38-40 Colborne Street, Village of Fenelon Falls (Mansion House Hotel)

Heritage Designation Evaluation

Fenelon Falls
PT LT 1 E/S COLBORNE ST AND S/S FRANCIS ST PL 17 FENELON AS IN
R366292 S/T R366292; KAWARTHA LAKES
2023

Kawartha Lakes

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The subject property has been researched and evaluated in order to determine its cultural heritage significance under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990. A property is eligible for designation if it has physical, historical, associative or contextual value and meets any two of the nine criteria set out under Regulation 9/06 of the Act. A heritage evaluation of the property has determined that 38-40 Colborne Street has cultural heritage value or interest and merits designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

1. The property has design value or physical value because it:

i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method:

38-40 Colborne Street is a representative example of commercial Italianate architecture in downtown Fenelon Falls. This style was the most populate architectural style for urban commercial buildings in the second half of the nineteenth century, both in Fenelon Falls and in communities across Ontario. It demonstrates the key features of this style which include two-storey construction, ornate brick coursing, pilasters and raised brick window hoods.

ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit:

The property displays a typical degree of craftsmanship for a building of this type.

iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement:

There are no specific technical or scientific achievements associated with this property.

2. The property has historical or associative value because it:

i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to the community:

The property has direct associations with the history and development of downtown Fenelon Falls throughout the 1870s and 1880s. This was a period when the community was growing in prosperity and the subject property speaks directly to this period of growth. It operated for its early life as the Mansion House Hotel and speaks to the role of hotels in nineteenth century communities, both for tourists and for longer term accommodation for local workers. It also has direct historical association with prominent local businessman and landowner, Jeremiah Twomey, the original owner of the property.

ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture:

The property yields information regarding the development of Fenelon Falls throughout the 1870s and 1880s and the increasing prosperity and

urbanization in the village during this time, as well as the role of hotels in housing both tourists and workers in communities during this period.

iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to the community:
The builder of the property was local contractor Thomas Marrs about whose work in the community little is known.

3. The property has contextual value because it:

i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area:
The property is important in maintaining and supporting the historic commercial character of downtown Fenelon as one of a collection of late nineteenth century Italianate buildings that define the commercial core of the community which is primarily located along Colborne Street.

ii. is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings:
The property is historically, functionally, physically and visually linked to its surroundings as part of a collection of extant Italianate commercial buildings which form the commercial core of Fenelon Falls. The building forms part of continuous streetwall along the east side of Colborne Street comprised of both late nineteenth century Italianate structures and more modern commercial properties.

iii. is a landmark.
The property is not a specific landmark.

Design and Physical Value

38-40 Colborne Street has design and physical value as a representative example of Italianate commercial architecture in Fenelon Falls. The building, which served as a local hotel and was constructed in 1877 as a replacement for an older hotel building, demonstrates the key features of this architectural style which was the most popular architecture style for commercial construction in Ontario in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is representative of the execution of this style in Fenelon Falls between about 1870 and 1890 when it was at its height of popularity and the commercial core of the village was developing rapidly from its pioneer beginnings to an established Victorian community.

Commercial architecture in Canada's cities, towns and villages, including Fenelon Falls, underwent a period of significant evolution throughout the nineteenth century. The earliest commercial architecture was purely functional, such as small general stores or blacksmith's shops in nascent communities where the proprietors would build a structure, often in a vernacular style, near or adjacent to their residence. As the century wore on, these structures often took on the stylistic trappings of contemporary architectural styles, but remained relatively basic detached structures on their own lots. A new structural type also developed: a two-storey structure with the commercial establishment on the main floor and the business owner's residence on the upper storey. Architecturally, these buildings still generally resembled residential structures although the ground floor would often have larger window to showcase the store's products. This type of arrangement was, and remained, typical for small hamlets with a few commercial enterprises.

However, with the increasing urbanization of many of the province's communities, commercial architecture was forced to adapt to the rapidly changing conditions of Ontario's towns and cities; this change was not limited to Ontario and is reflective of the condition of commercial structures across North America. One of the most significant changes was the centralization of commercial structures together in downtown areas. Although the concept of formal zoning was just being developed during this period, it was a time when commercial enterprises and work were being moved outside of the home and businesses were beginning to establish their own spaces in communities; as had and was continuing to occur in urban centres in Europe, businesses naturally clustered together for convenience, creating the beginnings of the commercial downtown and the idea of a main street.

As more businesses came together to form a downtown core, their buildings began to get closer together to respond to the increasing density and desire to not waste limited space. By the mid-century, the idea of commercial buildings being linked in a continuous street wall was common in urban areas as commercial structures were built directly adjacent to one another and even

shared dividing walls. This arrangement was a direct mirror of European urban spaces where tightly packed commercial cores necessitated buildings attached to one another, and built directly to the edge of the lot to maximize space. In the early days of this new commercial arrangement, two types of buildings prevailed. The first were two- to three storey buildings similar to a basic Georgian plan, and often with a gable roof divided by a parapet wall, forming a continuous gable along the street; good examples of this type of structure can be seen in Kingston where a substantial portion of the downtown developed during this time. Like their predecessors, these invariably included commercial space on the ground floor with residential space on the second and third storeys; the third storey was often located in the gable and included dormers windows for light. This was a continuation of the two-part commercial block which had developed in the first part of the nineteenth century. The second was the use of false facades to create the look of a much taller building when in fact, a flat rectangular façade was applied to a much small, generally gable roofed structure behind it. These were usually built in wood and located in areas where erecting a large commercial building was not feasible. Examples of this type of commercial architecture are less common because they were often replaced with larger brick buildings, but there are extant examples in Kawartha Lakes, particularly in Bethany where several of these structure are still standing. In both types, the idea of the storefront had developed with large windows and often a recessed entrance to show off products and entice shoppers inside. Whichever form of architecture they used, these mid-century streetscapes were often an eclectic mix of architectural forms but represented the shift towards a highly urbanized downtown with densely packed buildings, a continuous street wall and distinctive commercial architecture separate from purely residential spaces.

By the late 1850s, a new architectural style had evolved to respond to the need for urban commercial space. The Italianate style had become popular in residential architecture integrated elements from Italian and other European Renaissance architecture into eclectic and often exaggerated combinations. Features such as columns and pilasters were common, as well as wide eave with decorative brackets, decorative brick and iron work and arched windows with elaborate hoods and surrounds. Increasing mobility and the growth of pattern books allowed people in North America to see and experience European architecture and it was increasingly something seen as being desirable to imitate and adapt for the North American context.

This style was quickly adapted into commercial architecture where its decorative elements could be easily applied to the facades of downtown structures. With the high density of commercial buildings, and the fact that they now shared walls, the front façade of the structure was the only one that was seen from the street. As a result, builders and architects focussed on this side of the structure as the focal point for decoration and ornamentation. The

space for this type of work on these buildings was substantial: the increasing density of urban downtown necessitated buildings going up, instead of out, and by the 1860s, the majority of commercial buildings in downtown areas were two to four storeys, high enough to create upper storey residential or, by this time, office space, but still short enough to allow a person to comfortably ascend to the top storey by the stairs. This gave architects several storeys, albeit only on one side, of a building to craft ornate and decorative spaces

By the 1860s, a new standard form for downtown commercial buildings had fully emerged. These buildings, which like their predecessors were linked together in a continuous streetwall, were generally two to four storeys in height with commercial space on the ground floor and residential or office space upstairs. The commercial space on the ground floor generally included large plate glass windows and a recessed entrance which allowed for a substantial amount of display area visible from the street. This was not always the case for non-retail establishments such as hotels where the ground floor might have been used as a tavern so required a different orientation and focus and less visibility to the interior. The upper storeys were generally similar to one another with bands of tall sash windows differentiating each floor and the façade often divided into repeating bays by pilasters. These upper storeys also included extensive decorative elements, such as decorative brickwork in a variety of patterns, elaborate window hoods and large and heavy cornices. A flat, or gently sloping, roof was hidden behind the cornice. When placed together as part of a block of these structures, each individual building was distinct, but fit into a wider cohesive whole with consistent styling and massing.

Technological advancements were integral in making this style, and its widespread adoption, possible. Advances in glass manufacturing made the glass storefront possible, with newer larger pieces of plate glass facilitating the substantial expanses of glass necessary for the large uninterrupted windows. The elaborate ornamentation was also made possible by advances in cast iron manufacturing technology which allowed for the creation of prefabricated metalwork that could be ordered and applied to a building's surface and were substantially cheaper than bespoke and handmade decorative features. Most of the elaborate cornices and window hoods were made in this way and prefabrication allowed for consistent decoration to be applied across the façade of a structure. At the same time, increased mechanization in brick manufacturing made large quantities of brick available for use on structures of this size.

The redevelopment of many downtowns across Ontario in this style was not gradual and occurred rapidly between the 1860s and 1880s, although Italianate commercial buildings were still being constructed, although with less regularity, into the 1890s. Many business and property owners were eager to

adopt the new style and it quickly gained popularity as the go-to style for new commercial architecture. The late Victorian era was where architectural style was seen as being imbued with meaning, and Italianate commercial architecture was no exception. Italianate architecture, similar to other Neoclassical forms, was often associated with business and commerce due to its historical connection with ancient Greece and Rome, as well as the commercial centres of Renaissance-era Italy. Therefore, it was seen as an appropriate style for commercial downtown buildings, in a similar way that the Gothic Revival style was seen to be appropriate for ecclesiastical buildings because of its wider historic and conceptual associations with medieval Christianity. Similarly, the style very quickly came to represent a prosperous and economically vibrant community and to create a sense of permanence and confidence in the urban commercial landscape. As a result, business owners wanted to construct these types of buildings to help demonstrate their successes and promote an image of a prosperous community which, by extension, would increase visitation and investment in a community.

While the cost of buildings structures of this type was substantially decreased by the development of prefabricated decorative elements and mass produced bricks, it was still expensive to erect a building of this type. Many business owners were keen to develop blocks of these structures in concert to provide a consistent aesthetic throughout a downtown area, but it represented a substantial financial investment in building stock. Fire often provided the impetus, and the opportunity, for redevelopment and the application of a consistent architectural style and size across an entire connected streetscape. Many early commercial downtowns were built with a substantial number of wooden buildings which made fire a highly destructive and often inevitable occurrence. However, faced with the need to rebuilt from the ground up, business owners were able to consistent apply the Italianate style across their buildings which, while not exactly the same, were built in tandem to create a consistent aesthetic across an entire downtown area. This was what occurred in relation to this property which replaced an older building, the Dominion Hotel, which burned down in 1877 along with several other properties on the east side of Colborne Street. In fact, this process was even recognized by the *Fenelon Falls Gazette* which wrote in 1894 that "great improvements have been made in the village, particularly on the main street, where each of the oft-reoccurring fires was follows by the erection of brick buildings in the place of those destroyed."[1] The Italianate streetscape is representative of a second generation of buildings having evolved from more modest structures in the early and mid-nineteenth century to a fully formed and mature downtown architectural landscape.

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[1] "Of Age," *Fenelon Falls Gazette,* February 23, 1894, 4.

38-40 Colborne Street was constructed in this context. Known as the Mansion House Hotel, the building was erected in 1877 as a replacement for an older hotel on the same site, the Dominion Hotel, which burned down in March 1877, along with a range of stores along Colborne Street after a fire started in the stable and spread to the rest of the building. Little is known about this original structure which was built at some point in the 1860s. The new building was under construction by April with construction ongoing throughout the summer for its completion in fall of that year. A two-storey frame addition was later added to the rear of the building in 1894.

The new brick hotel was two storeys in height, with three bays on the front elevation divided by pilasters; only the two northern bays are included in the subject property as the southern bay has been integrated in the property next door and clad in an alternative material. Like other commercial buildings constructed in Fenelon Falls and other Kawartha Lakes communities during this period, it was built in the Italianate style; although not a retail establishment like most other Italianate downtown structures, the style was also regularly used in hotel buildings which often housed both rooms for rent as well as taverns and bars. The building itself is rectangular structure with a flat roof and is executed in brick construction. The building has since been painted, but, according to contemporary reports from around it time of its construction, it was originally built in a buff brick, which is typical of downtown Fenelon Falls where most of the Italianate buildings from the period between about 1870 and 1890 were constructed using buff brick.

The front of the building, particularly the ground floor entrance area, has been substantially modified since it was originally constructed, but, as a corner block, the side of the building remains visible and retains its historic Italianate brickwork and styling. When it was originally constructed, its location at the corner of Colborne and Francis Streets allowed for a much broader scope of decorative elements than most commercial blocks and the building, believed to be local contractor Thomas Marrs, took advantage of this prime location to continue the decorative patterns found on the front elevation of the structure onto its north side. The building contains several key elements typical of Italianate design. Most notably, this includes the moulded window hoods with drip mouldings and key stones. This same style of window hood is found on other Italianate buildings in Fenelon Falls, notably the McArthur Block, and likely speaks to a common builder. Unlike Italianate buildings in many other communities, the decorative elements in this, and other Italianate buildings in Fenelon Falls, are all executed in brick whereas many buildings in this style made use of prefabricated metal elements which were industrially produced at this time. Additionally, the building also includes decorative dog-tooth coursing between the first and second storeys drip moulding along the cornice line which adds to the Italianate aesthetic of the structure.

In comparison to other Italianate buildings constructed in Fenelon Falls in the late nineteenth century, the subject property fits well within the pattern of architectural development established in the community during this period. With the exception of the three-storey McArthur Block and McArthur House Hotel on the corner of Colborne and May Streets, the Italianate blocks along Colborne Street were consistently constructed to two-storeys in height, like the subject property. Although many have been modified since originally constructed, they contained a range of decorative Italianate element similar to the subject property, including coursing and window hoods, and were primarily executed in buff brick. The subject property, as a hotel, was distinct from the surrounding structures, primarily because of its ground floor design which included a central doorway flanked by sash windows, as opposed to the more typical recessed entrance and plate glass windows found in most retail establishments, but this is reflective of its use as opposed to the wider building trends in Fenelon Falls during this period.

When viewed in relation to the context in which it was constructed and in relation to other buildings of a similar age and type in downtown Fenelon Falls, 38-40 Colborne Street is a representative example of an Italianate commercial building in the community. Responding to the development of the style in the mid-nineteenth century and the evolving nature of urbanized downtown areas across Ontario, the building is demonstrative of commercial buildings constructed during this period through its style, massing and decorative elements which are found in structures throughout downtown Fenelon Falls built between about 1870 and 1890.

Historical and Associative Value

38-40 Colborne Street, also known as the Mansion House Hotel, has historical and associative value as a former hotel and tavern serving the community in Fenelon Falls during its peak of nineteenth century prosperity. Near the end of the nineteenth century, the community underwent a period of rapidly increasing prosperity that attracted new businesses, residents and investment into the community. This property is a subject of that period of prosperity and yields information regarding Fenelon Falls' economic growth near the end of the nineteenth century, specifically with regard to the need for hotel accommodations and the growing hospitality sector in the community with its burgeoning tourist economy. Similarly, the property also has direct associations with prominent local businessman and landowner, Jeremiah Twomey, the original owner of the building. Twomey was an early resident of Fenelon Falls and, throughout the second half of the century, grew into a prominent local citizen, landowner and businessman through his various ventures in the community.

Fenelon Falls developed at the juncture of Cameron and Sturgeon Lakes along the short section of water now known as the Fenelon River. Prior to

settlement, water flowed out of Cameron Lake over an approximately 7-metre-high falls through a rocky gorge before entering into Sturgeon Lake just under a kilometre away. The drop and current at this site made it an ideal location for a mill site and, in 1841, a grist mill was constructed on the future site of the community by early settlers James Wallis and Robert Jamieson whose land grants, made in the early 1830s, had included large portions of the current village site.

Wallis and Jamieson were the primary business drivers and community developers in what would eventually become Fenelon Falls throughout the 1840s, building store, taverns, and the new Church of England, as well as severing lots for building. The first bridge was built across the river around this time and corduroy roads gradually built to hamlets and rural settlements in the surrounding area

By 1851, the mill was demolished and replaced with separate grist and saw mills; it was also at this time that the first steamers arrived in Fenelon Falls, with the arrival of the Woodman out of Port Perry in 1851 on her maiden voyage. By this time, the lumber industry was rapidly developing in Kawartha Lakes and Fenelon Falls was well situated to take advantage of its economic benefits, with a prime location on the Fenelon River for transporting timber and mills for processing. New residents and businesses arrived and the community grew steadily throughout the 1850s and 1860s, with its population reaching about 300 people by 1865, and by the early 1870s, three large lumber mills operated in the village, processing millions of feet of pine annually.

The 1870s brought a major change for the community: the arrival of the railway. The Victoria Railway was chartered in 1872 with the intention of joining Lindsay by rail to the northern townships, Haliburton County, and, eventually, the projected Canadian Pacific Railway near Mattawa. Despite early political and financials hurdles, the line began construction in Lindsay in 1874 and soon reached Fenelon Falls. Over the next several years, construction continued north before the line ended at the final terminus in Haliburton village.

As in communities across Ontario, the arrival of the railway was a major economic boon for the community and struck off a period of rapid growth in Fenelon Falls. Not only did the railway make access easier to the community from the wider region, it also allowed for products to be transported in and out of the village and bolstered Fenelon Falls' growing industrial base, particularly with regard to dressed lumber which was overtaking squared timber, usually transported by water, as the preferred wood product and required transport by rail. Fenelon Falls was undoubtedly a lumber town prior to the arrival of the railway, but the new line further solidified the importance of the community in the regional lumber trade. The railway also facilitated the development of Fenelon Falls into an established grain terminal for the

surrounding rural region as the railway allowed for bulk shipments of grain south to both Lindsay and the province's growing urban areas. Similarly, the community became a new gateway into the more unsettled areas of northeastern Victoria County and into Haliburton County as the primary rail linkage into Somerville Township and Haliburton.

Transport in and out of Fenelon Falls was further bolstered by the construction of the new lock and canal between 1882 and 1886. Since the development of a navigable waterway through the Kawartha throughout the mid-nineteenth century, Fenelon Falls had long been the upper terminus for navigation because of the falls. However, in 1882, the federal government agreed to open a new lock and canal to connect Sturgeon Lake with the upper lakes beyond. The new lock and canal were opened in 1886, further increasing access to and from Fenelon Falls. This was a boon, both for industrial and commercial development where greater access for goods and services helped to bolster the local economy, and for the new tourism industry as the natural beauty of the region was beginning to attract tourists to the Kawartha Lakes area, in particular for summer recreation.

By 1886, the population had reached its nineteenth and early twentieth century peak of just over 1,300 residents and the village was booming economically. This economic boom allowed for a period of substantial architectural growth in the community, particularly with regard to the downtown. Early images of Fenelon Falls show effectively a frontier community, with scatterings of wooden buildings, both residential and commercial marking out the village from the surrounding rural area. However, the growing prosperity throughout the 1860s, 1870s and 1880s allowed for substantial investment to be put into building stock and it was through this period that downtown Fenelon Falls and the commercial corridor along Colborne Street developed with new two and three storey brick buildings in the latest architectural styles housing shops and services for the growing community. These new buildings served a variety of commercial purposes, including retail, small manufacturing such as blacksmithing, and hospitality, including hotels such as the Mansion House.

Hotels were a common fixture in late nineteenth century communities. In a time before rapid travel by car, more accommodation was required for travellers who could not get as far as quickly by the modes of transport available to them, which in Fenelon Falls were either the train or the steamship. At the same time, the rapid development of new railways and the expansion, in Kawartha Lakes, of the steamship lines meant that more people could and were travelling for various reasons. In the early and mid-nineteenth century, travel throughout Ontario was extremely difficult with travellers relying on travel by water or on poor roads; stagecoaches were available in some areas but they were far from reliable or comfortable. The new railways and steamships, however, changed that with reasonably comfortable and regular

travel that was rapidly being expended throughout the 1850s, 1860s and 1870s meaning more people were travelling more often and further afield.

These hotel businesses served a number of different clientele. Some of the major clients in the nineteenth century were businesses travellers, including itinerate salesmen who travelled from community to community and those who had come for specific businesses with major players in regional business of the day. Hotels such as the mansion house provided a comfortable place to stay while they were in town for business and often also offered private parlours, sample rooms, and rooms for meetings. As the majority of hotels during this period also included taverns, business could continue over food and drink.

By the 1870s, a second clientele had emerged: tourists. The tourist industry in Kawartha Lakes dates back as far as the early 1850s when it attracted hunters and anglers to the region for sport, attracted by its many lakes and natural landscapes. By the later decades of the century, the draw of the region for visitors had become well established as it continued to attract more, and varied tourists; this was supported by the development of good rail and steam links into the region which made it reasonably accessible to city dwellers. Where in the 1850s the majority of visitors were men coming to hunt and fish, either alone or in groups, by the 1870s and 1880s, the types of tourists had expanded to include women and families visiting the region for more generalized summer recreation. During this period, the idea of an escape to the country for the restoration of physical and mental health was gaining significant traction amongst urban dwellers and throughout the finals decades of the century, increasing number of people were choosing to spend their summers in Kawartha Lakes to relax, enjoy the availability of outdoor summer recreation activities and restore their health before returning to the city. The majority of these people came from the upper and upper middle classes, the only socio-economic groups at this time with both the time and means for an extended vacation of this type. Indeed, the area was actively marketed as a tourist destination, particularly by the railways for whom tourists formed an important part of their revenue. For example, the Grand Trunk Railway, which had assumed operations of the various rail lines in Kawartha Lakes by the early twentieth century, published a series of pamphlets on the wider Kawartha region, including both Kawartha Lakes and northern Peterborough County, promoting it as a prime tourist destination. One GTR pamphlet, published in 1903, for example, noted that Fenelon Falls was "a veritable sportsman's paradise, rivaling in its wild, rustic and beautiful surroundings the most inaccessible and fascinating portions of other parts, while being less than three hours ride from Toronto."[2]

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[2] Grand Trunk Railway, "The Kawartha Lakes," 1903, 11.

Although summer cottages had, by the early twentieth century, become the preferred accommodation for summer visitors, the majority of visitors in the 1870s and 1880s stayed in hotels. The primary reason for this was access. Without reliable roads or motor vehicles, tourists relied on mass transit – the railway and steamships – and had to take advantage of what accommodation was accessible when they arrived. While some cottage communities, such as Sturgeon Point, were developed in the late nineteenth century and were served directly by steamship, many early tourists took advantage of hotels and lodges in or nearby to existing communities such as Fenelon Falls, Bobcaygeon and Coboconk which provided bedroom, food, and connections to local tourist operators. Tourists provided an important source of income for rural communities such as Fenelon Falls and the hotels that were developed to serve them were important spaces to promote the tourist economy in these communities in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.

Many hotels also catered to a third clientele. These were not short term visitors but rather longer term guests who rented rooms for extended periods of time while they worked in the community. Particularly in communities with seasonal industries, hotels acted as many people's homes. Although not a location usually identified for residential use, the development of the hotel as a longer-term housing solution was well-established in urban life in the second half of the nineteenth century. The growth of the Canadian economy after 1850s and increased industrialization in its urban communities led to a significant influx of new residents in cities in towns; some were newcomers to the country, while others were coming into the city from rural areas or smaller communities as economic opportunities in urban areas increased with the growth of industry. This period saw a significant demographic change as the populations of urban areas boomed with new residents intent on taking advantage of economic opportunities in mills, factories and other businesses. In Fenelon Falls, this kind of transitory worker was almost exclusively associated with the lumber industry which was highly seasonal with many men working in the lumber camps in the winter, the log drive in spring and then returning to town for the rest of the year to work in the mills and other industries. These people, who were often young and single, needed somewhere to live and hotels often stepped into this role in a time when apartment buildings were infrequently constructed and were not necessarily suited to the seasonal nature of some industries. Many, if not most, hotels during the late nineteenth century included a residential option where patrons could stay there for a long period of time and were available with varying degrees of amenities, from large luxurious rooms with full service to tiny, box-like accommodation with few conveniences and comforts. Lengths of tenure in these hotels could range from months to years, depending on the needs of the renter. For those in low-wage or transient industries, a residential hotel could be their life-long accommodation because there were few other housing options.

The Mansion House was built at a time when all three of these clients were regular fixtures in hotels across the region. Constructed in 1877 to replace an older hotel, the Dominion Hotel, it was owned by Jeremiah Twomey, of whom more is discussed below, and operated initially by Nobel Ingram and later Jeremiah Twomey Junior, the son of the original owner. It included both guest rooms and a tavern below which served both food and alcohol. It operated exclusively as a hotel until the 1940s. The building itself was constructed by local contractor Thomas Marrs but little is known about the full scope of his work in the community. The exact make up of the guests at the Mansion House is not known but, because it had a liquor license and tavern, it likely catered more strongly to a male clientele, including both business travellers and tourists. Although having a tavern did not explicitly exclude female guests and families, they were more likely to stay at an establishment without a tavern, particularly in light of the temperance movement of the late nineteenth century that found its greatest support amongst upper and upper middle class women, the same women who spent their summer recreation travelling to places such as Fenelon Falls. It is known that the Mansion House catered to business travellers, including travelling salesmen, both from accounts of the time and the fact that it is recorded as having three sample rooms, used for salesmen to display their goods for retail buyers. It is unknown if the Mansion House also included the option for longer term residential stays, but these were certainly available in other hotels in Fenelon Falls and it is likely that there were some patrons renting rooms for longer stays. The fact it had a tavern also meant that it was patronized by local people who came to the hotel for food, drink, and an opportunity to socialize.

The importance of the hotel to nineteenth century communities is evidenced by the fact that Fenelon Falls, a small centre, had anywhere between three and five hotels throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of these hotels, the Mansion House was extremely well-regarded for its good service, comfortable rooms and excellent food and drink. An account of the hotel in 1879, just two years after it opened, appeared in an 1879 edition of the Canadian Post. Written by a "Commercial Traveller", the description of the hotel is full of praise and commends it as a premier establishment in the region. The article noted:

> The hotel is owned by Mr. Nobel Ingram, a gentleman, who evidently is well qualified to take charge of any of our leading hotels. The building is built of the very best white brick, two storeys in height and is on the corner of Colborne and Francis streets. The site is probably the best in the village. The sitting rooms are excellent while the parlour is one of the coziest I ever had the pleasure of occupying. The bedrooms are spacious and neatly carpeted and well furnished. The table is supplied with the best that

can be obtained. The steak and roasts are tender and juicy. Everything about the dining room denoted the very best superintendence. The bar is supplied with the best brands of liquors and cigars. In connection with the hotel, there is a very commodious driving shed, over which is an excellent hall capable of seating a great many people. Those who like billiards can try their hand with the cue. A first-class bus meets all trains and the bus driver, Harry, seems to be a general favourite. During the past ten months, I have visited nearly all the town and village hotels between Amherstburg and Ottawa, and I must say that the Mansion House of Fenelon Falls is unsurpassed.[3]

The hotel was clearly well regarded, a sentiment that continued into the twentieth century when it received similarly high praise in the 1904 publication *Souvenir of Fenelon Falls* which noted its exemplary food and drink, air bedrooms, parlours and sizable driving shed. The hotel is also notable for its transfer bus, a horse drawn wagon that brought guests from the wharf to the hotel, to give it an advantage over the hotels, such as Hotel Kawartha and the McArthur House Hotel that were built after the locks were constructed and were, therefore, closer to where visitors disembarked.

Looking at it within the context of its development, the subject property, in its capacity as the Mansion House Hotel, yields significant information regarding the development of Fenelon Falls in the second half of the nineteenth century and the role of hotels in communities such as Fenelon Falls. The hotel was constructed during a period of prosperity and growth for the village and its construction speaks to the optimism and economic boom of the late nineteenth century. Similarly, its role as a hotel yields information as to how hotels operated and their clientele. The Mansion House appears to have had a significant clientele of business travellers, both by accounts and through its architectural features and amenities, and this demonstrates the some of the way in which business was conducted during this period and the role of travel in economic activities. Similarly, it also speaks to Fenelon Falls' growing importance as a tourist centre as an increasing number of hotels were erected to serve new visitors.

The property also has direct historical associations with Jeremiah Twomey, its first owner, as well as his son Jeremiah Twomey Jr. who operated the hotel from 1887 onward. The older Twomey, who arrived in Fenelon Falls around 1854, grew throughout the second half of the nineteenth century into a prominent local citizen, businessman and landowner before his death in 1895.

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[3] "The Mansion House, Fenelon Falls," *Canadian Post,* November 14, 1879, 3.

He is a significant figure in the early history of the community and its economy development throughout the late Victorian period.

Jeremiah Twomey, sometimes spelled Twoomey, was born in Cork, Ireland around 1820 and emigrated to Canada around 1853. He landed first in Peterborough where he worked as a blacksmith before travelling to Fenelon Falls with James Wallis in about 1854 where he was employed as the blacksmith for Wallis' mill. He also completed the machine work on Wallis' steamship, the *Ogemah*, which launched that year. Shortly after that, likely around 1857 or 1858, Twomey went into business on his own as a blacksmith in the village. In 1859, Twomey purchased the property on the southeast corner of the intersection of Francis and Colborne Street and began construction on several new structures, including a blacksmith's shop for his business, and, by 1869, the new Dominion Hotel.

Twomey continued to operate his blacksmithing businesses while leasing out the operation of the Dominion Hotel to others; this continued to be his business relationship with the hotel until his death. When the hotel burned down in 1877, he quickly rebuilt in brick, a testament to his growing success and financial resources, and also constructed a new brick block next door which he also managed as a landlord, while continuing to work as a blacksmith.

Although his role in the village was as a blacksmith and landlord, Twomey was widely regarded in his life as a fixture in the community and one of its prominent citizens. He built a substantial blacksmithing business – the 1871 census lists him as having two employees – and managed several important downtown properties. As the local blacksmith, he would have interacted with most of the Fenelon Falls' citizens in some capacity as the blacksmith was a central figure in nineteenth century life when he would undertake repairs on all sorts of machinery and tools vital to every day life. Twomey's station in the village is most well articulated in his obituary that appeared in the *Fenelon Falls Gazette* after his death in March 1895. It read:

> Mr. Jeremiah Twomey, Sr., who died on the 28th ult. in the 76th year of his age, was not only one of the oldest but one of the most generally esteemed residents of Fenelon Falls, and during his last illness and since his death every reference to him showed the kindly feeling with which he was regarded by all who knew him. It can safely be said that everybody liked "Jerry" Twomey, and no wonder, for he was "honest as the sun" kind-hearted, friendly and charitable, and ready to take any trouble at a moment's notice to do an acquaintance, or even a stranger, a good turn....He was buried on Saturday in the Catholic cemetery, Verulam, and the very large attendance at the funeral from

both town and country showed the estimation in which he was held.[4]

Twomey was clearly highly esteemed in the community and his role in the community was also important for its development in the late nineteenth century, both as a blacksmith and, in relation to the subject property, as a property builder and landlord. Recognizing a need in Fenelon Falls for commercial real estate, Twomey translated his success as a blacksmith into success as the owner of several commercial properties in the downtown, while still retaining his original business. Through its association with Twomey, the property holds additional significance as one of the properties of a prominent and well-respected local resident in nineteenth century Fenelon Falls.

Contextual Value

38-40 Colborne Street has contextual value as a contributing feature to the historic commercial streetscape of downtown Fenelon Falls. The property, which is historically, visually and historically linked to its surroundings as part of the continuous commercial streetwall along the east side of Colborne Street, maintains and supports the historic commercial character of the village's downtown area which is characterized by its collection of Italianate commercial architecture dating primarily from the 1870s and 1880s. The downtown area includes a variety of late nineteenth century Italianate property executed in a similar style, size and massing to the subject property which, taken together, form a cohesive downtown landscape of which 38-40 Colborne Street is a contributing feature.

The majority of downtown Fenelon Falls, as it current exists, was developed in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Increased prosperity during this period, as well as various fires throughout the 1870s and 1880s that destroyed many early and mid-nineteenth century buildings, meant that new commercial buildings were erected quickly throughout this period along Colborne Street which had grown throughout the nineteenth century into the commercial core of the community. Images of Colborne Street from the turn of the century show the commercial area of the community at its most complete historic iteration, with a continuous streetwall of two and three-storey brick buildings executed in the Italianate style along the west side of the street, and an east side comprised of both older false façade commercial buildings as well as several Italianate blocks near the intersection of Colborne and Francis Street, including the subject property.

Downtown Fenelon Falls has undergone a number of substantial changes since the turn of the twentieth century, but the majority of its Italianate commercial buildings along Colborne Street remain, although some have undergone

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[4] "The Late Jeremiah Twomey," *Fenelon Falls Gazette,* April 5, 1895, 4.

significant modifications; this includes the covering of a lot of brick facades with vinyl and aluminum siding as well as the substantial modification of Victorian storefronts. Taken together, these Italianate structures, including the subject property, form a cohesive grouping that defines the downtown area of Fenelon Falls as a historic commercial downtown. The majority have retained their size and massing, as well as many decorative elements, similar to the subject property and define the streetscape through their construction directly to the sidewalk and their adjacent properties which help to form a cohesive streetwall along Colborne Street.

The continuous historic streetwall that is characteristic of many historic Ontario downtowns, has also been maintained along the block where the subject property is located. The subject property is located on the east side of Colborne Street at the intersection of Colborne and Francis Street. The streetwall along this block is maintained for about two-thirds of the block, with the south end of the block home to a modern property that replaced the older false façade structures seen in turn-of-the-century images. The subject property is located at the north end of this streetwall, with a two-storey commercial block located to the south; this block is, in fact, partially a continuation of the original Mansion House Hotel. The block also includes several other two-storey nineteenth century commercial blocks, as well as a one-storey modern block which nevertheless maintains the continuous streetwall at sidewalk level. Through this continuous streetwall, the subject property remains physically linked to its surroundings, alongside its visual and historical links as part of the development of the late nineteenth century downtown streetscape.

Summary of Reasons for Designation

The short statement of reasons for designation and the description of the heritage attributes of the property, along with all other components of the Heritage Designation Brief, constitution the Reasons for Designation required under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Short Statement of Reasons for Designation

Design and Physical Value

38-40 Colborne Street has design and physical value as a representative example of Italianate commercial architecture in Fenelon Falls. The building, which served as a local hotel and was constructed in 1877 as a replacement for an older hotel building, demonstrates the key features of this architectural style which was the most popular architecture style for commercial construction in Ontario in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is representative of the execution of this style in Fenelon Falls between about 1870 and 1890 when it was at its height of popularity and the commercial core of the village was developing rapidly from its pioneer beginnings to an established Victorian community.

Historical and Associative Value

38-40 Colborne Street, also known as the Mansion House Hotel, has historical and associative value as a former hotel and tavern serving the community in Fenelon Falls during its peak of nineteenth century prosperity. Near the end of the nineteenth century, the community underwent a period of rapidly increasing prosperity that attracted new businesses, residents and investment into the community. This property is a subject of that period of prosperity and yields information regarding Fenelon Falls' economic growth near the end of the nineteenth century, specifically with regard to the need for hotel accommodations and the growing hospitality sector in the community with its burgeoning tourist economy. Similarly, the property also has direct associations with prominent local businessman and landowner, Jeremiah Twomey, the original owner of the building. Twomey was an early resident of Fenelon Falls and, throughout the second half of the century, grew into a prominent local citizen, landowner and businessman through his various ventures in the community.

Contextual Value

38-40 Colborne Street has contextual value as a contributing feature to the historic commercial streetscape of downtown Fenelon Falls. The property, which is historically, visually and historically linked to its surroundings as part of the continuous commercial streetwall along the east side of Colborne Street, maintains and supports the historic commercial character of the village's downtown area which is characterized by its collection of Italianate commercial architecture dating primarily from the 1870s and 1880s. The

downtown area includes a variety of late nineteenth century Italianate property executed in a similar style, size and massing to the subject property which, taken together, form a cohesive downtown landscape of which 38-40 Colborne Street is a contributing feature.

Summary of Heritage Attributes to be Designated

The Reasons for Designation include the following heritage attributes and apply to all elevations, unless otherwise specified, and the roof including: all façades, entrances, windows, chimneys, and trim, together with construction materials of wood, brick, stone, stucco, concrete, plaster parging, metal, glazing, their related building techniques and landscape features.

Design and Physical Attributes

The design and physical attributes support the value of the property as a representative example of late nineteenth century Italianate commercial architecture.

- Two storey brick construction
- Brick side elevation
- Flat roof
- Ground floor commercial space
- Pilasters
- Fenestration including:
    o Rounded two-over-two sash windows
- Decorative brickwork including:
    o Window hoods with key stones and drip moulds
    o Coursing and cornice with drip moulding
    o Dog tooth coursing

Historical and Associative Attributes

The historical and associative attributes support the value of the property in its association with the late nineteenth century development of Fenelon Falls and in its role as the Mansion House Hotel.

- Association with the late nineteenth century of Fenelon Falls
- Association with Jeremiah Twomey
- Continuous use as a hospitality establishment

Contextual Attributes

The contextual attributes support the value of the property as a contributing feature to the historic downtown commercial streetscape of Colborne Street.

- Orientation towards Colborne Street
- Location at the intersection of Colborne and Francis Street
- Construction to the lot line on the front and side elevations

- Continuous streetwall along Colborne Street
- Views of the property down Colborne Street and Francis Street
- Views of Colborne Street and Francis Street from the property
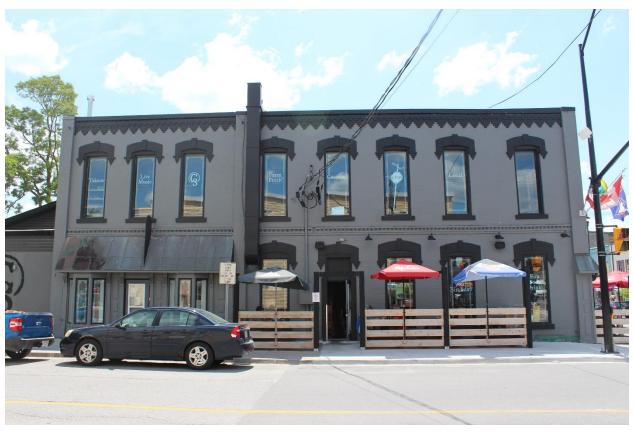
Images

Downtown Fenelon Falls, c. 1905

Mansion House Hotel, c. 1940s

Transfer Bus in front of the Mansion House Hotel, n.d.

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