MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 16-26 Walton Street

Known as: Smith Block

Architectural Style: Walton Street Heritage District

Date Built: Circa 1851

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

Lot Description: PLAN 9 PT LOT 290 291 292 293



Architectural Description

This three storey, four section, block is in the typical pilastered design of the mid-19th century. The roof shape is low gable, parallel to the street, and seats three sets of single stack chimneys. The roof is trimmed with close eaves. The main bays of the block have flat structural openings, plain wooden lugsills and lintels. The windows are double hung sash type, with six over six panes. The shop front cornice is boxed with frieze and brackets. The main doors of the building have flat structural openings with plain trim and surround sides. The architraves are plain, no embrasure, with no side panels, and flush blind transoms.

Historical Abstract

The Smith Block is situated on land that was part of the estate of John David Smith; land which he had earlier received from his father, Elias Smith, one of the holders of the original Crown Land Grants. It was built in 1851 by J.D. Smith's sons, John Shuter and James Smith, with the former owning the eastern section of two shops, and the latter owning the western section, also divided into two shops.

The block was designed by Rochester architect Merwin Austin in 1851. Austin had also been commissioned to design the Town Hall in 1850. The building, while not largely affected by the several downtown fires, has seen considerable action in Port Hope's famous floods. Being situated on the west bank of the Ganaraska River, with its easternmost wall rising from the rock river bed, the building nevertheless still stands as a testimonial to the determination of its builders to create a lasting commercial structure in the Port Hope downtown core.

In this spirit, the Smith Building has played a significant role in the commercial history of Port Hope, housing merchant tailors, a movie theatre and several other small business proprietors. Some of the earliest tenants operated a saloon, an express and telegraph office and finally a post office. The sections were alternatively owned or leased in this four shop red brick building.

This brick commercial building with residential and/or storage space above, three storeys high is the typical pilastered design of the mid-19th century with ornamental brickwork to cornice and frieze, the latter now interrupted by later windows punched through the wall to light the attic storey in the eastern three quarters of the block. Most of the original sash survives in the upper two floors except for the western section. Shop fronts vary in quality but have all been renovated with plate glass windows. One cross wall at the centre extends through the roof as a parapet with attached chimneys.



Architectural Detail

The mid-19th century block with ornamental brickwork to cornice and frieze has been altered by later windows punched through the wall to light the attic storey in the eastern three quarters of the block.