MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 53-57 Walton Street

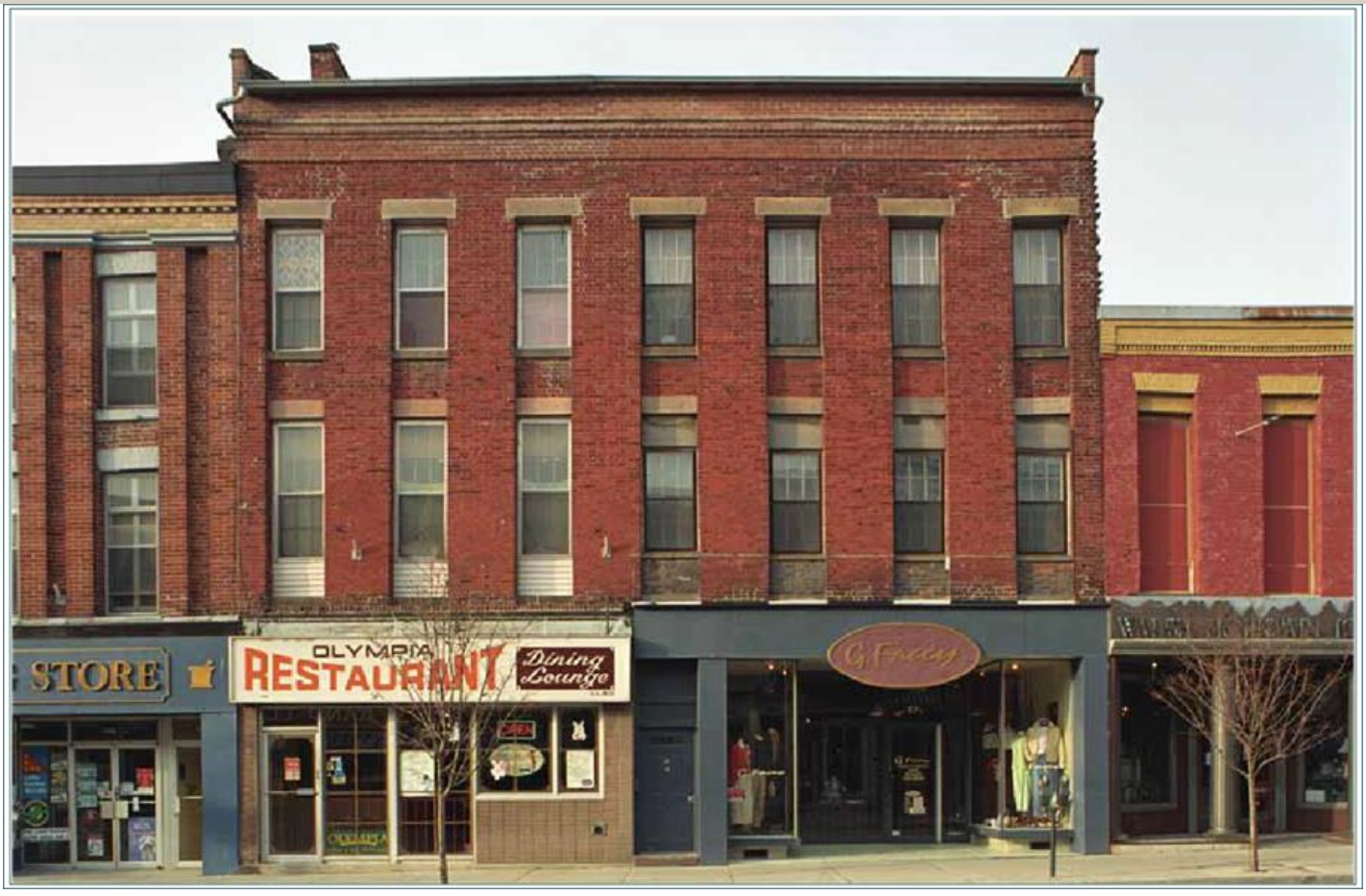
Known as: Meredith Building

Architectural Style: Walton Street Heritage District

Date Built: Circa 1850

Date Designated: October 6, 1997 to By-Law No. 44/97

Lot Description: PLAN 33 PT LOT 53 PT LOT 54



Architectural Description

This is a three storey brick commercial block with residential and/or storage space above. It has two units facing Walton Street, each being separated by a stairway. The block is a remarkably elegant version of the first phase of building and follows the early vernacular as it emerges into the typical local pilastered form. The low-pitched gabled roof supports twin chimneys on the east end. Piers separating the window recesses in the upper storeys run to the top of the third storey where the wall breaks out as a continuous band with elaborate brickwork to the cornice. The upper storeys have seven bays to the main facade, each window headed by a plain stone lintel and supported by a plain stone sill. The building is all natural red brick, except for the cornice, which is lighter due to previous painting. The storefronts are of modern design; the west end being altered more than the east end, but it too has been changed.

Historical Abstract

Henry Howard Meredith acquired the landupon which several blocks were built on Walton Street including 53-57, 59, 63 and 65 Walton Street. The building located at 53 - 57 Walton was the earliest block erected (1850) by H.H. Meredith. Occupants of the building soon after its erection were J. Morton and Company (Dry Goods, Crockery), William Gwatkin (General Store), and Gordon and Hays (Sheet Iron & Coppersmiths).

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.

John Brown came to Port Hope from Cavan Ireland via the United States in 1818. He was a member of the legislature for Dur-ham County in 1830 and 1835. Brown erected the first brick building in Port Hope in 1823, the Royal Hotel on Mill Street South that was later demolished and replaced by a gas station. His mills located north of town on the river, the Brown Stone Mills included flouring mills, sawmills, a blacksmith and cooper shop, a store, a distillery and granary. He died in 1842, after having made a contribution to the growth and development of the town.

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. The same year he built an elegant house on a four-acre estate near his extensive real estate holdings on Walton Street (Hill and Dale, 47 Pine Street South). In addition to these properties, Meredith was noted for purchasing the Crawford Block, a terrace on Mill Street (41 Mill Street North) in 1855.

The deaths of Meredith, his wife and their daughter by 1902, saw 53-57 Walton and the rest of his estate being sold to John A. Brown in 1907. Brown’s executors divided the estate and 53-57 Walton Street was sold in two parts, the east unit to Paul Haggis, and the west unit to Irving S. Margles.



Architectural Detail

This building follows the typical local pilastered form but a hybrid form with piers between window recesses between the upper storeys. The recesses are continuous to the heads of the third floor windows where the wall breaks out as a continuous band with elaborate brickwork to the cornice. The windows are long and narrow, double hung with the smaller sash uppermost.