

Landmarks

Dunnottar's Significant Heritage Buildings

The Dunnottar Special Places project was inaugurated in 2011-12, with the first major component being a comprehensive and detailed inventory of 61 buildings and sites. Through rigorous analysis and assessment processes suggested to us by the province's Historic Resources Branch, we have identified a handful of buildings that most effectively define and illustrate key aspects of our history and heritage. The following list of 18 buildings and sites constitutes the Dunnottar Heritage Group's recommendations and reminders to the community about those places that have major claims for heritage significance.

- All Saints Anglican Church, Whytewold
- Matlock Station, Ponemah
- Matlock Community Hall
- Fournier Store
- "Armadales"
- "Buena Vista"
- "Cedar Springs"
- Dafoe Cottage
- Douglas Cottage
- "Durness"

- "Elderslie"
- "Feldsted"
- "Glenayr"
- "Maclan"
- Melville Cottage
- "Norfolk Lodge"
- "Pinegrove Lodge"
- "Shoreacres"

As noted, the development of this short list of significant sites was the result of careful and studied deliberations using standard heritage evaluation criteria, processes and scoring regimes. This work was carried out by the Dunnottar Heritage Group with assistance from staff of the Historic Resources Branch of Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection. We are grateful to the branch for their generous support and patient attention in this endeavour.

As a collection, these 18 buildings define many aspects and themes from Dunnottar's past, and do so through places that are at once significant, but also interesting and attractive.

The selections reveal some important qualities that help make Dunnottar a distinct community in terms of its architectural legacy. We note four public buildings—a church, railway station, hall and store—that recall our shared communal spaces. But given the nature of Dunnottar (and constituent communities of Matlock, Whyetwold and Ponemah), as a summer resort, it is naturally the heritage of our cottages that forms the greatest legacy. And the 14 summer-time buildings noted here suggest the variety and wealth of that heritage, from the typical modest cottages that are familiar forms in all Lake Winnipeg resort communities, to the grand and sophisticated cottages that are unique to Dunnottar. It is these latter places that really make our community special. With their striking forms and designs, special features, and varied material uses, these cottages are nothing short of a treasure.

All 18 buildings are presented on the following pages with an accompanying Heritage Value Statement that elucidates each building's key heritage attributes. We present the public buildings first and then the cottages, in alphabetical order, and in many cases via their picturesque site names.

All Saints Anglican Church, Whytewold



The “Little Church at the Crossing” was designed in 1922 by Victor Horwood, who was Provincial Architect from 1911 to 1924, and whose many fine buildings include the Law Courts in Winnipeg and much of the original University of Manitoba campus. The church had no rector until 1941; rather, the church’s lay reader was Horwood himself. The first incumbent, Reverend J.A.G. Wilson, said of Horwood that “he was the church.” This simple, gable-roofed church with its domestic-scaled windows, small pointed steeple and modest beaverboard interior nonetheless has the architectural features often identified as essential to an Anglican church: an entrance porch to the side, and an articulated chancel. It is the perfect, unassuming design for a summer community. All Saints has served generations of summer campers and residents of the resort communities of Matlock, Whytewold and Ponemah.

Matlock Station, Ponemah



This station (c. 1930) is a rare surviving example of a portable Canadian Pacific Railway Station. From 1902 to 1931, these were built in Montréal and brought by rail to new communities. Meant to be temporary, some remained in service. The separate shelter was built recently to original CPR plans. Like several other Lake Winnipeg summer resort communities, Whytewold, Ponemah and Matlock (incorporated as Dunnottar in 1947) were founded by the CPR in the first years of the 20th century, on land the railway bought along the lakeshore. Rail service to these communities was convenient and affordable, and carried thousands of people—from day-trippers escaping the heat of the city for a few hours to white-gloved Winnipeg aristocrats spending the summer in comfortable second homes. These stations—one in each village, only a mile apart—were a key element of the communities’ success.

Matlock Community Hall



Matlock's Community Hall probably dates from around 1920, the year in which the Matlock Community Club Building Company was incorporated with the power to "deal in real estate, to operate cafés, and to promote amusements." This building is stylistically similar to traditional Lake Winnipeg Cottages, with its frame construction and gable front. The verandah section at the front entrance is a later addition, but is quite in keeping with the building and with local architecture in general. The interior is quite striking, with its wide, open hall and exposed beams. From the beginning, the building was an important centre of sociability for the community's summer residents, serving as a location for dances, lectures, teas, church services and other events.

Fournier Store



Built around 1930 (replacing an earlier building that burnt the year before), this building served the area for years as a general store with living quarters at the rear. It also housed the post office and, for a period, the community's only telephone. This is a modest, shed-roofed frame building with a low false front, of a style commonly employed for commercial buildings of the period, and once a familiar site on main streets across the west. It is clad in wooden cove siding with corner boards and applied geometrical decoration on the front. The exterior has a high degree of physical integrity, with original siding and details.

“Armadale”



Armada was built in 1937 by the Empire Sash and Door Co., for J.H. Findlay. Like several mid-1930s cottages in the area, it is sided in round logs, in this case graduated from larger at the bottom to more slender at the top. Perhaps Armada's most unusual features are some of the architectural and decorative details, including materials salvaged from a mansion on Wellington Crescent. This was almost certainly the 1911-12 house of Sir Daniel McMillan, at number 645. Demolished in 1937, its architectural features were advertised for sale in the early spring of that year. This cottage is in excellent condition, with a high level of physical integrity.

“Buena Vista”



This cottage was built for Kenneth Johnston by the Ross Brothers in about 1907, on land bought from the C.P.R. Like the majority of Lake Winnipeg cottages, it was constructed from high-quality lumber shipped from British Columbia, in this case as part of a kit. Architecturally, the most unusual and interesting feature is the central living hall, with its cathedral ceiling. The hall is wrapped and overlooked on three sides by a gallery reached by a staircase at one side. Bedrooms nestle under the steeply-pitched roof at either end. Though there have been some alterations—including the loss of a stone fireplace—Buena Vista retains a high degree of physical integrity, a testament to its original livability and the good stewardship of the family in which it remains today.

"Cedar Springs"



This cottage was built to 1932 plans by the North American Lumber and Supply Company for Homer S. Robinson, an insurance executive. Robinson had a good year in 1933; in addition to acquiring this lovely cottage, he was elected to the University of Manitoba's Board of Governors and appointed a director of the Canukeena Club (an organization of World War I veterans dedicated to furthering esprit de corps in civilian life). Robinson eventually played an important rôle in the development of Canada's national parks; named Superintendent of Parks and Resources Information in 1948, he went on to be highly instrumental in the development of park interpretation programmes. Cedar Springs is an unusual cottage for its cedar log siding and interior board-and-batten panelling. Like many of Dunnottar's best cottages, it has a masonry fireplace, in this case fieldstone, with a broad chimney to match.

Dafoe Cottage



Built probably in the early years of the 20th century, this cottage became the summer home of the John Wesley Dafoe and Alice Parmelee family in 1910. It remains in the family today. A highly-influential journalist, Dafoe was editor of the *Manitoba Free Press* from 1901 to 1944, during which time the newspaper was amongst the most important in Canada. The cottage is a modest-sized building with a hipped roof complicated by a small ventilating gable at either end. Screened porches at the front and rear provide the outdoor living areas so typical of Lake Winnipeg cottages, and the brick fireplace—surprisingly common in Dunnottar cottages—makes for a cosy common room on a cool night.

Douglas Cottage



Probably built for Mr. And Mrs. R.A. Douglas in 1915, this cottage is a long, low, side-gabled building with a generous screened porch stretching across the front. The symmetrical facade, with six windows on either side of a wide central doorway with sidelights, gives it an almost classical air when seen from the front; views from the back and sides are more informal. A large fieldstone (or beachstone) fireplace provides a warm focus to the main room. Douglas Cottage is a well-preserved example of a century-old cottage with many original features such as the cove siding, windows, and many interior details, such as fir wainscoting and the fireplace. The large lot has two outbuildings, including a small guest house of a kind that, once common, is often lost.

"Durness"



Originally named after the small village in Sutherland, in the northwest Scottish highlands, that was the ancestral home of the Ross family, this cottage was built in 1910 by Duncan and Neil Ross. Ross Brothers were contractors who built many area cottages; this one became a summer home for the brothers and their two sisters. This is a large, front-gabled, two-storey cottage with a full-width porch, now glazed, across the front. Notable interior details include original beamed ceilings and wainscoting in the porch, dining room and common room. Like many of Dunnottar's best cottages, the common room also has a substantial masonry fireplace (in this case, of brick).

“Elderslie”



Named for the country house of the prominent Speirs family near Glasgow, Scotland, this cottage was built in 1902 for John Tully Speirs and his wife, Susan (Marnie), formerly of Dundee, Scotland. This is a very large cottage, of unusual design. The main block has a two-story section with a gable front enlivened by an oriel window. Wings extend at an angle from each side. The glazing of the screened porch at mid-century even resulted in the charming use of horizontally-divided window panes in the front. The most striking interior feature is the inglenook, with its Arts-and-Crafts-inspired built-in benches and low, raftered ceiling creating a cozy room within the Common Room.

“Feldsted”



“Feldsted,” as it was first named, was built in the mid-1930s, and is one of relatively few Lake Winnipeg cottages to have been constructed of stone. The large, square stone chimney and externally-expressed chimney breast provide considerable visual interest to the entrance front. The common room is a striking space, with an open timber ceiling with turned pendants. The fireplace, with its arched opening, is built of the same stone as the walls. In one wall is a large window consisting of five tall casements with an arched section above, sheltered beneath an eyebrow dormer. French doors open into a sunroom, which, though a later addition, harmonizes well with the building. This cottage is extremely well-preserved, with original windows and fittings throughout.

"Glenayr"



This cottage was built in 1911 for W.L. Parrish, a prosperous grain merchant, sailing enthusiast, and early booster of what later became Dunnottar. By 1905 he was the first president of the Whytewold Club, and in 1911 he was advertising cottages to let. This cottage might well be one that Parrish built speculatively. It is a fine example of a typical type, with its modest size, frame construction, hipped roof, and screened porch. A feature common to many cottages, the interior partitions do not extend all the way up, allowing air currents to circulate and heat to rise into the cathedral ceiling. Such cottages once dotted the shores of the southern part of Lake Winnipeg, welcoming city-dwellers fleeing the hot, dusty streets for the cool breezes off the lake.

"Maclan"



Dating to the first decade of the 20th century, this cottage was probably built by Samuel Spink, second president of the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, for his wife Agnes Ann (Maguinnis) and their family. It passed into the possession of his daughter, Pearl, and her husband, Harry Cecil McWilliams. They were married in 1913. The cottage remains with descendants of the McWilliams family today. This is a frame cottage with a steep pyramidal hipped roof and wrap-around porch, but this prosaic description belies the building's extraordinary silhouette. The tall, two-storey shingled lookout projecting through the centre of the roof gives the building a towering outline appropriately recalling a lighthouse in this lakeside setting.

Melville Cottage



This cottage was designed for his family by architect Alex Melville, who, first with his brother and then on his own, was responsible for a large number of buildings in Winnipeg and elsewhere in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Melville's love of the picturesque is evident in his cottage, with its unusual plan, corner entrance and polygonal second-storey bay. A large verandah faces the beautiful view over the lake. Like many of Dunnottar's best cottages, it once had a fireplace, though this has been removed. With that exception, however, the building retains a high degree of physical integrity both inside and out, with original beadboard panelling and many other details on the interior.

"Norfolk Lodge"



Presumably named after the ancestral home of the Stebbing family at West Dereham, Norfolk, this cottage was built in 1933 by William (m. Bernice McKay) and Herbert (m. Barbara Cakebread) Stebbing for their families. Norfolk Lodge is a classic modest Lake Winnipeg cottage, with its hipped roof, verandah across the front, in this case under the same roof, and partial interior divisions, all in wood. Such cottages, once so common, are increasingly threatened. This cottage has been carefully and sensitively maintained and has an unusually high degree of physical integrity, with nearly every feature original to the building. Its windows, siding and details are all original, and give a perfect impression of the kind of comfortable-but-not-ostentatious summer retreat that many middle-class Winnipeggers were able to afford in the early 20th century, even—as here—in the depths of the Depression.

“Pinegrove Lodge”



Built in 1933, this cottage was the summer home of Jimmie and Mary Vaughan (née Spencer). It is constructed of painted cedar logs, and was reportedly built around the large fieldstone fireplace that dominates the common room. The buildings suggest the rustic style favoured for national parks in both Canada and the United States. This building's interior is particularly striking for its hand-forged ironwork and its unique interior partitions. They suggest a rustic interpretation of half-timbering, with a framework of peeled half logs and vertical tongue-and-groove fir panelling infill.

“Shoreacres”



A wide, low building with a hipped roof and a narrow pavilion at either side, Shoreacres may date originally from the early 20th century, but was rebuilt in 1936 by John T. Boyd and his wife Kate (McCullough). Boyd had risen from office boy to become President and General Manager of Shea's Brewery in Winnipeg. He ran the brewery from 1934 until his death in 1950. The striking hexagonal dining room and the living room are very well preserved, but the property's most unusual features are its outbuildings. These include the two-bedroom guest annex and diminutive maid's quarters. Shoreacres is an excellent example of the kind of rural estate that a wealthy and hospitable businessman was able to build in Lake Winnipeg's most exclusive resort community, even in the midst of the Great Depression.