



16 RUSKIN ROW

DR. KENNETH CHARLES & FLORENCE CAMPBELL HOUSE

PREPARED BY PETERSON PROJECTS – UPDATE JULY 2026



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Date of Construction: 1908

Building Permit: 1148/1908

Architect: Atchison, John Danley

Contractor: Davidson Brothers

ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST:

Another example of the fine residential architecture completed in Winnipeg in the pre-World War I era is this large home located on the east side of Ruskin Row at the foot of Harvard Avenue.

The ground floor of this unusually designed single-family home is clad in rough-cut limestone, the upper floors in shingles. The most conspicuous element is the complex gambrel roof which is cross shaped producing ends facing in all four directions. The house measures 13.7 metres square and cost \$7,000 to complete in 1908.¹

The architect of this home was well-known local designer John D. Atchison (1870-1959). Born in Monmouth, Illinois, Atchison was educated in Chicago, studying architecture at the Chicago Art Institute and the Chicago Manual Training School.² In 1895, he opened his own



Front (west) and north façades, 2009

practice in Chicago that continued until the early 1900s. He worked on the staff of the World's Columbian Exposition and for the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad. His commissions brought him to Winnipeg and by 1905 the city's prosperity and future prospects prompted him to relocate his business there.³

A list of some of the more prominent local buildings designed by J.D. Atchison over his career includes: Wardlow Apartments, 544 Wardlaw Avenue (1905, Grade II), Kennedy Building (Mitchell-Copp), 315 Portage Avenue (1906, Grade II), Dennistoun House, 166 Roslyn Road (1908, Grade III), N.W.C.T.A. Building, 291 Garry Street (1908, Grade III), Paterson Block, 54 Donald Street (1909, Grade II), Oldfield, Kirby and Gardner Building, 234 Portage Avenue (1909, Grade II), Canada Permanent Building, 296-298 Garry Street (1909, Grade II), Maltese Cross Building, 66 King Street (1909, Grade III), Chamber of Commerce Building (Great-West Life Building), 177 Lombard Avenue (1911, Grade II) Carlton Building, 354 Portage Avenue (1912, Grade III), Boyd Building, 388 Portage Avenue (1912, Grade III), Union Tower, 191 Lombard Avenue (1912-13, Grade II), Merchants' Bank Branch, 1386 Main Street (1913, Grade III), Curry Building, 233 Portage Avenue (1915, Grade II) and the Bank of Hamilton Building, 395 Main Street (1916-18, Grade I).⁴ In 1923, Atchison left Winnipeg for Pasadena, California, and continued to practice there, adopting the Spanish Colonial style for his residential work. He died in 1959.⁵ He has been given 20 points by the Historical Buildings Committee.

The local firm Davidson Brothers were the contractors for this structure.



Front (west) and south façades, 2009

HISTORICAL INTEREST:

The area known as Crescentwood in Fort Rouge developed slowly in the late 1900s because of poor connections, namely bridges to Winnipeg. The construction of the Maryland Street Bridge in 1895 assured this connection and triggered the area's modern development beginning with the construction of St. Mary's Academy shortly after the turn of the century. The earliest fine home of the area was barrister John H. Munson's house, 475 Wellington Crescent, built in 1888 and named Crescentwood. It was, for many years, the showpiece of the suburb, being enlarged on several occasions before and after occupation by the James A. Richardson family after Munson's death in 1918.⁶ The home's name was used for the northwest corner of Fort Rouge and Crescentwood (named after a public contest) began its modern organization under the watchful eye of developer Charles Enderton (1864-1920). By 1902, he had accumulated a large amount of land in the western portion of Fort Rouge, subdividing it into large lots, formally establishing Wellington Crescent as a "grand drive". In September 1902, Enderton took an entire page of the Manitoba Free Press to promote his new subdivision and to outline the building restrictions therein. These caveats (attached to each registered lot) included: minimum setbacks from the street (18.3 metres, 60 feet); minimum completed values for homes (\$6,000 on Wellington Crescent, \$3,500 and \$4,000 elsewhere); restrictions on non-residential structures; and number of homes per lot (one).

Land sales were slow in the early years, but the suburb eventually grew and flourished, and the Enderton caveats ensured the district remained a haven for Winnipeg's affluent. When economic growth slowed and then stopped after 1914, Enderton (and others) could not sell their extensive holdings (Enderton alone owned 133 vacant lots in 1917).⁷



Rear (east) façade, 2009

The original owners of the house were Dr. Kenneth Charles Campbell (1875-?) and his wife Florence Elizabeth Bain Campbell (nee. Gillies) (1880-1951).⁸ Dr. Campbell was born in Pickering, ON and moved to Winnipeg in the early 1900s. The couple was married in Carleton Place, ON in 1905 and had a son in 1914. Campbell was active in the Western Canada Dental Association and served overseas as a Major in World War I, where he was wounded and contracted tuberculosis. The couple lived in this house for only a short time, moving to 265 Kingsway, where they lived for many years.⁹

The second owner of this home was Dawson Whitla Elliott (1884-1974), accountant and director of R.J. Whitla and Company, one of the region's largest wholesale dry goods firms and of which his father, Dawson Kerr Elliott (1853-1946) was President after 1905. The D.W. Elliott family included wife Aimee and one daughter.¹⁰ Only Mrs. Elliott is listed in 1920 and by 1930, Charles Frederick Joyce (ca.1884-1938), director and manager of Olser, Hammond and Nanton Limited was the resident of the house. The couple had four children and his widow, Edith (ca.1892-?) remained in the home into the early 1940s.¹¹



Front (west) façade, 1978

RECOMMENDATION TO HISTORICAL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE:

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

- its historical importance- one of Crescentwood's and Winnipeg's well-appointed pre-World War I single-family dwellings;
- its associations- its long-term connections to early and influential businessman D.W. Elliott;
- its design- an excellent example of a 1910-era mansion;
- its architect- J.D. Atchison was a respected and important practitioner;
- its location- contributes greatly to its historic streetscape and the neighbourhood; and
- its integrity- its main façades continue to display many of their original elements and design.

ENDNOTES:

- ¹ City of Winnipeg Building Permit, #1148/1908.
- ² Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906, p. 55; and F.H. Schofield, The Story of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB: S.J. Clarke, 1913), Vol. II, p. 374.
- ³ F.H. Schofield, op. cit., p. 374.
- ⁴ Compiled from City of Winnipeg Historical Buildings Files; J. Wade, Manitoba Architecture to 1940 (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 1976); Winnipeg Telegram, September 18, 1906, p. 55; Winnipeg Tribune, December 21, 1907; and F.H. Schofield, op. cit., pp. 374-75.
- ⁵ The Emerson Court House and Town Hall Building (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation, Historic Resources Branch, 1985), pp. 8-11.
- ⁶ R.R. Rostecki, Crescentwood: A History (Winnipeg, MB: Crescentwood Home Owners Association, 1993), pp. 44-46. Upon the death of Mrs. James A. Richardson in 1973, the family donated the house and the land to the City of Winnipeg. The buildings were demolished in 1976, the land became Munson Park.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 36.
- ⁸ Thanks to J. Makichuk for additional research.
- ⁹ Biographical information from Winnipeg newspapers, various; Census of Canada, 1911; Henderson's Directory, 1900-1920; and "Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force Collection," Library and Archives Canada.
- ¹⁰ Census of Canada, 1911.
- ¹¹ City of Winnipeg Assessment Rolls, Roll No. 12040052000, 1910-1960; and Henderson's Directory, 1910-1960.