

Pitman House

Address: 2387 McBride Crescent

Date of Construction: 1926

Other Names: n/a

Architect/Builder: Henry Wilson

Adopted by the Heritage Commission: Dec. 22, 2016

Last Updated: Feb. 23, 2017



Courtesy of Trelle Morrow (2016)

Description

The location of the Pitman House is in the prestigious Crescents Neighbourhood of the city. This neighbourhood was formulated in the 1913 Brett & Hall design for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway community of Fort George. The Pitman site is at the north-east corner of 10th Avenue and McBride Crescent. Due to the curvature of the street, the lots in the Crescent area are pie-shaped, with the Pitman site having a frontage of 67 feet, and a lane exposure of 54.5 feet.

Heritage Value :

The Pitman House is valued as the home of the W.J. Pitman family, community members who were well-known for their musical talents and community involvement. The W.J. Pitman family became established in Prince George in 1921, and in 1926 they constructed a large home on McBride Crescent. By 1922 Pitman had established a music and piano store under the family name on 3rd Avenue in Prince George. Family music talents made the family well known in the city to the extent that Mr. Pitman was the organist for the Knox United Church Dedication in 1922, continued as church organist for some years. Upon retirement circa 1940, the Pitman Music and Piano business was purchased by B.C. "Bud" Moore and became Moore's Music & Electric Company. However, the name Pitman still resonates with our pioneers about the early days in Prince George.

The value of the Pitman House is also captured by the Pitman family's contribution to the civic development of the community. The Pitman family was interested in books, and for a few years, 1927 - 1931, allowed the local library to occupy space at the back of the Pitman Music Store on 3rd Avenue. The library had been in city hall, and Mr. Pitman undertook to check the books in and out at his store as a public service. He also served as a School Trustee, intermittently, from 1922 to 1933 and a city alderman from 1940 - 1942.

The Pitman House also has significant architectural value. It is a two-storey structure revealing similar characteristics to the Dutch Colonial style, which originated with the Dutch

settlers in New York. In the 1920s and 1930s, this theme was one of several ethnic and classical revival styles which appeared in the Crescent area of Prince George, and indeed over the nation. Themes in vernacular architecture were many and varied. One of the reasons for such a wide divergence in architectural styles in this time period was the blossoming of the catalogue industry which brought all kinds of housing data into the household.

Character-Defining Elements :

The Pitman House is a 2-Storey structure revealing similar characteristics to the Dutch Colonial style, which originated with the Dutch settlers in New York. In the 1920s and 1930s, this theme was one of several ethnic and classical revival styles which appeared in the Crescent area of Prince George, and indeed over the nation.

Character-defining elements illustrated in the Pitman House include:

- A gambrel roof design with 2nd storey dormor windows;
- Main facade of the house has symmetrical window pattern;
- Check-rail windows with small panes incorporated in the top sash;
- Central main entrance with portico, sidelights, transom and columns, a style also typical of Georgian house designs; and
- Bevelled siding on the exterior, also typical of other themes of the day.



Courtesy of Trelle Morrow (2016)

Sources:

- Prepared and researched by Trelle Morrow (2016)
- Chalmers, Graeme and Frances Moorcroft. *British Columbia Houses*. University of British Columbia, 1981.