window at the north end of the ground floor. The second floor includes a small window and a door to a newer open deck supported from below by fan-like wooden brackets (Plate 5).

The south façade again includes the raised stone foundation, brick veneer ground floor and frame upper storey. A pair of windows on the ground floor is topped by an unusual windowless projection supported by a plain wooden bracket attached to the frame between the ground floor windows (Plate 6). The projection also features fish scale shingling.

The brick veneer walls of the rear (east) façade are flat, interrupted only by a single arched window (Plate 7). Two windows in wooden frames are located on the second floor that also features wooden bracketing under modest eaves.

The building is finished with a pyramidal hipped roof and has been recently painted.

INTERIOR

As with the exterior, there are interior elements that suggest major changes have occurred to the interior layout, especially in the front foyer area (Plates 8 and 9). The basement features an exit door in its east wall and much of the rubblestone foundation wall is exposed (Plate 10). The ground floor features a large foyer with ornate wood staircase (Plate 11). Off the foyer are the living room/dining room (in the home's south end) and the kitchen to the rear (east). Extensive renovations to this area have removed or covered much of the original finish, although hardwood floors are evident.

The second floor features a number of small rooms, all of which display pressed tin ceilings each with its own design (Plate 12). A metal ladder gives access to the attic.

INTEGRITY

The building has stood on this property for over 100 years and does not appear to have serious structural problems. Exterior alterations have been relatively few and minor in scope, although some of the detailing is beginning to show signs of aging.

STREETSCAPE

The Forrest House is surrounded by a wide variety of buildings – modern and pre-World War I apartment blocks, early 20th century residences and even some commercial property. It contributes greatly to its streetscape (Plate 13).

ARCHITECT/CONTRACTORS

A review of contemporary newspaper building lists and numbers has not uncovered the architect or contractor for the Forrest House, although the amount of exterior details certainly suggests that this would not have been a contractor-designed structure.

PERSON

The house had a long connection to the Forrest family, beginning with the original owner Horatio F. Forrest. Born in Montreal in 1839, H.F. Forrest was educated in military college and after graduation took up civil engineering, working for the Intercolonial Railway. After many years under its employ, he took a similar position with the CPR, relocating west to Manitoba in 1873, headquartered in Brandon. He, along with a small party of engineers, was responsible for the original surveying of the CPR mainline between Kenora and Winnipeg. Once the line was handed over to the syndicate by the government, Forrest took on a new job as government inspector of railways as well as working for the Great Northwest Central Railroad as its general manager and receiver. His final work as an engineer came in the form of district engineer for the Canadian Northern Railway, a position he held until poor health forced his retirement in 1913. He died at his

home on Scott Street on January 18, 1915 and was survived by his wife, two sons (William Wilson Forrest of Ottawa and Horatio F. Forrest Jr. of Winnipeg) and one daughter (Miss Ida [also given as Aida], living at home.)⁷

H.F. Forrest Jr., a banker, was living on Mayfair Avenue at the time of his father's death but moved into the family home shortly after. He had been born in St. Claire, Quebec in 1869 and come west with his family in 1873. He entered the financial sector as a private banker and joined the staff of the Union Bank in 1906, rising to the rank of branch manager in Neepawa, then in Calgary before accepting the position of manager of the Savings' Bank department in Winnipeg. He died at home on April 5, 1923 after a short illness.⁸

The estate of H.F. Forrest Jr. continued to own the property until it was sold to the City of Winnipeg in 1938. The City owned it until 1948 when it was sold to CPR employee Joseph Maruszczak, who lived in the property into the late 1970s.⁹

EVENT

There is no known event connected with this building.

CONTEXT

The Forrest House was built at the very beginning of the development of this area, Fort Rouge, one of Winnipeg's early residential neighbourhoods. The use of brick, its size and exterior ornamentation would have set the home apart from the few neighbouring residences. It is an example of the type of pre-1900 residential structure favoured by influential and wealthy citizens.

⁷ Manitoba Free Press, January 19, 1915, p. 16.

⁸ Manitoba Free Press, April 6, 1923, p. 6.

⁹ ARO, 1886-1980.

The Historical Buildings Committee completed a building inventory for one of the oldest areas of Fort Rouge, the Osborne Village Development Plan Area (district bounded by the Assiniboine River on the north and west, the Red River on the east and Gertrude Avenue on the south). It identified only seven single-family dwellings constructed in 1887 or earlier (two have been demolished since the completion of the report). Table Two lists these five buildings and shows that the Forrest House is the fourth oldest home in the district. Plate 14 shows all five buildings and illustrates that the Forrest House also has the most intact and ornamentally complex exterior.

TABLE TWO
PRE-1890 OSBORNE VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AREA BUILDINGS
(SORTED BY AGE)

ADDRESS	AGE	PRESENT USE; CONDITION
325 Wardlaw Avenue	Pre-1883	Single-family home; composite siding added
384 Wardlaw Avenue	Pre-1883	Single-family home; composite siding added
363 Wardlaw Avenue	1883	Commercial; composite siding added
120 Scott Street	1887	Single-family home; only minor exterior alterations
116 Lewis Street	1887	Single-family home; exterior cladding in poor condition

LANDMARK

This home is on a relatively quiet residential street and while visually striking, would not be considered conspicuous or known outside of the neighbourhood.



APPENDIX I

CITY OF WINNIPEG - Preliminary Report Assessment Record

Building Address: 120 Scott Street

Building Name: H.F. Forrest House "The Oaks"

Original Use: single-family dwelling

Current Use: single-family dwelling

Roll No. (Old): 12031791000 (7427-12-1)

RSN: 143429

Legal Description: 37 St. Boniface, Plan 27455, Lot 1 (Old: 36 St. Boniface, Plan 207A, Lot 131 & North 15 ft. Lot 132)

Location: east side between River & Stradbrook avenues

Date of Construction: 1887

Storeys: 2½ and basement

Heritage Status: **ON INVENTORY**

Construction Type: Brick veneer, frame and rubblestone foundation

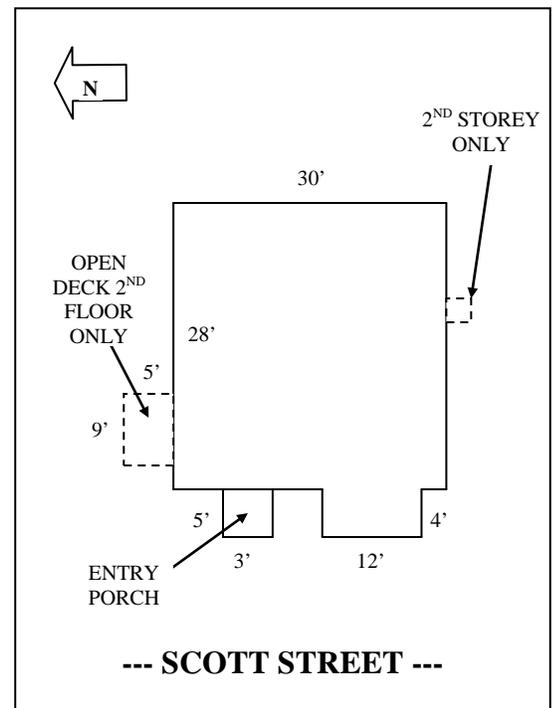
Building Permits (Plans available: [A] Archives; [M] Microfilm; [4th] 4th floor, 65 Garry Street):
- NONE

Information:

- 30 x 28 x 28 + = 25,024 cu. ft.
- 12" eaves throughout
- 1978 Assessment – "excellent shape"

ARCHITECT: UNKNOWN

CONTRACTOR: UNKNOWN



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Plate 1 – Front (west) and north façades, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

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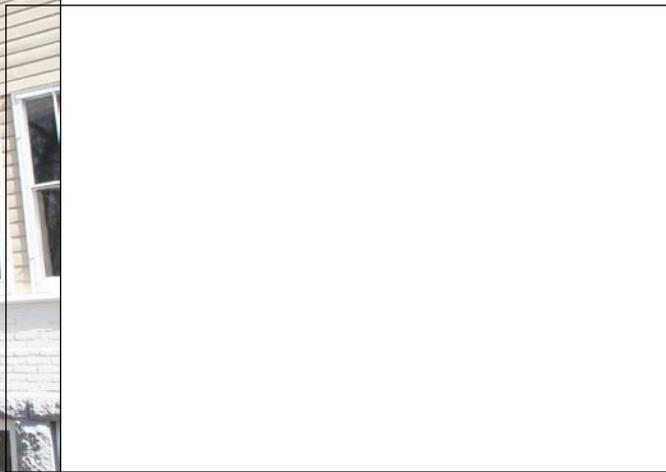


Plate 2 – Front entrance porch details, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

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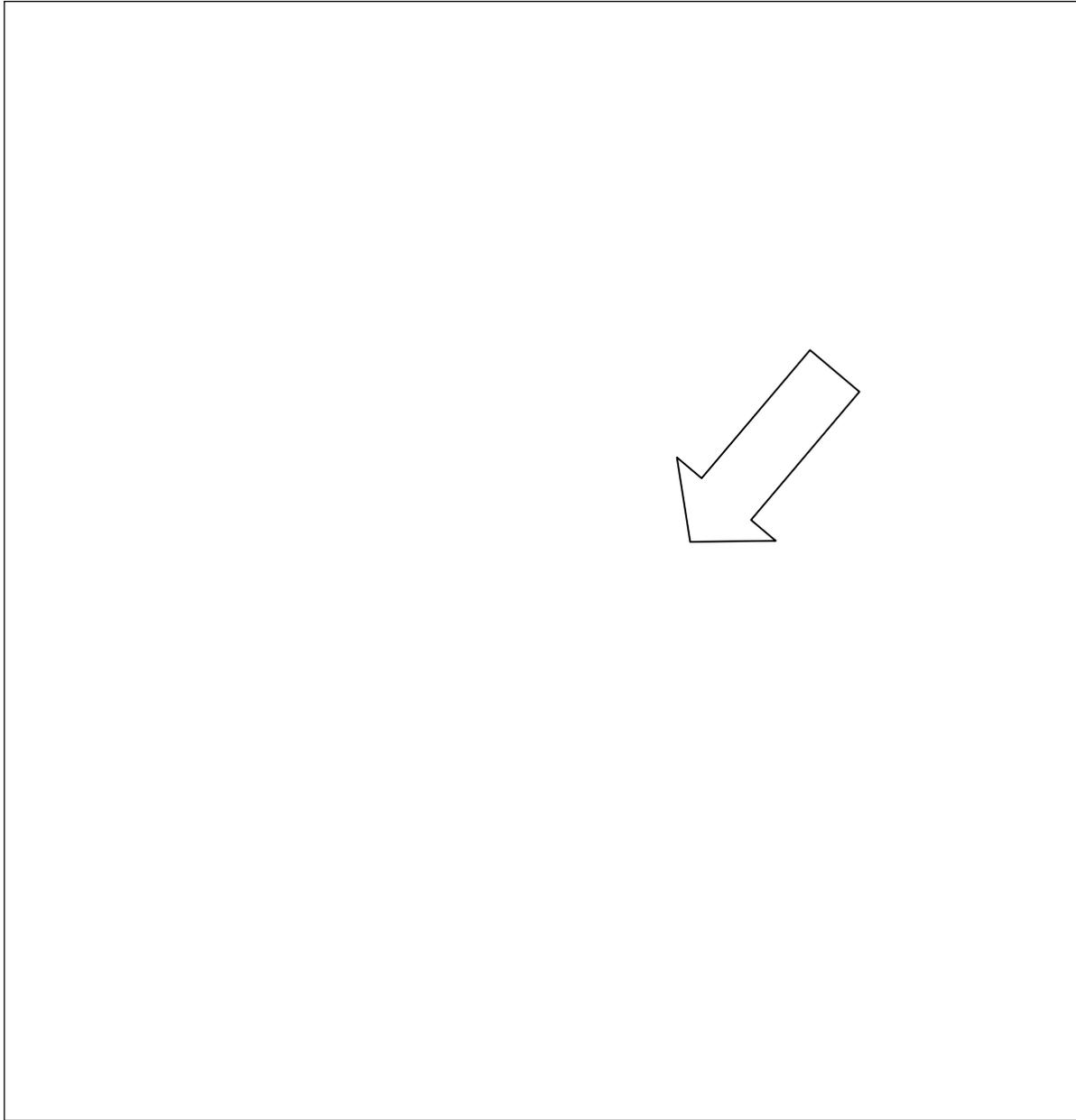


Plate 3 – Front façade detail, 2006. This arched brick section, found on both the north and south sides of the entrance porch, suggest a different entrance may have originally been built for this house. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

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Plate 4 – Details of front brickwork and frame cladding, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

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Plate 5 – North façade, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

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Plate 6 – South façade, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

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Plate 7 – Rear (east) façade, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

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Plate 8 – Front foyer, showing renovated door opening, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

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Plate 9 – Foyer roof detailing, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)



Plate 10 – Basement, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

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Plate 11 – Foyer stairs leading to second floor, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)



Plate 12 – Tin ceiling, second floor hallway (left) and northeast corner room (right), 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

120 SCOTT STREET – HORATIO F. FORREST HOUSE “THE OAKS”



Plate 13 – Looking north along Scott Street, 2006. (M. Peterson, 2006.)

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Plate 14 – Pre-1890 houses in the neighbourhood are: #1- 325 Wardlaw Avenue (pre-1883); #2- 384 Wardlaw Avenue (pre-1883); #3- 363 Wardlaw Avenue (1883); #4- 120 Scott Street (1887); and #5- 116 Lewis Street (1887). (M. Peterson, 2006.)