

603 WELLINGTON CRESCENT HODGSON WILBERFORCE HUTCHINSON HOUSE

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Date of Construction: 1912

Building Permit: 3977/1912

Architect: Ross and MacFarlane (Montréal) - Herbert B. Rugh (local supervising architect)

Contractor: Unnamed

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

The house was built on the north side of Wellington Crescent on a stone foundation with rusticated stone cladding on the ground floor and stucco on the second floor. During construction, 26 cords of stone, 29,000 bricks, 1,200 superficial square yards of plaster and 22.2 cubic metres of concrete were used.¹

The main (south) façade features a wealth of detailing. Access to it is gained by a large, 3.7-metre open deck with a heavy stone balustrade and tile floor. Scroll-shaped supports add a classical feel to the deck which also includes large stone pedestals topped by stone basins. The main door is flanked by sidelights and small windows and a curved stone pediment above. The multi-paned windows of the ground floor feature large, decorative curved stone panels above and are set in smooth-cut stone frames. The walls of the ground floor are clad in rusticated stone, all corners are embellished with smooth-cut stone quoins.



South façade, 2009

On the second floor, the smooth-cut continuous sills create a belt course, encircling the entire structure. The two outside windows on the second floor also feature metal balconettes.

The east and west sides as well as the rear of the house continue the ornamental language of the front façade. A second, smaller tile and stone porch allows access from the house into the large backyard and riverbank. The low-pitched tile hip roof ends in heavy overhanging eaves with exposed wooden rafters, carved to resemble brackets.

The building stands on its original site and appear to be in good structural condition. A modern addition to the east end of the building, because of the materials and design, does not negatively affect the design of the original, in fact it complements it.

The former Hutchinson House shows many of the features associated with the Italianate Style, popular in Western Canada in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The style came from England in the 1820s and proliferated in Eastern Canada in two distinct strands: the villa, usually more elaborate and picturesque; and the city palace, which would include this house.

Primarily used in residential architecture, the Italianate city palace model created a classically inspired structure, with either a symmetrical or asymmetrical front façade. The asymmetrical type used an L- or T-shaped plan, often with a tower or cupola.² The structures were most often built of stone, often rusticated on the ground floor and smooth on upper levels, or brick.



Rear (north) and east façade, 2000

Window openings were often embellished with projecting round or segmental arch heads. Pediments, attached columns, quoins, pronounced mouldings and other details were used to enliven the main façades. The roof was usually a shallow hip and invariably ended in deep eaves accented with ornamental brackets.³

The Montréal firm of Ross and MacFarlane was responsible for the design of this house.⁴ The firm was responsible for a number of fine buildings across Canada, including the Hotel Fort Garry, Broadway, in Winnipeg. The company had hired Herbert B. Rugh, a well-known local architect, to supervise its work in the West and it is his signature that is found on the original Building Permit. Rugh was trained in Chicago at the Armour Institute of Technology. He worked in the United States before coming to Winnipeg in 1904 and establishing himself as a specialist in designing luxurious homes. It is not known how long his professional relationship with Ross and MacFarlane (and later Ross and Macdonald) lasted.⁵



Rear (north) façade, 2000

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

In 1912, with the Crescentwood subdivision garnering interest and development, Hodgson Wilberforce Hutchinson, president of the Fairchild Company, a large agricultural implements firm, built this mansion.

Hutchinson was born in Clark Township, Durham County, Canada West (Ontario) on October 20, 1862. After completing his education, he worked for two years in his father's store but in December 1882 came to Winnipeg. He moved up from bookkeeper to manager of a small implement manufacturing company, and in November 1888 became the manager of F.A. Fairchild and Company. When it reorganized as a joint stock company, Hutchinson was made secretary-treasurer and manager and following the death of the founder in 1898, he was appointed general manager and finally president in 1900. By 1904, he owned a controlling interest in the company and when it was taken over by the John Deere Plow Company in 1907, Hutchinson was appointed vice-president, as well as other duties.

Like his contemporaries, H.W. Hutchinson's business interests were vast and he exercised control of a great many other ventures, including the Consolidated Mortgage Company, Brockville Atlas Motor Company, Anchor Wire Fence Company, Port Arthur Wagon Company, Dalton Manufacturing Company (Toronto), and Security Investment Company, among others.⁶

Charlotte Isabel Hutchinson (nee Macgregor),⁷ H.W. Hutchinson's wife, was listed as the owner/resident of the house until 1926 when Laura B. Spencer, wife of grain broker Chessman G. Spencer, became the owner.⁸ The Spencer family inhabited the house until 1947 (C.G. Spencer died ca.1939) when it was sold to merchant W.P. Riley. William Pitt

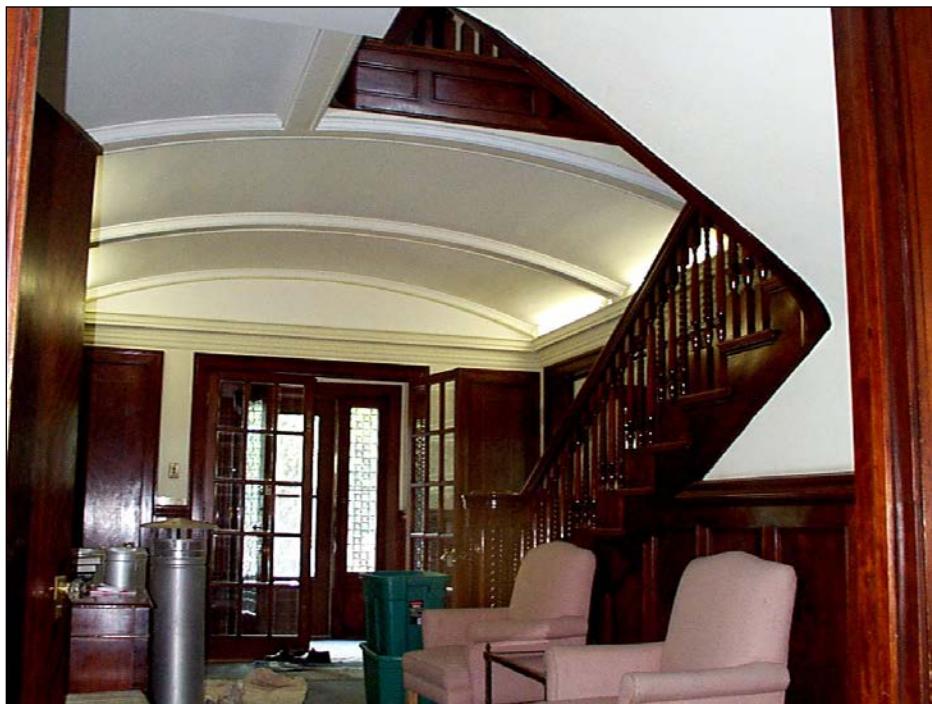


Living room fireplace, 2000

Riley was born in Bloomington, Wisconsin on February 23, 1870. Educated in Iowa, he worked for many years in North Dakota as a manager and salesman for a number of wholesale grocery firms. He came to Canada in 1906, organizing the Riley, Ramsay Company in Port Arthur, Ontario. It was ultimately sold to A. MacDonald Company of Winnipeg and Riley became its general manager and later its president. In 1913, the company was renamed Western Grocers Limited. Riley went on to become president of Great-West Life Assurance Company in 1943 after 22 years as a director. He was also a director of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, Monarch Lumber Company and Gateway Grocers Limited. When he died at his Wellington Crescent home on May 15, 1954, it was estimated that his estate was worth \$1,131,945.⁹

Interestingly, Joseph Harris was the next owner of the house beginning in 1956¹⁰ and it was also Harris who took over the presidency of Great-West Life Assurance Company from Riley in 1951.¹¹ Harris was born in Toronto in 1892, graduating from the University of Toronto in commerce and finance in 1915. He joined his father's firm, Harris Abattoir Company, moving to Winnipeg in 1925 to manage a new plant in St. Boniface. In 1927, the firm merged with three other companies to form Canada Packers. Harris remained the manager of the Winnipeg plant until his retirement in 1951 to take over at Great-West Life.¹² He would hold this position until 1959 when he was named chairman of the board.

Besides his association with Canada Packers and Great-West Life, Harris was also a vice president of the Canadian Bank of Commerce and a director of the Manitoba Sugar Company and Beaver Lumber. He retired in 1969 and died on January 12, 1976.¹³



Main foyer, 2000

Dentist Donald C. McInnes and his wife Julie A. McInnes purchased the home from the Harris family and lived in the house until its sale to the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg in January 1997.¹⁴

In Manitoba, the Unitarian Church was introduced by Icelandic immigrants, whose liberal Lutheranism was decidedly less orthodox than that of the German and Norwegian Lutherans in Winnipeg and the West. Bjorn Petursson, a Gimli-area farmer with theological training, became a leader for the Icelanders who did not wish to join with the Lutherans, but instead allied themselves with the Unitarian Church which was well-established in Minnesota. In 1890, Petursson moved to Winnipeg, where he found an ever-growing Icelandic population. The following February the First Icelandic Unitarian Church of Winnipeg was formed with 22 members. Their first church was opened on Christmas Day 1892, but within the year, 67-year-old Bjorn Petursson had died. Subsequent ministers included Icelander Magnus J. Skaptason, Rognvaldur Pettursson from Hallson, North Dakota, Frank Wright Pratt of Hopedale, Massachusetts, and Horace Westwood, a minister from Youngstown, Ohio. It was Westwood who was able to obtain the necessary funds to build a modern church.¹⁵ A second congregation, All Souls' Unitarian, organized in the early 1900s and met in the Manitoba Hall.¹⁶ Its first church was opened September 14, 1913 at the corner of Furby Street and Westminster Avenue (some of the large congregation had to sit on planks laid across carpenters' horses and nail kegs). The dedication service was held on October 19.¹⁷

In 1921, the Winnipeg congregation merged with the Tabernacle congregation, a Winnipeg group founded in 1894 as a splinter group of First Lutheran Church of Winnipeg. The Tabernacle group had built its own church on the southeast corner of Furby Street and Sargent Avenue (584 Sargent Avenue) in 1895 and expanded and renovated it in 1902.¹⁸



Front (south) façade detail, 2000

During meetings in 1919, the new group, to be known as The First Icelandic Federated Church (Unitarian and Liberal Christian), suggested that it occupy the old Tabernacle building and sell the Unitarian building.¹⁹ A group opposed to the merger, however, successfully fought this transfer in court and the new congregation was forced to build a new facility. This they did on the northwest corner of Banning Street and Sargent Avenue (790 Banning Street) in 1921.²⁰

The Unitarian Church in Winnipeg slowly grew, its congregation attracting members from outside the Icelandic community. Today, there are approximately 200 members of the local congregation.²¹

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 finest pre-World War I era mansions built in the Crescentwood area;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early and influential businessman H.W. Hutchinson;
- its design- an excellent example of the Italianate style;
- its architect- Ross and MacFarlane were a respected and important firm;
- its location- contributes greatly 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 City of Winnipeg Building Permit (below as BP), #3977/1912.

² L. Maitland, et al., A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), pp. 58-59; and Identifying Architectural Styles in Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Historic Resources Branch, 1991), pp. 12-13.

³ Ibid., pp. 12-13; and L. Maitland, op. cit., pp. 59.

⁴ BP #3977/1912.

⁵ The Year Past, 1985 (Winnipeg, MB: City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Committee, 1986), pp. 49-50.

⁶ F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1913), Vol. II, pp. 86-89.

⁷ Ibid., p. 89.

⁸ City of Winnipeg Assessment Roll, Roll No. 12040492100 (below as ARo), 1910-30.

⁹ Winnipeg Tribune, May 15, 1954, p. 23, and June 25, 1954; and Winnipeg Free Press, May 15, 1954, p. 1.

¹⁰ ARo, 1930-56.

¹¹ Winnipeg Free Press, November 17, 1951, p. 18.

¹² Ibid., p. 18; and Winnipeg Free Press, January 12, 1976, p. 6.

¹³ Winnipeg Free Press, January 12, 1976, p. 6.

¹⁴ ARo, 1960-98.

¹⁵ P. Hewett, Unitarians in Canada (Toronto, ON: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1978), pp. 130-31 and 143-146.

¹⁶ Manitoba Free Press, February 8, 1913, p. 37.

¹⁷ Manitoba Free Press, September 15, 1913, p. 20 and October 20, 1913, p. 5.

¹⁸ ARo, 73 St. James, Plan 49, Lot 29, 1892-1915; and BP #525/1902.

¹⁹ AR, Roll No. 906790-12-1 (PC 90), 103 Furby Street. All Souls' Unitarian Church was sold in 1921 and became St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church.

²⁰ P. Hewett, op. cit., pp. 180-84.

²¹ K. Breckman, in conversation with the author, July 2000.