

HERITAGE BUILDINGS REPORT: #139 DUCKWORTH STREET, ST. JOHN'S, NL



What is currently known as #139 Duckworth Street was constructed circa 1894-1897. It first appears in the City of St. John's Triennial Appraisement Rolls for 1897, and first appears on a map on the 1902 updated section of the 1893 St. John's Insurance Atlas.

The building was constructed in the Second Empire style popular amongst builders after the Great Fire of 1892. It was built 2 1/2 stories on front facade, 4 on back, with a small one storey addition at rear on the south west corner of the building. The building was used, probably from the time of its construction, as a mixed commercial/residential property.

The building is of wood timber construction, with a brick veneer on front. The building has always been a single detached structure, and originally was clad in iron siding. The mansard roof was tin on top, with composition roofing material on side of mansard. The rear one storey addition was demolished by 1914. The top storey features two bonneted or semi-circular dormers, typical of the Southcott-inspired use of the Second Empire style. The top eaves of the mansard feature a dentil moulding, a detailing seen repeated in the curve of the dormer windows.



The building has known a variety of tenants over the years. Between 1904 and 1909, the occupant may have been one Duncan Smith. From at least 1913 to 1919, one of the occupants was Thomas Lynch, an employee and teamster for FB Wood Co. Ltd. Frederick B Wood was Proprietor of Wood's Candy and Fruit Stores, with stores on Water Street, Duckworth St. and Freshwater Road.

In 1915 Alexander Rose, Master Mariner, was also listed as an occupant. Captain Rose was still living in the building in 1924, as was Michael Donovan and Mrs. George Spittell. By 1925, the building, originally numbered as #111, had changed to #139. From 1928 to 1932, the building housed one William Hennebury, a labourer and employee of City Council.

The property always, apparently, had a commercial component on the main floor. In 1936 this was the Pilot's Cafe, also spelled as Piolet's Cafe in the city directory of the day. John Cullen was the proprietor, and lived above the business. Also listed as a resident was Leopold Caines, labourer.



Mantel, second floor parlour.

At some point around 1946, the original iron clad exterior was removed. By 1960, E.F. Bailey had taken over occupancy of the building, and for the next twenty five years, the Bailey family was involved in the operation of Bailey's News Stand, the business for which the building is best remembered today. From circa 1965 to circa 1985, the stand was run by Dorothy Bailey, and for several years in the seventies and eighties, the services of "handwriting experts" were offered out of the building as well.

By 1991 the building was vacant and remained so for ten years, the fabric of the building gradually deteriorating through neglect and vandalism. In October 2001, an application was made to demolish the structure to make way for a new hotel on Duckworth Street.



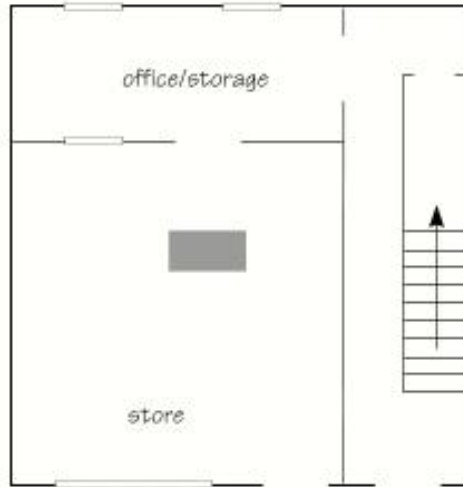
Bannister and rail, second floor.

Other Images:

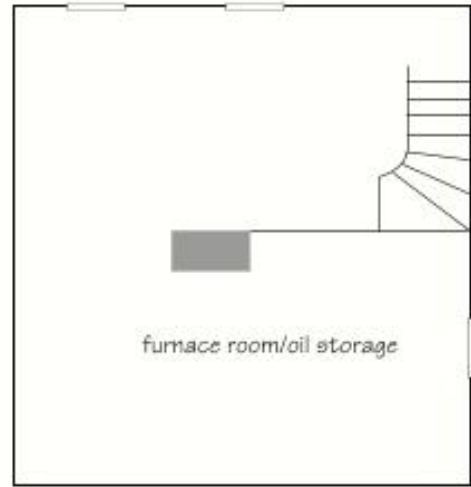
- Floorplan, drawn October 2001

#139 Duckworth Street - October 2001

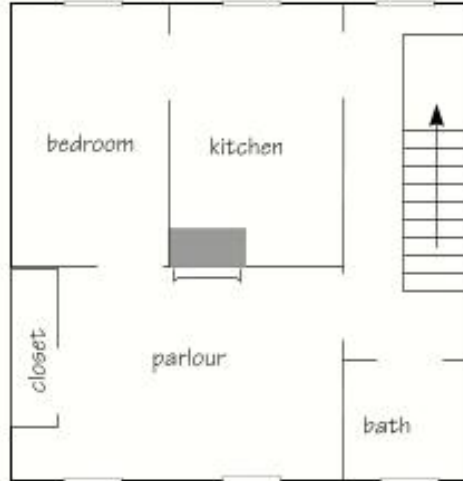
1st floor



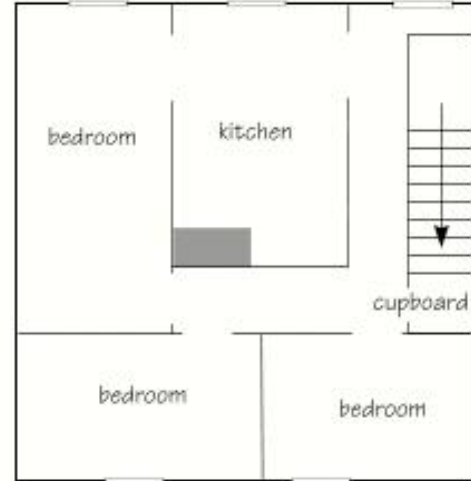
basement



2nd floor



3rd floor



1m