MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 20 King Street

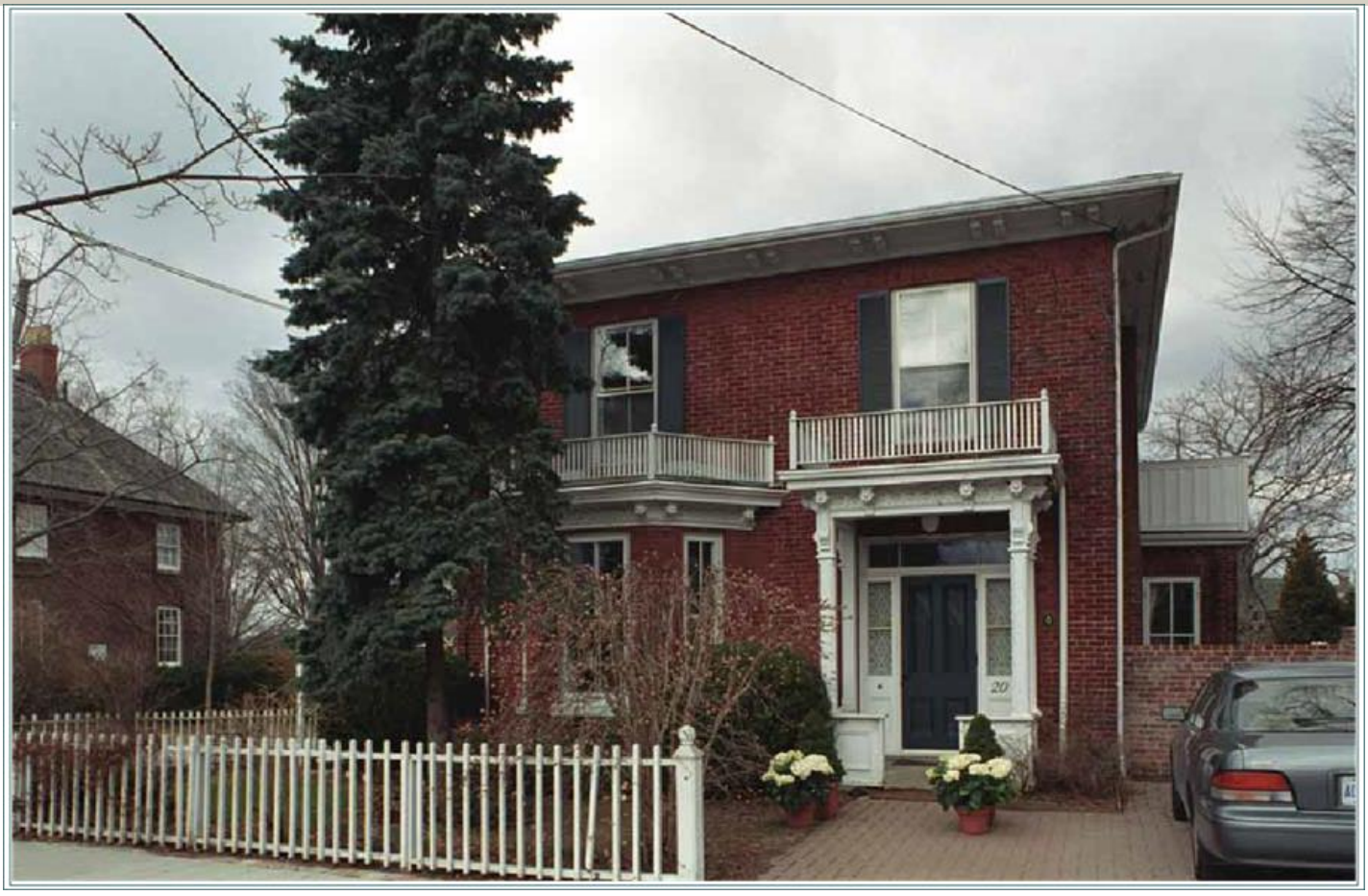
Known as: John Read House

Architectural Style: Victorian

Date Built: Circa 1870

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

This two-storey house is clad in brick laid in an unusual pattern exhibiting paired headers between the normal stretcher pattern. This is similar to a type known as garden wall bond. The house has a low-pitched hipped roof with projecting eaves. Under the eaves lie pairs of tooled "S" brackets on a moulded frieze.

The window openings are flat and are headed by a brick radiating voussoir. The front facade top-storey windows have brick sills, which have replaced the wooden lugsills that sit below all of the home's other windows. The front facade has a one storey bay window with a hipped roof and eaves jutting out. A moulded corona decorates the plain cornice. Beneath his are medallioned block brackets set on a moulded frieze panel which itself has been intricately decorated with carved swirling medallions.

The main entrance is framed by a flat-topped portico. It is highly decorated in the same fashion as the bay and is supported further by carved brackets and bevelled posts. A moulded panel encloses the bottom portion of the portico. At one time, both the bay and the portico had ornate wooden cresting with fine urn decoration above. The main entrance itself is a panelled door flanked by sidelights and headed by a flush, light transom panel.

A one-storey side addition has pilasters, which run to the eave line of the balcony above. A moulded and panelled balustrade capped by round urns encloses the balcony. Underneath the eaves one can see decorative stepped brickwork.

Historical Abstract

In the Wall and Forrest Map of 1853, several lots in the vicinity of this house are identified as being owned by John Read. He appears to have owned two lots on Armour Street (part of Town Plot Lot 18) in addition to a lot on the corner of William and King Street (town plot lot 10). John Read (1798-1886) was born in Dublin, Ireland and emigrated to Port Hope circa 1830.

In 1853, he was a Town Inspector overseeing the By-Laws of the Municipal Council regarding liquor licensing. In a business directory of the late 1850's, he provides his occupation as collector and his address as Ward Street. In the 1861 census, he provides his occupation as carpenter as well as a much later census of 1881. With the number of lots that he purchased in the area and his skills as a carpenter, he undoubtedly was buying lots, with the intention of building houses and later selling them.

John Read would have been age 72 at the time this house was constructed circa 1872. The Read House was also known as the Simpson House. John Read's daughter, Mary Jane, married William Simpson and they resided at 20 King Street. By 1865, William Simpson and William Read, one of John Read's four sons, established a wine and liquor store on Walton Street (from archival photos it appears to be located in the E.P. Smith Block, 34-46 Walton Street).

Although John Read provides his address as Mill Street in directories of the 1870's, by 1881, at age 78, he is residing in the same household as his daughter Mary Jane, her husband William Simpson and another Read son,

Henry. Henry was a secretary for the Midland Railroad.

Much later in the 20th century, the house was divided into two units but it has now been restored to its former single-family use.



Architectural Detail

The main entrance is framed by a flat-topped portico. It is highly decorated in the same fashion as the bay and is supported further by carved brackets and bevelled posts. The main entrance itself is a panelled door flanked by sidelights and headed by a flush, light transom panel.