

Henderson House Oldest Surviving Building from North Kildonan

North Kildonan is one of the oldest settled areas in Winnipeg as it was first settled in the 1820's, only the West and Old Kildonan areas of Winnipeg were settled before the East and North Kildonan areas. St Boniface was settled on a permanent basis only a few years earlier with St Vital being first settled around the same time in the early 1820's.

The oldest surviving building from North Kildonan's early history was built in 1854 or 1856 depending on the source but contrary to what you might think, you will not find it in North Kildonan. The sad story is that this house originally at what is now 2112 Henderson Highway is now in St Norbert where it has been since 1979 in the St Norbert Heritage Park off Turnbull Drive.

Henderson House at 2112 Henderson Highway was the home of a number of generations of Henderson's the family that Henderson Highway, John Henderson Junior High, the Henderson Library and Essar Avenue are named after Henderson's. Essar is named after Samuel Robert Henderson, who among his contributions was a reeve, councillor and school trustee for the Municipality of Kildonan and the Municipality of East Kildonan which then included North Kildonan before the division in 1925. He was the secretary for many years of the Kildonan St Paul Agricultural Society and president of the Good Roads Association until his death in 1928. East Kildonan Road was renamed Henderson Highway in his honour after his death

John Henderson was the reeve of the Municipality of Kildonan in the first decade of the 20th century before the Municipality of Kildonan was divided into East Kildonan and West Kildonan in 1914; with Old Kildonan splitting off from West Kildonan in 1921 and North Kildonan splitting off from East Kildonan in 1925. John Henderson also served as a councillor on the Kildonan Council for many years as well as on the East Kildonan School District Board.

One would think that Henderson House would enjoy a prominent place in our community because of its age and the prominent family that lived there for many generations but this is not the case. In around 1977-1978 the last private owner of the house at 2112 Henderson Highway decided to build a more modern and larger house on this property. He offered to sell it to the City of Winnipeg. The city and the local community committee dithered on making a decision whether to restore the house and make it into a museum for the area. The more recent outside cladding was removed but there it sat for a year. In 1978 the owner of the property demanded that the house be moved or he would completely tear it down.

The city then decided it would be moved just down the street to the site of another historical house at 1940 Henderson Highway. Harold Piercy the City Councillor for the area and the

president of S.P.I.K.E House a home for mentally challenged residents which was then being started at 1940 Henderson Highway, a city owned property decided that he didn't want a museum on this property so Henderson House remained at 2112 Henderson for a little time longer while the community committee looked for a new location for the house.

In a very short sighted decision the house was moved from its location at 2112 Henderson Highway to St Norbert in 1979. The owner of Henderson Highway received a tax credit from the city and over time the ownership of Henderson Highway was transferred from the city to the provincial government. The province made some promises that it would restore it to its original condition but as of yet, the province has done nothing to restore it and it has no plans to restore it or even anything to conserve it in its present state. It seems the province is willing to allow it to completely rot away thereby solving the problem by neglect.

If one goes to see it today it is in a terrible state surrounded by a wire fence to prevent access to it with only a small sign saying Henderson House. Some of the other homes in the park have been restored but Henderson House unlike all the other buildings is out of place because they have some historical ties to the area while Henderson House is completely distant from its community.

Henderson House should be restored and moved back to our area as it is one of the oldest surviving building in Winnipeg; it is older than Barber House in Point Douglas where millions have been spent on it over the decades.

I believe the only way the house will be restored and moved back to the community is if many residents demand it from our provincial, federal and city politicians. We all know money is tight but the various levels of government spend all kinds of money on less worthy projects. If this house is restored and moved back to our community, it can be made into a museum for our area, ours is the only region in Winnipeg where there is no museum. It seems our elected representatives do not think there are enough people who care about our history; we need to prove them wrong.

APR 22 1978

City offered historical house

A two-storey log house, which may be one of the oldest buildings in Manitoba, has been offered to the city by its owner, Jack Seitz.

Henderson House, as the structure is called, currently is at 2112 Henderson Hwy. but Mr. Seitz wants the city to move it because he has built a new house on the site.

A city report states that the house appears to date back to 1828, although more research must be done to confirm that date. If the date is con-

firmed, then the building was part of the original Selkirk Settlement and is one of the oldest in the province.

The planning department report, which will be discussed Tuesday by council's parks and recreation committee, recommends that the city accept Mr. Seitz' donation.

The house should be moved to a two-acre park at 1040 Henderson Hwy. to sit alongside a 1920's-era stone house the city purchased last year, the report recommends.

The provincial government should pay the moving costs, estimated at \$10,000, plus the \$120,000 to \$150,000 cost of restoring the house, the report states. The city would pay for maintaining the house and the park.

"Henderson House is in better structural condition than either of the two historic houses, the Riel House and the Turenne House, currently being restored by the province," states the report.

April 26 1978

April 1978



Staff photo

Council approval is sought to accept donation of this historic house on 2112 Henderson Highway.

Moving costs estimated at \$10,000

Acceptance of historic dwelling recommended to city council

The acceptance of a donation of what has been heralded as one of the oldest and most historically significant buildings in Manitoba was recommended for city council approval by Winnipeg's civic parks and recreation committee Tuesday.

Owned by Jack Seitz, of 2112 Henderson Highway, East Kildonan, the nine-room, two-storey log structure, thought to have been constructed with the original Selkirk Settlement about 152 years ago, is being donated to make room for a new house under construction nearby.

In recommending acceptance of Seitz's offer, an administration report estimates the cost of moving the "Red River Frame" dwelling to a site next to the historic Ross House at 1940 Henderson at about \$10,000, with the cost of restoration, which it says should be picked up by the provincial government, at \$120,000 to \$150,000.

In calling the acquisition highly desirable, the report says "the dwelling depicts a way of life typical of that of middle-class pioneers in the half century that pre-dates

the creation of the province in 1970 or the incorporation of the City of Winnipeg in 1871."

The restoration of both the Henderson and Ross houses on the same 1.9-acre site "will not only greatly enhance the historic theme of the park," but also facilitate the provision of maintenance and security by consolidating services in one area, the report adds.

Councillors unanimously applauded the project during the meeting, saying it represents a budding and long-overdue awareness of the city's historical identity, though a few said they would have preferred private enterprise to spark the initiative.

While acknowledging the restoration by the provincial government of the historic Riel and Turenne houses in St. Norbert, Coun. Joe Zuken (Labor Election Committee — Norquay) commented he was "very much afraid the Henderson house will be much older before they make their decision to contribute" toward its costs.

Historic Henderson House

APRIL 26 1978

Owner attaches conditions to donation



The historic two-storey Henderson House which the owner won't allow to be moved until he receives some concessions from the city

By Chris Smith
Urban Affairs Reporter

Council's parks and recreation committee may be one jump ahead of itself in accepting the donation of an historic house on Henderson Highway.

The committee Tuesday accepted the offer of the two-storey log house, known as Henderson House, which may be one of the oldest buildings in Manitoba.

But Jack Seitz, whose wife Trudy offered the house to the city last June, said he won't allow the house to be moved from the property at 2112 Henderson Hwy. until he has a written commitment from the city on some form of concession for the donation.

A city report states the house may date back to 1828, and if the date is confirmed, the building would have been part of the original Selkirk Settlement.

The report recommends moving the house to a two-acre park at 1940 Henderson Hwy., to sit alongside a 1920s-era stone house the city purchased last year.

Mr. Seitz said he had initially wanted approval to subdivide the land and build a second house and then sell it, but was turned down by the community committee.

City environment commissioner Dave

Henderson said the request to subdivide was turned down because the resulting parcels of land would not have had the required frontage.

Mr. Seitz said he also wanted the city to hook up sewer and water to his house from the trunk line on the front street, but has since paid for it himself.

He added he at least wants to be able to deduct the value of the house from his income tax "as some concession" for donating it to the city.

Mr. Henderson said it is a fairly standard practice for people making donations to the city to ask the city legal department for a certificate of value to declare for income tax purposes.

He said the city has not formally dealt with such a request and the value of the house would have to be appraised for income tax purposes.

The parks committee accepted the offer of the house with the provision that the province pay the estimated \$10,000 moving costs and the \$120,000 to \$150,000 cost of restoring the house. The city would pay for maintaining the house and park.

The province though, through its historic sites and objects board, has not committed itself to restoration funding, the city report states.

July 1978

Gift house may be demolished

The owner of an historic log house in East Kildonan said Tuesday he will demolish it in a few days unless the city decides quickly to give him tax concessions in return for the building.

Jack Seitz offered the 152-year-old house to the city about a year ago, but now says he is tired of waiting for some form of tax concession and will demolish the house if the city does not act soon.

He said he is only prepared to wait a few more days for a city decision and "I have a bulldozer on the property right now" ready to demolish the building.

He wants either a tax certificate which will allow him to deduct the value of the house from his income tax, or property tax concessions for the new home he has built on the property at 2112 Henderson Hwy.

But some members of city council's finance committee Tuesday questioned the sincerity of Mr. Seitz's gift when he won't allow the house to leave his property until he has the concessions in writing.

They also questioned the

\$15,000 value he has placed on the log house.

Coun. Abe Yanofsky (ICEC—Jefferson) said there was no mention of tax concessions when the house was offered to the city nor when city council agreed to take it.

The city has accepted the house, to be moved to property beside an old brick house in a park on Henderson Highway, provided the province will pay moving and renovation costs.

John McFarlane, director of the provincial historic resources branch, said the province is ready to move the house once the city and Mr. Seitz reach an agreement. It will restore the house as funds become available.

Coun. Alan Wade (NDP—Notre Dame) said "I think he (Mr. Seitz) is going to hang himself" with all his requests.

Issuing a tax certificate for income tax deductions is a common practice when the city receives a gift, but both city and provincial officials said they can't put an historical value on the house. The house would not be of much value as a normal building.

Historic house spared wrecker, to get park site

By Chris Smith
Urban Affairs Reporter

July 1978

A 154-year-old house in East Kildonan has been spared the wrecker's ball and takes up new residence in a city park beside another historic building.

The house, believed to be part of the original Selkirk settlement, was first offered to the city by owner Jack Seitz about a year ago, but the move to a park site has been held up by municipal approval procedures, discussions with the province and negotiations on the value of the gift for an income tax write-off.

Tuesday, city council's finance committee and Mr. Seitz reached an agreement which will allow the provincial historic resources branch to move the house from 2112 Henderson Hwy.

Mr. Seitz will receive a tax certificate valuing the house at \$2,200. He had asked for a \$5,000 tax deduction each year for 11 years, or \$16,000 in cash, as compensation for the inconvenience and added costs of keeping the house on his property for the year.

However, city officials said they can only appraise the house under standard methods because they do not have the expertise to put an historic value on the building.

The house had been lived in until Mr. Seitz bought the property, and he said a bulldozer was about to knock it down when it was discovered it might be of historic value.

Two weeks ago, Mr. Seitz threatened to knock it down anyway if he didn't receive some form of tax concession for donating it to the city. He had set a July 14 deadline, but postponed it because finance committee was not scheduled to meet until Tuesday to discuss the matter again.

The committee told Mr. Seitz to list his increased costs and it would consider reimbursing him. Mr. Seitz said he is facing increased labor and material costs because of the delay and has been paying taxes on the house.

City council will be asked to approve the finance committee recommendations tonight so the province can proceed with moving the house. The province has already agreed to move and restore the house if the city will maintain it.

J. D. McFarland, director of the provincial historic resources branch, said Tuesday it would be two to three weeks before arrangements could be made to transport the building.

July 1978

Henderson House to move

The fate of the 152-year-old Henderson House, at 2112 Henderson Highway, seems sealed following Winnipeg city council's decision Wednesday to back a city-provincial proposal for moving and restoring it.

Under the proposal, recommended by civic finance committee Tuesday, the province will move and restore the historic dwelling at 1940 Henderson Highway, site of historic Ross House.

For its part, the city will obtain access rights to the private property over which the Henderson House must be moved, will dismantle and rebuild any fences, lawns or

shrubbery on those properties and will back-fill the basement hole at the original site.

Also, the city will grant Jack Seitz, who owns the 2112 Henderson site, a \$2,200 certificate for income tax deduction purposes, based on the assessed value of the house.

Seitz last year donated the house to the city as an historic artifact, but council took until May to officially accept.

Seitz says the city's delay in moving the building off his property has cost him about \$16,000 in additional expenses. Finance committee has invited him to submit an itemized list.

July 1979

New location sought for Henderson House

It appears that the Old Henderson House, situated at 2112 Henderson Highway, will not be moved to the Ross property at 1940 Henderson Highway after all.

Early last week, Norma Price, Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs, had announced the Province would be restoring the structure and would move the building to the Ross House property.

Councillor Harold Piercy (Ind. Henderson) told the Herald he has made representation to the Minister and to the City's Environment Commissioner objecting to the building being placed at 1940 Henderson. Councillor



Coun. H. Piercy

Piercy is a director of S.P.I.K.E. Inc., which is the group of local residents

which converted the Ross property into a home for handicapped people.

Piercy said, "We of S.P.I.K.E. Inc. have expended a great deal of time, money and effort converting the old Ross House into a home for handicapped people. We just do not want and indeed won't have a home for handicapped people turned into a tourist attraction. We have tried to normalize the life of our Ross House handicapped residents. To place an historic building on the same grounds would grossly interfere with the atmosphere we of S.P.I.K.E. Inc. are attempting to create."

Piercy said Tourism and Cultural Affairs Minister Price was sympathetic to the problem and is now considering other city parks property in North Kildonan for locating the Old Henderson House. Councillor Piercy has suggested consideration be given to Centennial Park, Bunn's Creek or the new park presently being developed on Paufeld Street.

Mclvor Avenue Contract awarded

The contract to pave Mclvor Avenue has been awarded to J.D. Construction Company Limited, according to Councillor Harold Piercy.

paving be completed within 70 days from the date the contract is formally awarded by the City." Piercy said he has asked City Administration to have

July 1979

Province to restore old Henderson House

The Manitoba government is taking steps to restore and preserve the Henderson House, 2112 Henderson Highway, as a building of provincial historic significance, Tourism and Cultural Affairs Minister Norma Price has announced.

The minister said the province has agreed to accept the house as a gift from its present owner, Jack Seitz, and will move it by the end of this month to City of Winnipeg Property at 1940 Henderson Highway, commonly known as the Ross property. The province has also accepted responsibility for its restoration over time.

The City of Winnipeg is co-operating in the move and in the final location of the house.

Mrs. Price said the house, dating from 1858, is one of the oldest log structures in Manitoba. Its present site was first homesteaded by Samuel Robert Henderson, an Orkneyman with the Hudson's Bay Company, with his wife Flora Livingstone, an original

Selkirk settler.

For some time it had been believed that the house had been altered to such an extent over the years that much of its original construction had been destroyed. In 1977, Manitoba's Historic Sites Advisory Board reviewed the question of preserving the house as a historic site and recommended that it be photographed, measured and carefully demolished to preserve the remains of the original structure.

Subsequently, at the suggestion of Mr. Seitz, the province's Historic Resources branch began stripping away the obvious non-original construction materials and found that most of the house had been kept in its original state. It was found to be a fine example of Red River frame construction whereby logs are laid horizontally, fitting into vertical braces. The log work is well detailed and generally, the Henderson House is considered to be in better shape than other known buildings of this period.

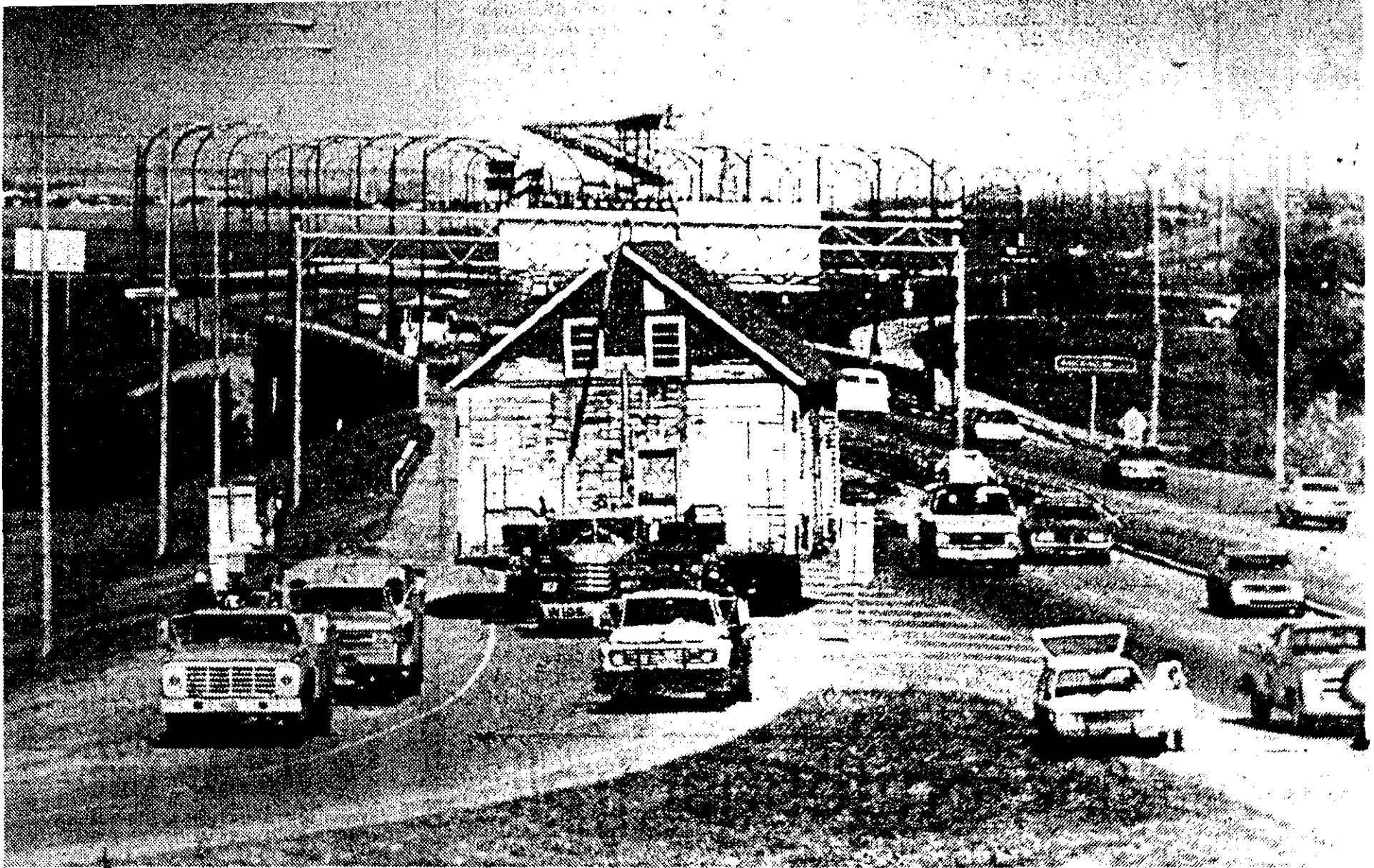
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Memories of 38 years in Henderson house

Peter Hoving sits in front of the 152-year-old Henderson house at 2112 Henderson Highway as workmen prepare to remove it for restoration. The house, dating from the time of the Selkirk settlement, will be moved to the site of the historic Ross House, 1940 Henderson Highway. Hoving, who bought

the house from a member of the Henderson family, lived in it with his family from 1926 to 1954 when he sold the structure. The current owner, Jack Seitz, donated the house to the city in return for a \$2,200 tax certificate and the filling of the basement hole. The province will pay for the restoration.



Tribune photo by Joe McLellan

Home, home on the road

September 26 1979

After 15 hours on the road, Henderson House arrived safely Tuesday at its Turnbull Drive destination, where it will undergo extensive restoration before being moved to a permanent site, yet to be announced. The

120-year-old log cabin, believed to be the first residence built on the east side of the Red River, began the journey from 2112 Henderson Hwy. to Lot 78 on Turnbull Dr. at about 2 a.m. Police, Manitoba Hydro officials

and workers from CP Rail, Manitoba-Telephone System and Hardman Movers pitched in to make the trip, via the Perimeter Highway, a success. The tourism and cultural affairs department will restore the building.