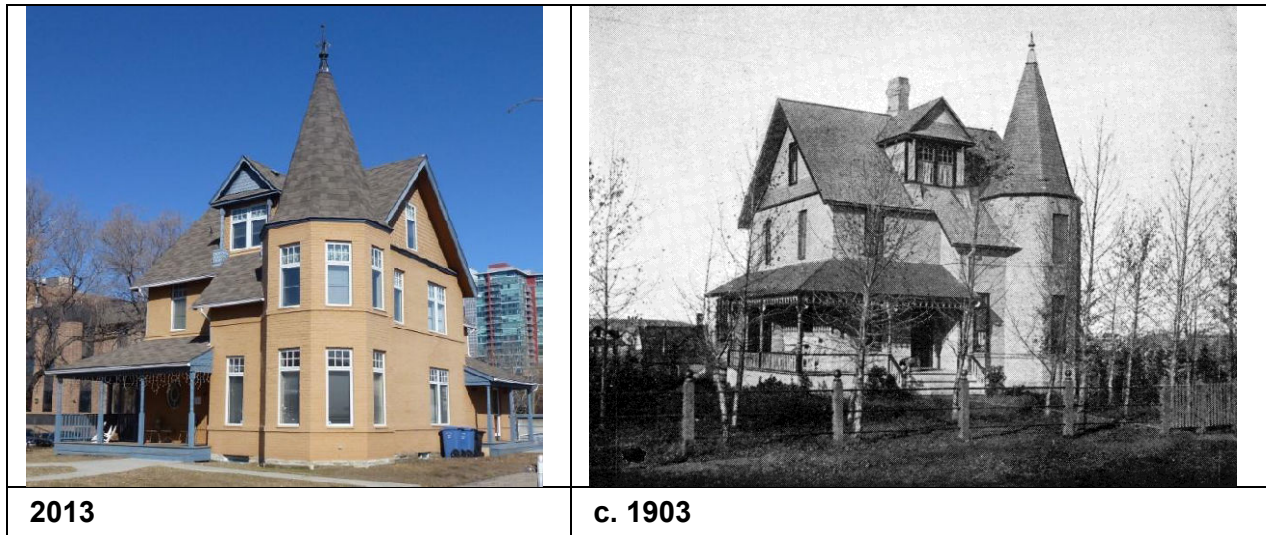


Statement of Significance for McHugh House



Description

The McHugh House, completed in 1901, is a Queen Anne Revival style dwelling. It is a two and one-half storey, asymmetrical, wood frame structure with buff-coloured brick veneer. The rear of the house incorporates an earlier c. 1896 house. The McHugh House features a corner tower with tall, steep roof and finial, and a wraparound front verandah.

Heritage Value

The McHugh House was the home of John Joseph (J.J.) McHugh, one of three brothers originally from Ottawa who were Calgary pioneers and prominent ranchers. In 1883 J.J. McHugh and his brother Thomas, later joined by brother Felix, formed JJ Ranch (later H2 Ranch) near Gleichen, Alberta. They raised Clydesdale horses, which they introduced to Alberta, and Shorthorn cattle. The McHughes were among the first to ship livestock to Alberta from the east by rail.

J.J. McHugh (1855–1928) first came west in 1873–75 with a government surveying party. He returned in 1879 as a government farm instructor to the aboriginals, then ran a government farm at Fish Creek and was an assistant inspector of Indian reservations. Felix homesteaded in Sunnyside - McHugh Bluffs there is named for him. J.J. and Felix later formed McHugh Bros., Ranchers and Railway Contractors, which helped build the CPR line through the Crowsnest Pass and the Springbank irrigation ditch. They were also agents for West Collieries coal from the Crowsnest Pass.

Completed in 1901, this house was built for J.J. and his wife Frances and used by them, with gaps, until 1924. It was built in stages starting with the rear section of the house that was likely started after the McHughes obtained the lots in 1896, but perhaps before. The main, turreted part of the house is the 1901 section. Frances (1861–1939) was active in church and hospital groups. The couple were original members of the Southern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers' Association.

The McHugh House is an early, rare, and intact example of the Queen Anne Revival style architecture in Calgary, and the best and earliest example in the Mission district. The masterful and unusual design combines elements of Queen Anne style including a steep gable roof; its asymmetrical and irregular form; projections from the side and rear forming cross gables; tall

vertically proportioned windows; prominent shingle detailed dormer and a polygonal corner tower topped with a very steep distinct turret. The front verandah serves as a delightful counter point to the tower. Originally the porch had lathe-turned Eastlake style ornament. The original shingle details are still in evidence on the upper levels and the mix of materials including brick and sandstone at the base serve to emphasize its picturesque qualities.

The house is a rare example of brick-construction; it is constructed of buff brick, which is a rarity in Calgary, since such material was rarely used after c. 1905-10 and so few early, brick houses predating this period, survive. Originally it was more commonly used than red brick for the more substantial and attractive houses.

The house is the oldest known house in its original location in the Rouleauville area of the Mission community and one of the oldest remaining houses in the neighbourhood. It is one of a small number of remaining buildings that survives from the small community of Rouleauville, before the community became part of the city of Calgary in 1908. It is the only house of its kind in the area – now dominated by commercial and institutional buildings - making it a distinctive area landmark.

The building was used by Catholic agencies. During 1934–38 it housed the Basilian Fathers who ran St. Mary's Boys' High School across the street. In 1960, the Congregation of the Brothers of Our Lady of Lourdes purchased it to serve as the Don Bosco House, a home for teenage boys and the first group home in Canada.

Since 1968, it has been the Religious Education Centre and Mission Council Office (c.1970–79); Cabrini House, run by the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (1980s); Exodus House, a halfway house for prostitutes; a home for troubled teens run by the Alberta Safe House Society (1990s); and Elizabeth House for pregnant teens and new mothers (1990s).

Character-Defining Elements

Character-defining elements of the property include, but are not limited to, its:

- Two and one-half storey asymmetrical and irregular form including prominent two-storey polygonal corner tower; rear two-storey (original c.1896) extension;
- Side-gable roof with rear cross-gable roof; wooden tongue-and-groove soffits; steep, polygonal tower roof with finial; shed roofs on the porches and first-storey side extension;
- Wood-frame construction clad in buff-colored brick laid in stretcher bond; sandstone foundation; patterned wood-shingle-clad gables, front dormer and detailing;
- Rectangular windows with single and double openings; an oval front window;
- Open wraparound front verandah and side verandah with turned wooden supports;
- Central brick chimney with corbelled cap;
- Interior elements such as an open main staircase with elaborately turned newel posts, balustrade with squared balusters and panelled wainscot along the staircase and in the main entrance room; mottled porcelain-tile fireplace surround and hearth; and
- Deep set-back on a grass-planted lot with circular concrete entrance path.