

Hodgetts House is sold

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Cobourg's history was lived in these walls

The magnificent red brick home, known to people in Cobourg as Hodgetts House, has new owners and with the sale comes the potential for the structure to be returned to its former grace.

A spokesman at Frank Realtors in Port Hope said he wasn't able to name the new owners, but he said they plan to use it as a private residence.

Already, work has begun to refurbish it and to repair the damage from a fire three years ago that almost completely gutted the rear portion of the house.

A title search of the property reads like a history of Cobourg. The original 200 acres of land in the parcel was granted to Daniel McKyes in 1804. He, in turn, sold the land to Asa Burnham, who broke it into smaller lots.

The land changed hands several times over the years and the Hodgetts home was built there in the mid-1860s.

Alfred Hodgetts purchased the home in 1926 and his son, A. B.

Hodgetts (CM), a former teacher at Trinity College School and now retired, fondly remembers growing up there.

"I'm more inclined to remember the depression years there," he said. "We were marked as a generous house and we were grateful for that."

Hodgetts said transients would stop by the house for a meal and a chat, then move on. Tales of the hospitality they were greeted with passed among people, making the house popular for people in need.

He said he remembers the carriage house in the back, now gone and the "magnificent garden and lovely woodwork."

The garden was his father's favorite hobby. The late Alfred Hodgetts was best known in Cobourg as the manager of the Toronto Dominion Bank.

The house was sold by the family in 1973 with the death of Alfred Hodgetts and Hodgetts said he sometimes regrets having sold.

Continued on page 2



Hodgetts House, William Street

Hodgetts

A Architecture - Coburn
(07-31)
202

Continued from page 1

"I regretted very greatly, when I saw what happened to it, that I didn't stay there," he said. "It was a tragedy."

From 1973 until the present, the house had several owners and remained unoccupied for the last few years. Vandalism over the years and the fire reduced the interior of the once beautiful home to a ruin.

There was some talk of turning it into a restaurant, including a zoning change two years ago, but the plan never materialized.

"I hope it will be restored to its former gracious state," Hodgetts said. "It housed a very happy family."