



MUNICIPALITY OF

**PORT HOPE**

**HERITAGE DESIGNATION**

## **Address: 82 Victoria Street South**

**Known as:** John Tucker Williams House (Penryn Homestead)

**Architectural Style:** Neo-Classic

**Date Built:** Circa 1828-1829 (modifications circa 1890)

**Date Designated:** June 26, 1979 to By-Law No. 3212/79, SCHEDULE B

**Lot Description:** CON 1 PT LOT 9 BF



### **Architectural Description**

The house exhibits features of the neo-classic style, which was popular in Upper Canada from 1810 to the 1830's. This refers chiefly to the interior features of the house, which have survived from the original house. The exterior appearance is the result of extensive alterations made in the 1890's. These included the bricking over of the roughcast walls, the building of the two projecting porches to the north and south through the full height of the house, and a rebuilding of the roof, which altered its pitch and extended its eaves. The north porch did away with the original portico and the large arched window of the upstairs salon. Inside the porch is the original entrance doorway, which with its semi-elliptical fanlight and sidelights, is characteristic of neo-classic houses. The 1890's exterior double doors have a rectangular transom above them. The brick walls of the two-storey structure are in stretcher bond and the basement is coarse rubble construction. The roof is a medium pitched hip with centre flat deck and has brick chimneys set inside the plan. Each of the projecting porches has returned eaves, ornamental dentils, and a small circular window below the peak. From the main facade projection extends a porch with fluted Doric pillars and a carved radiating fan decoration in the pediment. On the north front projection is a pair of shuttered casement windows, and on the north facade wall are four two-over-two double hung shuttered sash windows, with multi panel sash. The projection on the rear of the structure has a paired one over one double hung sash window with a rectangular transom above and one two-over-two double hung sash window on either side of the projection.

On the walls of the south front are eight shuttered two-over-two double hung sash windows and the most important facade, was a typical five bay front. The later south projection has three arched entranceways. The central door is accompanied by a radiating fanlight and the side doors each have six windowpanes and a panel. Inside the south projection is the original entrance. It has delicately carved Greek pilasters to the side and an entablature above. The east wall has three shuttered one-over-one double hung sash windows and a later bay window with three shuttered one-over-one double hung sash windows. On the west wall of the west addition, there are one twelve-over-twelve double hung sash window and another one mutilated by converting the centre six panels into a single glass; both windows are shuttered. From the original house there are also three horizontally positioned casement windows, the centre one to be soon obstructed by a new chimney being built. Two shutters enclose the present set of casement windows. On the grounds, at the rear of the house, are two small octagonal buildings, a third has been destroyed. One, a latticed gazebo at the end of the garden, has a pagoda roof with a finial crowning it. The other structure of similar form has eight panelled sides, each with a glazed transom. It too has a pagoda roof and finial. A large board and batten stable survives to the west of the house. It is white like the house. To the south of that barn is a modern structure serving as a workshop.

Inside the house the ceiling cornices are decorated with simple mouldings. Much of the woodwork including the mantelpieces in the dining and living rooms and in the upstairs bedrooms are carved and moulded with

classical details. The very broad doors are single leaf and panelled. A lovely moulded banister and newel post stands in the front hallway. The ground storey floors are hardwood and upstairs are wide pine planks. In compliance with naval Commander Williams' wishes, the floor of the oval-shaped ballroom upstairs slopes downward at both ends to simulate the deck of a boat. In the original kitchen on the ground floor to the southwest a large hearth and bake oven remains. Below this kitchen is the original summer kitchen where the present owners have uncovered another large hearth and bake oven, which the previous owners had bricked in. The original staircase was replaced by the present one at the time the house underwent major exterior changes. In the attic, part of the original hand-hewn wood eaves trough remains on the south facade where the central projection was added.

### **Historical Abstract**

Commander John Tucker Williams (1789-1854), a British naval officer, built Penryn Homestead. Williams was formerly of the Royal Navy having fought under Nelson at the battle of Trafalgar. He came to Upper Canada during the War of 1812-15 stationed with Admiral Yeo's Fleet on Lake Ontario based at Kingston. He settled in Port Hope and in 1823, he purchased lot 9, concession 1, Hope Township. He married Sarah Spradbrow Ward, the daughter of another early Port Hope settler, Captain Thomas Ward.

During the Rebellion of 1837, he commanded the Durham Regiment, was appointed Magistrate and later represented the County in Parliament (1841-1848), and in 1851, he was Port Hope's first appointed Mayor.

Penryn Homestead is one of the oldest known dwellings in Port Hope. The house was named Penryn after the area in Cornwall from which John. T. Williams came. It was built of lumber cut on the property and sawn in a water-powered mill on the Ganaraska River. Because the family was anxious to move in, the house was rushed to completion with green lumber so the family was unable to live in it the first winter due to shrinkage. Bricks for the fireplaces and chimneys were made in Port Hope in the brickyard once located south east of present day Trinity College School.

J.T. Williams' children, Arthur T.H., Augusta, and Emma upon their marriages resided in three nearby estates: Penryn Park (82 Victoria Street), Arthur and Emily Seymour Williams; Idalia, Charles Seymour and Emma Williams Seymour; Dunain, William and Augusta Williams Fraser (345 Lakeshore Rd.). After the death of John T. Williams in 1854, his wife Sarah Ward Williams (1807-1888) resided at Penryn Homestead until her death at age 80 in 1888.

As mentioned in the description above, the exterior appearance of the house underwent extensive alterations in the 1890's. These alterations included: bricking over the roughcast walls; building two projecting porches to the north and south through the full height of the house; rebuilding the roof, altering the pitch; and elimination of the original portico and the large arched window of the upstairs salon.



Archival Photo Before Modifications circa 1890, Archives of Ontario