

19-21 King Street East, Village of Omemee (Mulligan's Drug Store)

Heritage Designation Evaluation

Omemee
LOT 6N KING E GEORGE
2024



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. Staff have determined that 19-21 King Street East 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:

19-21 King Street is a representative example of an Italianate style commercial building in Omeme. Constructed just after 1891, it displays typical characteristics of the Italianate commercial style which was the most popular style for downtown commercial architecture in the second half of the nineteenth century. Key features include two-storey brick construction with a flat roof; division into bays; a decorative cornice; and a retained Victorian storefront.

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 local druggist Robert J. Mulligan who ran a drug store in this building and its immediate predecessor beginning around 1890. Mulligan was both a prominent local businessman and an involved member of the community, serving as Reeve and as an important lay member of the Methodist Church.

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 commercial development of Omeme in the second half of the nineteenth century and nineteenth and early twentieth century pharmacy services in the village.

iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to the community:
The designer and builder of the property are not known.

3. The property has contextual value because it:

i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area:

The property helps maintain and support the character of the commercial core of downtown Omemee as one of a range of late nineteenth century commercial buildings extant along King Street East. It forms part of a collection of historic commercial buildings along King Street that helps define both the commercial core of the village and the overall small town character of Omemee.

ii. is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings:

The property is physically, visually and historically linked to its surroundings as part of the historic commercial landscape of downtown Omemee. It forms part of the historic line of commercial buildings along the south side of King Street that help form the downtown core of the village. It is also historically linked to the five surviving commercial buildings in downtown Omemee that pre-date the major fires of the early 1890s.

iii. is a landmark.

The property is not a specific landmark.

Design and Physical Value

19-21 King Street has design and physical value as a representative example of an Italianate commercial building in Omemee and one of the oldest extant commercial buildings in the village. Constructed after 1891, it displays typical characteristics of the Italianate commercial style which was the most popular style for downtown commercial architecture in the second half of the nineteenth century, including two-storey brick construction with a flat roof; an ornate cornice with decorative brickwork; and a retained Victorian storefront.

Commercial architecture in Canada's cities, towns and villages, including Omemee, 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 dormer 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 smaller, 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 structures 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 eaves 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. This was the case in Omeme prior to the early 1890s when a series of major fires in 1890, 1891 and 1892 destroyed the majority of commercial buildings in the downtown and these were later replaced in modern architectural styles. However, the style also appeared in other circumstances, such as when small communities grew and matured and the capital required to replace older commercial buildings became available.

19-21 King Street East was constructed in this context. It was constructed in later 1891 as a replacement for an older building on the same site; both the current building and its predecessor served as pharmacies. The first of these stores was constructed in the late 1840s by Thomas Matchett, a prominent Omeme businessman and later local and provincial politician. This original building, known as Medical Hall, was erected in the fashion of early Victorian commercial buildings in much of Ontario. The building, as portrayed in drawings of the structure, was a one-and-a-half storey gable front structure with Neoclassical features, including return eaves, and a Victorian storefront. This building was destroyed in the August 1891 fire, which started on the south side of King Street and eventually spread to the block where the subject property is located. The current building was erected as a replacement block by then-owner Robert J. Mulligan beginning in late 1891 and was constructed in

the up to date Italianate style, then the most common commercial style across Ontario's commercial downtown areas.

The building, erected in buff brick, two storeys in height with a flat roof and ground floor storefront. It is built to the south and west lot lines, as is typical for commercial buildings of this type, to form part of the streetwall along the north side of King Street. What makes this building unique and differentiates it from most Italianate commercial buildings is its massing, as it includes not only the two-storey commercial section but an attached two storey residential unit, set back from the street and with an entrance on the east elevation of the building, not facing the street, along with a small garden. This residential unit was built as the Mulligan home and, while accommodations for shop keepers either above, beside or to the rear of their stores was very common in late nineteenth century Ontario and in Omemee itself, the massing of this building to facilitate the set back two-storey residential block with associated greenspace was not and reflects the small-town location of this building where space was at less of a premium than in more heavily urbanized settings.

The building is embellished with a number of features typical of the Italianate style and which mark it out as part of this broader trend in commercial architecture, although it is far from a highly ornate example. Of particular note are the ornate cornices, both at the roofline and above the signboard on the south elevation of the building. The cornice, which features dog tooth coursing, is typical of Italianate architecture. The building also retains its historic Victorian storefront, including a recessed entrance and plate glass windows.

One of the building's most notable features is its retained nineteenth century advertising. The west side of the building features a ghost advertisement for Mulligan's store, stating Mulligan's name and the products on offer in his drug store, including medicines alongside items such as jewelry, watches, clocks, soaps, books and stationary. These signs were very popular forms of advertising in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for many local businesses, offering largescale ads visible from the public thoroughfare as stores began to offer for sale an increasing number of consumer products and competed with one another for customers.

Although the Italianate style was the most common architectural style for downtown commercial buildings in the second half of the nineteenth century, as can be seen in downtown areas across Kawartha Lakes, this building is unique as one of only three intact Italianate commercial buildings in downtown Omemee and the only one of the three built after the 1890s fires. The reconstruction efforts in Omemee heavily favoured the Second Empire style, defined by its mansard rooflines, and the majority of buildings constructed in the village after the fires are in this style. The other two Italianate commercial

buildings in downtown Omemee – 24-26 King Street East and 34-36 King Street East – were constructed in the 1860s and both survived the fires. The use of the Italianate style in communities across Ontario was common until the end of the nineteenth century, but it was not the preferred style in Omemee in the final decade of the century.

Overall, the property is a unique example of Italianate commercial architecture in Omemee. It displays and has retained key architectural features of this popular commercial style as executed in the second half of the nineteenth century, including its retained Victorian storefront and ornate cornice. The property is also unique because of its attached living quarters which are a layout indicative of the building's small-town location. It is important of only a small number of Italianate buildings in downtown Omemee and the only one that was built after the 1890s fires.

Historical and Associative Value

19-21 King Street East has historical and associative value as a long-standing pharmacy in Omemee, particularly as R.J. Mulligan's pharmacy and in its association with Mulligan, a prominent local businessman, politician and lay leader in the Methodist Church. Through its long-standing use, it yields information regarding the development of medical services in Omemee and the development of pharmacies in turn of the century communities.

Constructed around 1891, it yields information regarding the reconstruction of Omemee after a series of fires in the early 1890s and the development of its businesses in the late nineteenth century. It has direct historical relationships with the history of commercial and economic development in Omemee as a well-known local business premise.

Omemee was established in the mid-1820s with the construction of a Mill on the Pigeon River, where the village is now located. Emily Township had been formally opened for non-indigenous settlement in 1821 and, in the same year, large numbers of primarily Protestant Irish settlers arrived in the area and took up land in the southern part of Emily as well as in Cavan Township to the east. The area around what is now the village was acquired by the Cottingham family, Maurice and Mary Cottingham of County Cavan and their sons Samuel and William, who established a shanty near the river, alongside the Laidley and English families who travelled with them. By 1825, the mill was established by William Cottingham, Maurice and Mary's younger son, eventually becoming the commercial and industrial nucleus of the village; this was also the first grist mill established in what would later become Victoria County.

The first store in the community was open by 1826 and run by Samuel Cottingham in close proximity to his brother's mill. The influx of settlers in Emily Township, both the Protestant group of which the Cottingshams were a part and the Peter Robinson settlement scheme which brought large numbers

of Irish Catholic settlers to northern Emily in the mid-1820s, meant a significant demand for goods and the new general store served a real need in the surrounding township. The mill and store soon became the focal point for the surrounding area and, slowly, a small community began to develop in close proximity and a village plot was soon laid out, for a community then known as Williamstown. This kind of rapid growth and development of local businesses was common for early mill sites, as mills were key infrastructure in early agricultural communities and vital economic drivers; settlers often travelled long distances to access them. The post office was established in 1835, as well as a local school in the same year. 1857 saw the arrival of the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton Railway which helped bolster the economic prospects of the village with a new and direct route to regional markets for the growing village's agricultural and other products. It was first renamed Metcalf in the 1840s and then later, Omemee. It formally incorporated as a village separate from Emily Township in 1874.

The 1858 Peterborough and Victoria Counties directory shows the progress of the village, just over thirty years from the establishment of Cottingham's mill, when its population had reached around 500 people. Of Omemee, the authors of the directory wrote:

The principle village in the township of Emily is situated on Pigeon River, which, beside supplying it with Hydraulic power, promises to be an important inlet for the produce and lumber of the northern townships. It has one excellent flouring and grist mill, with three run of stones; a very good saw mill, and a carding and fulling mill, all worked by water power. It contains two churches – an Episcopalian and Wesleyan; a grammar school; fifteen stores – some of them are good ones; two bakeries and groceries; two taverns, and a temperance hotel; three saloons; and blacksmiths, coopers, waggon makers, show makers, tailors, carpenters, harness makers, and dress makers, in fair numbers. Omemee boasts a very excellent newspaper the “Warder” published by Mr. Joseph Cooper. It is on the line, and is one of the most important stations, of the Port Hope, Lindsay Beaverton and Railroad; and should the inhabitants be successful in procuring Government assistance to dredge and improve the navigation of Pigeon River – now capable, when the water is high, of floating a steamer to the village –

there is little doubt that it will become a town of very great importance.¹

The village contained a wide variety of stores, typical of a mid-nineteenth century small town, including the standard general stores, grocers, and blacksmiths, alongside more specialized commercial enterprises, such as coopers, tailors, harness makers and shoemakers that typically only established their businesses in communities large enough to support them. Throughout the 1860s and 1870s, Omemee's economy, and population boomed, as it continued to develop into an important centre for the surrounding rural townships and as a manufacturing and commercial centre, boasting saw, grist and carding mills.

Omemee reached its peak nineteenth century population by the late 1870s, with over 800 inhabitants, before slowly declining throughout the closing decades of the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth. This was a common trend in rural and small town Ontario around the turn of the century when an exodus was occurring from rural to urban areas as a result of shifting economic opportunities that favoured urban centres. By 1898, the Eastern Ontario Gazetteer and Directory reported a population of 600 people and a range of services and businesses, similar in many ways to the size and economic power of the community in 1858.

One of the most significant events in Omemee's history were the series of fires that swept the commercial core of the community in 1890, 1891 and 1892. Omemee, like other communities across Ontario, was significantly shaped by fires. In a time period where heating and lighting were accomplished using fireplaces, woodstoves, candles and lanterns, building fires happened frequently and spread rapidly. This was exacerbated by the fact that many buildings, until the second half of the nineteenth century, were built of wood which caught fire, burned quickly and spread easily between structures which were often clustered close together, particularly in commercial areas. Even masonry, which was increasingly used for new commercial buildings throughout the second half of the nineteenth century in part to reduce the impact of fires, was still susceptible to fires and could still be destroyed in a large blaze, albeit less easily than its predecessors.

The number of major fires in Omemee in the nineteenth century is not known, but it is known that the town suffered significantly prior to 1877 when it established its first fire brigade, in response to several large fires in the early 1870s, including one at the Ivory sawmill which narrowly avoided a much larger and more widespread blaze. By this time, many of the earliest buildings in the downtown had been replaced by newer masonry structures. The 1881 Fire

¹ Directory of the United Counties of Peterborough and Victoria for 1858 (Peterborough: T&R White, 1858), 38.

Insurance plan of the village shows King Street East as a mix of masonry and wooden structures as the village slowly transitioned to a brick dominated downtown landscape.

The fires that precipitated the building of the subject property happened in rapid succession, in 1890 and 1891, followed by another fire in 1892; all of these fires were, at the time, believed to have been deliberately set, unlike most fires that this time which were accidental and usually a direct result of nineteenth century heating, cooking, and lighting. These three fires together destroyed most of downtown Omeme and precipitated a significant rebuilding effort that resulted in the landscape of the village as it now appears. The first of these fires, on June 2, 1890, began in Blackwell House, a hotel on the corner of King Street East and Colborne Street North. The Lindsay Watchman reported:

Last Monday morning about four o'clock fire was discovered in the old Blackwell House, an old brick hotel unoccupied for some time past, and the alarm was quickly sounded. Despite the efforts of the fireman, assisted by the citizens, the flames spread rapidly, and the adjoining stores were soon ablaze... Following is a list of the losses and insurance: Blackwell House, loss \$3,000, insured for \$2,000; Williamson's boot and shoe store and harness shop, loss \$6,000, insurance \$1,800; T. Ivory and Sons, general merchants, loss estimated at \$10,000, insured for \$7,600; Miller's tailor shop, loss \$3,500, insurance \$1,500; Mrs. Marr, whose store was occupied by W.H. Spence, implement agent, loss \$1,000, insurance \$500. The fire is believed to have been the work of an incendiary.²

The second of these fires occurred on August 27, 1891. This was the largest of the 1890s fires in Omeme and began in the stables of Clark's Hotel, before the wind spread it quickly along the south side of King Street East. The fire destroyed at least eleven commercial premises, including the Great Northwestern Telegraph office and the large brick block on the southwest corner of King and George streets that contained Clark's Hotel itself, the Windsor Hotel, and Ivory's general store, which had been relocated on account of the 1890 fire to an existing storefront in that block. The fire's path also engulfed a number of residential buildings along King Street, as well as sheds, outbuildings and stables.

The last of the three major fires occurred on April 28, 1892 and finished the destruction of the downtown; only a handful of buildings survived all three

² "Destructive Fire in Omeme," *Lindsay Watchman*, June 5, 1890, 5.

fires. This fire primarily impacted the south side of King Street in the block between George and Sturgeon Streets. The Canadian Post reported:

Omemees has had another disastrous fire, causing losses estimated at \$15,000. The fire broke out last Friday night about 10 o'clock, in Mr. Thomas Stephenson's old store - D. Minn's harness shop. A prompt alarm was given, and it was no time until willing hands were removing stock and contents of adjoining stores and residences. There was a strong wind that fanned the flames and it was no time until George Morrison's brick residence on the east and J.J. Lundy's building, occupied on the west by Wm. Millier, tailor, RECORDER office, and H.T. Everett, jeweller, were in flames. The fire extended to T.J. Parson's fine store and residence on the corner west of Lundy's building, burned south to Mary St., consuming all the sheds, stables, hose-house and lock up on the entire block...There is scarcely any question that the fire was the work of an incendiary, and this is the third disastrous one in the village from presumably the same cause within the past two years. The result is that over three acres, formerly the active and businesses part of the place, is now covered by rubbish of the late disastrous fires.³

The impact of these fires on Omemees's business community, both material and financial, cannot be overstated. A prosperous community with a range of successful businesses needed to be rebuilt, and it was beginning soon after the first fire in 1890, and continuing into the mid-1890s. The reconstruction efforts yielded a new, but remarkably consistent streetscape built primarily in the Second Empire style as some, but not all, of the pre-1890 buildings destroyed in the fires had been.

The subject property was constructed beginning in late 1891 to accommodate R.J. Mulligan's pharmacy, owned and operated by local businessman Robert Mulligan. The building that had originally occupied this site was destroyed in the 1891 fire and had also been originally constructed as a pharmacy. The date of construction for this original structure is not definitively known, but it is believed to have been built in the late 1840s by Thomas Matchett. Matchett was one of Omemees's early businessman and an important local politician figure in the village and region in the second half of the nineteenth century. He was born in Cavan Township, in Durham County, in 1826 and came to Omemees in the 1840s to open a pharmacy, a trade he had learned in the

³ "Another Disastrous Fire" *Canadian Post*, May 6, 1892, 3.

hamlet of Cavan. In addition to his role in the community as a businessman, he also served as clerk of the Division Court and treasurer for Emily Township, alongside prominent lay leadership roles in the Methodist Church. In 1867, he was elected to the Ontario Legislature as the first member for Victoria South and served in that role until 1871, later becoming Reeve of Omemee and then Clerk of Victoria County.

Until his appointment as County Clerk, including his stint in the provincial legislature, Matchett ran a pharmacy on this site, known as Medical Hall. With his appointment as County Clerk, and with it a move to Lindsay, Matchett handed over the Omemee business to his son-in-law William Higinbotham. Higinbotham, a young doctor from Fenelon Falls, had married Matchett's daughter Olivia the previous year and, like his father-in-law, grew to be a well-known and respected businessman in the village, serving as village Councillor and as a lay leader in the Methodist Church. Around 1887, the Higinbothams moved to Brantford to open a pharmacy there and the business was taken over by Edward Scarlett, although they retained ownership of the building. Scarlett, originally from Castleton in Cramahe Township and also a druggist and a Methodist, came to Omemee and married Jennette English, of the early settler family, and the couple quickly moved west to Manitoba. The business was quickly taken over by Robert Mulligan before burning in the August 1891 fire. In October of that year, William and Olivia Higinbotham formally sold the now vacant property to Mulligan who promptly took out a loan to build a new building on the property, the building that is currently standing on the site.

Mulligan, often known as R.J. Mulligan, was born in Emily Township in 1858, the oldest son of William Mulligan and Victoria Mitchell. Both Robert Mulligan's parents were of Irish descent, the children of immigrants from the 1820s and 1830s. Victoria Mitchell's parents had come to Emily in the early 1820s as part of the first wave of immigration to the township and settled on Lot 6 in Concession 1. Less is known about William Mulligan's parents who came to Manvers at some point prior to their son's birth in 1833. William and Victoria settled first in Manvers and then moved north to Emily Township at some point in the 1860s. As with many Irish families in southern Emily Township, they were Methodists and attended the Lebanon Wesleyan Methodist Church in the small hamlet of Lebanon where they lived on Emily's southern border. At some point in the 1870s, the family moved to Omemee and by 1881, Robert Mulligan appeared on the census in the village living with his parents and working as a painter. In 1889, he married Amy McCrae, the daughter of local cabinet maker and Methodist lay leader John McCrae and his wife Jane McNeely. By the 1891 census, he was listed as a druggist, having taken over the local pharmacy.

Mulligan's path to the profession of local druggist is not known, but reflects the way in which the pharmaceutical profession operated throughout the nineteenth century. Although some pharmacy operators, like William

Higinbotham, were trained medical doctors, many were not and the profession was not regulated as it would come to be in the twentieth century, particularly in rural areas. In the early nineteenth century, the pharmacy profession was essentially unregulated and most pharmacists learned their trade by apprenticing with an existing practitioner or by self-education through a variety of books and manuals. The quality and type of service offered by these early practitioners was highly irregular, with some formulas created and dispensed in early nineteenth century pharmacies highly suspect, ranging from a variety of botanic compounds to more drastic options such as opium, mercury compounds and narcotics. Most pharmacies, particularly in rural Ontario, also sold other products from paints and wallpaper to seeds and basic farm equipment in order to maintain a profitable business.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, advances in chemistry had led to advances in the creation of medical compounds and the practice of dispensing medication increasingly needed skills and knowledge requiring training. People and governments also increasingly recognized pharmacists, then usually referred to as druggists, as important players in health and medical practice. Regulation around pharmaceutical practice was first introduced in Ontario in 1871 and, in 1882, the Ontario College of Pharmacy, now the Ontario College of Pharmacists, opened in Toronto and began to develop standards of practice and education for pharmacists across the province to ensure professionalism across the industry. At this time, and into the first several decades of the twentieth century, training for pharmacists took the form of several, usually four to six, years of apprenticeship and a year of formal schooling at the Ontario College of Pharmacy, where the on the job training was intended to provide hand-on skills in dispensing alongside the practical nature of running a business and the formal education specifically provided training related to the mixing and dispensing of medication. A university degree was not required to enter into pharmacy until 1929 and the school did not join the University of Toronto, of which it remains a part, until 1953.

Mulligan's exact career development and formal education are not known, although he certainly would have apprenticed with someone in the village throughout the 1880s, likely with William Higinbotham. His route into the profession is also not known as his early work experience, as noted in the 1881 census, was as a painter and his father was a carpetmaker. However, by the late nineteenth century, pharmacy was seen as a respectable profession with the opportunity to own one's own business and thus very attractive to young men, and some young women. Many existing pharmacists actively recruited apprentices to join them at their businesses and many of the connections between pharmacists and their apprentices were made through familial and community relationships. It is likely that Mulligan knew Matchett and Higinbotham very well as active and involved members of the Methodist Church in Omeme. Mulligan himself would eventually become an important

lay leader and his wife Amy McCrae was the daughter of one of Omemee's major turn-of-the-century Methodist leaders.

Mulligan's pharmacy, like others across much of rural Ontario, sold both medication and sundries. Most pharmacies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century sold a combination of medicines mixed by the pharmacist and patent medicines, such as branded cod liver oil, which were more or less effective for various ailments and medical needs. Pharmacists in urban areas were more likely to have a larger trade in fill prescriptions; at this time, many rural doctors filled their own prescriptions in their own offices as opposed to sending them to the local pharmacy. Alongside their pharmaceutical products, however, most pharmacies also sold other products and this was certainly the case at Mulligan's store. The painted sign on the western side of the store that is faded but still visible identified what many of these products were including jewellery, watches, clocks, fancy goods, toiletries, soaps, seeds, wallpaper, books and stationary, alongside the medical goods. These items formed a not-insignificant part of Mulligan's business, as they did in many rural pharmacies around the turn of the century.

Mulligan's was also the local telegraph agent for Great North Western Telegraph, a subsidiary of Western Union. This was a very common practice in rural and small town pharmacies that would often act as agents or bill-paying depot for a variety of other services, including gas, coal and oil payments, insurance sales, and train and steamship ticket sales. Telegraphy and telephone exchanges were often commonly found in pharmacies during this period. Many pharmacies also sold alcohol, particularly after with the beginning of prohibition in Ontario in 1916, or earlier in communities with the local option, including Omemee which enacted the local option in 1908, when alcohol could be obtained with a prescription only and many pharmacists abused this power. It is highly unlikely that Mulligan participated in the illicit liquor trade as he was a devout Methodist and church leader. Offering other services brought customers into the buildings, but was also a recognition of the fact that pharmacies were often important community hubs in turn of the century communities where local people could come in, purchase their medicines or other products and catch up on local news and gossip. Mulligan's store was well recognized as this type of community gathering space, and was heavily frequented and well-known in Omemee. In her memoir, Flora McCrae, then Lady Eaton and Amy Mulligan's youngest sister, wrote of the store:

The drug store was the forerunner of the social centres of today, and Mr. Mulligan, a kindly man, was very popular with the young lads of the village. His store had the telegraph agency and some of the boys telegraphy from

him, while others did their apprenticeship in pharmacy with him after school.⁴

Mulligan's reputation in the village was not just as a successful businessman, but also as a community leader. He was elected Reeve of Omemee in 1910 and served in that position until 1916, just two years before his death. He was also a longstanding member and leader of the Methodist Church in the village, including on its boards and as the leader of the church choir.

Overall, the subject property had direct historical associations with both the historic and economic development of Omemee throughout the late nineteenth century and with R.J. Mulligan's drugs store more specifically. The property yields information on the rebuilding of downtown Omemee after the 1890s fires that devastated the village's commercial core while also providing information regarding the role and operations of a turn-of-the-century small town pharmacy.

Contextual Value

19-21 King Street East has contextual value as part of the historic streetscape of downtown Omemee. It helps maintain and support the character of the commercial core of downtown Omemee as one of a range of nineteenth century commercial buildings extant along King Street East. It is one of a collection of late nineteenth century commercial buildings dating from the 1890s along the street and forms part of the historic streetwall along the north side of King Street. It is physically, visually and historically linked to its surroundings as part of the village's downtown streetscape.

The subject property was constructed just after 1891 as part of a general rebuilding of downtown Omemee after a series of three disastrous fires that swept the commercial core of the village in 1890, 1891 and 1892. These three fires destroyed the majority of commercial buildings along King Street, as well as a number of residential properties and outbuildings. The rebuilding effort was significant and resulted in a collection of late nineteenth century commercial architecture, including the subject property, that formed a cohesive and consistent commercial streetscape along King Street East.

The rebuilding effort produced a range of new commercial buildings, many of which are still extant in downtown Omemee and form its commercial core. The reconstruction can be seen in a comparison between the 1881 and 1904 Fire Insurance Plans of Omemee which show a significantly different streetscape before and after the 1890s fires, including the subject property. What is unique about the rebuilding in Omemee was the large number of Second Empire buildings constructed there, including buildings located at 13-17 King Street East, 16-22 King Street East, and 31-37 King Street East. Although the subject

⁴ Flora McCrae, *Memory's Wall*, 19.

property was constructed around the same time, it was erected in the older Italianate style, more in alignment with buildings erected prior to the fires and in alignment with the preferred styles of the time, as the Second Empire style had reached its peak around 1880. Nevertheless, the subject property alongside those reconstructed as part of the post-1890 period of redevelopment in the downtown core have a shared history and function in concert with each other to support and maintain the historic commercial character of Omemee's downtown streetscape.

Omemee's current commercial core stretches from approximately Sturgeon Street in the west to Colborne Street North in the east; while King Street continued both east and west beyond this, the commercial structures give way to residential and institutional buildings. Between these two cross streets, King Street East, on both the north and south sides, is lined with commercial establishments. While some have been constructed more recently, the majority date from the late nineteenth century and taken together form a cohesive, historic small town downtown area with a variety of stores and businesses. This mix of buildings is typical of downtown areas in small town Ontario that date from the late nineteenth century which generally contain a concentration of historic commercial buildings, in both the Italianate and Second Empire styles, alongside other structures, such as residences or modern commercial structures; this is also the case in Omemee. 19-21 King Street East supports and maintains this historic small town streetscape as part of this collection of buildings. Constructed in the Italianate style like many other buildings of this period, it is built to the sidewalk and forms part of a Victorian streetwall along King Street East. These are typical features of a late Victorian downtown that are maintained by this extant structure in combination with the other late Victorian commercial buildings that form part of this historic landscape.

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, constitute the Reasons for Designation required under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Short Statement of Reasons for Designation

Design and Physical Value

19-21 King Street has design and physical value as a representative example of an Italianate commercial building in Omemee and one of the oldest extant commercial buildings in the village. Constructed after 1891, it displays typical characteristics of the Italianate commercial style which was the most popular style for downtown commercial architecture in the second half of the nineteenth century, including two-storey brick construction with a flat roof; an ornate cornice with decorative brickwork; and a retained Victorian storefront.

Historical and Associative Value

19-21 King Street East has historical and associative value as a long-standing pharmacy in Omemee, particularly as R.J. Mulligan's pharmacy and in its association with Mulligan, a prominent local businessman, politician and lay leader in the Methodist Church. Through its long-standing use, it yields information regarding the development of medical services in Omemee and the development of pharmacies in turn of the century communities. Constructed around 1891, it yields information regarding the reconstruction of Omemee after a series of fires in the early 1890s and the development of its businesses in the late nineteenth century. It has direct historical relationships with the history of commercial and economic development in Omemee as a well-known local business premise.

Contextual Value

19-21 King Street East has contextual value as part of the historic streetscape of downtown Omemee. It helps maintain and support the character of the commercial core of downtown Omemee as one of a range of nineteenth century commercial buildings extant along King Street East. It is one of a collection of late nineteenth century commercial buildings dating from the 1890s along the street and forms part of the historic streetwall along the north side of King Street. It is physically, visually and historically linked to its surroundings as part of the village's downtown streetscape.

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 property's value as a representative example of late nineteenth century Italianate commercial architecture.

- Two-storey buff brick construction
- Flat roof
- Cornice with dog tooth coursing
- Fenestration including:
 - Sash windows
 - Voissoirs
 - Ground floor picture windows in storefront
- Signboard with cornice
- Victorian-style storefront with cornice
- Recessed entrance
- Set back residential portion including Classical entrance porch

Historical and Associative Attributes

The historical and associative attributes support the property's value as a pharmacy and in its role as part of the history of commercial development and the post-1890 reconstruction of Omeme.

- Historic and continuing use as a pharmacy
- Association with local figures Thomas Matchett, William Higinbotham and R.J. Mulligan
- Relationship to the history of commercial development in Omeme
- Relationship to other buildings erected as part of the post-1890 reconstruction of Omeme

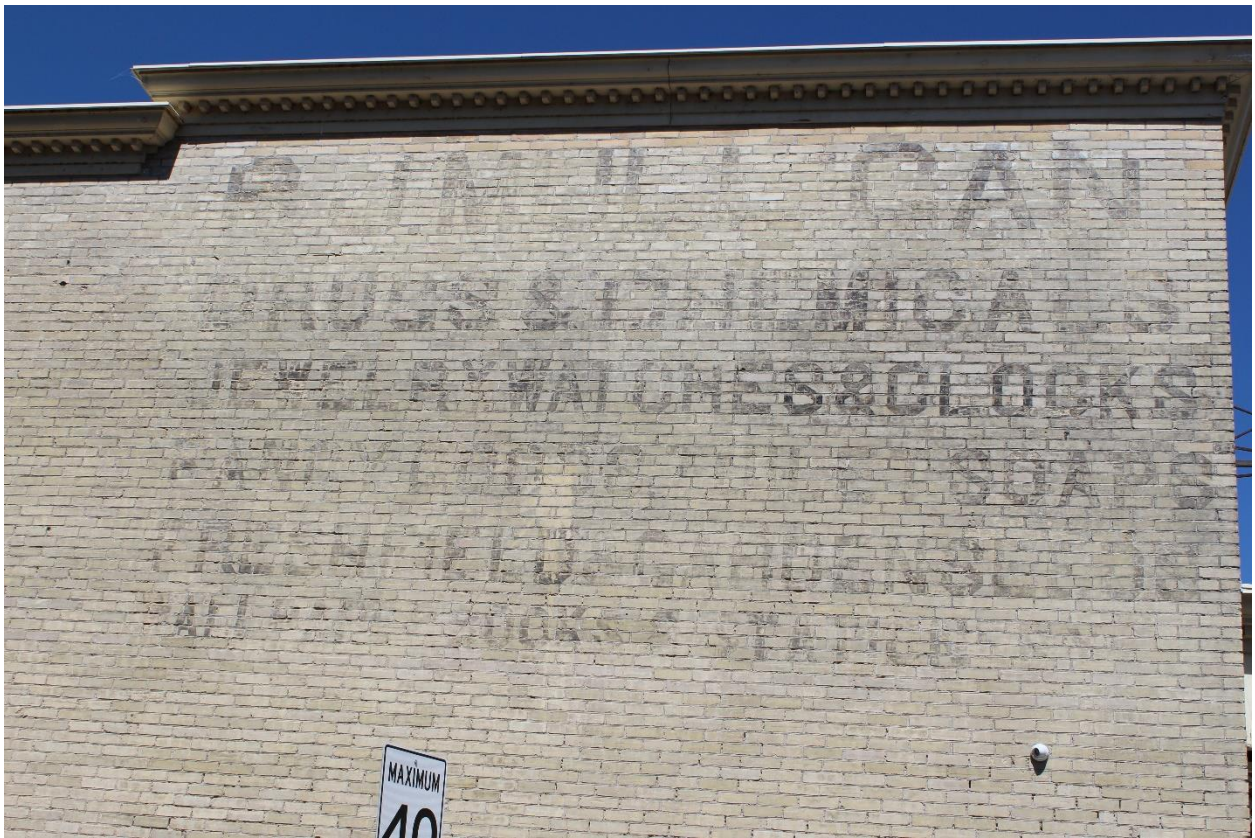
Contextual Attributes

The contextual attributes of the property support its value as a contributing feature to the historic streetscape of downtown Omeme.

- Construction on the northwest corner of King Street East and George Street
- Construction to the lot line
- Views of the property along King Street East and George Street North
- Views from the property along King Street East and George Street North
- Relationship to other Italianate commercial buildings in downtown Omeme

Images







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