MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 159 Bruton Street

Known as: William Skitch Cottage

Architectural Style: Ontario Cottage – Regency

Date Built: Circa 1861

Date Designated: February 27, 1989 to By-Law No. 21/89, SCHEDULE B-2

Lot Description: RIDOUT PLAN 1 LOT 17 PT LOT 18



Architectural Description

This is a diminutive example of the Ontario cottage so prevalent in Port Hope. It is typical with a hip roof, front gable with fanlight and end chimneys, the whole set over a high basement so that the rear allows more light to the cellar. The verandah has been removed and the stoop, which extends the width of the facade, is rather unsympathetic finished in concrete.

The facade has a centre door with transom above flanked by French windows. The building has a rear wing. The exterior is rendered in roughcast, but there is evidence of the original stucco finish scored to look like ashlar.

Historical Abstract

Lot 17 and lot 18 of the Ridout Plan on which this house is situated was part of the original land acquired by Toronto banker, Thomas Gibbs Ridout. The Ridout Subdivision was Lot

8 in the First and Broken Front Concession of the Hope Township survey. His land holdings extended from Victoria Street on the west, to Jocelyn Street in the north, to east of Julia Street in the east. Subdivision of the Ridout property and sale of the lots began in 1847.

Upon the death of T.G. Ridout in 1861, ownership of his land transferred to his wife, Matilda. Matilda Ridout sold Lot 17 to Anne Skitch in 1861. In 1864, William Skitch, Anne's husband, purchased neighbouring lot 18. The house was built circa 1861. In business directories of 1868 and 1871, William and his son Henry provide their business address as Walton Street and their residence address as Bruton Street.

William Skitch (1823-1894) was born in Stratton, Cornwall, England in 1823, emigrating to Canada in 1850. His wife, Anne Burney and five children arrived later that year. They initially lived in a row of tenements on the corner of Brown and Walton Street that later burned and were replaced by construction of Dr. Clemesha's Seaton Hall (142 Walton Street).

William established a tailoring business. Unfortunately, his shop was located in the Quinlan Block (78-92 Walton Street) , which was destroyed by a fire in 1866. He was left with only his tailor irons as a result of not having any insurance. He was able to re-establish his business and by 1871, son Henry (1849-1924) was also a tailor. He took over the family business when William died in 1894.

In 1905, Henry purchased the eastern middle section of the Quinlan Block (78-92 Walton Street), a unit that was inherited by the daughter of Cornelius Quinlan upon his death in 1883. Henry died in 1924 at which time, one of his sons Alfred Burney (1881-1927) continued with the business. He unfortunately died of leukemia only three years later at the age of 46. The Skitch tailoring business lasted for three generations in Port Hope.

The house remained in the Skitch family after the death of William in 1894 being transferred to Henry then Alfred who sold the house in 1907. The next two succeeding owners each held onto the property for over forty years. The neighbouring, lot 18, was sold by the Skitch family in 1905.



Architectural Detail

The facade has a centre door with transom above flanked by French windows and front gable with fanlight.