

Statement of Significance



59 Duckworth Street - Devon House

Formal Recognition Type

City of St. John's Heritage Building, Structure, Land or Area

Description of Historic Place

Devon House is a four-storey, Second Empire style house located at 59 Duckworth Street, St. John's. The designation is confined to the footprint of the building.

Heritage Value

Devon House has been designated a municipal heritage building because of its historical, architectural and environmental values.

During its history, Devon House has been the residence of a number of noted Newfoundland figures. In 1891, the house belonged to Alexander McLellan MacKay, an agent for the Anglo-American Telegraph Company. Originally from Nova Scotia, MacKay first came to Newfoundland to take charge of the telegraph lines. While here he also played an important role in the development of telegraph lines including the Trans-Atlantic Cable and the cross-Newfoundland line.

Additionally, MacKay has been given credit for assisting in the introduction of both electricity and telephone lines in Newfoundland. Aside from working with the Anglo-American Telegraph Company, he also was a member of the House of Assembly from 1878 to 1889.

Following MacKay, the Templeman family moved in to the house. Philip Templeman was a Bonavista-based Merchant who experienced great wealth during his life. While living in Devon House, Templeman still maintained a residence in Bonavista; an indicator of his prosperity. From 1878 to 1889, Templeman served as a member of the House of Assembly representing the district of Burgeo and Lapoile.

Architecturally, Devon House is a unique-looking structure in the downtown landscape. Having survived the Great Fire of 1892, this brick and stone house is distinctive because it has two large tower-like bays with protruding roofs located on the front façade, making it stand out when compared to surrounding buildings. Hooded windows located at the rear, ornate brickwork,

heavy quoining along the sides of the building and the mansard roof all are reflective of the Second Empire style, while decorative wood-working and stone work along the windows indicates the craftsmanship of the unknown architect. Details such as the delicate rope trim and dentils along the eaves add to the overall charm of this building.

Environmentally, Devon House is significant because it is located next to the municipally designated row houses, Devon Row. The cohesiveness of the Southcott design is carried through both buildings and their proximity to each other lends a feeling of time and place to the area. It is also remarkable that Devon House survived the Great Fire of 1892 and its location marks the limits of the fire.

Source: City of St. John's, meeting held 2005/02/14

Character Defining Elements

All elements that define the building's Second Empire design including:

- colour, size, texture and location of brick and stone on exterior;
- Second Empire mansard roof;
- two storey bays on front façade including tower-like roofs;
- ornate decoration and mouldings on front facade dormer windows;
- symmetrical façade including shape, size and location of all window and door openings;
- original window and door mouldings and decoration;
- all remaining original windows and doors;
- original eaves trim including rope trim and eaves bracketing;
- decorative brickwork on building, i.e brickwork located on front façade between first and second levels; and,
- the building's location next to Devon Row.

All original interior features including all wooden doors, mouldings, staircases etc.

Notes of Interest

Unusual features of this house are the tower-like roofs located above the bay windows.

Location and History

Community	St. John's
Municipality	City of St. John's
Civic Address	059 Duckworth Street
Construction (circa)	1850 - 1860
Architect	Unknown
Builder	Unknown
Style	Second Empire
Building Plan	Rectangular Long Façade
Website Link	http://www.craftcouncil.nl.ca/