MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 59 Francis Street

Known as: John Might House

Architectural Style: Gothic Revival

Date Built: Circa 1865

Date Designated: May 16, 1983 to By-Law No. 31/83, SCHEDULE B-2

Lot Description: PLAN 11 LOT 9 PT LOT 10



Architectural Description

This Picturesque Revival house of the mid 1860's displays decorative elements of Gothic Revival origin: decorative trim, steeply pitched gables, board and batten siding, and irregular shape. The windows have quatrefoil surrounds in the upper panes, a feature to be found in several other Port Hope houses of the same era. The windows are of varying shape, divided by heavy wood mullions. Significant original interior features are drip mouldings and a fine staircase. Some interior changes have taken place: a fireplace added; kitchen extended; south window in second parlour replaced by French doors; and basement stairs sacrificed for a cupboard. Low ceilings upstairs have been removed to reveal earlier higher ceilings. Early photographs reveal that a porch ran the length of the west half of the facade.

Historical Abstract

The College Subdivision contains about 245 acres and extends from the Lake to Molson Street in the north Hope Street on the west and Nelson on the east. When the town was incorporated in 1834, the College Subdivision or lot number 4 and the number 8, the Ridout lot, were added to the original town plot. Lot number four was Clergy Reserve and was given to King's College in 1828. Sale or rental of the property would contribute to the support of the College at Toronto. In 1849, it was offered for sale at $8.00 an acre. The University of Toronto bought it and soon subdivided the property into lots. The street names were assigned by the University after prominent men. Francis Street was named after Francis Hincks, Prime Minister from 1851-54.

Lot 9 and part lot 10 were originally part of the King's College grant of land. The first transaction of this property occurred in 1864 when John Might bought several lots through the King's College bursar, David Buchan.

John Might (1794-1865) was originally from Dublin, Ireland emigrating to Canada in 1833. He was a saddler, who advertised, "saddler, harness and trunkmaker, every article in the line of the best quality, constantly on hand, or made to order, upon moderate terms". He was located on Ward Street in 1851, then moved his saddlery establishment to Mill Street approximately where the Registry Office now stands (17 Mill North built in 1871). He also performed the function of the Justice of the Peace, and was a quartermaster in the militia in 1847.

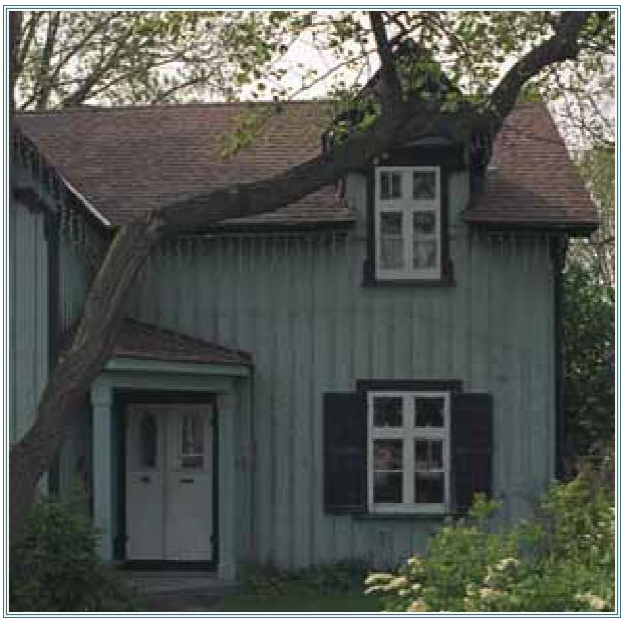
In 1865, John Might left the property to his children, son Samuel Might, and daughter Jane Dickson. He also left to his daughter some other properties he owned in Protestant Hill including a townhouse at the corner of William and King Street (6 William Street) and an adjoining house as described in his will.

It is thought that Robert and William T. Roberts, who were sailors, resided in the house during this period. Later owners found a telescope of the Roberts in the house.

In 1873, William Garnett purchased the house. William Garnett was an established architect and builder, whose building achievements during the 1850's included construction of Hill and Dale (47 Pine Street S.), and 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. By 1853, he had established a Carpenter Shop with a planing machine which merited mention in the local paper. In 1873, he purchased a lot on the west side of King Street and is credited with the construction of a brick house in the Gothic Revival style (50 King Street) circa 1875, which he later sold in 1884.

In 1882, Garnett and his wife transferred the property to Edward H. Sanders who then conveyed the property to Robert Wade in 1889. Wade retained ownership for many years. In 1920, the house was transferred to Roland and Marion Jex and remained in the Jex family for many more decades.



Architectural Detail

Early photographs reveal that a porch ran the length of the west half of the facade.