MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 47 Pine Street South

Known as: Henry Howard Meredith House (Hill and Dale)

Architectural Style: Victorian

Date Built: Circa 1851

Date Designated: April 21, 1986 to By-Law No. 28/86, SCHEDULE B-10

Lot Description: PLAN 8 LOT 8 PT LOT 9



Architectural Description

Hill and Dale represents a fascinating composite of periods now essentially Edwardian from the major renovations to the interior and addition of rectangular bays, new entrances, and extensive verandahs. It exhibits signs of its earlier history in some of the arrangements and interior trim. The house is now essentially a two-storey brick-faced structure, ell-shaped in plan, with hipped roof and gabled front to the addition. The exterior is notable for its brackets, of long console form in two sizes belonging to its first phase of circa 1851, the eared trim and four-paned windows and Italianate gable belonging to the second phase of the mid or late 1870's, the bay windows, east entrance and new south entrance plus the columned verandahs of circa 1903.

The interior layout largely survives from the original main block facing east, incorporating a centre hall plan with internal chimney between the front and rear rooms on the north side and the chimney against the hall partition on the south side. Interior detail of note includes fragments of earlier trim belonging to the 1850's, a substantial amount, particularly in the north wing, of the 1870's, and a most significant complement of late Victorian detail, including the cherry staircase, and significant Edwardian improvements. These last comprise new mantelpieces throughout the main block, most with mechanical tile surrounds and metal linings to fireplaces, one a glass mosaic facing decorated with a neo-Classic design of garlands and torches, and panelled wainscot in the dining and breakfast rooms on the north side, and fretwork and spindle work grilles at the tops and/or side of principal openings. Above in the northeast bedroom is a noteworthy fireplace. Plasterwork exhibits detail of different periods including a simple cove appearing to be a later change of the 1920's or 30's. In addition to the above, the beaded wainscoting on the circular stairs to the attic must be mentioned.

Historical Abstract

Hill and Dale is a four-acre estate in the heart of Port Hope built for Henry Howard Meredith in the early 1850's. The four acres that comprise the estate were acquired by several owners over a period of approximately five years. In 1844, Richard Barrett purchased a lot from John David Smith. In 1845, he also acquired a lot to the south from James Grant. His next purchase included the lots on the corner of Pine and Augusta Street. Unfortunately, by 1846, he declared bankruptcy and his lands were sold at public auction. By 1847, H.H. Meredith had purchased the property. Meredith also purchased the "Brewery Lot", lot 57 from William Garnett in 1851. Hill and Dale is built primarily on the former Barrett lot, but extremely close to the boundary line of the former Brewery Lot.

Henry Howard Meredith (1815-1892) was a prominent figure in Port Hope. He was a native of Ireland who came to Canada in 1829. In 1840, he married Margaret Brown, the third daughter of John Brown, a notable early settler. Brown erected the first brick building in Port Hope in 1823 on Mill Street South. Meredith, along with his father-in-law, John Brown, and brother-in-law, James Madison Andrews, ran the Port Hope Harbour and Wharf Company until 1851 when the Board of Harbour Commissioners was established. Meredith was secretary for the Company from 1829 to 1851.

Over the next decade, he would acquire extensive real estate holdings including the Crawford Block (41 Mill Street N.), and blocks on Walton Street (53-57, 59, 63 and 65 Walton Street). In addition to purchasing the Brewery Lot from Garnett, in 1851, Henry Howard Meredith contracted him to erect Hill and Dale. William Garnett was an established architect and builder whose building achievements during the 1850's included the alterations that were made to St. Mark's Church in 1851 (51 King Street). Born in England in 1818, he came to Canada in 1849 and immediately began work on some important contracts. He established a Carpenter Shop with a planing machine on John Street that merited mention in the local paper. The house was completed by 1853, as it appears illustrated on the Wall and Forrest Map of 1853.

In 1869, Meredith sold Hill and Dale to Henry Covert (1815-1893). Covert was the son of Colonel Covert who had emigrated to Cobourg in 1823. In the late 1860's, Henry Covert was the President of the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton Railway, later named the Midland Railway. During Covert's ownership of the house some modifications were made; addition of the eared trim, four-paned windows and an Italianate styled gabled wing were added to the house. Covert died in 1893, and the house was conveyed to Covert's wife and daughter who sold the property in 1901 to George H. Ralston. Once again the house underwent some modifications, which included adding bay windows, altering the east entrance and adding a new south main entrance and the columned verandahs in circa 1903.

Ralston had a distinguished military record during World War I (1914-1918). He advanced from Major to Brigadier General, an honour that has been commemorated in the naming of a local street and the legion hall. The house remained in the Ralston family until 1985.



Architectural Detail

Hill and Dale represents a fascinating composite of periods with the addition of extensive verandahs.