Bill No. B-2

The Corporation of the City of Hamilton

BY-LAW NO. 84-31

To Designate:

THE PROPERTY KNOWN AS "THE RIGHT HOUSE"
LOCATED AT MUNICIPAL NOS. 35-41 KING STREET EAST

As Property of:

HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL VALUE AND INTEREST

WHEREAS the Council of the City of Hamilton did give notice of its intention to designate the property mentioned in section 1 of this by-law in accordance with subsection 29(3) of The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1980, Chapter 337;

AND WHEREAS no notice of objection was served on the City Clerk as required by subsection 29(5) of the said Act;

AND WHEREAS it is desired to designate the property mentioned in section 1 of this by-law in accordance with clause 29(1)(a) of the said Act.

NOW THEREFORE the Council of The Corporation of the City of Hamilton enacts as follows:

1. The property known as "THE RIGHT HOUSE", located at Municipal Nos. 35-41 King Street East and more particularly described in schedule "A" hereto annexed, is hereby designated as property of historic and architectural value and interest.

2. The City Solicitor is hereby authorized and directed to cause a copy of this by-law, together with reasons for the designation set out in schedule "B", to be registered against the property affected in the proper registry office.

3. The City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed,

(i) to cause a copy of this by-law, together with reasons for the designation to be served on the owner and The Ontario Heritage Foundation by personal service or by registered mail;

(ii) to publish a notice of this by-law in a newspaper having general circulation in the Municipality of the City of Hamilton, for three consecutive weeks.

PASSED this 14th day of February A.D. 1984.

City Clerk

Mayor

(1983) 19 R.P.R.C. 7, October 11

SCHEDULE "A"

To

By-law No. 84- 31

THE RIGHT HOUSE

35-41 King Street East,
Hamilton, Ontario

FIRSTLY:

ALL AND SINGULAR that certain parcel or tract of land and premises situate, lying and being in the Nathaniel Hughson Survey, in the City of Hamilton, in the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth (formerly the County of Wentworth) and Province of Ontario, and being composed of Part of Lot 4 fronting on the north side of King Street, Part of Lot 29 fronting on the south side of King William Street and Part of the alleyway between the said Lots closed by By-Law No. 565 of the Corporation of the City of Hamilton, passed the 14th day of May, 1906, and which may be more particularly described as follows, that is to say:

COMMENCING at the southeastern angle of Lot 4 aforesaid, being the intersection of the northern limit of King Street with the western limit of Hughson Street as shown on the Nathaniel Hughson Survey and being the intersection of the northern limit of King Street with the western limit of Hughson Street as shown on plan of survey BA-784 registered by the Director of Titles on the 23rd day of December, 1975 as Instrument No. 400465 A.B.;

THENCE westerly along the northern limit of King Street 60.42 feet more or less to a point in the production southerly of the line of the western face of the western wall of the building erected upon the lands herein described now occupied by the Right House and known as Numbers 35 to 41 King Street East;

THENCE northerly to and along the western face of the said wall 138.21 feet more or less to an angle in the said wall, the said angle being distant 61.0833 feet measured westerly parallel with the northern limit of King Street from the western limit of Hughson Street;

THENCE westerly along a southern face of a southern wall of the aforesaid building .75 feet more or less to an angle in the said wall;

THENCE northerly along a western face of a western wall of the said building .73 feet more or less to an angle in the said wall;

THENCE westerly along a southern face of a southern wall of the said building .46 feet to an angle in the said wall;

THENCE northerly along a western face of a western wall of the said building 11.73 feet more or less to an angle in the said wall, the said angle being distant 62.21 feet measured westerly parallel with the northern limit of King Street from the western limit of Hughson Street;

THENCE westerly along a southern face of a southern wall of the said building 4.54 feet more or less to an angle in the said wall;

THENCE northerly along a western face of a western wall of the said building 17.87 feet more or less to an angle in the said wall, the said angle being distant 67.12 feet measured westerly parallel with the northern limit of King Street from the western limit of Hughson Street;

THENCE westerly along a southern face of a southern wall of the said building 11.12 feet more or less to an angle in the said wall;

THENCE northerly along a western face of a western wall of the said building 52.77 feet more or less to the northwestern angle of the said building;

THENCE easterly along the northern face of the northern wall of the said building erected upon the lands herein described, and the production easterly of the line thereof 79.71 feet more or less to a point in the western limit of Hughson Street;

THENCE southerly along the western limit of Hughson Street 220 feet more or less to the place of beginning.

SECONDLY:

ALL AND SINGULAR that certain parcel or tract of land and premises situate, lying and being in the City of Hamilton, in the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth (formerly the County of Wentworth), and Province of Ontario and being composed of Parts of Lots 29 and 30 fronting on the south side of King William Street between James and Hughson Streets in Nathaniel Hughson's Survey in the said City of Hamilton, and which may be more particularly described as follows, that is to say:

COMMENCING at a cross cut in the concrete walk marking the intersection of the southern limit of King William Street with the western limit of Hughson Street, being the northeastern angle of said Lot 29;

THENCE westerly along the southern limit of King William Street 84.33 feet to an iron bar planted in the eastern limit of the alleyway opened by By-Law Number 565 of the Corporation of the City of Hamilton, passed the 14th day of May, 1906;

THENCE southerly along the eastern limit of the aforesaid alleyway 67.29 feet more or less to a stake planted in the production westerly of the line of the northern face of the northern wall of the Right House building erected upon the lands immediately adjoining on the south;

THENCE easterly to and along the northern face of the aforesaid wall and the production easterly of the line thereof 83.37 feet more or less to a cross cut in the concrete marking a point in the western limit of Hughson Street;

THENCE northerly along the western limit of Hughson Street 68.06 feet more or less to the place of beginning.

THE foregoing description being intended to describe the parcel of land upon which is erected the building known as the Right House, and being municipally known in the year 1983 as Numbers 35 to 41 King Street East, Hamilton, Ontario.

SCHEDULE "B"

To

By-law No. 84- 31

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

THE RIGHT HOUSE

35-41 King Street East,
Hamilton, Ontario

In 1890 to 1893, Hamilton merchant Thomas C. Watkins built the new premises for The Right House on Gore Park, heralding the arrival in the city of a contemporary innovation—retail marketing on the grand scale. The Right House was bigger, bolder and better equipped than any of its neighbouring rowhouse stores. Architect William Stewart & Son had been able to translate this new merchandising spirit into architectural terms with considerable success and a good measure of Victorian flamboyance.

In the interest of promoting its "modern" aspect, The Right House design employed many of the fashionable features of the day: running arcades, columns and stone arches busily articulated the street facade; contemporary pressed metalwork provided the crowning decoration to eaves and parapet (now gone); window openings contained so much plate glass that the building was nicknamed the Crystal Palace; and modern conveniences such as the elevator offered an added degree of comfort and class to shopping excursions. In terms of subsequent architectural developments, Watkins' building was not only the first but it is now also the last of the large nineteenth century department stores to survive intact in the city. As such, The Right House is a unique example of its kind in Hamilton.

That entrepreneur Watkins chose to locate on the Gore was in keeping with a city tradition, for the Gore was the commercial focus of Hamilton for both retail and wholesale businesses. Furthermore, Gore Park was a major city attraction for Hamiltonians at the turn of the century; its lush mature trees, flower beds and graceful fountain provided a setting not only pleasant for people but also highly complimentary to the surrounding architecture. Then, as today, Watkins' store related well to the site, for its design was both harmonious and distinctive, and its size was scaled appropriately for people and open square. While the Gore streetscape has continued to evolve—new buildings have replaced old and facades have changed according to fashion—the Right House has maintained its place of prominence. The building still serves as a major anchor block on the Gore, and, except for minor changes, retains its original appearance and vitality.

Of particular significance are the south and east facades on the exterior and the cast iron columns on the first floor of the interior.