MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 128 Walton Street

Known as: Furby House

Architectural Style: Walton Street Heritage District - Regency

Date Built: Circa 1840

Date Designated: April 11, 1988 to By-Law No. 39/88, SCHEDULE B-8

Lot Description: STEWART PLAN PT TOWN PLOT 56



Architectural Description

This two-storey building is located at the end of a row of non-related buildings and is connected on the west side to George Perk's three-storey brick building, 130-132 Walton Street (Perks Terrace). It is rectangular in plan, has two storeys with three bays on the second floor main facade and a hipped roof of moderate pitch.

The original frame construction (visible in the streetscape photograph of 1925 in the Cal Clayton collection) has been covered in composition shingle. A recessed porch, one storey high, is at the front of the house, supported by the walls of the house itself but decorated by wooden pilasters at the corners and a low carved wooden railing. Another matching pilaster is on the west edge of the house adjoining Perks Terrace (130-132 Walton Street).

The 1925 photograph reveals a Tudor type of treatment of the western section of the first storey with diagonal half timbering and shutters on the window. The windows have a flat opening shape and plain surround. A wooden cornice and fascia runs across the front of the house between the first and second storeys. This feature is now covered in composition shingle.

Historical Abstract

From the Crown land granted in 1797 to Walton and Smith, four acres were sold in 1817 to James Hawkins, the ingenious blacksmith familiarly known as "Uncle Jim". Hawkins then began to sell off smaller parcels of land. William Furby (1799-1881) purchased one sixth of an acre in 1829. The house is thought to have been constructed circa 1840. In 1856, James H, Hagerman, gentleman; Dr. George Perks who constructed Perks Terrace one door west of Furby House (130-132 Walton Street); and William Furby signed an agreement to share the right of way (Brown's Lane (now Drive) which led to Hagerman's house and provided access to the rear of the Furby and Perks buildings.

Furby was born in Yorkshire, England in 1799 and was trained as a printer and cabinetmaker before he came to Upper Canada in 1819. He settled in Port Hope in 1826 and for many years engaged in the furniture business. In 1831, Mr. Furby in partnership with a Mr. Woodhouse, purchased the printing plan of Mr. John Vail, who a few months earlier had established the Port Hope Telegraph, the first newspaper. Mr. Vail's press was an older wooden press that Mr. Furby soon replaced with one of the first iron printing presses in Canada. His partner, Mr. Woodhouse, died in the summer of 1831, and Mr. Furby continued the publication of the paper alone. The Telegraph, after several name changes, was later renamed the Guide.

In 1856, George Manning Furby (1833 - 1911), elder son of William, entered into partnership with Mr. Crea, took over the Guide and soon published the paper three times weekly. In 1856, William Furby focused his attention on his furniture making business. He had a turning and bedstead factory on Cavan Street in a building owned by William Barrett.

George M. Furby sold his interest in the Guide in 1861. He remained active in municipal affairs as both high school and public school Trustee, Harbour Commissioner, president of the Board

of Trade, and Warden of St. John's Church. He became manager of the Midland Loan and Savings in 1890, the offices of which were located in the building that formerly housed Russell's cabinet warerooms (114-116 Walton, Russell Block). George M. Furby resided at 61 Bramley Street North during this period.

Historical Newspaper Ad



An ad that appeared in the Guide in June 1860 announced that William Furby was manufacturing furniture at "his old stand, Walton Street". He also had an undertaking department with "a first class hearse and coffin trimmings with coffins kept constantly on hand."

The house at 128 Walton Street remained in the Furby family until the death of George M. Furby. The executors of his will, William P. Noxon, his son-in-law and Dr. L. B. Powers, sold the sixth of an acre property to Alfred Burney Skitch, tailor, in 1912. His widow, Olive retained ownership of the property until 1953.



Architectural Detail

The building recently underwent a facelift. It appears to have evolved from a standard three bay design but at some point the east and centre thirds were recessed. The brackets to eaves may have also been a later addition. At one time a small shop was connected to the east wall of the house visible in a photograph from 1878 in the Clayton Collection. In the Insurance Underwriters Plan of 1901, it was listed as a harness shop. It has since been removed.