

CORPORATION OF THE TOWN  
OF ALMONTE  
BY-LAW NUMBER 27 - 1978

A BY-LAW TO DESIGNATE THE  
PROPERTY KNOWN MUNICIPALLY  
AS 80 Queen Street, Almonte,  
Ontario, AS BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL  
AND HISTORICAL VALUE OR INTEREST.

WHEREAS section 29 of The Ontario Heritage Act, 1974 authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all buildings and structures thereon, to be of architectural or historic value or interest; and

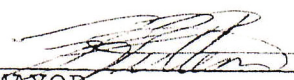
WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Almonte has caused to be served on the owners of the lands and premises known as 80 Queen Street in the Town of Almonte and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, notice of intention to so designate the aforesaid real property and has caused such notice of intention to be published in the same newspaper having general circulation in the municipality once for each of three consecutive weeks; and

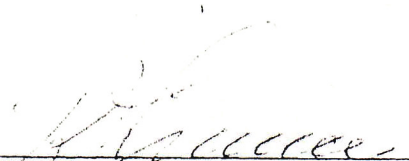
WHEREAS no notice of objection to the proposed designation has been served on the clerk of the municipality;

THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Almonte enacts as follows:

- 1) There is designated as being of architectural and historical value or interest the real property known as 80 Queen Street in the Town of Almonte, and being Part Lots 11, 12, 15 and 19, Union Street, Plan 6262.
- 2) The municipal solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in the proper land registry office.
- 3) The Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served on the owner of the aforesaid property and on the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of the passing of this by-law to be published in the same newspaper having general circulation in the municipality once for each of three consecutive weeks.

READ A FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD TIME AND PASSED THIS 12th day of December, 1978.

  
MAYOR

  
CLERK



VETTER HOUSE, Almonte, Ontario

Location: 80 Queen Street, Almonte, Lanark County, Ontario  
Lot 19, Mitcheson Survey

Present Owner: Frank A. Vetter & wife

Present Occupant: The Vetter family occupy the house.

Present Use: dwelling house

Statement of Significance: The importance of the Vetter House lies both in its architectural distinction and in its claim to be one of Almonte's oldest surviving homes. Architecturally, the house can be compared to 'le modèle québécois', a French-Canadian style which is not commonly found in Ontario and which is certainly unusual in this region. Historically, the situation of the building and its early commercial use underline Almonte's relationship to and dependence on the river. As well, the probable builder of the structure, John Menzies, was a force in the young community, holding a number of political offices and the position of Registrar of the North Riding of Lanark in the last quarter of the 19th C..

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The n.e.  $\frac{1}{2}$  of Lot #15, 9th Concession Ramsay, the original extent of the property, was sold by Isiah K. Boyce, the brother-in-law of Daniel Shipman, to Edward Mitcheson in 1846 for \$800. Mitcheson mortgaged the lot in 1847 and again in 1848 during which time the house could have been built. In 1853 Mitcheson sold Town Lot 19, a subdivision of the original property, to John Menzies. Photographic evidence indicates that Menzies did occupy a building on the lot and that he did operate the basement floor as a store of some kind. Over the next fifty years the ownership of the property appears to have remained in Menzies' hands although there are a large number of confusing turnovers. In 1860 Menzies assigned the property to N.L. Whitney who, in turn, sold it to Robert MacFarlane (in trust). Yet in 1889, Mary Agnes Menzies willed possession back to John Menzies and others. In 1892, Lot 19(all) was purchased by J.D. Gemmill for \$474 but was also sold to Francis A. Hall. Hopefully, this confusion can be clarified by further research. Finally, in 1933, Winnifred Gemmill sold the lot to R. Patterson for \$1600(a.o.l.s.) at which time it was probably restored to the condition in which it is today. In 1946

*if mortgaged  
Lot 15 100 ac, &  
is no indication  
that the house was  
built*



1. Original & sunsequent owners:(cont'd)  
it was purchased by Lois Chaplain, for \$1600, who retained possession until 1969 when the property was sold to the present owners, Mr. & Mrs. Vetter, for \$29,000.
2. Date of erection: The earliest documentary evidence of a house on that lot dates only to 1863 (Walling Survey) when Menzies was in residence; however, most descriptions of the house date it to 1853, the year Menzies purchased the lot, and an architectural evaluation would certainly seem to uphold a date circa. 1850.
3. Architect: Not known.
4. Alterations and additions: The house does not seem to have had any major structural changes made. Apparently it was restored c. 1933 to a state which very accurately reflects the original structure as depicted in early photographs. Dormers were, however, added at that time. The western bay of the cellar level walkway has been enclosed. As well, a pre-1880 photograph shows that the present French windows on the cellar level replace double-hung sash windows.  
The verandah appears to have extended at one time along both the southern and eastern ends. A bay window on the east elevation which does not quite match the style of the house may have been added when that portion of the verandah was removed.

*shown to have  
verandah on the  
east side in  
Belden's book 1880*

B. Historical Events or Persons Connected with the Structure:

Belden's Historical Atlas of Lanark describes J. Menzies, 1880, as follows:

Menzies, John, Registrar North Riding of Lanark. Has also held the offices of Township Councillor, School Trustee, etc.. Owns 100 acres in 11th Con., Tp. of Ramsay. Mr. Menzies is a native of Scotland. Born 1823, and has resided in Lanark Co. 35 years.\*

*John Menzies  
Historical Society*

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views:
  - a) North Lanark Historical Society Photograph Collection
    - i) First Rosamond Mill, c. 1860 (Menzies in background)
    - ii) Shipman's lumber yard, c. 1870
    - iii) Front bridge, c. 1930
    - iv) Railway crossing, c. 1940
  - b) View of residence of J. Menzies, from Belden's Historical Atlas, 1880. 31.
2. Bibliography:
  - \* Belden, H. & Co.. Illustrated Atlas of Lanark County. Toronto 1880. reprint edition, Ross Gunning, 1972.

*done in present  
creation of  
this photo*



2. Bibliography (cont'd):  
 Blake, V.B. & Greenhill, Ralph. Rural Ontario. Toronto, 1960.  
 Lessard, M. & Marquis, H.. Encyclopédie de la Maison Québécoise. Montréal, 1972.  
 MacRae, M.. The Ancestral Roof. Toronto, 1963.  
 National Capital Commission. Heritage. Ottawa, 1976.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General statement:

1. Architectural character: The house bears an affinity to 'le modèle québécois', a French-Canadian style of the mid 19th C.. This is particularly reflected in the long first floor verandah, the bell-cast verandah roof and the early mercantile use of the cellar level. In over-all plan, however, it is a vernacular expression of many styles, Classical Revival and Regency are the most obvious.
2. Condition: very good

*vernacular  
 from 1800-1850  
 popular practice  
 this is a vernacular style  
 in a general sense*

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The house is approx. 50' wide (4 bays) by 30' deep (2 bays plus verandah). A free-standing structure, it is 1½ storeys in height with ground-level basement.
2. Foundations: rubble stone
3. Wall construction, finish and colour: Due to the extreme thickness of the walls throughout the building and to evidence of interior stone walls found on the second floor, it is felt that the Vetter's is actually a stone building sheathed with clapboard. The wall surfaces of the upper storey and a half are all sheathed with this white clapboard. On the first storey of the east elevation, the wall is finished in the board and batten style, also painted white.
4. Structural system and framing: masonry load-bearing walls
5. Porches: There is a long open verandah which stretches across the first storey of the southern elevation. The verandah is supported by wooden piers and its roof is in turn supported by 6 treillis posts. The wooden treillage, a simple diamond design, is reflected in the railing.
6. Chimneys: There are two brick chimneys on the peak of the gable. One is offset from the east end, the other sits on the peak of the west end.

OMISSION:

To Part B., Section 6., considering the roof, should be added the following:

- b) Dormers: There are three dormers on this house. Two are on the southern elevation, each sporting gabled roof with overhang and covered with white clapboard, shingled roof. The third is central on the rear elevation. It is hooded in roof shape and completely shingled.



7. Openings:

- a) Doors and doorways: There are four doorways. Two of these are French doors on the cellar level (second and fourth bays). The third is situated on the northern elevation and is very plain as would befit the back door. There is a rectangular glass transom above the doorway. On the southern elevation, first floor, is the main doorway through which one enters the hall. Two slender pilasters support a moulded cornice and this encloses a rectangular transom (5 lights) and side-lights. The door itself has four panels. (\*note- comparing this house to a similar one in York County, the Richardson House (see Rural Ontario, plate 24), it may be possible that the asymmetrical placement of the main door is due to the fact that it once occupied the southern bay of the eastern elevation rather than its present position. This is purely supposition, of course)

- b) Windows and shutters: The majority of the window openings are very plainly finished with the exception of those on the east wall, ground floor. The cornice of the second storey windows on that side does have some minor moulding but the moulding of the trim and cornice of the projecting bay window is more vigorous than that of any other window on the house. The windows themselves appear to have been replaced in the restoration and are generally one-over-one light double-hung sash. The dormer windows and the cellar windows are, however, of casement design.

8. Roof:

- a) Shape, covering: This house has a shingled, high gable roof with bell-cast, ~~shingled~~ roof on the verandah. There is a central gable on the main elevation.

C. Description of Interior: Not done.

D. Site:

- a) General setting and orientation: The main elevation faces south, overlooking the Mississippi River, directly toward the Town Hall.
- b) Outbuildings: None.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Compiled by M. Christine Castle (cont'd next)

*7. The door is with the transom  
 and the door is at the end  
 of the main elevation. A small  
 number of steps at the front  
 of the door. The door is  
 clearly shown in the  
 door in the location.*

*1890*

*Illustration of  
 of Lanark Co.  
 door is shown in  
 verandah.*

*4. The large windows and  
 verandah de-emphasize  
 the asymmetry.*

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION(cont'd)

under the auspices of the Almonte Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee and the Ontario Heritage Foundation, July, 1976.

Appended material:

- i) modern photograph
- ii) photocopy of view of J. Menzies residence from Belden's Historical Atlas, p. 31.