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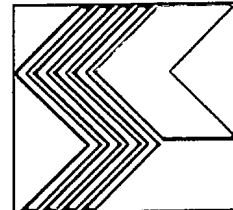
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# CITY OF ST. CATHARINES

CITY HALL  
50 CHURCH STREET  
P.O. BOX 3012  
ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO L2R 7C2

PLANNING  
SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT

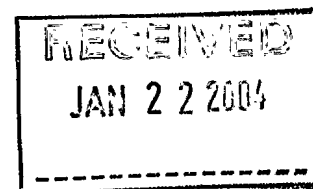
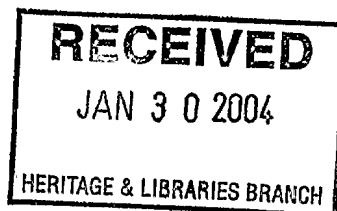
TEL (905) 688-5801  
FAX (905) 688-5873



January 21, 2004

## REGISTERED MAIL

Ontario Heritage Foundation  
10 Adelaide Street East  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5C 1J3



To Whomever This May Concern:

**Re: Designation of 29 Edmund Street  
Under the Ontario Heritage Act  
Our File No. 10.64.171**

Please be advised that City Council at its regular meeting of January 19th, 2004, passed a By-law designating the above-noted property under the Ontario Heritage Act.


Three (3) certified copies of By-law 2004-5 are enclosed for your records.

Please contact the writer at (905) 688-5601, extension 1710, if you have any questions.

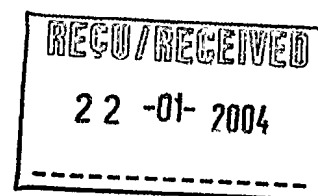
Yours truly,

Kevin Blozowski  
Planner I

encl.

 c.c. A. Poulin, City Solicitor  
K. Todd, City Clerk

(C:\Karen\Heritage\OntHertFndDesLtr)



12/14/04  
RC

# CERTIFIED COPY

CITY OF ST. CATHARINES

BY-LAW NO. 2004-5

A By-law to designate the property at 29 Edmund Street to be of historic or architectural value or interest.

WHEREAS the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. 0.18, authorizes the council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate property within the municipality to be of historic or architectural value or interest;

AND WHEREAS property under the Ontario Heritage Act means real property and includes all buildings or structures thereon;

AND WHEREAS the Council of The Corporation of the City of St. Catharines has caused to be served upon the owner of the property described in Schedule "A" hereto, known as No. 29 Edmund Street, and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation notice of intention to designate the property and has caused such notice of intention to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the municipality;

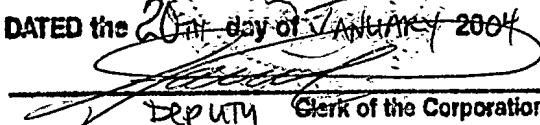
AND WHEREAS the reasons for designation are set out as Schedule "B" hereto;

AND WHEREAS no notice of objection to the proposed designation has been served upon the Clerk of the City of St. Catharines.

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ST. CATHARINES enacts as follows:

1. The property, more particularly described in Schedule "A" attached hereto, known as No. 29 Edmund Street, is hereby designated to be of historic or architectural value or interest.

**CERTIFIED under the Hand of the Clerk and the  
Seal of the  
CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ST. CATHARINES  
to be a TRUE COPY of By-law 2004-5  
of the Corporation of the City of St. Catharines**

DATED the 20 day of January 2004  
  
Deputy Clerk of the Corporation of  
the City of St. Catharines

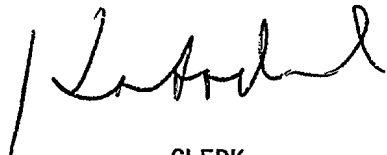
2. The City Solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this By-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "A" hereto in the proper Land Registry Office.

3. The City Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this By-law to be served upon the owner of the property and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this By-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of St. Catharines.

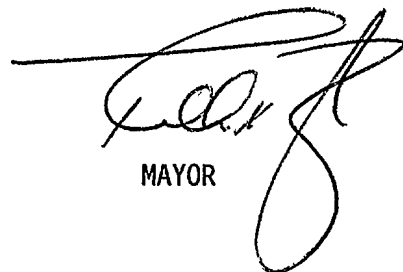
Read a first time this 19<sup>TH</sup> . . . day of JANUARY 2004.

Read a second time this 19<sup>TH</sup> day of JANUARY 2004.

Read a third time and passed this 19<sup>TH</sup> day of JANUARY 2004.



CLERK



MAYOR

SCHEDULE "A" TO BY-LAW NO. 2004-5

City of St. Catharines, Regional Municipality of Niagara, and being Part Lot B and Part Lot D, Thompson Plan CY68, designated as Parts 2 and 3 on Reference Plan 30R-4118.

## Heritage House

(Thompson House)  
29 Edmund Street  
St. Catharines, Ontario



Current Owners:

[REDACTED]

Original Owners: Sarah and William Thompson

Construction Date: c. 1870

Builder: Theodore Thompson

Legal Description: Plan 68B R.P. 30R4118 part 2 & 3

Mailing Address: 29 Edmund Street  
St. Catharines, Ontario  
L2R 2G3

Prepared for the St. Catharines Heritage Committee by Scott Tufford  
June, 2003

## HISTORY

In January, 1869, the land owned by Henry Mittleberger in Lot 18, Fifth Concession of Grantham Township was subdivided under the Mitchell and McGiverin Plan (registered as Plan #5). Under this plan, the grid of blocks and sidestreets that exist today north of Welland Avenue and east of Lake Street were first laid out on what was then the northernmost edge of St. Catharines, with farmland stretching out beyond to the lake. A short time later, Block K of the plan, bounded by Beech, Edmund, George and Catharine Streets, was purchased by William and Sarah Thompson. The 1871 Census of Lincoln County recorded William as 56 years old and his occupation as "accountant"; both he and Sarah were born in England and were "Friends" (Quakers). Although the date of their arrival in the area is uncertain, they were regarded as "well known and highly respected pioneer citizens" (*St. Catharines Standard*, February 1, 1929). William was first listed as a resident of Edmund Street in the 1871 Lovell's City Directory and thus the family home was most certainly constructed during the years 1870-1871.

The builder of the house was Sarah and William's son Theodore Thompson who was 24 during the 1871 Census. A carpenter and joiner by trade, he was a partner in the construction firm of Thompson and Ness with an office at St. Paul and Bond Streets (1874 St. Catharines General and Business Directory). He also served for eight years with the 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion Volunteer Militia of Canada. The *St. Catharines Constitution* of April 12, 1866 noted that Theodore had passed a "very creditable examination at the Toronto Military School, completing a course in six weeks that normally required two to three months". He achieved the rank of ensign in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company of the Battalion in 1866, commanding it on the Niagara frontier during the Fenian raids (*St. Catharines Daily Times*, June 18, 1874) and became Captain in 1868. An accomplished marksman, he was vice-president of the St. Catharines Rifle Club, won various local competitions and was a member of the Canadian team at the international shooting competition at Wimbledon, England in 1872. Theodore married Harriett Groves on December 19, 1871 at St. George's Church; they lived in a house on Beech Street on the north side of the Thompsons' block where their first child William Theodore was born in 1872.

When Theodore Thompson died after a recurring fever in June, 1874 at the age of 28, it was regarded as a calamity for both his family and the community at large (*ibid.*, 1874). Harriett was left widowed with a small son and pregnant with daughter Hattie (known as "Birdie") who was born in January 1875. Local directories indicate that Harriett and the children lived in various houses in the neighbourhood, while ownership of the Edmund Street house remained with her parents-in-law. Under the terms of Sarah Thompson's will (probated in 1883), Harriett received the northeast corner of the block "for her use" while the "southerly house" on Edmund went to Theodore's brother Thomas Philips Thompson (instrument #2954). Thomas sold the house and lot to his nephew William and niece Birdie in February 1896, and Harriett would come to live with them until her death in 1929.

William Theodore became a talented pianist/organist and music instructor and was deeply involved in the musical life of St. Catharines for over half a century. He studied in Vienna under the noted Polish pianist and composer Teodor Leschetizky (1830-1915) and was one of his last pupils (*St. Catharines Standard*, March 7, 1951). He served as organist for a number of local Protestant churches including Knox Church (1897-1902), St. Thomas (1902- ? ) and St. John the Evangelist

in Thorold (1917-1947). From 1900 to 1940, he held the position of music instructor at Ridley College where he was known affectionately as "Willie" and gave many generations of students a solid foundation of musical knowledge. During his tenure at Ridley, he founded the Mozart Club in 1910, an organization of musically inclined students who would give recitals at the Assembly Hall. William presided over the club until his death in 1951 and often held meetings at the family home with Birdie acting as hostess. He further organized the Ridley School Orchestra in 1924 (Bradley, 2000). Off campus, he was involved with the Civic Orchestra Association and the Civic Concert Association which held concerts at the Collegiate; Mr. Paul Lipischak, who worked as a handyman for the Thompsons during his teen years, recalls that William donated his Steinway grand piano for use at these concerts and that the large instrument had to be moved between the house and the school. William also conducted Gilbert and Sullivan operettas (in his younger years) as well as the oratorios of various composers (*Standard*, March 7, 1951) and he gave lessons in the parlour of the house.

Birdie Thompson was active in her own right in the performing arts of the City. She worked with the theatre in the Old Opera House on Ontario Street and was an excellent dancer in her youth. Birdie and William were often visited at their cottage at Fifteen Mile Beach by Pierre Berton and his wife before he achieved fame as an author; he was a first cousin of the Thompsons since his mother Laura Beatrice was the daughter of their uncle Thomas Philips (Taylor, 1984). William died in March of 1951 and Birdie survived him for five and a half years until her own death in September 1956. The house on Edmund Street was vacant until it was purchased by Dawn and Bill Russell around 1958-59, and they had the two storey rear addition built about 1961 (J. Wakelin, personal communication, 2003). The fourth and present owners of the house, [REDACTED], purchased the property in 1998 and have established the Heritage House Bed and Breakfast.

## ARCHITECTURE

The Heritage House consists of the original two storey brick structure, rectangular in plan, with a two storey rear addition, front portico and a west side porch. Its broad facade faces south and is symmetrically arranged around three bays with a central front entrance; the house is capped by a low pitch gable roof with two forward facing gables. The house displays a blend of mid-nineteenth vernacular styles: the gabled roof with decorative brackets reflect the Italianate style while the front gables with their distinctive pointed windows hint at the Gothic Revival tradition.

## EXTERIOR

The exterior walls of the original house were laid in the basic stretcher bond pattern. Most of the window openings are rectangular with heavy stone lintels and narrower stone sills; the lintels have been hammered dressed with rough, stippled faces and chiseled perimeters. The exceptions are the two upper facade windows which have pointed 90 degree arches formed by brick headers. Just below the sill line of those upper windows, embedded at regular intervals in the brick of the facade

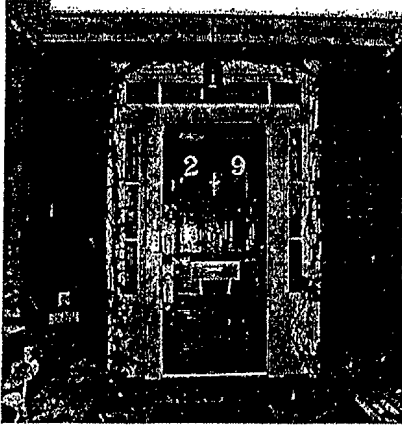




and side walls, are remnants of the ends of wood planks where the roof of the original Victorian porch was joined to the house. A photograph of the house dating to before circa 1891 shows the porch that extended

across the entire facade and along the sides almost to the rear corners. It featured a slightly concave roof line from front to back, turned support posts (six across the facade) with curvilinear brackets, squared pedestals and a latticework railing. To best recollection, this porch survived until the 1920's or 1930's when it was removed. The present front portico, with its hipped roof and heavy brick support piers bearing triangular stone insets, was most likely built soon after the original porch was demolished and the west side porch was constructed at roughly the same period (Wakelin, 2003). The old photograph further indicates that what is now a window on the east side of the front entrance was originally a type of French door that allowed access from the southeast front room to the outside.

The two storey rear addition was added about 1961; it bears a series of large semicircular brick arches along its east wall which are incongruous with the styling of the original house.



### WINDOWS AND DOORS

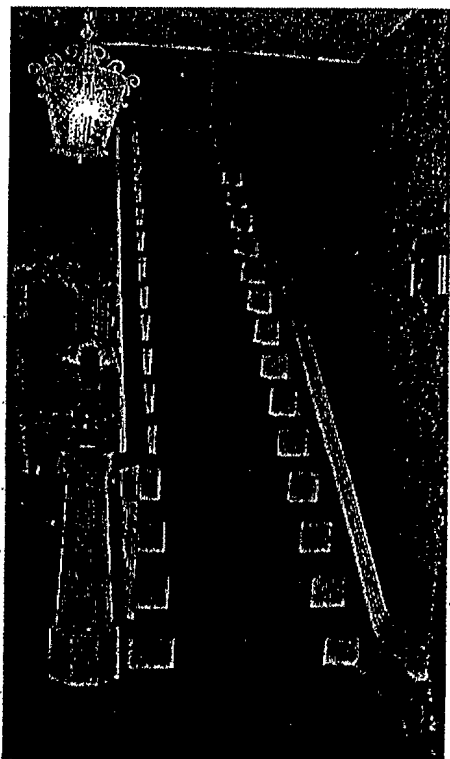
The front entranceway maintains its original characteristics. It has a solid panelled door with a moulded surround featuring heavy side pilasters and transom bar, narrow paned sidelights and transom lights, typical of front entranceways of the mid-nineteenth century.. Most of the original windows were rectangular double leaf casement types that pivoted inward, while the pointed front gable windows designed to conform to the particular shape of the arches (these arches are now filled in with small triangular panes of glass). Presently, the windows of the house are modern double hung sash construction. The gable windows once had pointed, louvered shutters but are now enclosed by ornamental railings or 'balconets' of wrought iron, as are the front windows on the ground floor.

### ROOF

The low pitch gable roof of the main block has the double gables which remain the most distinctive surviving element of the house's facade. Beneath the roof eaves on the front and sides are evenly spaced curved brackets mounted on a broad frieze and painted white, lending the house its Victorian Italianate styling. According to Mr. John Wakelin, the roof eaves must have been at some time rebuilt and set in a lower position than before with larger brackets; the original gable window shutters could not be reinstalled as they no longer have sufficient vertical space to pivot outwards without hitting the brackets. The old photograph also shows that there were originally two inset chimneys on both ends of the house with double stacks and decorative brick



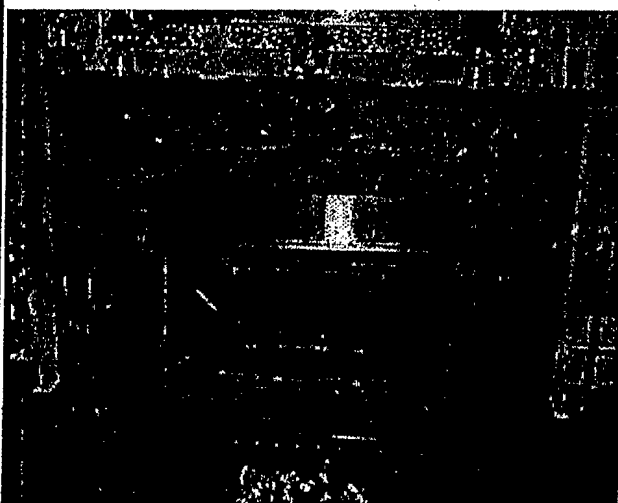
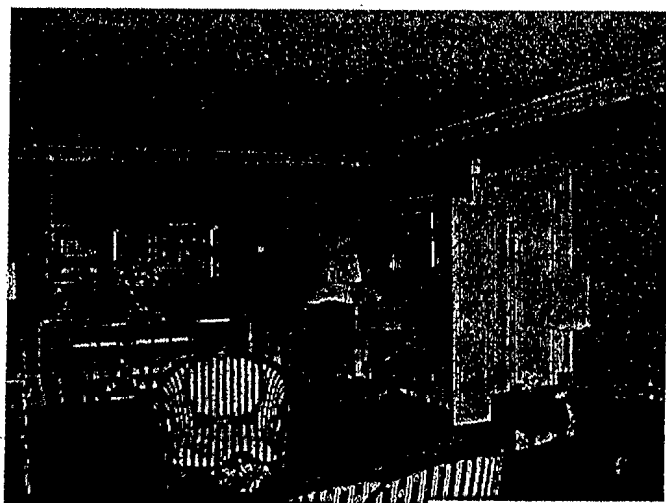
capping. The east chimney, which serviced the furnace, has since been removed while the western one, attached to the parlour fireplace, remains but has been obviously modified or rebuilt and has lost its original detail.



## INTERIOR

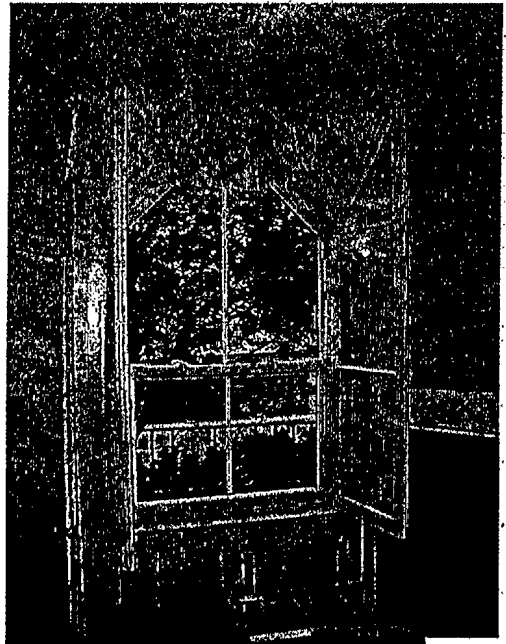
The interior plan of the house conforms to the familiar Ontario Cottage style with the front entrance leading into a central hallway with living rooms and/or bedrooms on both sides (Kalman, 1995). The central hall is fairly spacious and has the original staircase with a heavy octagonal newel post, balusters and a broad handrail, finished in natural wood, that is at a noticeably lower height than modern handrails. The doorways off the hall maintain the original broad wood door surrounds and the old baseboards are evident throughout the original section of the house. The rear dining room in the northeast corner of the ground floor was originally the kitchen and features a chair rail and vertical wainscoting along its walls.

One of the most interesting rooms is the west side parlour, immediately to the left of the hallway, where many of the original elements have been carefully restored by the present owners. The parlour has the old baseboards and floorboards, and also features a heavy crown moulding with a thick, recessed center bead around the



perimeter of the room. The visual focus of the parlour is the fireplace, centered in the west wall, its dark grey marble mantelpiece carved with curvilinear Gothic Revival foil patterns. The room is well illuminated with one front (south) window and two side (west) ones. As the site of many music club meetings and private lessons, the parlour was for years an important centre of the musical life of St. Catharines. Mr. Lipischak recalls that at one time the room held two grand pianos and the floor had to be specially reinforced to bear the weight of the massive instruments. One piano, built in 1874, may still be seen at the north end of the parlour.

The second floor also maintains some of the general decorative features (baseboards, doors and surrounds) as found downstairs. The front rooms still serve as bedrooms; in the southwest bedroom, the original casement window with its two pointed leafs remains in place in excellent condition. The sashes swing inwards and a narrow length of wood fastened by a pivot to the side of the frame is the original bolt meant to secure the window. In the southwest corner of this room is a closet that once served a fascinating purpose. It originally enclosed a built-in cistern used to collect and store rainwater off the roof and then pipe the water for use throughout the house.



## SOURCES

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Special Collections, St. Catharines Centennial Library.
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- St. Catharines Standard*, (obituaries) February 1, 1929 and March 7, 1951.
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- Index to the 1871 Census of Lincoln County.
- 1871 Lovell's City Directory*