MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 5-17 Walton Street

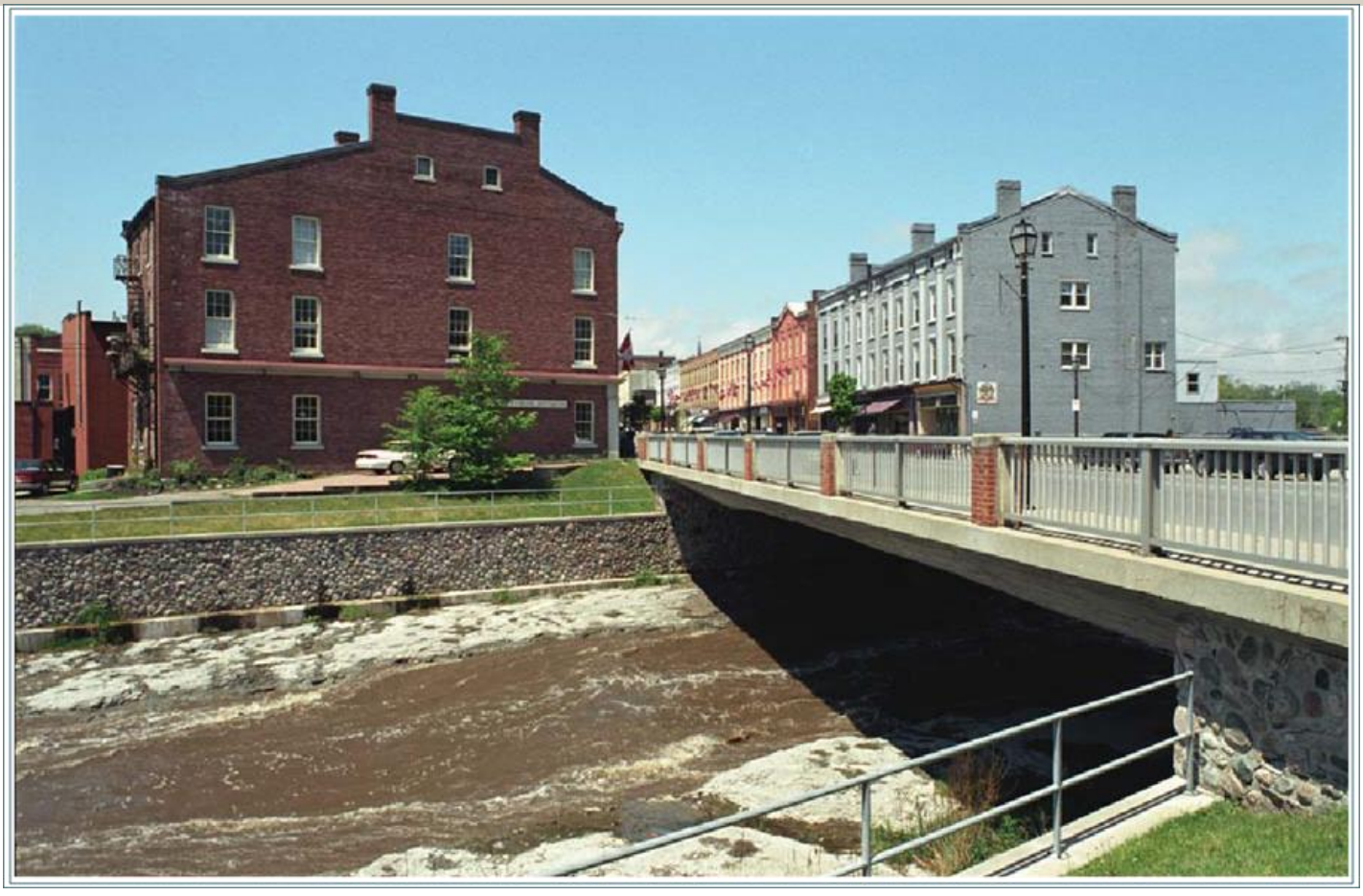
Known as: Post Office Block (Riordan Block)

Architectural Style: Walton Street Heritage District

Date Built: Circa 1877

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

Lot Description: PLAN 14; PT LOT 5 LOT 4 LOT 6



Architectural Description

White brick commercial block with Nos. 5 -17 stores below and storage space above in six units. This later building was very much in the mid-Victorian mode, but still carried the local details of ornamental brickwork, including labels over segmental window heads, a band course serving as a shop front cornice and heavily modelled parapet fronting the low-pitched shed roof.

The shop fronts themselves had been seriously mutilated by 1970 and only two of the original windows were complete, with parts of two others, and the entrance to the upper floors also surviving. Alterations to shop fronts to install modem aluminium in dark bronze finish had improved the front generally, but the fixed awnings and curious signboards were added, but less sympathetic adornments. The building was, regrettably, sandblasted, despite the fact that it had weathered like most "white" brick to a pleasant mottled buff colour.

This building, the Riordan Block, was severely damaged in the 1980 flood and removed to effect the subsequent floodway improvements. An old photograph also shows Mr. Riordan's thumbing of the nose to local authorities insisting that all buildings on Walton be built in brick. For he constructed a "bridge" of wooden stores over the Ganaraska saying they had a brick wall at each end. Needless to say they went out in a flood!

Historical Abstract

John Riordan built this six unit two-storey commercial block in 1877. Construction of the block was controversial, and town council had objections. John Riordan was the son of early settler Dennis Riordan, originally from Limerick Ireland, who settled in Port Hope in 1819. He was a tax collector and bailiff. In addition to purchasing this lot on Walton Street, he also owned land on Ontario Street, a town lot that was subdivided into small lots and sold during the 1850's.

Numerous businesses were located in the block most notably the Post Office. The Post Office, which was originally established in 1817, had endured several changes of location. Originally it was located in the residence of the first Post Master, Charles Fothergill. It was then relocated to the store of David Smart on Mill Street when he became Post Master. After several other relocations including the Smith Block (16-26 Walton Street), the Post Office was located in the new Riordan Block in 1877. During the previous years, David Smart and his son, R.W. Smart had been Post Masters. In 1877, the Reverend J. Baird was appointed Post Master succeeded by E. J. Baird in 1878. A Post Office Building was erected on the west side of Queen Street in 1883, and later demolished in the 1960's.

Historical Newspaper Ad



Archival Photo

