MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 126 Walton Street

Known as: Wilson-Benson House

Architectural Style: Walton Street Heritage District - Queen Anne Revival

Date Built: Circa 1885

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

Lot Description: PT 56 N/S WALTON



Architectural Description

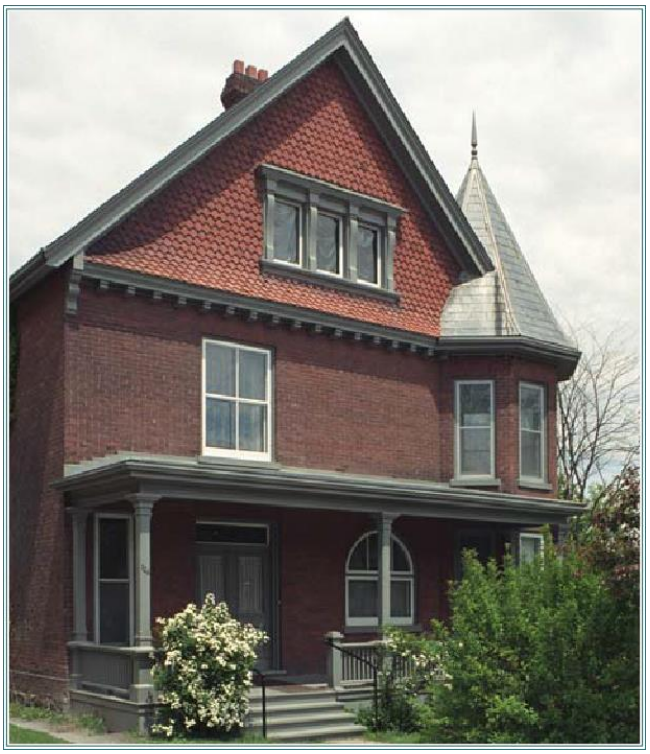
This two and a half storey brick house is built in the Queen Anne Revival style popular at the turn of the century. Typical of the genre, this commodious house has an offset tower, a broad verandah, and a steeply pitched roof. The gable on the Walton Street facade is sheathed in decorative shingle and contains a dormer window divided into three sections by heavy mullions with capitals.

The tower is five-sided with a conical roof topped by a finial and contains a long window on each storey of each wall surface. Excluding the windows on the tower walls, there are three bays on the main facade first floor. The double door contains a semi-circular headed window in each half and has a flat transom with stained glass but no sidelights. The large main floor window is Edwardian in treatment with coloured glass in the semi-circular transom section. A single chimney rises from the eastern slope of the roof. Another gable with dormer is on the east wall.

Historical Abstract

As with so many of the other properties on this section of Walton Street, Judge James Smith of the Grange (33 South Street) owned it in 1841. It had been part of a three-quarter acre purchase from James' brother, William. Upon James Smith's death in 1874 what was referred to as the "Gilchrist property", (named after Gilchrist who had purchased the same three-quarters of an acre from Allan Wood in 1830), was left to Smith's widow, Mary Ann. In 1884, one section of the Gilchrist property was sold to George Wilson and his brother, Frederick. Three years later, the Wilson's bought another section of the property. One of these purchases included the former Bank of Upper Canada building (118-120 Walton Street) in 1884, and the other was the land on which the Wilson's built 126 Walton Street in 1885.

For fifty years, the Wilsons were publishers of the Port Hope Guide. Ralph Wilson, George Wilson's son, carried on as publisher of the Guide in 1939, and his wife, Margaret Sproatt Wilson, was the editor for seventeen years. In 1956, the Wilsons sold the newspaper to A.B. Schultz. This house and lot remained in the Wilson family until 1935 when it was sold to Dr. Henry W. Benson. His son, Dr. J.B. Benson, has resided in the house since its purchase and also used it for his doctor's office.



Architectural Detail

This house is a high style late Victorian displaying various details typical of the Queen Anne Revival style. The bracketed tiled pediment to gables, octagon corner tower with conical faceted roof and round head lower storey window with stained glass transom are features common to this style.