

THE LACAC OF BROCKVILLE

7 November 1983

DESIGNATION REPORT

Designation Recommendation
and Description for

Robert Sheridan Store

40 King Street East
Brockville, Ontario

Block 14, Lot 1

a. Reasons for Designation

The former Robert Sheridan store is being recommended for designation for both historical and architectural reasons. The building is typical of the three-storey masonry commercial construction which stands on the main street of Brockville. Like many present King St. commercial properties it was solidly built in the late nineteenth century. A valuable feature is an elaborate sheet metal cornice on the two street elevations. During its life the ground floor of the building has been occupied by a succession of businesses, representative of their period. The family of the first owner has been prominent in Brockville to the present day, including among its members a recent Mayor.

b. Historical Background

In 1855 Robert Sheridan purchased this lot (1) and built the structure for use as a stove and tinware shop (2). This business operated in the building until 1893 (3) when it was sold to Thomas E. Seaman, a travelling salesman. After this purchase Seaman's wife operated a fancy goods store on the ground floor and they lived upstairs. (4)

From 1911 the store was used by the Hum King Laundry and later until about 1929 the Palace Laundry operated by the Ung family were the proprietors. (5) In the period 1933 to 1936 it was used by George Ross & Co., Plumbers and from 1937-1943 by A. L. Charlton as a grocery store. From 1945 to 1954 the building housed Welch and Johnson Ltd., auto accessories suppliers.

The property now houses Brockville Drugs Ltd., a retail pharmacy.

At present, and probably throughout its life, the two upper floors of the building have provided residential accommodation. This also is a common feature of King Street, Brockville. While there are now separate apartments on the upper floors, it is believed that at one time both floors formed a single residence.

c. Architectural Description

This solid masonry building is located at the north east corner of King and Garden Streets. Its dimensions are 25' along King Street and 50' on Garden Street.

All walls are faced with squared masonry, generally uncoursed, with the exception of the blind east wall which is rubble masonry.

Three courses of stone work project slightly from the walls and employ longer stones, some of them three feet or more. One of the emphasized courses is at the level of the

second floor, the others are below the top of the windows of the upper stories. The window spaces are formed by jack arches with prominent keystones. Solid stone lugsills accent the windows.

The roof is flat, sloping down to the north. It displays an elaborate cornice on the south and west elevations. This cornice, of sheet metal construction is the most striking feature of the building. It is now painted and appears to be in good condition. The cornice is horizontal rather than sloping with the roof.

Worked into the centre of a main facade pediment is the date 1885. The cornice includes a frieze comprising dominant brackets and smaller brackets or dentils in the soffit area. The dominant brackets have special decorative cut-outs and are surmounted by pinnacles.

On the west elevation the cornice and frieze are similar in design except for the absence of the pediment. The minor brackets are in groups of 14, 15, and 14. The lowest element in the cornice is a long narrow horizontal rectangular design between the major brackets with a diamond design inset in each rectangle.

Fenestration on the upper floors on the south elevation is of four slender rectangular windows with the inner pair narrower than the outer two. The west elevation has five windows of equal size on each of the upper floors. Original double hung wood frame windows have been replaced by aluminum sash.

The street level on the King Street side and on Garden adjacent to King has been altered, probably more than once, to suit the needs of the business occupants. It now consists of large plate glass windows with a sign bearing the name of Brockville Drugs. The business entrance is at the street corner with an entrance to the residences at the east end of the south elevation. Earlier designs used a central store entrance according to old photographs.

d. References:

1. Copy of DEED registered in Leeds County Registry office, dated 29 January 1885.
2. Union Business and Professional Directory for 1884-5
- Robert Sheridan, stoves and tinware.

3. Copy of DEED registered in L.C.R.O.,
dated 13, February 1893.
4. Foster's Directory of Brockville 1895-96
 - Seaman, Mrs. W. E. Fancy Goods (ground floor)
 - Seaman, Thomas E (upper floors)
5. Other Business Directories were consulted.

Other details contained in LACAC Historical Building research forms.

e. General

This building has had province-wide publicity through the inclusion of a photograph of it in a composite picture in a poster illustrating Main Street, Ontario. The poster was prepared and distributed by the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture in 1981.

f. Recommendation

The Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee recommends that the building at 40 King Street, East the former Robert Sheridan store, be designated under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act, 1980.

It is recommended that the present attractive original features of the facade be preserved and that the 1885 design be approached by sympathetic replacement of less attractive modern features.