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BY-LAW NUMBER 2003- 27 OF THE CITY OF ORILLIA

A BY-LAW TO DESIGNATE THE KEAN'S BLOCK – 19-27 MISSISSAGA STREET EAST AS BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL 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 real property, including all buildings and structures thereon, to be of architectural and historic value or interest;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the City of Orillia has caused to be served on the owners of the lands and premises known as 19-27 Mississaga Street East and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, notice of intention to so designate the aforesaid real property and has caused such notice of intention to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the municipality;

AND WHEREAS no notice of objection to the proposed designation has been served on the Clerk of the municipality.

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ORILLIA HEREBY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. THAT the Kean's Block located at 19-27 Mississaga Street East, more particularly described in Schedule "A" attached hereto, be and it is hereby designated as being of architectural and historic value or interest.
2. THAT the Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "A" attached hereto in the Registry Office for the division of Simcoe.
3. THAT the Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owner of the aforesaid property and on the Ontario Heritage Foundation and cause notice of the passing of this by-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the municipality.

BY-LAW read a first, second and third time and finally passed this 3rd day of March, A.D. 2003.



MAYOR



CLERK

SCHEDULE "A" TO BY-LAW NUMBER 2003-27 OF THE CITY OF ORILLIA

KEAN'S BLOCK – 19-27 MISSISSAGA STREET EAST

Parcel 2-1 S/S Miss-1, Section 51-12, being Part Lot 3, South side of Mississaga Street, Plan 12, designated as Parts 1 and 4, on Plan 51R-15258, City of Orillia, County of Simcoe.

Being PIN 58667-0086(LT)

KEAN'S BLOCK

19-27 MISSISSAGA STREET EAST

CITY OF ORILLIA

PART LOT 2, SOUTH SIDE, MISSISSAGA STREET EAST, PLAN 12

EARLY LOT HISTORY

The first registered transaction for village Lot 2, Plan 12, south side, Mississaga Street East, dates to April 1854 when John Grantham Hall and others sold a half acre to Thomas H. Portas of Oro township. Hall sold Lots 2 and 3 to Portas for £40. Within months, Portas sold to Edward Shortiss, Esq., of Toronto for £52. Shortiss bought several village lots on the speculation that their value would increase once the railway, already at Barrie, reached Orillia.

In January 1858, Shortiss sold Lots 2 and 3 to John World of Orillia for \$500.¹ On the sale transaction, World is identified as a yeoman (farmer). The *Canada Directory* for 1857-58 lists a John World as a cabinet maker.² The 1861 census for Orillia township identifies him as a cabinet maker, born in England, aged 42. His spouse Jane was 41 and born in Ireland. On Lot 3, Mississaga Street, World established himself as a dry goods and grocery merchant.

FRANCIS KEAN

In September 1862, World sold Lot 2 to James Quinn of Orillia for \$400. According to the 1857-58 directory, Quinn was a land agent. He severed 31 feet of the east side of the property and on May 2, 1863, sold the balance of the lot to Francis Kean for \$900.

Francis (Frank) Kean was born in Nassagawaya township in Halton County (near Guelph) on August 26, 1834. In the 1861 census for Orillia township (including the village), a Mrs. F. Kean is listed as aged 18, born in Canada, and of the Baptist faith. One year old Albert D. Kean is recorded with Mrs. Kean but noted as "at John Kean's." There is no listing for Frank Kean. Frank, 36, and his wife Martha, 26, are listed in the village census for 1871. Frank was born in Ontario, of Irish ancestry, and Baptist faith. Martha had German ancestry. Their sons Albert, 10, and Milton 7, were born in Ontario. Frank was in the tailoring business.

¹ Approximately £100.

² By the end of the century, the World Furniture Company was distributing catalogues.

There are conflicting accounts of Frank's earliest business dealings. According to the January 7, 1888, issue of the *Toronto Mail*:

He learned the trade of waggon making, and carried on a business of his own with great success until the gold fever broke out in California, when he left for that State. He returned to the County of Simcoe in 1857, and established a milling and general business at Marchmont. He acquired considerable capital through that undertaking, and moved into Orillia in 1862, where he founded the business which still bears his honoured name.

According to his obituary in the *Weekly Times* of February 26, 1920, Frank arrived in Orillia on February 12, 1854, where he joined his brother, John Kean, as a millwright. They built the mill at Marchmont for Simon Peter Powley, a mill for George Copeland on the Wye River, and the first mill in Muskoka on the Musquash River for William Basil Hamilton. Frank operated the Marchmont mill for six years before settling in Orillia where he served as a tax assessor and for about twelve years on municipal Council. For ten years he was president of the Agricultural Society. He was a charter member of Orillia's Masonic Lodge No. 192 when it was instituted in August 1867.

Kean may have built a two storey frame building on Lot 2. In 1866, he was listed in the Orillia directory on Mississaga Street as "groceries, provisions, and baker." The 1867 plan of the village of Orillia by Albert Fowlie indicates three buildings on Lot 2, labelled "F. Kean" and "Jas. Quinn." The 1869 directory lists Kean as a general merchant and Quinn as an estate (former land) agent. The 1871 tax assessment roll lists Frank Kean and John World as merchants "Kean & World" on part Lot 2. The property was valued at \$1200.

According to the *Northern Light* of May 19, 1871:

F. Kean has commenced erecting a very handsome residence on Tecumseth St., of the 'Italian Gothic' style of architecture, size 36x32, two stories with a wing 20x16 to cost \$1,800.³ Mr. Kean also intends building a store on Mississaga St., 60x26, 22 ft. high, to be second to none in the country. Cost \$2,000.

Only Kean is listed on part Lot 2 for the 1872 assessment. The value of \$1200 was unchanged from the previous year. John World was on his part Lot 3, valued at \$1000.

On the morning of August 26, 1872, fire broke out in John Dunn's bakery on Mississaga Street. Dunn's store and dwelling were soon consumed and the flames spread east and west along the south side of Mississaga. According to the *Expositor* of August 29, 1872, the fire destroyed "F. Kean's store and dwelling, S.S. Robinson's Law Office, W. Bingham's tin-shop - which with

several out-buildings, also destroyed, were owned by Mr. F. Kean" for a total loss of \$10,000 in houses, furniture, and stock. The *Expositor* continued:

Mr. F. Kean, although the heaviest loser, will be ready to meet his customers to-day, at Geo. Macnab's old stand, opposite the Queen's. . . . Rumours are current that the buildings destroyed will be immediately replaced by others of brick, but the following are all that appear certain: - Mr. Kean will commence at once the erection of a brick store, one storey only of which will be finished this fall.

The *Northern Light* of September 4, 1872, noted:

Recollect that Frank Kean has opened out at MacNab's stand and although his flag pole, house and shop were burnt down, Frank is still alive and selling the best and cheapest Goods in Orillia. Let all his old friends call and see how things look after the fire.

With fires prevalent throughout the province in the decade of the 1870s, there was a shortage of brick for reconstruction. The cost of rebuilding may not have been of concern to Kean. The *Expositor* of December 1872 published his announcement:

FRANK KEAN -Being about to secure the 150,000 pounds which his Father's Uncle, at his death, left by entail, has fully made up his mind to retire from business, therefore it is a fixed fact that the large and select stock of goods now on hand must be disposed of by the 1st of January and no mistake. The rush still continues, because it is well known he is sacrificing, in sales for cash. A full assortment of groceries on hand, Orillia, 11th December 1872.

Although announcing his retirement from business, Kean continued with the construction of his new brick block. On January 8, 1873, the *Expositor* announced:

Mr. Frank Kean's handsome brick block is approaching completion as rapidly as possible at this season. Mr. World expects to remove his stock into one of the stores on Monday next. Mr. James Tudhope will resume business with a new stock of hardware about the 1st of February and Mr. Empey's shop will be ready soon after.

The 1873 assessment roll is not available but in March of that year, John World announced that he was opening in "No. 2 Kean's Block." On May 22, James Tudhope opened in "No. 1 Kean's New Brick Block." In June, Frank was advertising as an *Auctioneer: Valuator and General Commission Agent*. He also was an agent for the Allan Steamship Line. Other (later) occupants of the building may have included the office of the *Times and Simcoe Expositor* newspaper, and the Sons of Temperance Hall and Meeting Room at the centre in the rear.⁴

The 1874 assessment roll lists Frank in the upper flat of Lot 2 (value \$500). F. Kean & Co. (west end), John World, and "Empey"⁵ each occupied a store valued at \$1000 (per unit). The west wall was a common or party wall shared with the owner of Lot 1 (possibly Alexander E. Smith).

³ This is believed to be on Lot 35, North Tecumseth Street.

⁴ From an article, "The Kean Block," attributed to Orillia Lacac, no date.

⁵ The 1872 directory lists A.M. Empey as an agent for the Dominion Telegraph Company.

Frank's 1872 announcement of his retirement may have meant he was leasing the business. In July 1874, Delia Wilson of Orillia, "trading under the name of Frank Kean & Co.," declared financial insolvency. In 1875, Frank (not Kean & Co.) was assessed for the second flat and one of the store units.

One of the features of Kean's Block was the third floor Music Hall. Its Grand Opening performance was on February 11, 1873. It saw professional and amateur productions of musicals, piano concerts, even bell ringers and illusionists.

MUSIC HALL. - Mr. F. Kean's new Hall will be opened this evening by the Complimentary Banquet to the President and Directors of the Midland Railway. It is expected that between three and four hundred will be present. The Hall has been finished in first-class style, and is handsomely decorated for this occasion. Union Jacks are hung upon the walls in profusion, with the following mottoes: 'God Save the Queen,' 'Canada our Home,' 'Orillia on the Highway to the Pacific,' 'Railroads and Progress,' 'Welcome to the Midland Railway,' and 'Welcome to the Nipissing.'

"Much to the regret of a lot of people in town," the Music Hall was cut into two in September 1879. According to the *Times* of September 4, 1879: "It was the only place we had in which a decent crowd could be gathered." Kean's business needed additional room so the space was divided into two almost equal parts. The rear was to be used by Kean. The front was being "fitted up for a court-room" with seating for about two hundred.⁶

About 1884 Kean bought property on Lake Simcoe, retired, and went into farming. He left the operation of the business to his son Milton. The 1890 directory lists: "Frank Kean: General Store and Appraiser Canada Permanent Loan and Savings Company." A second entry reads: "Kean & Dalton: Auctioneers Valuers Money to Loan *Frank Kean - R. Grant Dalton.*"

Another significant occupant of Kean's Block was Thomas H. Robinson. A graduate of the Ontario College of Pharmacy, Robinson occupied the store of Hunter & Tudhope in 1879. In 1887, he and George Armstrong (druggists) were sharing Kean's Block with Peter Bertram, Milton Kean (store), and Albert Kean (law office). The second storey flat was unoccupied.⁷ According to the *Toronto Mail* of January 7, 1888:

The store [Robinson's] is in the Kean Block, and is 24 x 50 feet in dimensions, with dispensary and telephone office 24x30 feet in the rear. He carries an excellent stock of drugs, chemicals, proprietary medicines, toilet articles, books, stationery and periodicals. He is also a dealer in

⁶ The 1887 assessment lists Mrs. Eliza Kennedy, a widow, as the owner of part Lot 5, valued at \$1500 and identified as a Music Hall.

⁷ The 1887 assessment lists Frank Kean as owner in an upper flat of part Lot 4 with Divisional Court Clerk, Josiah Henderson, as the tenant.

flower and garden seeds in the season. A speciality is made of compounding prescriptions and difficult formulas. In January, 1887, Mr. Robinson became local agent for the Bell Telephone Co.

The Kean family experienced several tragedies. In January 1889⁸ when exiting from the midnight train at Orillia, their eldest son, Albert, "slipped under the wheels and met his death." Albert had been a successful trial lawyer. A second son, Milton David, died in 1896 at age 33. The *Orillia Times* of September 3, 1896, noted:

He [Milton] early displayed a remarkable aptitude for business, and his father gave him the opportunity in his large general store on Main street. In a few years the business became Kean & Son, but in a short time the younger member of the firm wished to go out into bigger fields and a good opportunity offering the business was disposed of. The deceased tried business in several other places and finally established himself in the city of Chicago, where he was working up a wood business, when suddenly taken with the illness which finally caused his death.

Frank abandoned farming in February 1904 and started a shoe business. His remaining son, Boulton Ramsay, died on July 3, 1913. Martha's date of death may be August 17, 1913. Frank died on February 25, 1920.

FRAWLEY AND DEVLIN

On January 31, 1895, Frank sold Lot 2 to Michael J. Frawley and Bernard Devlin of Barrie for \$5800. Devlin & Frawley owned a dry goods store in Barrie. In November 1902, Frawley (unmarried) sold his share to Devlin and Kean's Block became known as the Devlin Block. In February 1920, it was occupied by E.A. Wood Ltd. (dry goods, dressmaking, millinery, and ready-to-wear), Nelson's Fair, and the Cut Rate Shoe store.

Bernard Devlin died at Barrie on January 11, 1923, followed by his widow, Katherine P. Devlin. His executor, Charles Thomas Devlin, died on December 4, 1928. Executors to Charles' estate were his widow Mary I. and daughter Isobel Devlin (Innes). Mary and Isobel leased the Devlin Block stores to several tenants. In May 1961, they transferred ownership to Harold S. Shannon of Toronto as trustee. In June, Shannon transferred it for a dollar to Ronald Gordon Innes of Barrie.

The sale to Innes was confirmed in September 1968 by a Quit Claim signed by the Devlin heirs: Katherine Ann McCabe of Essex County, Bernard Devlin of Barrie, Ann M. Snyder (formerly Devlin) of Baltimore, Maryland (executor of the late Frank Devlin), and Isobel Devlin Innes of Barrie. This was for part of Lot 2 and the "buildings municipally known as numbers 19-21-23-25 Mississaga Street East."

⁸ January 1891 is given in the obituary of Milton Kean. The date of 1889 is given in the obituary of Frank Kean and confirmed as January 9, 1889, in the Wills probated for Simcoe County.

RECENT AND CURRENT OWNERS

In September 1968, Innes sold to [Buchler/ Buehler] Brothers Ltd. They sold to Sagur Investment Ltd. in July 1975. The current owner, Consortium Capital Projects Ltd., bought in November 1976.

ARCHITECTURE

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

Immediately after the fire of August 1872, Kean announced that he "will commence at once the erection of a brick store, one storey only of which will be finished this fall." In December, he stated his intention to retire from business, possibly having leased Kean & Co. to Delia Wilson. In January 1873, the *Expositor* noted that Kean's "handsome brick block is approaching completion as rapidly as possible at this season." The tenants opened for business that month.

STYLE AND FORM

This is a two storey, brick, commercial block designed with three storefronts. Integral to the west end of the structure was an open passageway leading from Mississaga street to the rear of the building. (This has since been enclosed as part of the west end store.) Each section is defined by vertical bands of raised, contrasting colour brick. Although the fenestration (window) placement is asymmetrical, the design is balanced by a central triangular pediment at the roof level. When built, it is said to have been the largest building in Orillia, with seventy-five feet of frontage on Mississaga Street.

Stylistically, Kean's Block seems to be in transition between the frame, two storey commercial blocks of the Georgian period, and the three storey Richardson and Romanesque Revival styles that eventually lined the streets of most downtown cores in Ontario.

MASONRY

Kean's Block is constructed of red-orange brick, likely accented with a buff colour brick. It has been overpainted in grey, with white contrast elements. There is plaster parging on the side facades.

ROOF AND CORNICE

The roof is flat but is fronted by an attractive cornice featuring a central triangular pediment incorporating a raised brick circle motif. The roof edge has moulded trim, traced underneath by a thin line of raised brick. From this, five vertical bands of raised brick descend to ground level, defining the four divisions of the storefronts and passageway. When built, the roof line was

ornamented with six turned finials. A tall flag pole was positioned at the central point of the triangular pediment.

A decorative band, just below the roof level, is created by two wide horizontal bands of raised brick above and below a moulded wood band. The wood band is supported by carved brackets placed within each of the five vertical bands. The intersecting of the vertical and horizontal bands create panel-like areas within the cornice.

WINDOWS

The upper level has seven semi-circular window openings in three groups of two, and a single. The sashes have 2x2 panes, wood frames, and plain lugsills. The trim surround is raised brick that traces the semi-circular shape of each opening, then is eared (or jogs) before dropping in a vertical band to the sill level. The effect was probably more dramatic when the raised (likely buff) brick was contrasted against the red brick and differed in colour from the sill.

Window openings on the side walls are smaller in dimension and segmental in shape. The sashes appear to be 1x1.

STOREFRONTS

The original horizontal storefront cornice and signband were positioned below the second storey window sills. The four divisions of the facade were defined within the storefront cornice by five triangular wall ornaments. Each was supported by carved brackets aligned with the second storey brackets of the cornice. The storefront cornice, signband, and related detailing have been replaced with modern, oversized signbands.

The street level display windows and entrances have been altered from their original design.

CONDITION

The structural integrity of the building is unknown. There is some deterioration in the paint and in the side wall parging. There is an overall need for routine maintenance.

SIGNIFICANCE

Frank Kean was among the first to construct a building following the 1872 fire on the south side of Mississauga Street. Completed early in 1873, the style is more in keeping with commercial blocks erected in the first half of the nineteenth century. Constructed in a red and likely buff brick

combination, the two storey form and triangular pediment present a simple but attractive row of storefronts.

As a businessman, owner of the popular Music Hall, politician, member of the Masonic Order, president of the Agricultural Society, and with other endeavours, Frank Kean's contributions to Orillia were many. Even with their deaths at a young age, his sons Albert, Milton, and Boulton are noted in Orillia's history. Kean's, later Devlin's Block, has housed a significant number of merchants and professionals. It is an important component of Orillia's commercial district.

RA