

Heritage Planner's Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The McLear Residence is a two-storey residential building in Edmonton's Westmount neighbourhood. Located on the west side of 126 Street, south of 109 Avenue, the wood-frame residence is identifiable by its hipped gable roof and square plan. Additional features include an open verandah on the front elevation, and a small shed roof addition at the rear.

Heritage Value

Built in 1912, the McLear Residence is valued for its association with the early development of the Westmount neighbourhood. The McLear Residence is further valued as an early example of the Foursquare architectural style. Foursquare residences were popular in the Westmount area and other communities because of their simple design and efficient floor plans. They typically feature a square plan with a symmetrical façade, and often have four rooms on the main floor, with bedrooms and a washroom on the upper floor.

Westmount, thought to have been named by early developers for the community of the same name in Montreal, was developed in the early 1900s. The Great West Land Company Limited advertised Westmount as "Edmonton's Beauty Spot" in the *Edmonton Bulletin* on October 8, 1909. Prominent realtors Enders and Payne offered "Dandy Brand New High Class Homes" at 25th and Mackenzie in the *Bulletin* in February 1912. During its early years, the lots and residences became known for their gracious and genteel character, particularly along Groat Ravine. Dwellings in the area tended to be wood frame with clapboard and shingle siding, and included features like verandahs and chimneys. Rapid growth in the early years required the Edmonton Public School Board to hold classes in a temporary building and other rooms in the district, before the permanent school opened in 1915. Following the Second World War and the advent of oil prosperity in 1947, Westmount grew rapidly, largely to the west of the established areas between 121 and 127 Streets.

The McLear Residence features a Foursquare design on a square plan. The two-storey residence has a hipped gable roof with a medium pitch, somewhat unusual in the area, and has original wood soffits. The front (east) elevation is characterized by an open verandah with a hipped roof and four slender pillars. The original fenestration pattern is seen on the lower level, but appears to have been modified on the upper portion to create a double window on the southeast corner. The overall fenestration is original, and all interior windows are original. Some storm windows have been replaced, but the originals are still with the

current owner. All four elevations, including the verandah, are currently clad in vinyl siding; however, the owner believes there are remnants of the original wood clapboard siding underneath. The original trim material remains on the house. Neighbouring houses to the north and south were built by the same builder, and retain their original siding for reference.

Built in 1912, the McLearn Residence had a range of owners or was vacant until 1919, when Frank McLearn and his family moved into the home. McLearn was an agent for North American Life Insurance, and was also involved in real estate with Hearing and McGee Ltd. He ran his own real estate firm from an office in the Bradburn-Thomson Block (10160 - 101 Street) and then the Tegler Building for a time, before becoming a manager at Westmount Oils Company, ultimately returning to North American Life Insurance. A photo of Bud McLearn, Frank's son, was taken in 1919 and shows Bud's Grade 5 class at Grandin School. The McLearn family lived in the house until 1954.

The McLearn Residence is located within the Westmount Architectural Heritage Area, and is on a blockface that includes a number of other properties on the Inventory of Historic Resources in Edmonton.

Character-defining Elements

The character-defining elements of the McLearn Residence include, but are not limited to its:

- Location on the west side of 126 Street, south of 109 Avenue in the Westmount Architectural Heritage Area; adjacent to other older homes on either side, and on a blockface with other Inventory buildings
- Form, scale and massing as expressed by its two-storey height
- Wood frame construction in a Foursquare design
- Hipped gable roof with a medium pitch with original wood soffits
- Original fenestration pattern and interior windows
- Open verandah with four slender pillars
- Original doors
- Brick chimney