

THE OSHAWA HOUSE HOTEL
62-68 King Street West
Oshawa

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SITE DESCRIPTION

Property: The Oshawa House Hotel

Location: 62 - 68 King Street West
Oshawa
Plan H-50002 pt lot 7
0.25 acre, 80.00 frontage, 135.00 depth

Owner: Amnon Holdings Inc.
3 Goldfinch Crt. PH3
Willowdale, Ontario M2R 2C1

Construction Date: c.1838

Builder: Unknown

Architecture Style: Italianate

Present Use: Commercial, rooms

Original Use: Hotel

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Plan: Rectangular

Exterior Wall: Brick with stucco cladding

Roof Type: Flat

Windows: 2/2 divided lights, sash

UNIQUE FEATURES

Windows and Doors: Segmentally arched with hood mouldings

Details: Quoins, horizontal belt courses

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Oshawa House Hotel is reported to have been built c.1838. Richard Woon, a local merchant, was the owner until his death in 1858 at which time ownership was transferred to A. Lockhart.

In 1853, the Oshawa House was valued at \$50 for assessment purposes. This figure jumped to ten times that amount five years later. It dropped to \$360 in 1859 where it remained until the mid 1860's. It is suggested that Mr. Lockhart made improvements to the building to account for the dramatic rise in assessment.

The Oshawa House was described in 1844 as the best tavern between Toronto and Kingston. It also served as a meeting place for many groups and religions.

Richard Woon served as hotelkeeper from 1838 until 1850. Mr. Woon was a native of Cornwall, England who settled in Oshawa in 1834. Richard Woon was a popular and successful Oshawa merchant owning several properties in the downtown core. The Woon's had six children: Elizabett, Robert, John, Amy, William, and Richard. Robert became a well-known manufacturer, John the proprietor of the "Commercial Hotel", and William a chemist who later moved to Honolulu. In 1861, the widow Mrs. Woon, owned a two-storey brick building and two shoe stores. A total of five people were employed at the shoe stores. Their average wage was between \$48 and \$55 per month.

John McElroy took a turn as hotelkeeper in 1853. He was born in Ireland c. 1910. The 1861 census lists John as married to Ann, 36 years old. Three of their children and two other family members resided with them. The McElroy's had three servants and four labourers. Their assets included 8 horses and 1 cow (total value \$1050), and 8 carriages for hire (value \$1150). The census also lists the tavern (value \$2000) and a "church belonging to the Church of England built of wood holds 300, cost \$6000". Although identified as "proprietor", John McElroy was never owner of the Oshawa House.

Mr. A. Lockhart of Bowmanville took over ownership of the Oshawa House in 1858. John McElroy continued to serve as hotelkeeper, being joined by his son William in 1863. William served as clerk for the hotel. He is listed in the militia roll in 1865 under First Class Service.

Assessment information throughout the 1870's and 1880's identifies John Hobbs of Oshawa as owner of the Oshawa House. John Hobbs was born in England c. 1906. His wife Jane was sixteen years younger. In 1871 the Hobbs had seven children living with them. Eliza Ann age 16, John Hy age 14, Richard 13, M. Grace 8, Thomas 6, Effie 4, and Louisa 3 months. A daughter Berdie, age 2, was scalded to death three days before Louisa's birth. James and Mary Jane Miller assisted the Hobbs at the hotel.

By 1881, Jane Hobbs was operating the hotel with the help of the Millers and John and Eliza Cooper. John H. Cooper worked as a bartender at the hotel in the mid 1870's. Listed as a carpenter of Scotch origin in the 1881 census, John Cooper later became innkeeper of the Oshawa House.

The Oshawa Hotel boasts in the Canadian Souvenir Publishing Company's booklet, "Oshawa...The Manchester of Canada" (1898) of having forty well furnished bedrooms, tasty sitting rooms and parlors, a large, well lighted reading room, and an excellent bar. Mrs. Cooper affords guests her personal attention and sets a first class table. Rates are \$1 per night. A number of single men call the Oshawa Hotel home. The tenants range from woodworkers and machinists, to marble cutters, blacksmiths and moulders.

By 1911 Arthur Appleyard is proprietor of the hotel. He came to Oshawa from Toronto with ten years experience in the hotel trade. Mr. Appleyard was a member of the Oddfellows and described as genial and well-liked. The Ontario Reformer's special souvenir edition of 1911 describes the Oshawa Hotel as a "modern hotel in every respect" with 25 large and airy guest rooms, a well fitted office, comfortable sitting, lounging and writing rooms, a large dining room, and a thoroughly stocked bar (all popular and advertised brands) in addition to good yards and stables. The building is heated by steam and lighted by electricity and gas. The Oshawa House catered to commercial men and anyone making a short or long stop in Oshawa.

The hotel business gradually declined. By the 1920's the Oshawa Hotel was converted to apartments with stores on the street level. In 1921 the tenants included the Dominion Express Company, a grocer, an insurance and real estate agent, a lawyer, an eye specialist, a tailor, a clothing company, and two high school teachers. Fuel and builders suppliers and a taxi company were also in residence by 1928. Today the Oshawa House continues to serve a varied selection of tenants.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Oshawa House was built c.1838 of red brick with buff brick detailing. Its rectangular plan, flat roof, and segmentally arched door and window openings reflect a modest Italianate flavour.

The Oshawa House features a single, unified block with horizontal proportions. In its original configuration, the building showed a six bay facade on King Street. Its main entrance, with sidelights and transom were reminiscent of a earlier era. Hooded window and door mouldings were comprised of alternating red and buff brick. A decorative buff brick string course separated the second and third storeys. The structure was framed with buff brick quoins.

Today the six bay facade at street level has been replaced in favour of commercial plate glass storefronts. The original entranceway remains, but the sidelights have been removed and the door is now offset. The 2/2 divided light, sash windows are crowned by a hooded drip mould. Although the wall surface has been altered by the use of white and coloured stucco, the design elements (ie: the hood mouldings, string courses, and quoins) are still visible.

The east elevation featured four bays across with a side entrance located at the south end of the wall. Interestingly, the four bays at street level were slightly offset from the stories above. The side entranceway and most northerly window bay have since been filled in. The wall surface is clad in white and coloured stucco.

A long, rectangular, two-storey wing projects out from the rear, or north, elevation. The original polychromatic brickwork is covered with the same white and coloured stucco, with design elements still featured. The wing has a moderately pitched, gable roof. It is six windows across on the second storey, the street level now a combination of entrance doors and plate glass storefronts.

Detailing on the west elevation is subdued, confining itself to quoining and coloured stucco string courses. A one storey building abuts the structure at street level.

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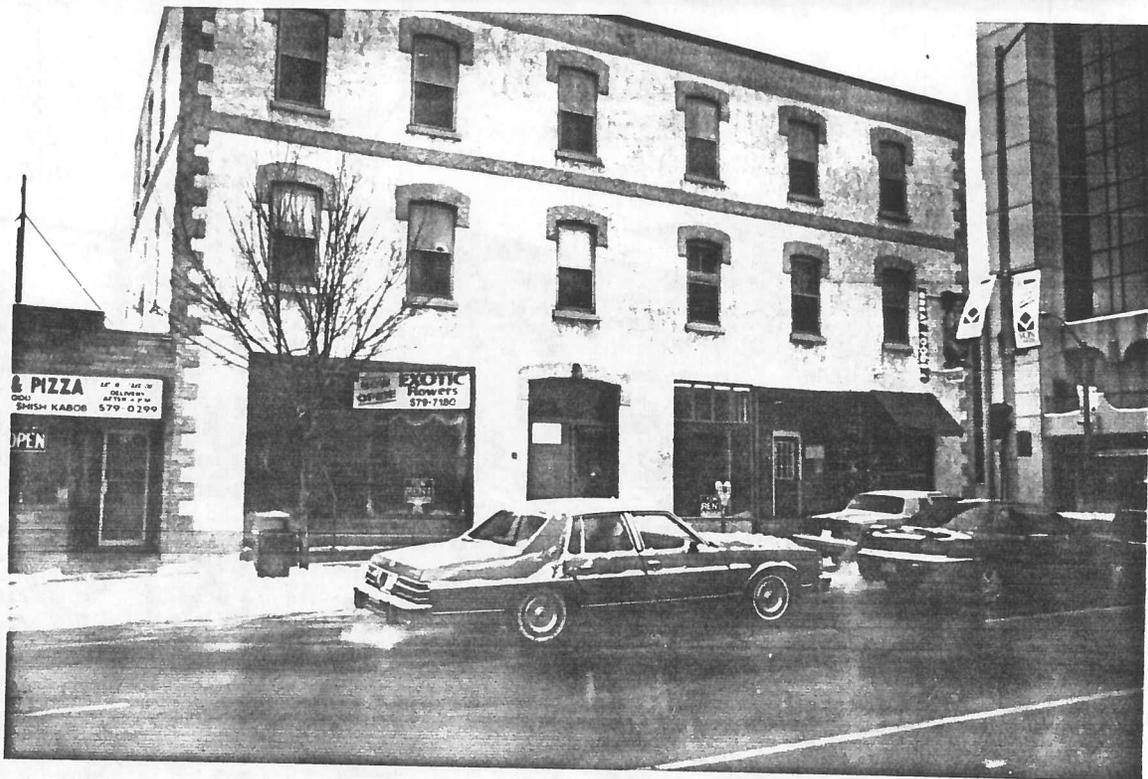
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Oshawa House Hotel
62 - 68 King Street West

View of southeast elevation.



King Street elevation.

Oshawa House Hotel
62 - 68 King Street West

View of southwest elevation.



East elevation.