

LONI BEACH

A GIMLI HERITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Notable Loni Beach Cottages

Gimli's delightful historic cottages, mostly in the Gimli Park and Loni Beach areas, are a fascinating and important aspect of our history. This history and heritage has been carefully explored through a Special Places project, the kind of initiative recommended by the province's Historic Resources Branch. A Special Places project ensures that a comprehensive and detailed inventory is used in follow-up analysis and assessments that identify those buildings with notable claims for significance. Before the ultimate development of the short list, which was followed up by the Gimli MHAC with recommendations for designation, several buildings in the Loni beach area were considered.

The following eight Loni Beach cottages were the subjects for this part of the project:

- Warters Cottage (10 North Lake)
- Sumarbustadur Cottage (17 North Lake)
- Maddin Cottage (22 North Lake)
- Dr. Hamilton Cottage (40 North Lake)
- Seaforth Cottage (72 North Lake)
- Finnbogason Cottage (78 North Lake)
- Tergesen Cottage (56 Loni)
- Cheatley Cottage (23 Vaughan)

Warters Cottage

10 North Lake Street



Construction Date

1912

Original Owner Name

The original owners were Nora and Dennis Warters (lots 7, 8 and 9) and Winnifred Warters (lots 7 and 9).

Historical Aspects

The cottage is from a kit, with plans and lumber provided. The building kit was put together with the base plate missing on the north and south sides. Much of the furniture was made by the original owner, Winnipeg shops teacher Dennis Warters. The deacon's bench came from one of the present owners' grandfather's dental office, a table was made by his father in shops class in the early 1930s. A picture of Loni Beach in 1912 shows the Warters cottage and a number of others along the beach. The cottage is one of the finest in terms of type and physical integrity in Gimli and the Loni beach area.

Sumarbustadur Cottage

17 North Lake Street



Construction Date

About 1918

Original Owner Name

Ronald Eyolfson

Historical Aspects

The cottage is now a summer retreat to the third generation of the Ida and Edwin Isford family. The name 'Sumarbustadur' was chosen by a brother, meaning 'Summer home' in Icelandic. The cottage is known for its highly unusual and distinctive roof shape – unique in Gimli.

Maddin Cottage

22 North Lake Street



Construction Date

Built around 1910 (Assessment Records)

Original Owner Name

Not presently known

Historical Aspects

Herdis Maddin and her sister Lil operated Lil's Beauty Shop in Winnipeg for over 40 years, beginning in 1940. The cottage has major connections to Herdis's son, Guy Maddin, who is an important Canadian film-maker. The cottage displays a simple basic form typical of its type, enlivened on the street-front side with the slightly sloped walls of a screened verandah.

Dr. Hamilton Cottage

40 North Lake Street



Construction Date

Built shortly after 1910.

Original Owner Name

Dr. Glen Hamilton was the original owner.

Historical Aspects

Given the site's connection to noted spiritualist, Dr Hamilton, there may have been séances at this cottage. It is said that strange noises emanate from the cottage on weekends. Architecturally the cottage is typical of its type – modest and casual.

Seaforth Cottage

72 North Lake Street



Construction Date

About 1916

Original Owner Name

Grandfather of Ian MacKenzie

Historical Aspects

Ian MacKenzie's grandfather bought the cottage when it was not quite finished. He bought it partly as a hunting retreat for himself and friends. Simple and straightforward in design, the cottage has a distinctive main door canopy.

Finnbogason Cottage

78 North Lake Street



Construction Date

Built in 1929

Original Owner Name

May have been a Mrs. Stephenson, who by marriage was connected to the Eaton Department Store family; also noted that it was owned by Allan Finnbogason, an Eaton's store manager.

Historical Aspects

It is said that Signy Eaton used the cottage to change at the time she served as Fjallkon at the Centennial in 1967. This modest but nearly original cottage has high levels of physical integrity: windows and doors are original; the exterior is entirely original; and the site still boasts its original shed and back house.

Tergesen Cottage

56 Loni Street



Construction Date

Built in 1935

Original Owner Name

Not presently known.

Historical Aspects

Valdi Stefansson planted trees for the original owner. Lorna and Terry Tergesen bought the cottage in 1968 from a doctor who owned it for many years. A traditional cottage, with its low pyramidal roof and spacious interior, the cottage has been upgraded over the years.

Cheatley Cottage

23 Vaughan Street



Construction Date

Pre-1914

Original Owner Name

Not presently known.

Historical Aspects

This was also called the Marr Cottage. The cottage was bought in 1925 by three Marr family sisters (Anne Fordham, Margaret Gresham, Madge Cheasley). It was later left to a brother (Ross Marr) and now belongs to his daughter, Roslyn Silversides. It remains a family cottage, used by many family members. The cottage is an exquisite example of one of the simplest types of cottage designs in Gimli – small, comfortable, light and airy.

LONI BEACH

A GIMLI HERITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Cottage Owners' Impressions

It is not only the obvious physical qualities that define the character of the Loni Beach Neighbourhood – roads, trees, cottages. It is also the grander elemental qualities, like the weather and the lake, as well as ephemeral qualities like sounds and smells that bespeak of the area's long-time history.

The following information—impressions—was gathered from interviews with long-time Loni Beach-area families, including several with the owners of cottages in the previous section. Common impressions for certain subjects are combined. All interviews were conducted by Lorne Thompson in the autumn of 2014.

Major Physical Qualities

Water

The lake is ever changing and awesome; lake levels change; there were several notations about getting water from an artesian well of which there was 5+ in Loni Beach; the drinking water from wells is particularly good

People can walk the whole length of beach uninterrupted – see Loni Beach people in the summer walking along shore all the time

Views to the lake and the water are vital; people like hearing the lake, being close enough to walk down to it

Weather – it's all about the weather

Roads

The roads were never in great shape; when a kid, the roads were oiled in about the second week of June and then for about two weeks had to be careful not to get oil on shoes/boots; now the roads are horrific – dust problem. Many people commented that they like that there is limited access – only two roads in and out – keeping it self-contained and not a drive-through; also noted that they are small, narrow, not paved – kind of rustic

Trees

People really enjoy the trees, many of which were planted by early residents and relatives: ash, oak, Russian olive. The trees are

beautiful – ‘they make it’

Cottages

A lot of old family cottages; brought up their children with the cottage, and now children have cottages

Cottages were noted by many as beautiful – they like the quaintness – and how they are cottages, not homes. The cottage is the perfect size: small – part of its charm; a great retreat from permanent home in the city.

Minor Physical Attributes

Birds

All respondents commented on the attraction of birds – always a lot of birds in summer particularly hummingbirds; in the fall, a transition time and see grouse and pheasants that you wouldn’t see in the summer; along with pelicans, geese, eagles; some concern about changing habitat that may affect the birds

Animals / Insects / Fish

It was noted that there were not too many animals around, occasionally a deer; great ‘frogging’ – some live adjacent to a swamp, main drainage ditch with frogs – good entertainment; also raccoons and skunks run amuck – but no problem with them. They just stand and look.

Most like the bugs – sometimes hear them just like a buzz

Some comments about being able to fish off the shore of their cottages and catch fish – don’t need to go out in a boat

Intangible Qualities

Sounds / Smells

The sound of the lake was noted by everyone

The smell of Gimli distillery cooking a new mash was a major observation – not unpleasant, just familiar.

Views

Many grew up here so sometimes take the views for granted – but they recognize also that they have one of the nicer views in the area. Some noted looking at the trees in cottage yard, and also en route to the lake.

Senses of Wood, Stone, Sand, etc.

Many mentioned looking for 'lucky stones' (with holes in them); also beach glass along the beach (keep jars of them). others mentioned liking the smell of the wood, and of the camp fires. One noted that you can open windows and have different sounds all the time

Memories

People/Family

Most memories were of people – for about 30 – 40 years the family has had a celebration the long weekend of August in which over 100 people attend – family and neighbours, friends

A daughter was married at Loni Beach; two daughters have cottages at Loni Beach, and a third daughter rents a cottage at Loni Casual visits from neighbours, and always lots of family. Many like the quieter times in June and September.

This is a family cottage – a place to make more memories.

Boats

Many families owned a boat once, at first small boats; now there are a few boats on the lake, but more sail boats

Games

Board games recalled, along with horseshoes, lawn darts

LONI BEACH

A GIMLI HERITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Community Heritage Resources

This project is mainly the idea of Gimli resident and Gimli MHAC member Rick Lair.

The primary resource for this project has been Mr. Wally Johannson (MHAC Presiding Member), who provided a residents' directory and list of names of heritage cottage owners and family names. Mr. Johannson also kindly provided a great deal of information from his various Gimli Special Places projects.

Site visits were made with the following cottage owners at their cottages:

- Hartley and Marni Miller (Dr. Hamilton Cottage – 40 North Lake Street)
- Virginia Johnston (Sumarbustadur Cottage owned by Isford family siblings – 17 North Lake Street)
- Roslyn Marr Silversides (Cheatley (Marr) Cottage – 23 Vaughan Avenue)
- Lorna Tergesen (Tergesen Cottage – 56 Loni Street)
- Ian MacKenzie (Seaforth Cottage – 72 North Lake Street)

As well, phone interviews were conducted with historic cottage family names including Kim Orris and Brian and Kathryn Squair, who shared information and knowledge about their family history and Loni Beach.

The Rural Municipality of Gimli provided historic copies of historic maps of Loni Beach.

Nelson Gerrard, historian and genealogist who specializes in Icelandic history, provided early history of Loni Beach – as an original Icelandic homestead (1875) and its later development as a lakeshore property.

LONI BEACH

A GIMLI HERITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Heritage Districts – An Introduction

The following information has been drawn from material provided by the Historic Places Initiative in Manitoba, which is housed in Manitoba Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection

What is a Historic Place?

For the purposes of the Historic Places Initiative (HPI), a historic place is any structure, building, group of buildings, district, landscape, archaeological site or other place in Canada that has been recognized for its heritage value.

What is a Heritage District?

Different Canadian jurisdictions use different terms to identify this type of historic place, including: “historic area,” “historic district,” “heritage precinct,” “cultural landscape,” “heritage conservation area,” “secteur patrimonial” and “arrondissement historique” (French). Each jurisdiction provides its own definition of what constitutes this type of historic place. HPI has adopted the generic terms “heritage district” (English) and “secteur patrimonial” (French) to describe all these places.

For the purposes of HPI, a heritage district is more specifically defined as: a place comprising a group of buildings, structures, landscapes and/or archaeological sites and their spatial relationships where built forms are often the major defining features and where the collective identity has heritage value for a community, province, territory or the nation.

Heritage districts resonate with memory and tradition. They form an integral part of our cultural heritage. They contribute to our appreciation and understanding of the past and assist in establishing a sense of place and cultural identity. Heritage districts reflect some level of human settlement, occupation or use. As a consequence, they are recognizable for their concentration of built forms. However, the significance of heritage districts goes beyond their buildings, and includes other aspects of the environment such as view planes, streetscapes, gardens, landscape features and patterns of activity and use. Although natural landscapes tend to play a secondary role in districts, the interplay between cultural and natural resources can form an essential part of a district’s heritage character.

LONI BEACH

A GIMLI HERITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Values-Based Management and the Statement of Significance

Heritage buildings and collections of heritage buildings—districts—are rich, even complicated, repositories for anyone interested in our history. They connect us to our forebears, to their ideas, their ways of life, their hopes and dreams and even their disappointments. Some of these buildings and districts also help tell major stories about our past, about the currents and torrents of history — settlement, economic growth (and decline), political conflicts, cultural and scientific advances, social change.

All of the subjects that can be attributed to a heritage building or district can be called **values**. And for anyone involved in the conservation of a heritage site, it is imperative that the values for their building or district be clearly articulated and understood. In Manitoba, various governments have protected nearly 700 sites (mostly individual buildings) that are understood to have value to the community or the province. Most of these have been recognized for their cultural heritage values, which through the Historic Places Initiative (HPI) are analyzed with review of the following three broad categories:

Physical Values

Those technical issues (style/tradition, material, function, craftsmanship) that typically are associated with the architecture of a building

Associative Values

Those broad historical issues (historical theme, social/community, cultural, spiritual, scientific, educational) that often are connected with a person, group or event associated with a building

Environmental Values

Those contextual issues (relation of historic place to site/setting, contribution of historic place to greater context) that help make a building a significant part of a whole

Each designated building in Manitoba possesses its own distinct constellation of values. A clear and concise expression of these values is a key goal of HPI in Manitoba. Indeed, HPI has based its work on this foundation, with the understanding that a clear expression of a building's core values will ensure that decisions made about it — maintenance, research, interpretation, promotion, repairs, conservation — are directed at the right places. In short, values-based management will be a tool that can be used by owners to clarify purpose, focus resources and interpretation, avoid mistakes and protect their investment.

The first element in the values-based management approach is called the **Statement of Significance**, the primary document that describes a building's core values. The Statement of Significance has three primary purposes: 1) to explain the heritage value of a historic place (or district) to anyone interested in the place, 2) to provide guidance about heritage value to property owners, planners, architects, etc., and 3) to help guide the preparation of conservation plans when work is required to a heritage building or district.

There are three sections of a Statement of Significance (SoS):

Description of Historic Place, which describes what has been designated

Heritage Value, which describes why the historic place is important

Character-Defining Elements, which describe the key physical qualities of the building that speak directly to the heritage value and must be protected in order to preserve value

In terms of HPI's values-based management approach, it is the Heritage Value section that assumes key importance. The creation of a good, and useful, Heritage Value section addresses the following issues:

- It will identify and effectively describe the core heritage values of a historic place.
- It will ensure that the principal area of heritage value is emphasized (i.e., one of either architecture; person, group, event; or context).
- It will identify secondary values and place them in a hierarchy after the primary value. Values that are interesting, but not deemed significant, will not be identified in the SoS.
- It will guide the identification of character-defining elements.

The Character Defining Elements section identifies, in point form, the major materials, forms, spatial configurations, uses, and cultural associations or meanings that together comprise the heritage value of the historic place, and which must be retained in order to preserve its heritage value. The Character Defining Elements section should answer the question: "What are the key elements of the historic place that must be protected in order to preserve the heritage value of the site."

LONI BEACH

A GIMLI HERITAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Loni Beach Cottage Neighbourhood Statement of Significance

Description of Historic Place

The Loni Beach Cottage Neighbourhood is a distinct residential area in the Rural Municipality of Gimli, bounded on the east by Lake Winnipeg, on the north by Loni Street and on the south by North Fifth Avenue.

Heritage Value

The Loni Beach Cottage Neighbourhood is valued as an important and distinct cottage area in Gimli. Dating to the turn of the 20th century, when the first cottages were built just over the municipal boundary with what was then the Village of Gimli, the Loni Beach Cottage Neighbourhood has a rich history and distinct physical quality that makes it a vital part of Gimli's heritage fabric.

Character-defining Elements

Key elements that define the overall heritage character of the Loni Beach Cottage Neighbourhood include:

- its location on the northern edge of Gimli, adjacent on its eastern boundary to the Lake Winnipeg shoreline, on flat, low-lying land
- its division into two distinct sub-neighbourhoods: east and west of Loni Street
- lightly built chip-sealed roadways, narrow, and with no through-traffic vehicle access (thus minimizing vehicle traffic and associated speeds), promoting pedestrian-friendly thoroughfares and a traditional aura of cottage ambience in keeping with the quiet slower-paced recreational use of the area
- a natural park-like setting created by the trees that define property lines and screen views between cottages (trees are between 50 and 100 years old, and consist mostly of local species of ash, elm and white spruce)
- street views ending in collections of trees due to curving nature of streets
- easily accessible pedestrian routes to the lake shoreline

- sand beaches on the shoreline
- shoreline protection from the north from Loni Point
- absence of commercial, retail or industrial development
- public tennis courts and artesian well access (at Loni and Vaughan)
- predominance of early-20th century cottage architecture

Key elements that define the overall heritage character of the east side of the Loni Beach Cottage Neighbourhood include:

- curved streets that follow the shape of the Lake Winnipeg shoreline, paved and typically six (6) metres wide and lined with ditches spanned by pedestrian bridges, and additionally without sidewalks
- cottages oriented towards the lake, on long, narrow lots
- cottages along public access routes more densely arranged than along North Lake Avenue and Loni Street
- public beach access lanes (Comber Avenue, Vaughan Street and Howell Street) typically grassed and fenced, ending with stairs to the beach

Key elements that define the overall heritage character of the west side of the Loni Beach Cottage Neighbourhood include:

- traditional grid layout mirroring layout of the town of Gimli, with narrow streets running east-west, and with cottages facing north or south, and also featuring short lots and unpaved, tree-lined back lanes
- lots often heavily treed, with trees defining property lines and also providing privacy
- mix of small year-round houses with historic and contemporary seasonal cottages

Key elements that define the heritage character of the lots of the Loni Beach Cottage Neighbourhood include:

- heavy use of trees on lots
- use of trees, shrubs and hedges to define property lines and provide privacy
- moderate landscaping and few gardens
- most driveways made with permeable surfaces (gravel or packed earth, sometimes grassed)
- many with a variety of outbuildings, such as playhouses, sheds and privies, but not dominated by vehicle garages; and often informally placed behind cottages
- some with fences, typically wire but also a few with wood used as decorative elements

Key elements that define the heritage character of the cottages of the Loni Beach Cottage Neighbourhood include:

- many surviving early 20th century examples which retain partial or complete elements of their original form
- mostly one storey, seasonal, modest in form and construction with informality of placement on lots
- most with limited colour palettes (white, brown, black, blue) and many with windows facing the streets
- many with screened seasonal additions such as porches, decks, sunrooms, etc.
- some with decorative and light-hearted accoutrements, like flags, wind chimes, decorative signs and street numbers, etc.
- sympathetic rehabilitation of cottages to all-season use (especially in the east neighbourhood) to reflect existing informal heritage character



