MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 42 Bedford Street

Known as: William Craig House

Architectural Style: Italianate

Date Built: Circa 1862

Date Designated: October 23, 1989 to By-Law No. 91/89, SCHEDULE B

Lot Description: PLAN 18 LOT 30 LOT 31; PT LOT 32



Architectural Description

This has to rank as one of Port Hope's finest mid-Victorian dwellings. Its commanding presence and good proportions mark it as a shining example of 1860's architecture. The brick house finished in Flemish bond on the façade, and common bond on the other elevations, stands two storeys high and is topped by a hipped roof. The roof is noted for its extended eaves, a characteristic shared with four or five other local homes. Four chimneys project from the end walls in the conventional position.

The three-bay facade is regularly arranged around the front door. The door is an unusual six-panel design flanked by simple fashioned Windows (fitted with six over six sash) adopt a graceful slender proportion, accented by flat lintels and louvred shutters. A verandah transom and sidelights in stained glass windows (fitted with six over six sash) adopt a graceful slender proportion, accented by flat lintels and louvered shutters. A verandah shelters the full width of the ground storey, its collared polygonal posts an asset to the composition. Another distinguishing feature is the band decoration in wood, which appears several courses below the plain cornice. To the rear stands a kitchen tail of more diminutive scale.

The interior contains it’s share of period features, most noticeably four fireplaces (three in wood, one in marble) and a full complement of plaster cornices, window frames, doors and door surrounds. The straightforward flight of stairs is a handsome composition typical of the era. The floor plan is largely preserved, although some alterations to the second floor layout are noted.

For historical and architectural reasons, this house is one of Port Hope's most important houses. It represents a transition in style between the staid symmetry of the period and the exuberance that would later characterize the high-Victorian period. Loyalistperiod and the exuberance that would later characterize the high-Victorian period.

Historical Abstract

Like so many of the neighbouring houses on Bedford Street, the land was acquired by David Smart in 1849, later sold to McDermot and Walsh in 1853 who held the property until 1858. In 1858, it was acquired by William Fraser, a prominent local businessman, who had erected the Fraser Block on Walton Street circa 1850 (108-112 Walton Street). Fraser sold the land to William Craig in 1861, and the house was erected shortly thereafter.

William Craig (1819-1891) was one of the most prominent men in the early affairs of Port Hope. A native of Yorkshire, England, he was married in Newcastle on Tyne. He came to Port Hope in 1852 and established a leather tannery on Cavan Street that would endure into the 20th century. William Craig operated William Craig and Sons, Morocco Factory and Tannery, for thirty-nine years until his death in 1891 when his son William Jr. succeeded him. Morocco was a type of fine soft leather prepared from goat or sheepskin and tanned with sumac then dyed various colours. It could be used for all types of leather products such as shoes and bookbinding’s. His sons, William Craig Jr. and T. Dixon managed the woollen manufacturing side of the business.

Like many other prominent businessmen, Craig also turned to politics and served as mayor for four years, first in 1866 and 1867 during Confederation, and again in 1877 and 1878. His political career also included a number of years as a councillor, harbour commissioner, high school trustee and trustee of the harbour bonds.

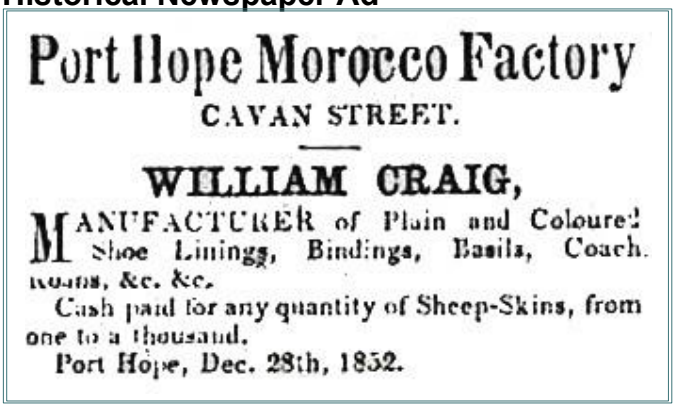
As an active member of the local Baptist congregation, he donated a piece of property for construction of the first Baptist Church on John Street (57 John Street) erected in 1869. Within the church is a tablet commemorating his contribution.

Craig was also the Charter President of the Port Hope Benevolent Society when it was formed in 1862. He was an active supporter of the YMCA when it was first established in Port Hope on John Street in 1874, and donated the land on which it stands. (50 John Street)

Another donation that Mayor William Craig gave to Port Hope during his second term as Mayor was the stone fountain located on the property at the rear of Town Hall which was unveiled in 1878. (56 Queen Street)

Craig had six children; four sons and two daughters. One son T. Dixon Craig became an Member of Parliament for Durham; William Craig Junior assisted his father in managing the Craig Tannery and succeeded him into the 20th century; a third son Joseph Craig took up residency in Minneapolis, Minnesota, while the fourth son was a missionary in Akuda, India. The two daughters were Mrs. D. Chisholm, wife of lawyer Duncan Chisholm who built an elegant home on Dorset Street West (150 Dorset later demolished and replaced with Idalia Carriage House), and Mrs. Clemesha, who resided at Seaton Hall (142 Walton). William Craig's initials are etched in the glass transom over the front door of 42 Bedford as a reminder of his legacy. Other owners of the property included T.A. Kirconnel in 1897, first headmaster of Dr. Hawkins School, and Ralph Wilson editor and owner of the Port Hope Evening Guide located on Walton Street (118-120 Walton Street).

Historical Newspaper Ad



Port Hope Morocco Factory

CAVAN STREET.

WILLIAM CRAIG,

MANUFACTURER of Plain and Coloured Shoe Linings, Bindings, Basils, Coach. Roans, &c. &c.

Cash paid for any quantity of Sheep-Skins, from one to a thousand.

Port Hope, Dec. 28th, 1852.

An ad that appeared in the local paper in 1852 in the year that William Craig established his business in Port Hope.