MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 31 Baldwin Street

Known as: James Clark Cottage

Architectural Style: Victorian

Date Built: Circa 1851 (modifications Circa 1871-1879)

Date Designated: April 11, 1988 to By-Law No. 39/88, SCHEDULE B-5

Lot Description: BALDWIN PLAN PT 1 TO 3 N OF WALTON ST



Photo Credit: Michael Wallace/Imagelink Studio

Architectural Description

The house is a one and one-half storey late Neo-Classic, red brick, gabled roof, with front gable projecting, and brick vestibule with ornamental brick frieze. Stretcher bond brick on front and side, possibly brick veneer, done at a later date. Corresponding with the original house is the front door case with tall four paned sidelights with spandrel panels below, three paned transom above the door, and three-panel door.

Some trim of the interior relates to the original period including the casings to doorways with a very fine bead on the reveal. Certain back moulds with filled cyma-reversa and sloped filled profile. There is evidence revealed in refinishing the hall of the timber framing of the house and the cordian wood lath used in the original construction. The floor framing of the ground floor has a centre-hewn beam carrying straight sawn joists spanning to the end sills, and appears to need support.

The brick veneer is a later improvement, possibly contemporary with the construction of the Second Empire style next door, for the brick to the north face and west end appear to be more carefully selected than chosen for the east face. Retrimming of the interior has occurred at the later period including the replacements of back moulds to the hall and the oak staircase balustrade and newel. Certain additional improvements accompanied the brick veneer such as the addition of the front vestibule, the east side bay window, and it is believed the reconstruction of the rear wing over an older foundation This rear wing has circular sawn joints to the ground floor. Later this wing had a second storey added.

Historical Abstract

The house is situated on primarily lot 1, 2, and part of lot 3 in the Baldwin Plan. The Baldwin Plan is comprised of Town Plot Lot 91, nine and a half acres which was purchased by Dr. William Warren Baldwin in 1813. Dr. Baldwin was a prominent citizen of Upper Canada residing in Toronto and practicing medicine as well as law. Upon his death in 1844, his son William A. Baldwin continued to sell lots in Town Plot Lot 91. The naming of Baldwin Street commemorates the early landowner. The Museum was officially opened in 1981 as an example of a working man's cottage of the 1860's with period furnishings and household goods of that era.

Over the past twenty years some restoration work has been done on the home, and a barn was assembled from older material donated by Hope Township farmers. Many examples of pioneer tools and implements are on display in the barn.

William A. Baldwin sold this lot in 1851 to James Clark, a labourer. On the Wall & Forrest Map of 1853, a large T-shaped dwelling is shown set back from Walton Street identified as J. Clarke’s. The house, which would later have an Italianate tower added to the front, is thought to be built circa 1851. At the rear of the lot, which extends to Baldwin Street are two smaller buildings, one in the location of the present day 31 Baldwin, the footprint appearing to be a small cottage perhaps with an extension to the rear.

By 1871, James Clark sold 31 Baldwin to Henry C. Russell. Mr. Russell was a cabinetmaker and furniture dealer who, in 1875, constructed the Russell Block (114-116

Walton Street) . In 1870, Henry C. Russell had also purchased and still owned a house on Augusta Street (72 Augusta Street) . He began to experience financial difficulties and claimed insolvency in 1879 then recovered financially and maintained his business and property on Augusta and Walton Street until 1886 when he declared bankruptcy. He sold this property in 1879 to Thomas Garnett, which perhaps allowed him to keep his other business and personal interests. As described above, this house underwent a transformation from a one and a half storey cottage to its present shape. The front door with sidelights and transom and some interior trim and door cases date from the original construction circa 1850. The brick veneer was added at a later date along with the front vestibule, the east side bay window, and it is believed the rear wing was reconstructed over an older foundation. Later this wing had a second storey added.

It is not known if the modifications were made during the ownership by H. Russell or if they occurred when he sold the house to Thomas Garnett. However, Thomas Garnett was a mason, who later in the next century, along with W.R. Chislett would be one of the contractors responsible for construction of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in 1906 (131 Walton Street). In 1924, he also built Dr. Powers School at Ward and Hope Street. Garnett was also awarded the contract to construct the Capitol Theatre in 1930 (14 Queen Street). The house remained in the Garnett family until 1960.

