MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 57-59 King Street

Known as: Charles Clemes Duplex

Architectural Style: Second Empire

Date Built: Circa 1876 (RESTORED)

Date Designated: July 18, 1988 to By-Law No. 52/88, SCHEDULE B-3

Lot Description: PT TOWN PLOT 6



Architectural Description

Among the few local examples of the Second Empire Style, this semi-detached brick house (and the adjoining unit at 57 King Street) stands as a textbook example of that memorable style. Its colossal three-storey scale is all the more impressive because of the semi-detached arrangement, symmetrically divided. Both halves of the composition contain a complex array of detail, not uncommon among the grander Victorian homes, but of course, the distinguishing element is the steeply pitched mansard roof (here lacking a bell cast) in cedar-shingles, not to mention the gabled dormers with eaves returns and moulded pilasters framed around segmentally-arched windows. A third façade dormer, centrally placed, boasts slender lights and is topped with a bracketed pediment.

While the roof is the dominant feature, the facade contains a wealth of notable features: two storey bay windows trimmed with band courses and decorative panels in brick; dentilled cornice and paired brackets; slender windows with original glazing intact some flat arched, some with segmental arches, some round headed; twin entrances with prominent arched transoms and panelled double doors. The Second Empire themes and elaborate detail continue on the side elevation; the house is remarkably well preserved save for the loss of the entrance porch and bowed roof verandahs (one on the north side and one on the south) although archival photographs are available for restoration.

Inside the side-hall plan is a suitably grand essay in Victorian opulence with exceptional plaster cornices and medallions intact. Most of the trim including door and window surrounds, interior shutters, and baseboards remain on view as well as doors and an interior doorcase. Fireplace mantels typical of the highly elaborate Victorian period are featured. The staircase, with boldly chamfered newel post, is a highlight.

Historical Abstract

In July 1876, Charles Clemes purchased from his future son-in-law, Fred W. Whitehead, lot 3 of town plot lot 6. Marcus Fayette Whitehead was the Collector of Customs and owner of Town Plot Lot 6. He died without a will in 1875, and his son, F.W. Whitehead, acting as administrator to his father's estate subdivided the block into five lots.

Clemes sold part of lot 3 to his son, John Pope Clemes suggesting that the duplex may have been constructed during 1876, or his son purchased the northerly unit while Charles and his wife, Phoebe, and their children resided in the southern most unit.

Charles Clemes (1814-1878) was a dry good merchant with a store at the corner of Ontario and Walton Street that offered "groceries, provisions, crockery glass, and painted ware." He was originally from Bodmin, Cornwall, England, and came to Canada in 1856 with his wife Ann and their children, Charles Pascoe, John Pope, Kate, Matthew, Charlotte Ann and William Peter. Another child Thomas was born in Port Hope and died shortly after and wife Ann died in 1858. Charles married Phoebe Lonsdale (1833-1890) and had a second family of six children, two of whom died as babies. Family members of his first family resided in one half of the Clemes Duplex, while Charles

and his second wife and family resided in the other half.

Charles Clemes died in 1878 leaving the house to his wife, Phoebe. His sons continued to operate the grocery business, and the house became the home of two generations of the Clemes family later transferring to Charles and Phoebe's sons upon the death of Phoebe in 1890. Charles sons later sold their half of the duplex in 1897.

John Pope Clemes (1847-1898), who was Mayor of Port Hope in 1886, sold his half of the duplex in 1891 and moved to McCreery House (78 Augusta Street). In addition to being Mayor, he held the position of Major in the local Regiment. He was Quartermaster of the amous Midland Battalion, and the first officer to return to Port Hope after the Battle at Batoche where the Battalion fought against Riel. Upon his death in 1898, John Pope Clemes was given a funeral with full military honours.

Archivial Photo



Historical Directory Ad





Architectural Detail

The south verandah was recently restored based on archival photos.