MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 18-22 Queen Street

Known as: Stevenson Block

Architectural Style: Vernacular

Date Built: Circa 1877

Date Designated: October 23, 1989 to By-Law No. 91/89, SCHEDULE B-8, De-Designated November 19, 2002

Lot Description: PT 56 N/S WALTON



Architectural Description

This two-storey brick building was constructed circa 1880 with three storefronts on the ground floor and apartments above. The most northerly 16' - 0" of the building was torn down in 1929 to allow construction of the Capitol Theatre lobby (14 Queen Street). At present the building measures 43' - 0" across the front by 38' -0" deep. The roof is flat with a slight slope to the rear. Although constructed originally as a cheap speculator's building, the simple brick cornice, the circular second storey window heads and the recessed Victorian shop fronts combine to form a well proportioned facade. A plain building typical of Victorian commercial design, this block is an integral part of the Queen Street streetscape.

Historical Abstract

William Stevenson built this block in two stages. The first section was constructed in 1877. In 1879, the second section was constructed.

William G. Stevenson was born in Ireland in 1833. He appears in Port Hope business directories by 1871 as a tailor residing on William Street. In a later directory he indicates he owns one half an acre on William Street (36 William Street), and he describes himself as a merchant tailor. When he had this commercial block built his clothing store was located in the first section.

An archival photo from circa 1890 shows Rosevear Grocery located in the southern most unit. A business directory from 1896 indicated William Stevenson was still located in the northern most unit, but by the late 1890's, the Midland Loan and Savings appears as tenant on an insurance map. In 1916, after the death of both William and his wife Susanne, each unit was bequeathed to one of their children.

Charles W. Stevenson inherited the northern most unit later selling it in 1930 for construction of the Capitol Theatre (14 Queen Street). The middle unit was occupied by Thomas Long Insurance who had formerly been located in the Robertson Block (35 Walton Street), and who resided on King Street (13 King Street). The southern unit was inherited by George Stevenson and occupied by Rosevear Grocery with the Knights of Pythias in the upper floor. The southern most units remained in the family for many decades.

In 2002, the decision was made to de-designate the Stevenson Block and expand the Capitol Theatre to provide the community with a performing arts centre offering a wide range of year-round professional and community arts and entertainment programming. The Capitol Theatre building expansion and renovation plan is scheduled to be completed by January of 2004.



Rosevear Grocery, (Photo: East Durham Historical Society)

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Architectural Detail

The northern most unit was originally William Stevenson's tailor shop later sold by his son, Charles, to Famous Players in 1930 for construction of the Capitol Theatre.