

Heritage Research Report 202 Main St. West (City Hotel/Tavern)

Part Lot 3 South Side Main St. West, Former Humberstone Village

See: Anger, Don. *The "Golden Age" of Old Humberstone Village (1790-1912) and its Early Inns and Taverns*. Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum, 2003.

Architectural Features:

The two-storey structure that stands at 202 Main St. W. underwent at least two distinct phases of building: the first being in 1851-3, and the second being in 1897. We know that when Marshall Doan began the rebuilding and renovations in 1897, he had the western portion of the original building moved back, and a new building erected in its place. The contract was given to Charles Reichman, and H.D. Suess drew the plans. The *Tribune* of May 10, 1898 reports, "The double verandah on Doan's hotel is now finished, and is said to be one of the finest in the country. It certainly is a good specimen of workmanship and reflects credit on the builder, Messrs. H.D. Suess and Mich. Huffman". This verandah seems to have been extant at least until the late 1950s. There have been significant alterations to the exterior since, and it retains little of its original appearance (See Appendix 1). The eastern portion, which is likely the remaining part of the 1853 building, features a low hipped roof, and two gabled dormers on the second storey façade. Curiously, the 1897 addition on the west of the building featured a flat roof, which was highly unusual for that period. The siding would originally have been clapboard, but has since been replaced by vinyl siding. The windows and entryways are not original.

In 2017 there was a fire, but the damages were localized and repaired.

History:

The oldest portion of the former City Hotel was originally built as a private residence, by John Frederick Utz, a blacksmith, around 1851-53. The home was purchased by John C. Minor in 1855, and then by Levi Kinsey in 1857, before Michael Reeb, then a Teamster, purchased the building in 1858 for \$600, but Levi Kinsey appears to have continued to live there, renting the house, for some time. During the 1860s Reeb worked as a grocer and merchant, but by the 1870s he was working as an Innkeeper; in an 1879 business directory he is listed as the proprietor of the City Hotel. The hotel was then purchased by Augustus Barth in 1884, and he ran it until 1889, when he leased it to Horace Ramey. Shortly after this, however, Marshall Doan purchased the hotel, running it from 1891-1899.

It was Doan who carried out the significant renovations on the original building, and had the main, street-facing portion constructed. In 1899, the hotel passed briefly into the hands of Oscar Upper, before being sold to William Mehlenbacher, a tailor. In 1906, Mehlenbacher and Charles A. White, proprietor of the Western Hotel down the road, switched properties. The property stayed in the hands of the White family until 1945, when it was sold to Melvin and Maria M. Misener. It

was then run by the Bagu family from 1951 until 1966. In 1978 it was purchased by Bob and Isabella Moskalyk, who changed the name from City Hotel to City Tavern, and it continued to operate until 2020.

Architectural and Historical Significance:

While few of the City Hotel's original architectural features have been preserved, the building does stand testament to Port Colborne's marine heritage. During the nineteenth century, Humberstone had at least eight licensed taverns/hotels, which were important in providing accommodations for travellers, as well as food, drink, and entertainment for the many who worked on an along the canal; this large number evinces the great influence of the canal on the businesses and industry of Port Colborne and Humberstone Villages. This is the last surviving hotel building from this period in the former Humberstone Village. When shipbuilding technology advanced and the large lakers could make the trip in a shorter amount of time, and the Welland Ship Canal (4th canal) was built, many businesses lost custom, including the numerous hotels that had once lined Main St.

Appendix 1



(Screenshot from Google Earth)



West Side 202 Main St.



Eastern Portion 202 Main St. ca. 1853