

~ 3rd Avenue~

Streetscape Award 2018

Location:

The streetscape of 3rd Avenue, between Grand and James.

Prepared By:

Mission Community
Heritage Commission

Streetscape Description:

This block in the downtown residential core is defined by its mix of pre- and early post-war housing that has remained relatively unchanged, other than renovations. Eight houses line the north side of the street, seven are situated on the south side (including one house facing Grand). Lot and housing sizes are also varied, and houses are not positioned at a consistent distance from the street. The street itself lacks curbs and a sidewalk on the south side of the road. Substantial efforts have been expended by builders and homeowners to maintain the form and improve the condition of current housing stock.

Significance:

Like most of central Mission, the houses on this block represent several different housing styles, each indicative of their time of construction. Of the 15 houses on this block, six were built between 1911 and 1920, four between 1924 and 1940, three between 1950 and 1955, one in 1968, and another in 1982. The oldest homes range from working class bungalows to stately homes.

Two of Mission's most historic and iconic homes, the McRae houses built in 1911 and 1912, anchor this streetscape. Both are brick-clad Victorian homes distinguishing characteristics. One is a three-storey home with patterned masonry at the joints and two-storey bay windows; the other possesses a hipped roof with cross gables and flared eaves, as well as a side porch. Two of the other pre-1920 homes are of a simpler, vernacular ('everyday') form, taller and narrower with front gables and symmetrical form.



Housing on 3rd Avenue between Grand and James varies in age, style, and materials. The home on the right is nearing its 100th anniversary. Image source: Google Streetview 2011.

The diversity of home designs on 3rd Avenue, however, is one of the block's most charming qualities. Rooflines vary widely from the simple to the ornate, from the low-angled to the steep-pitched, and they integrate different tiling materials. Floor plans and exterior materials are similarly heterogenous.

This neighbourhood is not historically significant simply because it includes some of Mission's oldest housing stock. (It does.) Nor is it historically significant because a few of the houses on the street represent some of the most exceptional qualities of Mission's early architectural legacy. (They do.) This streetscape is being recognized because the block's landscape reflects an evolutionary process of housing development common throughout Mission, and which helps contribute to the town's historic values.

History:

This neighbourhood in central Mission began developing within two decades of the city's incorporation. As populations began moving uphill, further from the main thoroughfare of what is today 1st Avenue, they converted forests into farms and homesteads. The south side of this block benefits from unimpeded views of the Fraser River and Mount Baker to the south, and thus, it was an ideal location for the development of homes among Mission's professional class. Notably, however, is that this neighbourhood was never exclusively or even primarily middle-to-upper class. The presence of more vernacular homes and cottages early on indicates that this block was, like most of Mission today, home to a diversity of income groups.

Much of Mission's residential core developed through a process of land clearance for larger homesteads or small farms, and then subsequent land division and infill. While this is occurring even today throughout the district, on this particular block, this evolutionary process was largely complete by the late 1950s. Only two homes were constructed after that time. Notably, both of these homes kept to the same scale of building (in terms of height and footprint) as those that preceded them.



One of the oldest houses on 3rd Avenue is this 1912 home, built by one of Mission's early physicians. In addition to having been immaculately maintained for many years, this home is also distinct for some of the architectural features: ornate cornices above the side porch and flared eaves built into the roofline. Image source: Google Streetview 2011.

Contact Us with Further Info!

We would love to know more about the history of these homes, and any information or photographs would be greatly appreciated. If you know anything about the past ownership, sale history, construction or renovation of the properties or their history of occupancy, please contact or visit the Mission Community Archives. We would love to hear from you.