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THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF WHITBY
In the Regional Municipality of Durham



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MUNICIPAL BUILDING
575 Rossland Road East
Whitby, Ontario
Canada
L1N 2M8

October 4, 1993
File: A-2160 (LACAC)

Registered Mail

[REDACTED]
306 Gilbert Street West
Whitby, Ontario
L1N 1R9

**Re: The George Gilcrest House
306 Gilbert Street West, Whitby
Heritage Designation, Part IV
The Ontario Heritage Act**

At a meeting held on the 27th day of September, 1993, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Whitby passed By-law No. 3367-93, a copy of which is enclosed, being a by-law to designate the George Gilcrest House, municipally known as 306 Gilbert Street West, Whitby, as a Heritage Structure under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

By-law No. 3367-93 will be advertised in the October 6, October 13, and October 20, 1993 issues of the Whitby Free Press newspaper.

Further information regarding the above noted matter may be obtained by calling Mr. Eric Braslis, Secretary of L.A.C.A.C. at 668-5803.

Debi A. Bentley
Administrative Assistant

c.c. ✓ The Ontario Heritage Foundation
Ministry of Culture and Communication
R. B. Short, Director of Planning
E. Braslis, Secretary, L.A.C.A.C.

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF WHITBY

BY-LAW NO. 3367-93

BEING A BY-LAW TO DESIGNATE THE STRUCTURE MUNICIPALLY KNOWN AS 306 GILBERT STREET WEST AS BEING OF HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL VALUE AND INTEREST

WHEREAS, in accordance with the provisions of Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. 0.18, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Whitby considers it desirable to designate property hereinafter described to be of historic and architectural value and interest;

AND WHEREAS, the Council of the said Corporation has caused to be served on the owners of the property municipally known as 306 Gilbert Street West, Whitby, Ontario, and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, notice of its intention to designate the structure at the aforesaid address to be of historic and architectural value and interest and has caused such notice to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the Town of Whitby;

AND WHEREAS, no person has served a notice of objection to the proposed designation on the Clerk of the said Corporation;

NOW THEREFORE, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Whitby enacts as follows:

1. The structure known as the George Gilchrist House located on the property known as 306 Gilbert Street West, Whitby, Ontario and more particularly described in Schedule "A", attached to and forming part of this by-law, is designated as being of historic and architectural value and interest for the reasons set out in Schedule "B", attached hereto.
2. This designation shall not preclude any changes that may be deemed necessary for the efficient use of the structure provided that any changes shall be in keeping with the original and current character of the structure and shall be carried out in consultation with the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee of the Town of Whitby.

BY-LAW READ A FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD TIME AND FINALLY PASSED THIS 27TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, A.D., 1993.


CLERK


MAYOR

SCHEDULE "A" TO BY-LAW NO. 3367-93

South half of Lot 23, Plan H50032, (formerly Third Double Range West of Brock Street as shown as on Werden's Plan), Town of Whitby, Regional Municipality of Durham.

(306 Gilbert Street)

SCHEDULE "B" TO BY-LAW NO. 3367-93

**HISTORICAL / ARCHITECTURAL
REPORT**

**THE GEORGE GILCHRIST HOUSE
306 GILBERT STREET WEST
BUILT C. 1876**

THE GEORGE GILCHRIST HOUSE

306 GILBERT STREET WEST

1876

Part, South half, lot 23, 3rd Double Range West of Brock Street, Werden's Plan

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The south half of lot 23, 3rd double range west of Brock Street was sold by the executors of Asa Werden to George Gilchrist, on May 1, 1876, and on Jan. 10, 1877, he mortgaged the property to Robert S. Campbell, for \$600 to pay for the construction of a house. The Whitby Chronicle of Nov. 9, 1876 lists among the new buildings constructed that year: "Mr. George Gilchrist, a good two storey rough-cast dwelling 20 X 30, off Centre Street." Rough-cast means that the house was stuccoed, but a photograph of about 1910 shows that the front and west walls were stuccoed but the east wall was of clapboard. There are no records on George Gilchrist or what his place was in Whitby's history. On March 18, 1879 he sold the house to William W. Hubbard. He sold the house on December 13, 1879 to Sylvanus Phillips. Nothing is known of these two owners. On July 13, 1889, Sylvanus Phillips sold the house to John Phillips of Brougham, who may have been his son. It appears that John Phillips rented the house, for it was occupied in 1893 by a Mr. Gilpin.

On Nov. 1, 1893, John Phillips sold the house to Alexander Bruce, the turnkey (guard) at the Ontario County Jail, which was located on the south side of Gilbert street, directly across from the house. On April 26, 1883, Alex Bruce married Letitia Gilland of Brock Township. In July 1904, he resigned as turnkey at the jail because of failure of his eyesight, probably brought about when he was attacked by a prisoner at the jail. He was granted a retiring allowance by the Ontario County Council of \$200. On Sept. 2, 1904, Alexander Bruce sold the house to Jane Boyer and moved to Toronto. Nothing is known of Jane Boyer.

On July 23, Jane Boyer sold the house to Thomas Emmett.

George Gilchrist house - 2

Thomas Emmett (1829-1911) was born at Nawton, Yorkshire, England, on May 26, 1829. As a youth he was a cricketer and a fox hunter, and was a foreman of a large farm. In 1855 at the age of 26, he came to Canada and settled on the Watson farm at Almonds, at the Whitby-Pickering Town line and the Kingston Road (Highway 2). On Sept. 26, 1861 he married Hannah Strickland, a daughter of John Strickland, a farmer in East Whitby Township. Thomas Emmett retired from farming in 1879 and in 1907 purchased the Gilchrist home on Gilbert Street. During his life in Whitby he was a member of the Whitby Cricket team and was one of its most valued players. Thomas Emmett died on Dec. 4, 1911, after falling down the cellar stairs at his home, at the age of 82.

On May 18, 1912, the house was sold by his executors to his widow, Hannah. She was born in Rosedale, Yorkshire, England, on Dec. 26, 1838, and died at Whitby on Nov. 14, 1916. In her last years, she was cared for by her unmarried daughter, Mary Hannah Emmett. Both Mr. and Mrs. Emmett are buried in Union Cemetery, Oshawa.

Thomas and Hannah Emmett had four children: Sarah Elizabeth (Mrs. Richard George Oke), 1862-1936; Mary Hannah, 1865-1940; George, ? - 1943, a dentist in Toronto from 1906 to 1943; and Eva, who died in infancy in 1874. On March 13, 1913 Hannah Emmett willed the house to her daughter Mary Hannah Emmett, who lived in the house on Gibert Street until shortly before her death on Dec. 19, 1940. On June 16, 1932, Mary Hannah Emmett mortgaged the house to her sister, Sarah Elizabeth Oke. After Sarah's death on Aug. 13, 1936, the mortgage was assigned on Octo. 29, 1936 to her husband, Richard George Oke.

Richard George Oke (1845-1939) was born at Welcombe, Devonshire, England, on Dec. 14, 1845, and came to Canada in 1854, settling at Almonds near the Emmett family. He was a trustee of Almonds Church for some years, and married Sarah Elizabeth Emmett on Sept. 28, 1892. In 1901 he moved into Whitby Town and operated a lumber yard until it burned down in 1920. The lumber yard was at the north end of Pine Street. Mr. Oke was one of the trustees who built

George Gilchrist 1 se - 3

the Methodist Tabernacle (now St. Mark's United Church) and was named an honorary member of session when it became a United Church in 1925. Mr. Oke died at Whitby on June 25, 1939, and was buried in Necropolis Cemetery, Toronto. His wife, Sarah Elizabeth Emmett, was born in Whitby Township on Jan. 22, 1862 and died on Aug. 13, 1936.

According to Ted Oke, of Lindsay, electricity was installed in the house on Gilbert Street in 1920 and indoor plumbing in 1923. Shortly before the death of Mary Hannah Emmett, the Oke family began renting the house at 306 Gilbert Street West, and continued to rent it for about 30 years. Richard George Oke did not live in the house for he had a home of his own on Dundas Street East. On April 27, 1940 Richard Oke's executors sold the house to his children: Catherine (Mrs. Charles Broughton), 1895-1979; Emmett Hambly Oke, 1909-1971; and George Edward (Ted) Oke, who has lived in Lindsay since 1930.

From 1939 to 1970 the Oke family rented the house at 306 Gilbert Street west. The first tenants were Mr. and Mrs. John W. Bateman, who had retired from farming in 1939. Mr. Bateman was Whitby's mayor in 1926-28.

From 1950 to 1959, the house was rented by the Whitby detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police. The OPP detachment was formed in Whitby about 1940 and operated out of the court house across the road until it needed new quarters. The police put an oil furnace in the house in 1950 and built the garage in 1952. East of the house in the side yard was a tall wooden aerial tower for the police radio antenna. The police also added an addition at the back of the garage in 1953. In 1951-52, the Ontario Provincial Police took over the policing of the Town of Whitby after the Whitby Police Commission fired the town's police force. Normally the OPP policed only provincial property and provincial Highways (2, 12 and 401). In 1959 the OPP moved to a new building constructed at Henry Street, south of Highway 401 and the house was vacant for a year.

From 1961 to 1969 the tenant was John Goemans, a tinsmith with the Ontario Department of Public Works.

George Gilchrist house - 4

On May 19, 1970 the Oke family sold the house to William G. Martin, who rented it until 1972 to Evelyn Locke, a clerk at McCullough Jewellers. On June 22, 1972, Mr. Martin sold the house to Lawrence and Agnes Disney who lived in the house. Disney had a car dealership in Whitby and his wife Agnes operated a dress shop in the downtown. On March 20, 1974, the Disneys sold to Michael and Gale Ruinsky. Mr. Ruinsky was division manager for Atlantic Packaging. On April 23, 1975, the house was sold to Joseph and Margaret Battle. The Battles undertook a considerable amount of restoration of the house. They painted the stucco grey, put bargeboard under the front eaves (where there was none before) and constructed replicas of the front and side porches. The front porch may have been removed about 1946. The replica side porch was added in 1988. The date "1843" was incorporated into the bargeboard under the front eaves, in the mistaken notion that the house dated from that time. Land titles and the Whitby Chronicle clearly indicate it dates from 1876. The Battles did a lot of interior work, refinishing the floors, adding brick to the walls in the front room and other restoration work. Interesting features in the house which are still preserved, include fine panelling in the dining room now used as a kitchen (likely original to the house) and a curved wall at the top of the stairs to the second floor, which is unusual.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The George Gilchrist house is a good example of a working man's house from the 1870s which has been restored in the 1980s. Historically, its long connection with the Emmett and Oke families, and its use as a Provincial Police Office are of interest.

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Architectural Report

A. M. de Port-Menares

January 6 1993

George Gilchrist House 306 Gilbert Street West Whitby

Part lot 23, 3rd Double Range West of Brock Street, Werden's Plan

Architectural Description

This one-and-a-half storey roughcast frame house has a medium-pitched gabled roof with the gable end to the street. A one-storey board and batten addition on the north with a salt-box roof comprises the principal extension of the form. The organization of the facade is basically symmetrical, with two, two-over-two sash windows on the upper floor, two on the ground, and the entry door making a third bay. The sizes of openings are proportioned to their placement, so that the ground floor windows are larger. The lower half of the front elevation is covered by a bell-cast verandah with a painted wood floor and ceiling.

Side elevations are fairly plain, with two openings near the north end of each side: a door and window on the west, two adjacent windows on the east. The side door is sheltered by a gabled hood carried on plain triangulated bracket struts. On the east side a small window has been inserted immediately below the eave, and a clapboarded shed dormer breaks the roof. The north back has two upper windows; most of the wall is taken up by the addition.

Roughcast is carried right to the ground, so foundations are not visible. The roof is asphalt shingle, with plain boxed soffits and unmoulded cornices on the back. The front gable has a moulded cornice and a little drop bargeboard at the peak with 1843 at the apex. Variable mixed brick chimneys (red, black, and white) are centred on the ridge at the front and back, indicating the use of stoves. A third is centred on the ridge of the back addition, and a vent stack has been built against the back wall.

Trim around openings was very simple, consisting of flat surrounds with a tiny drip mould along the top. Windows on the front elevation have small pediment-shaped top boards, and the upper ones have tiny relief urns applied to their sills. Reeded pilasters surround the door. The frame is capped by a dentillated entablature and broken pediment with urn. The door itself has a six-light upper panel and a cross-panelled lower half. The verandah floor is edged by a baseboard running across the front of the house. The three posts are chamfered, with modest scroll-sawn treillage. There is no railing.

Site

The lot consists of three parts: a wide double driveway on the west, the portion occupied by the house, and a swath of yard on the east. A board fence with a latticed top band encloses the side yard. A board and batten garage, having a gabled roof that echoes the profile of the house, closes the end of the driveway. The property is well tended and carefully landscaped.

The house is part of a row of later houses having approximately the same set back. The county jail and registry office, now 400 Centre Street South, occupy the south side of the street. Only the north side of the street has a sidewalk. Housing in the area is mixed: relatively recent three-storey maisonettes on the northeast corner of Gilbert at Centre face a fine Gothic house on the opposite corner.

Architectural Analysis

According to the *Whitby Chronicle*, when the house was built in 1876 it was considered to be two-storey, and measured 20 x 30.¹ The chimney placements indicate the use of stoves; the front elevation is particularly bold, with the chimney aligned directly over a window. This defiance of at least the appearance of support reflects the pragmatic, lumberyard approach taken to the construction. It is clearly a house laid out in the builder's tradition of 'in-the-head' plans.

The gable-to-street, side hall entry design is a town form, developed for the constraints of narrow frontages. The form had grand antecedents in the splendid neoclassic and Greek Revival temple houses of the early 19th century; the Barnum House at Grafton of 1817 has a side-hall entry, as does Chrysler Hall of 1846, now at Upper Canada Village. A modest structure like the Gilchrist house maintains with that lineage the outline of the temple form and the plainness of wall inherited from the Greek Revival.

During its history, the house had many occupants and tenants, including nine years' occupancy by the Whitby detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police, who converted to oil heat, built the garage in 1952 and a back addition in 1953.² The building is certain to have suffered depredations not immediately apparent; it is not clear, for instance, whether the windows are original. The house was extensively renovated and restored in the 1980s by previous owners who added the urns to the window sills, the neo-mannerist door surround, the pendant bargeboard, and possibly the moulded cornice on the front. The verandah and the side door hood are also new construction.

The house form is a conservative one that could have been built anytime after the 1840s. The tiny pediments over the front windows suggest a date in the 1860 range. The attractive verandah is a style more prevalent in the earlier decades, although the treillage might be found in the 1860s. The closed ceiling is an unusual refinement for the style; usually the curved rafters were exposed. With the exception of the front door surround, which is too ornate for the house, the restoration work has been sensitively

done, leaving elements like the shed dormer as products of their own time, and adding appropriately scaled and detailed features such as the verandah and the side door hood.

The house cannot be said to be little changed, because many of its changes may have been reversed or further altered in the process of renewal. In its present state, the Gilchrist house has the appearance of a modest historic building that has been adapted in small ways to meet new needs.

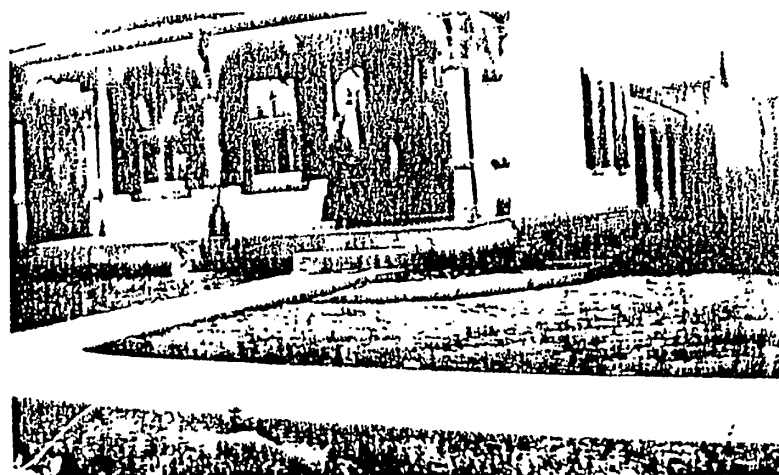
Notes

¹ Brian Winter, *Historical Report: The George Gilchrist House* (July 10, 1992), 1.

² Winter, 3.

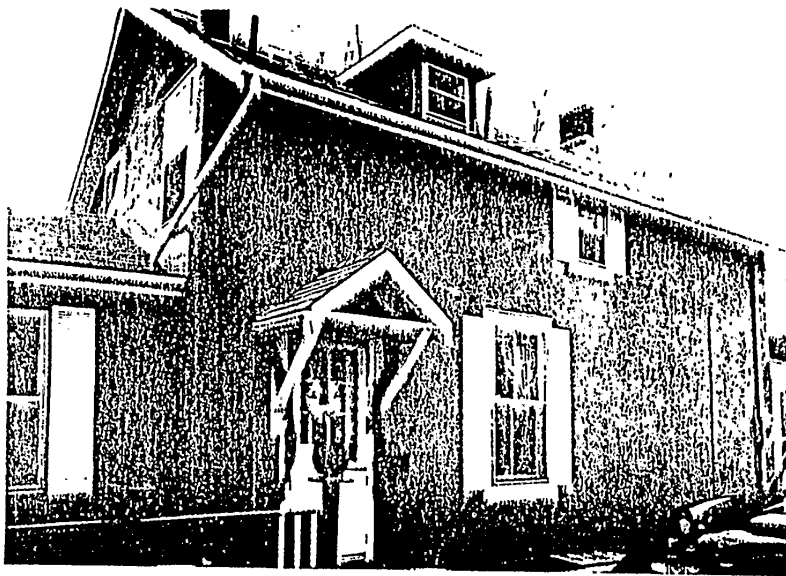


306 GILBERT STREET WEST, C. 1910





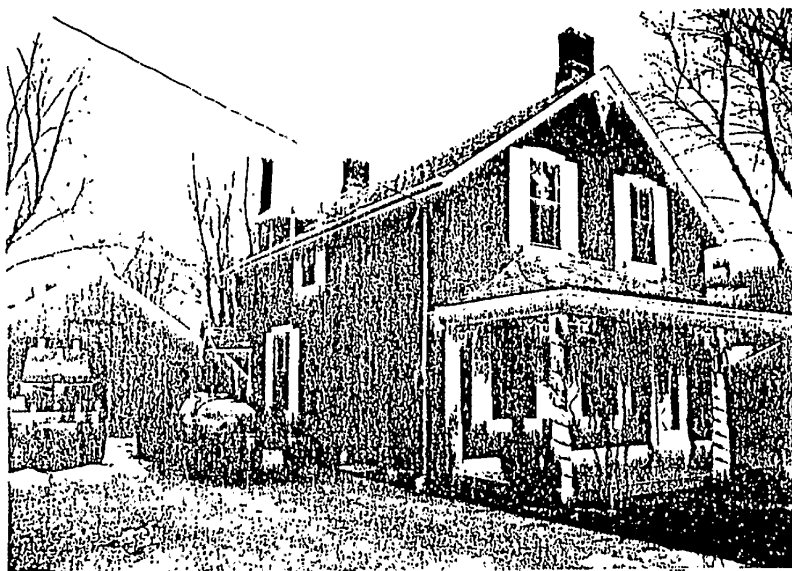
306 GILBEY STREET WEST, 1955



Gilchrist House: the side door.



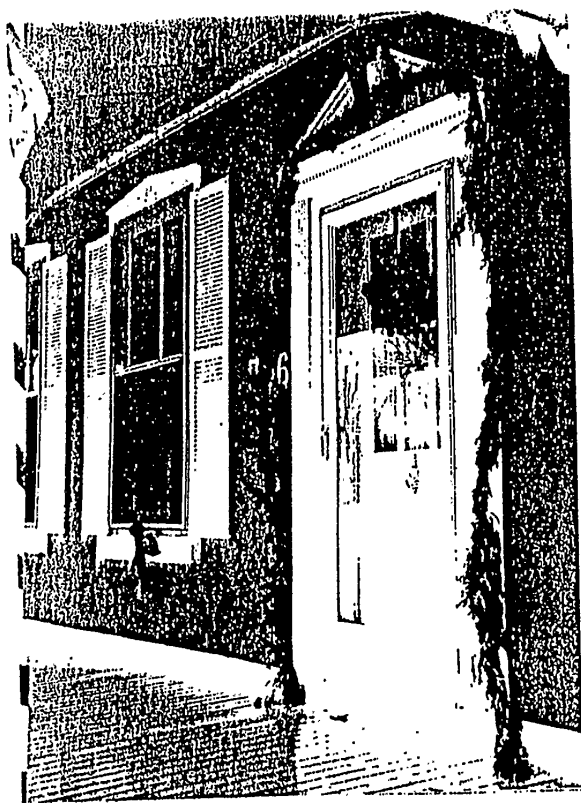
Gilchrist House: view from east.



Gilchrist House: view from street.



Gilchrist House: south front.



Gilchrist House: the front door.