



BLACKHAM'S HOTEL  
*circa 1864*

*Date Designated: April 5, 2003 to By-Law No. 19/2003, SCHEDULE*

*Lot Description: STEWART PLAN PT TOWN LOT 45, PT LOT 46*

## ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The building faces north, near the bottom of Dorset Street West, originally Baseline Road. It is the last house before the commercial area, and almost abuts the sidewalk. It is a two and one-half storey, red brick building with a high fieldstone basement. Special features include the unusual trapezoidal conformation, the parapet sidewalls and the low-pitched roof.

The brick is primarily common bond except for stretcher on the four projecting chimneys on the east and west elevations. The façade has patches of Flemish bond suggesting that this elevation may have originally presented a more elegant front to the street. Subsequent repairs were not up to the same standard. The acute angle at the northeast corner is masked

by an unusual recessed brick semi-circle in Flemish bond. The windows are six-over-six wood with brick moulding. The shutters on the facade are not original to the building but were obtained recently from the Dumble Estate when "the Lawn", the D'Arcy Boulton house built in 1817 on what is now Darcy Street in Cobourg, was being demolished. Although they predate the inn, they are compatible to the style and certainly enhance the appearance of the building.

The façade is symmetrical with three bays. At one time, in order to have a direct entrance to the inn's taproom, a door was cut into the brick at the west end. This was bricked over, probably when the building was made into semi-detached dwellings. When it was divided, a firewall was put down the middle and the original central doorway was split to make separate entrances to each side. Fortunately, the brick moulding and surround was preserved. The window above the doorway is not blind as the firewall abuts it. However, the brick moulding remains. Closed shutters conceal the blind window.



## HISTORICAL ABSTRACT



The east elevation, which originally faced the railway and the river is more elegant than the western one. Between the chimneys, the roof line is flat. Originally, the slopes leading up to the chimneys had five crow-steps. These are now gone. This is the longer of the two sidewalls and has a total of seven windows. The windows on the first and second storeys are placed between and on either side of the two chimneys, giving a pleasing symmetry to the elevation. The seventh window is in the middle of the third storey. It replaces a slit and was needed to give more light to what was an unfinished attic but is now living space. This window, although recently installed, is in keeping with the others and therefore should be included in the designation. The windows are not shuttered. The original windows leading to a high basement have been filled in with stone, matching the rest of the foundation.

The west elevation is the short length of the trapezoid and has only five windows. The northwest corner is at an obtuse angle. The flat roof line and the two chimneys with four windows between them are the same as on the other side. The short wall left no room for windows beyond the chimneys. The former slit window in the attic has been enlarged to match the others. Rather than in the middle, as on the other side, this window is over the windows nearest the front.

When the building was divided, summer kitchens were added at the back. These have been removed, revealing a deteriorating painted brick wall. The present owners have added windows to this wall as well as three skylights in the attic roof. This elevation is excluded from the designation.

Over the years, the trapezoidal rooms, as well as the halls and staircases, have been so altered that it is impossible to know what is original. Due to the unusual conformation of the exterior, the west side interior is much smaller than the east. As well as the addition of the firewall and the completion of the attic, enclosed staircases and walls have been both removed and added. However, the pine floors and the 10' ceiling have remained intact and are included in the designation.

This property has an interesting history in the early life of Port Hope and its bustling commercial activity. When the lot was obtained in 1859, it was next to the Midland Railway tracks and close to the Grand Trunk Station, an ideal site for a railway inn.

Due to the street layout, and the contour of the lot, the building has a trapezoid footprint. Two and a half storeys high, and constructed of red brick, the front facade was originally laid in Flemish bond, but renovations over the years have left little evidence of this feature. The building boasts four chimneys, elaborate parapets and carefully placed six-over-six wood windows.

Around 1895, the hotel closed. Subsequently, the building was divided into two semi-detached dwellings and the original central doorway was split to make separate entrances to each house. Recently converted into a single family dwelling, the western door is now blind, as is the window above. The building's unusual shape leads to curious but delightful details such as the rounded corner of red brick in Flemish bond, softening the acute angle of the northeast corner.

When the Grand Trunk Railway was completed in 1856, railways inns sprang up all along the route. In 1859, R. Blackham obtained a lot to build one for Port Hope. The property was not only beside the tracks and close to the station, but had the added advantage of being on the most fashionable and affluent street in town. The exact date of the inn's construction is unknown but it was definitely up and running by 1864. The building was then known as Blackham's Hotel. In 1875, W. Martin acquired the property and for the next twenty years it was known as Martin's Hotel.

The building suffered a disastrous fire in the 1890's. There were other fires and each time some of the original features were lost. However, the major changes were made early in its history and are therefore in keeping with the 19th and early 20th century architecture. It is believed that as a result of the 1890's fire the hotel was closed and the building divided into two dwellings with a firewall separating them. Passages now connect each floor between the two sides, making it into a single-family dwelling and are endeavouring to restore the building to its original splendour.