

Spring Edition 2022

POINT *to* POINT

ARMSTRONG'S POINT COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

“How does one divine the spirit of a place before disturbing its bones? How do the new owners listen to the heartbeat of a house and match their own to it?”

- G. Nash, *Renovating Old Houses: bringing new life to vintage homes*



39 East Gate tower restoration, 2021



Armstrong's Point
THE HERITAGE REPORT

With the Spring issue, our first of the year, Heritage has the pleasure of announcing four new members for our committee! They're already bringing us their great ideas and they'll be popping up all over the neighbourhood like spring buds and blossoms.

We also begin a “learn about your heritage neighbourhood” series to highlight the architectural eras and mosaic of housing styles that has evolved into AP as it is today. Recognize and appreciate your own home among them as you read along. From our perspective, with every year that goes by, each and every one, like a fine wine, becomes more valuable.

*April McDonald - Kassum
Chair - Heritage Committee*

Advertent Heritage Home Renewal

by Noor Ahmed, 39 East Gate

George Nash, an outspoken American renovation contractor, described three philosophies to working with heritage homes – preservation, renovation and remodelling...

Preservation is interpreted to be the most sensitive to heritage and includes restoration and conservation. Restoration is the “strictest” approach requiring replicating technical processes learned from historical research. An example would be to remove any addition and return the structure to its original form.

“Decades-old shakes had been patch-repaired but the structural curved shiplap was like new despite being over a century old. Shakes were reinstalled maintaining the original dimensions of the flat tooth pattern.”



“Ralph rose, over 40 feet, to the challenge of re-coating the spire - which itself is 4 feet tall!”

Photos: Noor Ahmed

Renovation is driven by a desire to “improve” a home regardless of the historical importance of certain features. The assumption is that one is free to adapt the home to current personal needs.

Examples would include removing interior walls or adding a dormer. At the end of the spectrum is remodel-

ling, i.e. gutting the house to make it “perfect”, a.k.a. “violence”, according to Nash. But the author conveys it best, perhaps, when he poses his questions: “How does one divine the spirit of a place, how do new owners listen to the heartbeat of a house and match their own to it?”

Understanding Mid-Century Modern:

Lateral Thinking

Seeking a fresh look for their new home, our owners began by recognizing the guiding design principle of this mid-century modern to be its long, low horizontal lines. Step one: simplify the landscaping by limiting the variety of plantings and the colour palette to emphasize the strong linear element of the brick planters themselves.

Step two: substitute a modernist garage door with horizontal windows to continue the theme. Where the original white door interrupted a smooth flow across the facade, a new black door allows a continuous long sweep of the eye from side to side.



Mark Rothko, No. 9
(White and Black on Wine),
1958



Front elevation 70 Middle Gate, winter sky,
December 2021



Dec. 2021: Watch this space, 70 Middle Gate
is a work in progress.

*Today, 27% of homes
in Armstrong's Point
are classified "traditional
bungalow" and 2%
"contemporary".*

- City of Winnipeg HCD Study



70 Middle Gate, constructed 1953,
Architect: Harry William Levin,
Style: single-storey ranch with attached garage.
Photo: Winnipeg Architecture Foundation

Harry William Levin (1914 - 1995)

"Winnipeg's north end produced an architect / builder who was involved in designing at least six homes in Armstrong's Point between 1949 and 1963. Born of immigrant parents, Harry Levin graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba in 1936 where he received several RAIC student awards. He went to England and completed two years' service with the London County Council and the War Department designing "workingmen's flats." He is known by the homes he designed in the Point: 54 East Gate, 112 East Gate, 70 Middle Gate, 45 West Gate, 51 West Gate and 57 West Gate."

- HTFC Study appendix

Gardeners, Start Your Engines

The Gates Garden Club Wants You!

The winter of 20/21 was pretty hard on the plantings at the Middle Gate boulevard. A lot of perennials just did not make it. The Heritage Committee put out a call for replacements if anyone could contribute. I was able to supply a number of plants from our garden and other neighbours also contributed. Voilà, a renewed garden.

While we were planting, I mused that we should have a garden club and others enthusiastically agreed. We'd like to invite anyone interested to join *East Gate* with us in making this happen.

Nobody has to be an expert, only have the desire to enjoy their lovely yard during the seasons to come.

We would be able to share ideas as well as plants and seeds. This has the advantage of saving money as well as obtaining plants that do well in our area and climate. We may be able to seek out experts to come and share their knowledge. For me the joy is just being able to talk about gardening!

If you are interested in coming to a meet and greet in the early spring, please send an "I'm in" to leslu@shaw.ca and you'll be notified of the time and place. In the meantime, stay well, enjoy the beauty of winter and remember that spring must come!

- Lesley Mowat



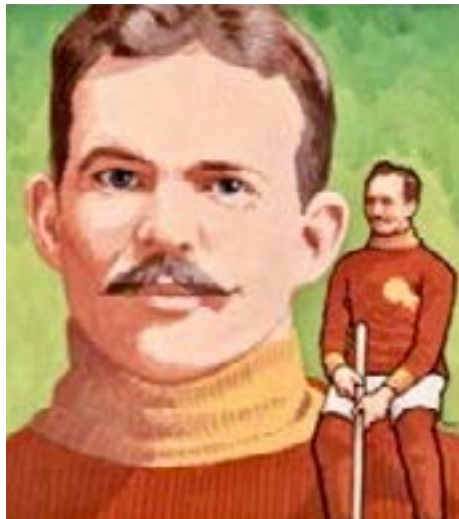
Middle Gate

Memorable Manitobans: the story continues..

You may recall reading earlier of the athletic accomplishments of Donald Henderson Bain, formerly of Armstrong's Point. It seems we didn't know the half of it!

We've been given a trove of additional information and are back with much more for you on this memorable Manitoban of ours:

- one of the province's and the country's greatest athletes
- a successful entrepreneur who amassed a large fortune
- a dashing and sought-after member of Winnipeg social circles and great contributor to



Portrait of Donald "Dan" Henderson Bain (1874-1962), in hockey jersey.

Image: Winnipeg Victorias Facebook

community groups, whose 69 East Gate address became a Manitoba Historical Site. Go to:

<http://www.armstrongspoint.ca/danbain.html>

The Gallery ...



Ferdous with one of his constructions, a colourful Mexican fishing boat. Below: "River Kwai" 2001



Left: A type of fishing boat known as a "dhow". For Bangladeshis it's a familiar sight on the rivers of their country. Right: the "BHS Babur" on which Ferdous served with the Pakistan Naval Service.

Ferdous Ahmed

A neighbour recently enjoyed a visit with Ferdous Ahmed and a chance to view some of his work, and has shared that time with us, giving all the opportunity to meet another of AP's "artists in residence" at 39 East Gate.

Ferdous is self-taught, having always been inventive and skilled with his hands, inspired by a "love of making, fixing and tinkering". Intricate model boats are fashioned of scrap wood, shaped, cut and painted from scratch.

Ferdous is also a painter, this work (left) depicting a train on the bridge over the River Kwai, made famous in the film of the same name.

While he's showing his finely crafted models and painting, Ferdous gives background to the work with memories of a "very happy" childhood home surrounded by rice fields and tea gardens, and the rewarding experiences of his career in the navy. Our thanks to both interviewer and artist for bringing these stories and the work to us so we could enjoy them as well.

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Point to Point: Armstrong's Point Community Newsletter. Send contributions, suggestions to: d.irwin@mymts.net

