

# THE LACAC OF BROCKVILLE

March 29, 1985

DESIGNATION REPORT

C. 1857 - 72-86

Designation Recommendation  
and Description for

## Donaldson Block

95, 97, 99 King St. W.  
Brockville, Ontario

Pt. Lots 34 & 35  
Block 29

### Reasons for Designation:

The Donaldson Block is being recommended for designation for both historical and architectural reasons.

The structure is a fine example of the type of mercantile architecture being constructed on Brockville's Main St. during the mid nineteenth century. It represents the movement from the construction of individual building units to larger commercial blocks.

Located at a busy intersection, the block adds greatly to

character of the immediate streetscape along King St. W. and down Apple St.

An important architectural feature of the building is the well preserved late nineteenth century, storefront of Copland's Book Store.

The storefronts have housed a variety of tenants which have played an integral part in Brockville's mercantile past and present.

Historical Background:

In c.1857 Andrew Donaldson built the existing structure after a disastrous fire destroyed the previous commercial building which had been built by William Buell Jr. in 1845. Andrew Donaldson was a hatter but it is not known if he actually utilized the building.

The structure has housed a variety of tenants which have played an integral part in Brockville's mercantile past and present. Included are: Andrew Donaldson, hatter, (1857); Heman Shepherd, dry goods and groceries, (1888); W.L. Maley, boots

and shoes, (1888); C.A. McKim, boots and shoes, (c.1900); G.L. Riches, pianos, (1904); J.S. Copland, books and stationery, (1906); H.W. Gilhooly, boots and shoes, (1909); Reward Shoes, (1932) and Agnew Shoes (1982). Two notable points arise from this list of tenants. The east store has housed the Copland Book Store since 1906 and the west store has housed a shoe store since at least 1888.

Architectural Description:

The Donaldson Block is a three storey commercial building with an attic and full basement. It is located at the corner of King St. W. and Apple St. This location afforded Donaldson the space and opportunity to construct a large block that would house two shops with residential units above. To economize on space a central hallway and stair was built that could be utilized by the tenants on both sides of the building.

The Donaldson Block achieves its impressive composition from its solid stone construction, good proportion and careful detailing. There is fine stone work incorporated into the two

public facades. A raised, dressed stone string course runs the length and width of the building above the second storey windows. The north-west corner of the building has raised, smooth dressed quoins above the first floor to the cornice. The first floor has flush, dressed quoins and remnants of a dressed stone pillaster. The openings in the wall above the first floor on the King St. elevation have smooth dressed heads while the Apple St. elevation has individual voussoirs. All elevations contain tooled stone sills.

The roof is flat, sloping away from the main facade. The strong cornice line emphasizes the roof line, uniform building height and the total mass of the building. It is located on the north and west elevations and is comprised of a wide boxed overhang with brackets and frieze mounted atop a parapet wall.

The window openings in the building have a measured rhythm. However, the sash is somewhat varied. As maintenance was carried out on the building the uniformity of the window design was lost. Presently the windows are a combination of casement type and double hung type with 1/1, 2/2 and 6/6 glazing.

Vents for the attic, with louvred openings, stretch the building vertically higher than its three storey height. They are located between the string course and the cornice on the north and west elevations. The rhythm of the vent openings is the same as the windows even though they are not all in use. This is due to the slope of the roof affecting the height of the parapet wall on the west elevation.

On the King Street elevation the shop entries at street level are found. one of the most important features of the building is located here. It is the well preserved late nineteenth century storefront of the Copland Book Store. The west storefront has been given a less sympathetic "update" with the reconstruction of the front windows and the application of a plastic front to the store.

Helping to separate the two storefronts is a central entrance to the residential units above on the second and third floor.

Because of the building's impressive proportions and its important location the Donaldson Block adds greatly to the historic character of the immediate streetscape along King St. and Apple St.

Recommendation:

The Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee recommends that that the building at 95-99 King St. W., also known as the Donaldson Block, be designated under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act, 1980.

Being a survivor of Brockville's mercantile past and with the "presence" the building affords, it is hoped that the Donaldson Block will be preserved as part of the downtown's period streetscape.

The committee is concerned with preserving the building's exterior architectural characteristics. Of particular concern are the north and west elevations. It is, however, understood that in order to retain the building's usefulness certain alterations and renovations may be required from time to time. Our committee would wish to examine and comment on any proposals affecting the exterior of the building, such as signage, paint colours, masonry repair and cleaning, window and door design, etc.