

THE CORPORATION  
OF THE  
TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

**BY-LAW NO. 3633-02**  
(187 Queen Street)  
(Roll No. 26-27-010-004-041)

**A BY-LAW TO DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY KNOWN MUNICIPALLY AS THE CRYSLER-BURROUGHS HOUSE, 187 QUEEN STREET, IN THE TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE, IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO, AS BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL VALUE AND INTEREST.**

WHEREAS Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O., Chapter 0.18, authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all buildings and structures thereon, to be of architectural or historic value or interest;

**AND WHEREAS** the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake has caused to be served on the owner of the lands and premises known as the Crysler-Burroughs House at 187 Queen Street, in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake in the Province of Ontario and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, notice of intention to so designate the aforesaid real property and has caused such notice of intention to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the municipality;

**AND WHEREAS** the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule 'B' hereto;

**AND WHEREAS** no notice of objection to the proposed designation has been served on the clerk of the municipality;

**NOW THEREFORE** the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake enacts as follows:

1. There is designated as being of architectural and historical value and interest the real property know as the Crysler-Burroughs House at 187 Queen Street in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake in the Province of Ontario, more particularly described in Schedule 'A' hereto.
2. The municipal solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this By-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule 'A' hereto.
3. The Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this By-law to be served on the owners of the aforesaid property and on the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of the passing of this By-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation.

**READ A FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD TIME AND PASSED ON THIS 25<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2002**

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LORD MAYOR GARY BURROUGHS

\_\_\_\_\_  
TOWN CLERK HOLLY DOWD

SCHEDULE "A"

187 QUEEN STREET

Part of Lot 50, Township Plan 86, as in Registry Office 659780, Lot 49, Township Plan 86, formerly in the Town of Niagara, now in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, Regional Municipality of Niagara.

PIN #46397-0075 (R)

## SCHEDULE 'B'

### REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

#### **Crysler – Burroughs House c.1822 187 Queen Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake**

The Chrysler - Burroughs House is recommended for designation for both architectural and historical reasons. It is historically significant for its association with such prominent citizens of Niagara as Peter Desjardins, who established the Desjardins Canal in Hamilton; Ralph Morden Chrysler, a wealthy merchant and partner in the Niagara Harbour & Dock Co.; and the lawyer Charles L. Hall, who was probably responsible for the Greek Revival alterations made to the house in the 1840's. Several significant American owners including George K. Birge and Page M. Baker, publisher of the New Orleans Times, owned the house during Niagara-on-the-Lake's heyday as a summer resort in the late 1890's.

Architecturally the house displays both neo-Classical and Greek Revival characteristics and is associated with the fine joinery work of John Davidson, who designed and executed the pulpit at St. Andrew's Church. This distinctive building is part of the remarkable residential streetscape at the west end of Queen Street that includes the Rogers - Harrison House, the McDougal - Harrison House, the Cottage Hospital and the Richardson - Kiely House.

#### **Historical Background**

The house occupies the southwest section of a large corner lot at Queen and Simcoe Streets. The fenced lot, with its lovely garden, contains numerous trees and shrubs that create a private enclave. The house is built so close to the lot line that the south façade abuts the sidewalk.

The lot was first granted c. 1795, but was not built on. A Patent was issued to Peter Desjardins, a French Loyalist refugee, in 1803. The house he built on the lot in 1805 was probably burned in 1813 but he constructed other buildings on the property, a portion of which he continued to own until his death in 1827. Desjardins is less prominent historically for Niagara than for the Hamilton area. He moved to the Head of the Lake in 1805 and in 1820 he petitioned the Executive Council for the land necessary to build a canal through Cootes Paradise in order to facilitate the shipping of goods from Dundas to Burlington Bay. Despite the fact that the Council approved the petition, the canal that bears his name did not open until 1837, ten years after his death.

In 1821 Desjardins sold the south half of lot 49 to Ralph Morden Chrysler for £100. In 1822 Chrysler acquired a further 12' of property to the north and constructed the fine two storey wooden house that exists today. He extended his frontage on Queen Street in 1830 and bought the remaining north half of lot 49 from Peter Desjardin's brother in 1837. Chrysler was a local businessman who was born on the Chrysler family farm in Niagara Township. With 11 of Niagara's notable citizens he successfully petitioned for a charter for the Niagara Harbour and Dock Company in 1831, a shipbuilding enterprise that gave a tremendous boost to the local economy. However, financial setbacks relating to the Dock Company forced Chrysler to sell the property to the lawyer Charles Lethum Hall for £900.

Hall, who was born in Sandwich (Windsor), was a lawyer and land speculator during the 1840's. He owned property throughout the town, including the Richardson-Kiely House. He and his wife were active citizens of Niagara-on-the-Lake and mention of both his business and the family's busy social life is referenced in the local papers throughout this period. Hall died in 1849, and is buried in St. Mark's churchyard, but the house continued to be owned by his descendants and leased to tenants until 1888 when Hall's daughter sold it to Dougal B. Macdougall. Macdougall sold the building to American businessman George K. Birge in 1895 and it remained in American hands throughout the Town's heyday as a summer resort until Dr. and Mrs. Rigg purchased it in the 1960's.

### **Architectural Features**

The house is a two storey, three bay, hipped roof structure on a brick topped foundation. The rear two storey wing once housed the kitchen. American owner George K. Birge converted the building into a summer residence and added a two storey gallery along the rear wing. Recently, the lower gallery facing the garden has been filled in to create additional living space on the ground floor. The exterior finish is clapboard. There is an elaborate modillion cornice with built-in cornice gutter ornamented below with console brackets and finely worked pilaster treatment with carved Ionic caps of a design similar to those on the Neo-classical Breakenridge - Hawley and Clench Houses. There are two end chimneys on each side of the roof. The chimney on the southeast corner was built as a dummy to preserve the symmetry of the composition. The house, which was probably originally entered directly from Queen Street, is now entered from the west side via a covered side porch with square pillars decorated with stylised anthemions. A magnificent Greek Revival doorcase, the work of John Davidson derived from a design in a pattern book by Minard Lefever, gives access to the hallway.

The entrance hall contains the stair, which rises towards the front of the house. Executed in oak with turned balusters, the staircase is a heavily scaled essay in the Greek Revival with a monstrous seahorse newel and a wide, low rail that is both difficult and uncomfortable to grasp. Half way up, as the stair turns towards the landing, is a shallow alcove for display of ornaments or a statuette.

The front parlour retains its pilastered marble mantel, another feature of the Greek Revival renovation. The former dining room retains its original neo-Classical mantel, although the fireplace has been rebuilt. Large double folding doors surmounted by wide trim of Greek design lead into what is now the dining room, located in the rear two storey wing. Original six-panel doors with contemporary locks, pine floors, doorcases, cornices and baseboard remain in this portion of the building.

The rear kitchen area has been considerably changed. The original cooking fireplace remains with its hearth and bake oven. However, an earlier 1999 photograph indicates that the simple mantel has been altered with the addition of both mouldings and brackets.

The rear staircase leading up to the servant's rooms in the rear wing is a simple, pleasant and elegant design in walnut. Its Victorian appearance indicates that it was probably installed after the Greek Revival alterations were completed.

The plan of the second floor has also been altered. The former double bedchamber with its archway with folding doors between has been converted to accommodate 21<sup>st</sup> century amenities. However, the neo-Classical fireplaces, with their matching mantelpieces of a curious Niagara design of Germanic inspiration, remain, as does much of the original trim and cornice mouldings.

**Designation**

This designation applies to the lands and more particularly to the entire exterior façade and structure of the house, the exterior doorcase and entrance portico and to interior features including the early trim and doors on the first and second floors, all existing fireplaces and mantels, original pine floors and both the main and rear staircases.