

Statement of Significance



54 Circular Road - Bannerman House

Formal Recognition Type

City of St. John's Heritage Building, Structure, Land or Area

Description of Historic Place

Bannerman House is a large, two-and-one-half storey, wooden house located at 54 Circular Road, St. John's. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

Bannerman House was designated a Municipal Heritage Building because it has aesthetic, environmental, historic and cultural values.

Bannerman House has aesthetic value because it is an excellent example of 19th century vernacular architecture in Old St. John's. This very large wooden house boasts two-and-one-half storeys with an additional two-storey wing at the rear. A chimney has a date of 1849, though it is believed to have been added sometime after the building's original construction. The steeply pitched gable roof, single hung windows and narrow wooden clapboard attest to early Newfoundland architecture.

Bannerman House has environmental value because the house sits on land that once stretched a sizeable distance, taking in the full extent of Circular Road, where farming and cattle grazing took place. The house was once the original farmhouse, though many renovations have taken place since its pre-1843 construction. Its early vernacular style provides a striking contrast to the ornate Second Empire merchant houses which were built later in the neighbourhood, making Bannerman House a vital contribution to the architecture and streetscape of the surrounding area.

Bannerman House has historic value because of the number, variety and historical significance of individuals who have occupied or been associated with the property. The original owner was John Mitchell, an immigrant apprentice butcher from Dorset England. He became a well-established name in the city for his excellence in providing produce for various sea vessels. By 1836 his reputation for quality goods allowed him to lease land from the government for the

grazing of his animals and to grow vegetables and flowers. Mitchell was also responsible for shooting and injuring the son of then Governor, Sir Richard Goodwin Keats, when young Keats attempted to steal vegetables one night in 1843. Mitchell took aim and shot the unknown intruder. From this event the land was known as Mitchell's Garden, and the account provides the earliest record of habitation in a Mitchell house on the site.

The next owner was a relative of Mrs. Mitchell, who divided the house into two residences, and where Sir Marmaduke Winter came to live until the completion of his home, Winterholme, directly across the street. Subsequent to Winter's occupation, the house was sold in 1927 to William A. Reid, secretary-treasurer and director of the Reid Newfoundland Company. This company was responsible for the Newfoundland railway, its construction, maintenance and business.

The next owner, in 1930, was Dorothy Crawford who was wife to James Crawford, director of Browning Harvey, a well-established business that has continued for more than 200 years. In 1969 Donald Snowden, educator and advisor for Labrador studies, purchased the house. Snowden was instrumental in developing key programs for Labrador students, formed the Fogo Island Co-Op and was chair of a Royal Commission on Labrador. The Donald Snowden Centre for Development Support Communications at Memorial University was named for him. All subsequent owners have made significant impacts on Bannerman House with regard to preservation and promotion of its rich history.

Bannerman House has cultural value because, as an early 19th century home in a neighbourhood built during the Victorian Period, it provides a fixed point from which Circular Road east emerged. It thus defines the neighbourhood's history. Since architectural practices and examples mirror the society and values by which they are spawned, Bannerman House and the other homes in the neighbourhood provide a concrete example of Newfoundland social, cultural and political transition from an outpost colony to the status of a self-governing independent dominion in the British Empire.

Source: City of St. John's, designated at a meeting held 1991-01-27

Character Defining Elements

All those elements that contribute to the building's 19th century vernacular design, including:

- steeply pitched gable roof;
- original chimney;
- style and size of original openings and fenestration of windows;
- two-and-one-half storey wooden construction;
- rear two-storey wing;
- narrow wooden clapboard;
- orientation, dimensions and size; and
- location as the cornerstone of the Circular Road neighbourhood.

Location and History

Community	St. John's
Municipality	City of St. John's
Civic Address	54 Circular Road
Construction	1840 - 1849
Style	19th Century Vernacular
Building Plan	L - Shape
Website Link	http://www.historictrust.com/bannerman_house.shtml

Additional Photos

