MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 142 Walton Street

Known as: Dr. John & Ester Clemesha House (Seaton Hall)

Architectural Style: Walton Street Heritage District - Queen Anne

Date Built: Circa 1892

Date Designated: October 6, 1997 to By-Law No. 44/97

Lot Description: PT 56 PT 69



Architectural Description

This large two and a half-storey house is constructed of brick laid in stretcher bond and is basically rectangular in plan with three projecting gabled bays. The hipped roof is of moderate pitch with a flat centre deck. On the first floor main facade there are six bays and on the second, eight. The window heads are segmental in shape with arches of radiating brick and lugsills. Above the flat deck of the porch is a wider window, still segmental in shape but with a heavy transom bar redolent of the Edwardian era. The segmental transom of the front door matches the window above. The double doors have decorative panels below long lights. There are brackets under the returned eaves of the gable on the southeast projecting bay. A single chimney rises from each of the west and east slopes of the roof. This elaborate house of the late Victorian age exhibits many features of the earlier Italianate style; for example, the lower pitched roof, the heavy eaves, the wide soffit and paired windows all hark back to the architectural style popular in the l870's. However, the spindle work on the front porch and the angled bays, which are gabled not hipped-roofed are evidence, of the later construction date of the 1890s.

An early photograph of Seaton Hall, in the Clayton collection, shows a large, vine-covered, spool-work verandah on the east side of the house. This has since been torn down. The photograph also reveals an oriel on the second storey of the main facade. The removal of this feature may explain the more recent style of the window in the now recessed section above the front porch. The dark shutters visible in the early photograph - an attractive feature - no longer adorn the house.

Historical Abstract

In 1892, John W. Clemesha, Port Hope physician, bought the western section of the property on which Seaton Hall stands from Thomas Hewson, a local carpenter and builder. The easterly section was bought from John Smart in the same year and it is likely that construction of the house commenced shortly afterwards.

Before 1850, on the west side of this corner lot, stood Thomas Wilcock's blacksmith shop and according to the 1853 Wall and Forrest map of Port Hope, shoemaker James North owned a section of land to the north. On September 13th of 1872, several houses in the area were severely damaged in a serious fire, but it is difficult to ascertain from the newspaper article of the day which house was on the future Seaton Hall site.

John W. Clemesha was a foremost physician of the town. He married Esther Craig, daughter of prominent businessman William Craig, whose residence was located at 42 Bedford Street and whose tannery, William Craig & Son was located on Cavan Street. Mr. Craig was Mayor of Port Hope for four years (1866-67, 1877-78), and was a mainstay of the Baptist Church.

In 1917, Clemesha's widow assumed ownership of Seaton Hall, and in 1937 their son, John C. Clemesha, also a doctor, sold the property to Ada M.E. Newman-Jones. The house changed hands several times after Mrs. Newman-Jones sold it in 1945 and is now sub-divided into apartments.



Architectural Detail

There are brackets under the returned eaves of the gable on the southeast projecting bay but they are missing from the west bay.