

Heritage Planner's Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The 1912 two and a half storey Ernest W. Morehouse Residence is a wood framed Foursquare style house with an open front verandah and open upper storey balcony. The Ernest W. Morehouse Residence is an early example of the large number of Foursquare dwellings favoured by moderately well-off Edmontonians built prior to World War I. It is located on a quiet residential street in Highlands, which was developed by William Magrath and Bidwell Holgate as Edmonton's newest neighbourhood on land east of the city limits.

Heritage Value

The Ernest W. Morehouse Residence is significant as an early example of a large wood frame Foursquare dwelling, and for its association with first owner Ernest W. Morehouse, Architect who designed this house for himself and his family.

Design elements include an open verandah that runs the front width of the house, with wooden fascia and pillars with brick bases. The main structure is sheathed in wood siding with corner boards. It has a pyramidal roof with projecting eaves over the verandah, a front bay window shaded by the hip roofed verandah and a balcony centred above the main steps. The vertical emphasis of the design is reinforced by the front-facing dormer with a gable roof, centred in the hipped roof.

The Ernest W. Morehouse Residence is significant for its association with Architect Ernest William Morehouse. He, more than any other architect, influenced the early development of The Highlands. From 1912 until 1915, permits show he designed thirteen buildings in The Highlands, and as Magrath-Holgate's in-house architect, he may have designed up to thirty more. His most prominent designs were the Gibbard Block, the Holgate Residence and the Magrath Residence. Born in Chatsworth, Ontario in 1871, Morehouse trained as an architect in Toronto, starting as a contractor. After 1892, Morehouse lived in Chicago, Chatham and Detroit, where he studied manufacturing buildings. When he came to Edmonton in 1910, it was to design and oversee the erection of a factory.

Morehouse first set up a design and contracting firm with Arthur Nesbitt, but in 1912 he struck out on his own, gaining local prominence. He served on the council of the Alberta Association of Architects in 1917, and four years later was its vice president. Morehouse left Edmonton in 1929 to return to Detroit, where he died in 1937.

Character Defining Elements

The character defining elements as expressed in the form, scale, massing, and materials of the 1912 two and a half storey Ernest W. Morehouse Residence that must be retained include:

- Wood cladding with corner boards on all elevations
- Pyramidal roof cladded in cedar shingles, with original front- gabled dormer with tripartite windows
- Large projected eaves with extended dentils and brackets
- Brick fireplace chimney on south elevation
- Front-facing verandah with supporting beams, solid railings, and four pillars with brick bases
- Upper balcony with centre door access located above the main front steps
- Bay windows on the west and south elevations, plus the pattern, style and construction of all wood windows on the west, south and north elevations. Front dormer windows are 4 over 1 with the majority of windows being 6 over 1.
- Wood front door, wood upper balcony door, wood side door and wood door located off the dining room.