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Durham

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

February 3, 2000
File: A-2160 (LACAC)

REGISTERED MAIL

Corporation of the Town of Whitby
575 Rossland Road East
Whitby, Ontario
L1N 2M8

Re: The James Rowe House
Part 1 of Plan 40R-19313
301 Front Street West, Whitby
Heritage Designation, Part IV
The Ontario Heritage Act

At a meeting held on January 17, 2000, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Whitby passed By-law No. 4532-00, a copy of which is enclosed, being a by-law to designate the James Rowe House located on property municipally known as 301 Front Street West, Whitby, as a Heritage Structure under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The Notice of Passing for By-law No. 4532-00 will be advertised in the February 9th, 2000 issue of the Whitby This Week newspaper.

Further information regarding the designation can be obtained by contacting Mr. John Taylor, Secretary of L.A.C.A.C. at 430-4306 extension 2275.

D. Shields

Debbie Shields
Supervisor of Administrative Services

cc: ✓ The Ontario Heritage Foundation
10 Adelaide Street East
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1J3

REGISTERED MAIL

R. B. Short, Director of Planning
J. Taylor, Secretary, LACAC

✓
8/11/00
RC

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF WHITBY

BY-LAW NO. 4532-00

BEING A BY-LAW TO DESIGNATE THE STRUCTURE MUNICIPALLY KNOWN AS 301 FRONT 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, as amended, the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Whitby considers it desirable to designate the exterior of the property hereinafter described to be of historic and architectural value and interest;

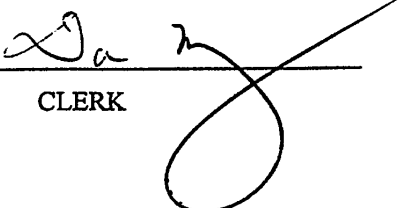
AND WHEREAS, the Council of the said Corporation has caused to be served on the owners of the property municipally known as 301 Front Street West, Whitby, Ontario, and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, notice of its intention to designate the structure at the aforesaid address to be of historic and 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 Rowe House ("Maple Grove") located on the property municipally known as 301 Front Street West, Whitby, Ontario and more particularly described on 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 17TH DAY OF JANUARY, A.D., 2000.


CLERK


MAYOR

SCHEDULE "A"

TO BY-LAW NO. 4532-00

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Lot C and Parts of Lots B & D, Plan H-50035, and Part Water Lot 27, Broken Front Concession, now designated as Part 1 on Plan 40R-19313 in the Town of Whitby, in the Regional Municipality of Durham.

SCHEDULE "B"
TO
BY-LAW NO. 4532-00

DESIGNATION AND ARCHITECTURAL REPORT FOR THE ROWE HOUSE

DESIGNATION REPORT

THE JAMES ROWE HOUSE

"MAPLE GROVE"

C. 1856

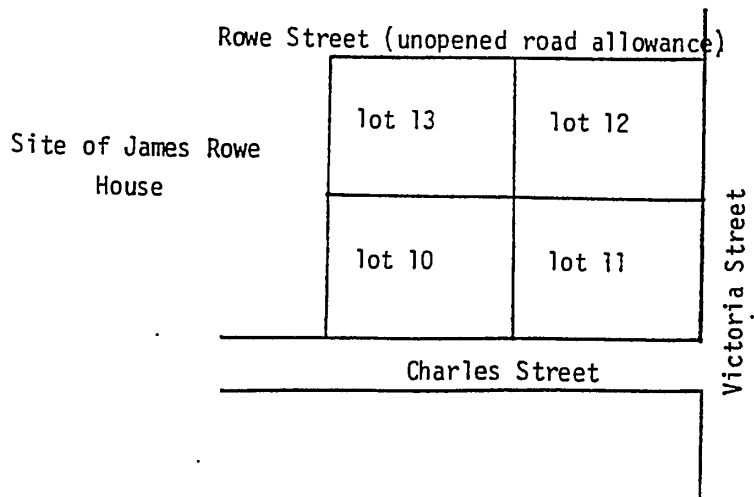
Compiled by Brian Winter, Archivist, Whitby Historical Society

April 23, 1986

On Sept. 4, 1856, James Rowe mortgaged his four lots for 1,000 pounds to the Bank of Montreal. English money in pounds, shillings and pence, was Canada's currency at that time. It seems quite likely that this mortgage was taken out to provide money to build a house. There is no indication that a house had been built on this site previously. James Rowe in 1856 would have been in the grain business about seven years and would be

lthy enough to build a house of the type on the site today. It appears that he had this idea in mind for a few years, for he began assembling the land in 1853 and completed the transaction in February 1856. Seven months later he took out the mortgage. It therefore seems likely that his home was built at the end of 1856 or completed early in 1857. There have been educated guesses that the house dated back to the 1840s. Peter Stokes, a noted restoration architect, examined the house about 1978 and said that there were many parts in it that dated before 1850. It is possible that, as a contractor, James Rowe might have used parts from earlier buildings to build his own home. A check of the abstract of title for lot 27, Broken Front Concession, shows that James Rowe did not purchase any land in the area until 1851 and that did not include the site of the present house. By 1856 he was prospering in the grain trade, had completed his first term as Mayor of Whitby, and would have been in a position to build his own house. Where he lived before 1856 is not known. The actual site of the house, lots 10 and 11, was purchased in 1856, while the back lots of the property had been purchased in 1853.

James Rowe called his home "Maple Grove," and it was known by that name until about the turn of the century. It remained in the hands of the Rowe family for 29 years.



James Rowe was one of the most influential persons in the early development of Whitby and the establishment of Ontario County. Without his many contributions, the history of Whitby would be much different than what is recorded today. He was the first mayor of the municipality in 1855 and was involved in many community projects. His significance in our town's history rates very high indeed, along with the likes Peter Perry.

James Rowe was born on Oct. 20, 1799 near Montreath in Queen's County, Ireland. He came to Canada in 1824 and settled at Shoal Point, on lake Ontario west of the Whitby-Pickering Town line. He was a farmer for about 20 years and married Mary Richardson, a member of a prominent Pickering Township family.

In the early 1840s he became a contractor and did work on the construction of the Welland Canal. He then formed a partnership with James Cotton in a contracting business based at Whitby. Cotton and Rowe received the contract for building piers and warehouses at Port Windsor (Whitby) from the provincial government in 1843-44 and also dredged the harbor. The same partnership in 1850 built the steamer Woodman, the first steamboat on lake Scugog. The Woodman went into service in 1851 at Port Perry and brought limber and shingles from Fenelon Falls and Bobcaygeon to Port Perry along the Scugog River and Lake. These materials would then be taken by road to Port Whitby for shipment to the United States.

By 1849, James Rowe had formed a partnership with John Welsh and John Watson, called James Rowe and Company, which built grain warehouses at Port Whitby. The James Rowe and Company became the largest grain shipping company at Port Whitby. Mr. Rowe also had a shipyard on the site of the McNamara Marine property where he built a number of grain schooners. One he named after his partner John Welsh and another was the "Prince of Wales."

In 1852 the three partners of James Rowe and Company formed the Whitby, Lake Scugog and Huron Road Company and purchased the harbor and Centre Road from the Provincial Government. The Centre Road is now Highway 12, leading from Port Whitby to Lake Simcoe. The new company spent \$300,000 on improving the road as far as Manchester and spent

\$15,000 on the harbor at Port Whitby. Tolls were charged on the road and at the harbor to pay for these improvements. The three partners operated the harbor and road until 1863 when they ran into financial difficulties and the Government expropriated the Whitby Harbor and Centre Road. They were sold in 1864 to Chester Draper of Whitby and Joseph Gould of Uxbridge. In the early 1850s, James Rowe was president of the Whitby, Lake Scugog and Huron Road Company.

In 1852, James Rowe acted as chairman of a public meeting to discuss building a railway from Port Whitby to Georgian Bay on Lake Huron, to replace the Centre Road. He was part of a committee from Whitby that petitioned the Government for a charter for the railway, and was one of 14 individual shareholders. The railway to Georgian Bay was not built, however, because of a severe economic depression that began at the end of 1857.

Like Peter Perry, Whitby's founder, James Rowe did all he could to promote the development of Whitby and its harbor and promoted the separation of the eastern townships of York County to form a new county with Whitby as the County Town.

In 1848 he was a member of an executive committee which initiated the movement for separation. When the Provisional County of Ontario was formed in 1852, James Rowe was a member of the first county council, as Reeve of Whitby Township. In 1852 he was appointed chairman of the building committee for the County Buildings, in charge of obtaining an architect and contractor for the court house (now Whitby Centennial Building) and the jail (demolished in 1960). He negotiated the purchase of the site of the County Buildings on Centre Street South, and on Sept. 23, 1852 James Rowe turned the sod for the Court House. He was also a member of a committee to recommend to the Government the names of persons to serve as the first officers of the new County of Ontario.

In 1853, James Rowe was elected as warden of the County of Ontario and presided at the laying of the corner stone of the Court House on June 30 of that year.

In 1855, Whitby was incorporated as a town, with James Rowe as its first mayor. He was so widely respected that when Whitby's third Mayor, Ezra Annes died in office

In 1857, the council unanimously chose James Rowe to fill the remainder of the dead mayor's term. James Rowe also served as Mayor in 1861 and for a number of years was either Reeve or Deputy Reeve of Whitby. In a political career spanning 16 years, the following offices were held by James Rowe:

Reeve of Whitby Township -- 1852-53.

Warden of Ontario County -- 1853.

Whitby's representative on the Ontario County Council -- 1852-53, 1856, 1859, 1860, 1863-66, 1868.

Mayor of the Town of Whitby -- 1855, Sept.-Dec. 1857, 1861.

Reeve of the Town of Whitby -- 1856, 1859-60, 1865-66, 1868.

Deputy Reeve of the Town of Whitby -- 1863-64.

Councillor for the South Ward of Whitby (Port Whitby) -- 1855-60, 1863-66.

In 1861, James Rowe contested the Riding of South Ontario as a Conservative in the Provincial election. He was defeated by the Reform (Liberal) candidate, Oliver Mowat, who later became Premier of Ontario and Lieutenant Governor of the Province.

James Rowe, along with Peter Perry, Ezra Annes, Samuel Cochrane and other leading men of Whitby, travelled throughout the County of Ontario promoting the separation and establishment of Ontario County. Mr. Rowe also took the lead in promoting any other worthwhile project for development of the town and county, such as the railway to Georgian Bay. Occasionally he expressed his wish to retire from politics, but the people of Whitby always called on him to run for office again.

James Rowe was very much involved in a number of local projects in Whitby as well as his political and business interests.

He was one of the persons responsible for the building of St. John's Anglican Church which opened in 1846. He made arrangements with his partner John Welsh to ship grain from Whitby to Kingston and have Kingston limestone brought back to Whitby in the boats as ballast. This stone was used to build the church and a store owned by James Rowe and operated by John Welsh at Port Whitby. James Rowe provided much of the money required to build the church and was one of the first Church Warden's at St. John's.

In the 1850s, James Rowe was President of the St. Patrick's Society of Whitby which held a celebration every St. Patrick's Day, March 17, and provided assistance to Irish immigrants coming to the Whitby area.

James Rowe House - 6

In 1851, James Rowe was a member of the Board of Management which built the Port Whitby Public School on Dufferin Street, which still stands. This brick school was the first meeting place of the Ontario County Council in 1852.

In 1850, James Rowe was one of seven directors who established the Whitby Building Society to promote development of the community.

James Rowe had a family of at least six children. His eldest daughter, Mary Charlotte was married to Thomas Lawler, a local grocer and their son, Arthur Thomas Lawler was Mayor of Whitby in 1906. A grandson, Bill Lawler, is presently a member of The Whitby Hydro Electric Commission. James Rowe's youngest son, Elliott Sprowl Rowe, was a Methodist Minister for some years before becoming a public relations director for the City of Vancouver in the early 1900s. He did much to promote and advertise Vancouver before his death there in 1914.

James Rowe died at his home on January 28, 1869, at the age of 69. He was buried in an impressive funeral at St. John's Cemetery, Port Whitby, attended by members of the Whitby Town Council and Ontario County Council.

James Rowe was described at his death as "a man of honesty and purpose. His death leaves a void in this community that will not easily be filled and his memory a name that will not be soon forgotten."

After the death of James Rowe, Maple Grove remained in the Rowe family for 16 years. On Feb. 21, 1885, Elliott S. Rowe sold the property to John Riley. Nothing is known of John Riley. His widow, Margaret Ann Riley, sold the property to Eugene Owen McCrohan on July 7, 1911.

Eugene Owen McCrohan, a native of Ireland, was a resident of Oshawa who used the Rowe house as a summer home. For the past 75 years it has remained the property of members of his family and their descendents.

Mr. McCrohan was the owner of the Central Hotel on King Street in Oshawa from before the turn of the century until about the 1920s. In later years the hotel was managed by his daughter, Eileen, Mrs. John Henry, whose family also used the house in the summer.

The ownership of Maple Grove has always remained in the McCrohan and Henry families until 1986, under various names. On Dec. 20, 1929, Eugene Owen McCrohan sold the property to McCrohans Limited, a family company, which reverted back to individual members of the family on Dec. 23, 1936. On Sept. 13, 1967, members of the Henry and McCrohan families transferred the property to McCrohans Co., Ltd.

It was the custom of the McCrohan and Henry families to use the James Rowe house the summer, and rent it in the winter. In the 1960s and 1970s it was rented to a number of school teachers.

In 1977, Eugene McCrohan Henry (1912-1981) retired from business in Ottawa and he and his wife Margaret moved into the house at Port Whitby. Eugene Henry was a son of John Henry and Eileen McCrohan, and was born at Maple Grove on Aug. 21, 1912. In the 1940s he was deputy director general of munitions for the Federal Government in Ottawa. After the second World War he was a consultant for real estate and food companies.

When he returned to his boyhood home, Mr. Henry expressed an interest in the history of Whitby and spent much time and money in promoting the town's history. He commissioned a painting of Port Whitby as it looked in 1867, by Cambridge artist Roy Austin and presented it to the Town of Whitby for its 125th anniversary in 1980. He donated to the town of Whitby Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee a set of photographs of old buildings of Whitby taken by Hugh Robertson, photographer for the book "Homesteads," published in 1979. He also presented a model of the Port Whitby light house to the Marina. He served as Chairman of the LACAC in 1980 and wrote an historical column for the Whitby Free Press. Eugene Henry died at Whitby on April 18, 1981. Since his death, the house has been rented for a time, and still remains in the ownership of other members of the Henry and McCrohan families.

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The James Rowe House ranks as one of the most significant historical sites in Whitby. It was the home of the Town's first mayor and one of the major political figures in the establishment of the Town of Whitby and the County of Ontario (now Durham Region). James Rowe was one of the major builders of early Whitby and his involvement in the grain business is significant as the grain trade was the reason for the establishment of a harbor at Whitby and for the town's early development.

Every effort should be made to preserve this house not only for its historical value to the Town of Whitby, but as a good example of 1850s style architecture and as one of the few remaining original buildings of the Port Whitby Community.

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THE JAMES ROWE HOUSE

"MAPLE GROVE"

C. 1856

Lots 10 to 13, Block 4, Scadding's Plan, Port Whitby, 1600 Charles Street.

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The James Rowe House, home of Whitby's first mayor, is located on the south-west corner of Victoria and Charles Streets, on one acre of land. The town lots were originally part of lot 27, Broken Front Concession, Whitby Township which was patented to John Scadding (1754-1824). Born in Devonshire, England, Mr. Scadding was property manager for Ontario's First Governor, John Graves Simcoe and accompanied Simcoe to Upper Canada in 1792. When Simcoe went back to England in 1796, Scadding went with him to manage the Simcoe estate. In return for his faithful service, he was granted large tracts of land in Canada, including the present site of Port Whitby. He returned to Canada in 1817 or 1818 to manage his land, and in 1819 laid out a plan for the Village of Windsor at the present site of Port Whitby. The name Windsor, came from John Scadding's home in Devonshire. He named the streets of Windsor after his sons, John, Henry and Charles. Charles Street still retains its original name, while John Street became Dufferin Street and Henry Street became Watson Street. John Scadding brought his family to Canada in 1821, but was killed by a falling tree in 1824 before he could develop the village of Windsor.

Lot 27, Broken Front Concession, Whitby Township, was patented to John Scadding on May 17, 1802. On March 16, 1834, his son John Scadding Jr. sold a number of village lots, including lots 10 to 13, to Robert Jameson. No detail is known about this man.

On October 28, 1842, Robert Jameson sold lots 10 and 11, Block 4 to James Wallis and Mr. Wallis sold lots 12 and 13 to Robert Jameson. It appears there was some kind of land swap here. On Feb. 2, 1853, James and William Jameson sold lots 12 and 13 to James L. Robinson, who sold them to James Rowe (1799-1869) on June 23 of the same year. On Feb. 7, 1856, James Wallis sold lots 10 and 11, fronting on Charles Street to James Rowe. Each of these lots was one-quarter acre. By early 1856, James Rowe had assembled a one-acre parcel of land in a strategic location on the Base Line for his residence.

within the plot shading the house from the west. Approaching the site from the west, the house is almost invisible. On the south of the house is a parking space, a new concrete sidewalk along the street in front of the house and new low planting up to the verandah. No old outbuildings belonging to the original arrangement survive, but a more recent cottage still stands, with a dog run attached. Planting around the house is mostly of the foundation type and, except for ornamental planting near the front, the garden comprises largely grass between the trees and a few shrubs.

Description of the House:

The building is a frame two storey house, the original plan an ell-shape with gables at ends and rear. The east front facing Charles Street, is three bays wide, the entrance set slightly to left of centre, the window above aligned with it. The south gable has a single window on each storey, the north gable two windows to each floor. The roof has a low pitch with projecting eaves, verges and eaves returns. Only one chimney stack survives in use, that on the west gable of the ell. The original finish survives to a large extent on the exterior and comprises wood clapboard at approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ " to 5" to the weather. Cornice mouldings survive, notably a canted bedmould, but applied gutters seem to have replaced the crown mould at the eaves.

Other exterior details of note include the cap to the beaded corner board still in place at the south-east corner, the remarkable French windows to the front which are a single leaf with the glazed light divided into whole panes with half panes at the side. The doorcase is pilastered with a deep headboard, now without a cornice: the six panel door is original and the transom light also although two muntins have been removed. Most of the sash are original, in arrangements of twelve over twelve panes of 7" by 9"

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glass, much of the glass original and very distorted. Some sash, however, have been reset upside down, giving an incorrect heavy outline to the meeting rail.

Alterations to the exterior include a front verandah probably early 20th century, the addition of a rear lean-to, now serving as kitchen and ground floor bathroom, and an extension filling in the north-west internal angle of the original ell-shaped plan to provide a small library extension to the north end living room. Various rearrangements of stoops and exterior cellar entrance have been made recently. The mouldings to the front door pilasters, though very much in keeping, are suspected as a c.1930 replacement.

Internally the original plan of the older section of the house is still readily discernible although the room uses suggested are conjectural. The layout is basically a centre hall plan. The front door, being slightly offset to the left favours the passage past the stair, the latter set to the right side of the hall. On the left of the hall is believed to be the original Dining Parlour, now serving as a ground floor bedroom. To the right is a long narrow room with slightly higher ceiling believed to be the Rest Parlour. Its counterpart upstairs is one step up from the stair hall. Both rooms in the north end of the house are more elaborately trimmed. A large room, now used as a Dining Room, occupies the rear ell and projects into the main body of the house slightly. This was most likely the kitchen and probably also served the family for general dining and domestic purposes much as a Keeping Room. The rear lean-to addition was likely the summer kitchen originally.

Upstairs the plan is virtually repeated except for the different subdivision of the rear room partly in the main body of the house and mostly contained within the ell. Here a subdividing partition, curiously canted in part, divides the space into two rooms. The south partition is oddly set

back to create a small landing at the top of the stair. The staircase has winders in a quarter turn to the south (after rising to the west) with no balustrade at the head of the well. Whereas this does make the moving of furniture upstairs easier, a straight run for the stair would have been equally practicable (and safer): the stair turn suggests a partition at the head of the stair, and perhaps only a single room in the back of the house.

The front rooms coincide roughly with those below. The larger rear room (in the south-west corner) has a beam coinciding with the rear line of the main part of the house. This is supplemented by a sloped beam in line with the west wall of the north projection of the ell, which may be simply a brace or earlier framing to a loft roof over the rear ell. A chimney, set on a bracket, projects from the west wall, the only stack surviving. The house was obviously heated by stoves originally and other chimneys probably occurred at the north and south gables.

Interior detail of the house is common to the 1840's with the fillet, flat ovolo and fillet form to backmoulds and panel moulds to the entrance door. However the north end rooms are more elaborately trimmed with an early version of the familiar fillet and cyma reversa with sloped fillet termination for backmoulds, a quirk mould to architraves of cyma, bead and fillet, and three quarter beads to the edges of door openings. The forms are not the broad flat profiles of the mid-1830's but the deep and rather delicate second manifestations of this popular profile, showing first in the late 1830's and becoming more common in the 1840's. This detail is combined with large scale baseboard with a square quirk at roughly three quarter height and a half round and fillet top. The six panel doors into the two front rooms have deep square fielding and the cyma reversa with sloped fillet panel mould.

Other two panel doors exist with a broader, fuller version of the same profile, projecting almost in bolection fashion, a distinctly mid-century detail. Upstairs, on a simple vertical beaded board and cleat door is a very fine brass thumb latch of late 18th or early 19th century pattern, which seems to be a re-use of older material. The stair is simple, without string ornament and with turned newels with bun top, broad oval hand-rail (vertical on the stair flight, horizontal at the well) and rectangular balusters.

Physical Condition:

The house has been well-maintained of late with careful attention to paintwork. However a number of structural problems are evident internally and distortions and deformations are slight to severe with sloping floors, openings out of square and at least one crack in an upstairs room showing movement. The problems seem to relate to settlements due to foundation movement, such as the front wall which is beyond the cellar, and the front section of the floor is humped over the cellar wall. The rear ell is particularly misaligned upstairs, but this has been concealed by new ceilings below. It is possible that the supporting beams and posts at cellar level or over crawlspaces have deformed and/or decayed in the past and that re-alignment has not accompanied repairs.

In Conclusion:

From surviving original detail the Rowe-McCrohan House would appear to date from the 1840's: its date, therefore, has been noted at c.1845 which certain documentary evidence also suggests.

The Rowe-McCrohan House is one of the finest surviving examples of the early building of Port Whitty. It retains a considerable complement of its original detail and its plan has not been changed radically. With further

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careful attention in renovations more of the historic and architectural character of the building can be restored. The house stands on a large property. Judicious shrub and screen planting will enhance the plot and help maintain privacy and some relief from the din and dust of increasing traffic. With the gradual phasing out of the adjoining factories and warehouses, which presently are incompatible uses intruding in the area, and the development of recreation in connection with the harbour it would be possible to ensure a more stable situation locally, thus contributing to the preservation of the older buildings and encouraging suitable infilling and compatible modern replacements for lesser structures.

Peter John Stokes
Peter John Stokes

July 1978

Consulting Restoration Architect