MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 135 Walton Street

Known as: William Cox Lelean House

Architectural Style: Walton Street Heritage District - Classic Revival

Date Built: Circa 1860

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

Lot Description: PT 67 TO 68



Architectural Description

This two-storey stretcher bond brick building is rectangular in plan, has a shed roof, and four bays on the second storey. It shares many of the characteristics of the R.C. Smith building (48-60 Walton Street) on Walton Street, dated 1867, including the shed roof, segmentally-headed window openings with correspondingly shaped cast-iron window heads, and a similar type of decorative brick coursing along the cornice.

The first storey has undergone extensive alterations over the years; the earliest photograph available of this building shows one door and two nine-paned display windows on both the undertaking and the furniture store sides of the building. The next available photograph shows more change: the undertaking section on the east side has had a Romanesque Revival treatment and the door to the furniture shop on the west side has been moved to provide a larger double window for display purposes. In both photographs the windows on the upper storey have six over six double-hung sash.

The present first storey has been sheathed in brick and the four new small windows and single door have decorative glazing. The segmental six over six windows of the upper floor have been replaced by aluminium storm and screen combinations. On the east wall a new window has been added, making three bays on the second storey. The original brick has been painted a light yellow-buff and the cast-iron sills and labels and decorative brickwork a darker contrasting colour.

Historical Abstract

In 1857, William Cox Lelean, Port Hope merchant, bought a large wedge-shaped section of land on the south side of Walton Street between the Wilcock House (135 Walton Street) and the present St. Paul's Presbyterian Church (131 Walton Street) from James Madison Andrews. On the 1853 Wall and Forrest map of Port Hope, Andrews is shown as the owner and two buildings are visible on the property, approximately where the barn and present funeral home are located.

The one and a half storey brick barn with its medium-pitched gabled roof may well be the same building as that shown on the map, but it is most likely that the present building was built by Lelean, after his 1857 purchase, perhaps as a commercial building for it is a structure redolent of the 1860's.

William Cox Lelean (1833-1872) and his brother Samuel (1836) were born in Megavissey, Cornwall. They emigrated to the United States in the mid 1850's then came to Canada and established a dry goods store on Walton Street. Directory listings describe their specialty as "importers and dealers in dry goods, millinery, boots and shoes. They were active Methodists, and William C. held the position of President of the Young Men's Christian Association in 1871.

In 1871, Lelean sold a part of his fairly large Walton Street holding, including his own residence, a neighbouring house to the west (143 Walton Street). William Cox Lelean moved to Leavenworth, Kansas in 1872 due to ill health and died the same year at the age of 38. His brother Samuel continued to run a dry goods shop on Walton Street in two different

locations under the name S. Lelean or Leleans located in the Quinlan Block (78-92 Walton Street), and in the Tempest Block (62-68 Walton Street).

Annie Duncalf Lelean, widow of Lelean, sold the property in 1892 to undertaker and furniture maker, Alfred W. George. The Georges came to Port Hope in the 1870's and it appears that they must have leased or used the building prior to the final purchase date of 1892.

As was common at the time, the funerary business was combined with furniture or cabinet making. Funerals took place in private dwellings. Caskets were simple wooden affairs and a secondary business for furniture makers. There was no embalming performed only cosmetic preparation for visitations.

In 1937, A.W. George deeded the property to his son, James Trevethan George, together with use of the lane on the east side. In 1952, Wilfred C. Ross bought the business and property from J.T. George and others and, in 1963, bought another section of land to the rear from George. The Ross family has continued the undertaking business on this site.



The next change that occurs to the lower storey is the addition of a Romanesque Revival styled door and window to the east side of the building where the undertaking business is located. The western end now has two large paned windows and one entry door. In both archival photos, the upper storey windows have six-over-six windows.



The first storey has undergone extensive alterations, three of which have been recorded in archival photos. The earliest shows one door with nine paned display windows on either side.



Architectural Detail

The R.C. Smith Block (48-60 Walton Street) and this building use similar segmental window hood in cast iron and plain cast iron sills. Both buildings incorporate an ornamental brick frieze along the cornice. The modern front brick treatment of the lower front gives the building a less historic character than the two earlier shop fronts seen in archival photos.