

Parkin Manor (Tower House, Castle House)

324-10th Ave. S.

1910



Often referred to as the “tower-house” or as the “castle”, this particular home was built as a true “Manor-house” for Mr. James Parkin, who had moved west from Manitoulin Island with two of his brothers and their families (Mr. James Parkin was unmarried at that time). They set up sawmills in the area and then commenced construction of this truly outstanding home to contain the whole family (and the house stands up to that demand by having nearly 4,000 sq. ft. on three floors).

When the 4th brother moved out west in 1911, he found it nearly completed except for “some of the plaster moldings around the light fixtures that seemed to keep falling down”. All of the Parkins apparently lived in the house from September to November of 1911, but suddenly moved out never to return. Whether the reason was financial, or business obligations up north, the reason is unclear, but the house seems to have been vacant until 1913, when Miss Cherrington leased the structure for her private school. Soon after that, the Homes family of the CPR lumber division bought it and moved in, living there for several years. It has changed hands several times since, and in the course of the years, it has been changed into a series of apartments. However, in 1975 new owners embarked upon an ambitious program to restore the once proud house to its original state as a private family dwelling. An old upstairs verandah has now been removed, and much of the plaster work on the main floor is undergoing repair. Work continues at a slow, but very methodical pace with excellent results.

A member of the Parkin family still had the book of plans that James Parkin used to order the drawings for this house, and in it the name used for this house style was the “Glen-Fora”. Mr. Parkin changed the materials however, and the wooden structure shown in the book became a much more refined brick structure. This brick was imported from Sandpoint, Idaho, and its beige-brown colour is unique in these parts. Several other refinements were also made: - the verandah had lovely, simple “Ionic” theme columns put in place of the “gingerbread” example in the book. The gorgeous curved front gable decoration with intricately carved brackets under the eaves, give an unparalleled, but controlled, richness against the plain brick. The tower of course, highlights the entire facade and makes it one of the most outstanding landmarks in Cranbrook.

Given Heritage Designation November 2000