



## City of Florence

Florence Municipal Center  
600 W. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Florence, Colorado 81226.  
(719) 784-4848 Fax (719) 784-0228  
Email: [planning@florencecolorado.org](mailto:planning@florencecolorado.org)  
[www.cityofflorence.colorado.gov](http://www.cityofflorence.colorado.gov)

Members:  
Brandon Angel  
Millie Wintz  
Fran Black  
John Dixon  
Sue Kinzer  
Scott McMillin  
Sherry Sky Stuart

CITY OF FLORENCE  
FLORENCE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
FLORENCE MUNICIPAL CENTER, CITY HALL CHAMBERS  
*Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.*

### AGENDA

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of the Minutes from the February 27, 2024 Meeting
- IV. Old Business
- V. New Business –
  - a) **Public Hearing** – Local Historical Designation – 105 West Main Street
  - b) Florence Archives Committee Report
  - c) Florence Storytelling Committee Report
- VI. Next Meeting Date and Time: Tuesday, June 25, 2024 @ 4:30 p.m.
- VII. Adjourn



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## FLORENCE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Tuesday, February 27, 2024  
 4:30 P.M.

Members	Present	Absent
Chair Angel	X	
Vice Chair Wintz	X	
Member Black	X	
Member McMillin	X	
Member Dixon		X
Member Kinzer		X
Member Stuart	X	
Council Representative MacKinnon	X	

Staff Present	Present	Absent
Planning Director Fox	X	

**I. Call to Order**

Chair Angel called meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Member Dixon and Kinzer absent, all additional members present.  
 Council Representative MacKinnon present.

**III. Approval of Minutes from the January 30, 2024 Meeting**

Member McMillin makes the motion to approve the January 30, 2024 meeting minutes.

Seconded by Member Wintz

Roll Call 5 ayes

**IV. New Business**

**a) Florence Archives February 2024 Committee Report –**

- Member Wintz explains the survey concept will be continued for the farmers market and the idea will be a part of the Mini-College in March with handouts. The handout will include information about the walking tours and the survey that the Archive has been doing.



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## b) Historic Nomination Committee - 105 West Main Street- Discussion

- Member Stuart explains that she has read the nomination application and information for 105 West Main Street, has also visited the site. Further states that the nomination for 105 West Main Street for the local historic district should go to the next step.
- Member McMillan states the history of Castle Hall in the nomination material makes this building significant.
- Chair Angel inquires about misspellings in the nomination material and the year Florence was incorporated.
- Chair Angel inquires about the next steps for the nomination of 105 West Main Street.
- Planning Director states the next will be a public hearing before the Commission, and then a discussion by the Commission regarding the nomination of 105 West Main Street for the local historic register. The Commission may at that time recommend to City Council, who will have the final decision on the nomination of 105 West Main Street to the local historic register.

## c) Webinar – Historical Context - Discussion

- Member Stuart discusses the contents of webinar and how the concept of Historical Context has changed over the years from just buildings to including people, places, ethnicity, and stories. Further states that Denver has an office of storytelling and that Council Representative MacKinnon has information from a series of stories that was in the original *Florence Citizen* about local people telling their own stories. The thought would be that these stories would be sorted through to come up with a concept for a historical context study or book. Further inquires about forming a committee for this project.
- Planning Director inquires who would like to be a part of this new project.
- Fran Black, Brandon Angle, volunteers to help Sky Stuart and Gayle MacKinnon.
- Name of new committee, Florence Storytelling Committee.

## d) Projects and Surveys – Discussion

- Planning Director inquires if any other members have a project or survey idea.
- Chair Angel states he is interested in projects that help or promote neighborhoods.
- Member Stuart states this idea could also be involved with the storytelling, stories about different neighborhoods etc.
- Chair Angel states he would like to find an aspect of a project that helps homeowners obtain tax credits or grants, to help perverse the core neighborhoods.
- Member Wintz along with Council Representative MacKinnon state that this aspect is heavily reliant on the homeowner to pursue the designation process that can ultimately lead to the tax credits or grants.
- Council Representative MacKinnon inquires about historical plaques on homes.
- Member McMillan gives presentation on the National Park Service and preservation briefs.

Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Historic Preservation Chair

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# FLORENCE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

MEETING DATE: MAY 28, 2024

STAFF REPORT

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**Agenda Item:** Public Hearing – Local Historic Designation  
105 West Main Street

**Department:** Planning

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## Property Information:

**Location:** 105 West Main Street

**Name of Structure:** Knights of Pythias, Castle Hall

**Year(s) of Original Construction:** 1888

**Original Builder, Architect, or Designer:** Unknown

**Original Owner:** Florence Petroleum Chapter 36 Knights of Pythias

**Current Property Owner:** Mildred M. Wintz

## Statement of Significance:

- According to the application form, all the major aspects of our United States history have left footprints in Florence, Colorado. Beginning as a railroad town in the westward expansion searching for resources and identity, such as Pike and Palmer. The Industrial Revolution left the Coal Towns surrounding the rail hub of Florence with buildings and evidence of the emergent Labor Movement. With the creation of the Knights of Pythias in 1864, the Florence Petroleum Lodge #36 built in 1888, is still intact evidence of that event. Castle Hall offered churches, organizations, and businesses a place to meet along with a theater in the basement. The building still functions as it was built in 1888, with a commercial shop on the first floor and an apartment on the second floor.

## Historical Background:

- The first fraternal organization, the Knights of Pythias, was created by an act of Congress in Washington, D.C. on February 19, 1864. The organization was established to help unite the North and South after the Civil War. The structure at 105 West Main Street, erected in 1888 by the fraternal group, offered a commercial space on the first floor and a meeting hall on the second. Many churches, social or other fraternal groups would use the meeting hall until their own structures were built. The Knights of Pythias went on to provide death benefits and some limited medical relief to local industrial workers. The Pythian Sisterhood, the wives of the Pythias, provided the first insurance for single female workers and windows left to support orphaned children. This was most common in the Company Coal Towns surrounding Florence.

## Architectural Significance:

- The building design is a commercial space on the ground floor with a meeting hall on the second floor. The commercial Victorian Italianate two story, red brick façade with rusticated stone quoins, flat roof and stone foundation remains unchanged. The first floor has a center wood door with stained glass transom angled plate glass, display windows over kicked plates with interior columns flank the entrance. The second floor has paired tall windows hoodmolds with springer and keystone of stone, centered under an 1888 datestone and flanked on the outer west ends by matching single windows. The infill over the setback entrance is Victorian metal stamped to resemble brick.

#### Alterations to the property:

- The footprint of the structure was changed by 20 feet with an addition at the rear of the building in 1903.
- The structure experienced fire damage in December 1949 when the Blunt Building, to the east burned down.
- A sever flood in 1921 flooded Main Street so severely that the basement level entrance was bricked up.

#### Significance of the Property:

- As indicated in the application and throughout the supporting documentation, 105 West Main Street, has played a pivotal role in Florence history. The building is associated with the history of fraternal organizations, such as the Knights of Pythias, who occupied the second floor. The building is also associated with housing the City's Post Office in the early twentieth century along with numerous businesses over the last 130 years, including a drugstore, a barber, and a book and stationery store.
- The building embodies the distinguishing characteristics of Italianate Architecture that was predominant in the late nineteenth century for commercial type buildings. Commercial buildings at that time were two or three stories, with a flat roof and ornamental detailing. The storefront has a recessed central entrance flanked by large display windows with kickplates, window and door transoms. Windows on the upper stories are smaller and are decorated with molded surrounds, radiating voussoirs, or plain stone lintels.
- The building is listed on the on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

#### Finding of Fact:

According to these finding of facts, this structure meets the following criteria for local historic designation as listed in the Municipal Code 15.60.080.

- 1) History: The building has significant character, interest, or value as part of the development of the City of Florence.
  - This building embodies a captivating history intertwined with influential individuals, organizations and pivotal events that have shaped the community, thus holding significant importance and meaning within the broader narrative of the City's history.
- 2) Architecture: Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.
  - The building exemplifies the defining features of Italianate Architecture, which prevailed in the late nineteenth century, particularly in commercial structures.
- 3) Listed on another historic registry.
  - The building is listed on both the State of Colorado and the National Register of Historic Places.

#### Suggested Motion:

I move that the Historic Preservation Commission acknowledges the finding of facts outlined in this staff report as accurate and proceed to convey its recommendations, along with these findings to the Florence City Council, in the form of an Ordinance to initiate local historic designation for 105 West Main Street, Florence, Colorado.

#### Attachments included:

- Application

Reference:

<https://www.pythias.org/invitation/home>



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### LOCAL HISTORIC DESIGNATION APPLICATION

#### Eligibility:

A building, object, monument, structure or site may individually be designated as a Landmark, or one or more buildings, objects, monuments, structures or sites which are united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development may be designated as a Historic District.

**The building, object, monument, structure, site or district must have distinctive character, more than 50 years old and meets one of the following categories:**

#### • History:

1. Has significant character, interest or value, as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the City, State or Nation; or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or
2. Is the site of a historic event with a significant effect upon society; or
3. Exemplifies the cultural heritage of the community; or has yielded, or may be likely to yield, important prehistoric information.

#### • Architecture:

1. Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or
2. Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering; or
3. Is the work of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the City; or
4. Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.

#### • Listed on another historic registry:

1. The property is listed on the Colorado Register of Historic Places;
2. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

#### Statement of Significance:

Describe how the building, object, monument, structure, site or district being nominated meets one of the criteria listed above. Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

*All the major aspects of our United States history have left footprints in Florence Colorado. Beginning as a railroad town in the westward expansion searching for resources and identity, Pike, Palmer, Osgood and Heyden all left traces. The industrial revolution left the Coal Towns surrounding the rail hub of Florence with buildings and news paper evidence of the emergant Labor Movement. To alleviate the misery and suffering of mine and mill workers, the Knights of Pythias ws created by an act of Congress in 1864. The Florence Petroleum Lodge 36 built in 1888, is the still intact evidence of that event. The sword of W. Cleland, an early A.T.&S.F railroad man for whom the local pre Florence railroad station was named, still hangs in Castle Hall. Houseing many nacienc churches, organizations, and businesses, as well as a theater in the basement, the building still functions as built, 1888, on its original footprint of 1903, with a commercial shop on the 1st floor and an apartment on the 2nd.*



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100 W. 2nd Street, Florence, Colorado 81226  
719-784-2486 Fax (719) 784-0328  
Email: [planning@florencecolorado.org](mailto:planning@florencecolorado.org)  
[www.cityofflorencecolorado.gov](http://www.cityofflorencecolorado.gov)

## Section I

### Current Owner(s) of the Property:

Name: Mildred M. Wintz  
Mailing Address: 105 1/2 West Main Street  
City: Florence State: Colorado Zip Code: 81226  
Phone Number: 719-784-2486  
Email Address: drwoody2@gmail.com  
(For Multiple Owners - list names, addresses and phone numbers on an additional Sheet)

### Address of Property:

Street Address: 105 W. Main St., Florence Co. 81226

### Name of Property:

Historic Name (if any): Knights of Pythias, Castle Hall

### Legal Description of Property:

Lot 30 & the E 6 ft. of lot 29 Blk 6 Florence, less 10 inches on & all the E. side of sd Lot 30, extending 110 ft sly from the N. end of sd lot 30, tog with an und 1/2 int in the E. wall of the building.

### Preparer of Nomination:

Name: Mildred M. Wintz Date: 01-25-2024  
Organization (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: 105 1/2 W. Main Street  
City: Florence State: Colorado Zip Code: 81226  
Phone Number: 719-784-2486

## Section II

### Category of Property (check on box)

- Building(s)
- District
- Object
- Site
- Structure

### Number of Resources within Property

1 Buildings  
1 District  
\_\_\_\_ Object  
\_\_\_\_ Site  
\_\_\_\_ Structure



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[www.cityofflorence.colorado.gov](http://www.cityofflorence.colorado.gov)

If property is a building, object or structure, has it be moved?  Yes  No

If yes:

Where was its original location? \_\_\_\_\_

When was it moved? \_\_\_\_\_

Year of Construction: 1888

Source of Information: Architectural Inventory Form: Colorado Cultural  
Resource Survey. SHF/CLG Grant # 2007-T1-001 Parcel # 3939163409003

Original Builder, Architect, and / or Designer: Unknown

Signature design K. of P. Castle Halls.

Source of Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Original Owner: Florence Petroleum Chapter 36 Knights of Pythias.

Source of Information: \_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Description:

Please describe the current appearance of the property and any alterations that have occurred since its original construction.

Attach additional sheets if needed.

*Built in 1888, the Knight of Pythis "Castle Halls" building design was always the same, a commercial space on the ground floor with the meeting Hall above. The commercial Victorian Italiinate two story, red brick facade with its rusticated stone quoins, flat roof and stone foundation remain unchanged. The 1st floor has a center wood door with stained glass transom angled plate glass display widows over kick plates with interior columns flank the entrance. At the 2nd floor there are paired tall windows hoodmolds with springer and keystones of stone, centered under an 1888 datestone, stone, flanked on outer ends by matching single windows. At the west end of the front facade is the entrance to the 2nd floor. The infill over the setback entrance is Victorian metal stamped to resemble brick. See attachments for additional.*

**Photographs:** Attach current photographs of the property. For buildings, structures and objects the photographs should show the property from all directions. Attach historic photographs if available.

*See attachments for additional.*

**Maps:** Include an 8.5 x 11 location map showing the property and footprint of the building or structure.

*See attachments for additional.*





## City of Florence

100 W. 2nd Street, Florence, Colorado 81226

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[www.florencecolorado.gov](http://www.florencecolorado.gov)

### 35. Historical Background:

*It has been stated that 105 West Main, "Castle Hall", may be the oldest commercial brick building on Main Street, erected in 1888 by a fraternal order, the Knights of Pythias. It appears on a 1890 Sanborn Insurance map of 189 as a stand alone building.*

*The beginning of the Industrial Revolution saw great strides in the creation of machines and the environments in which they functioned with no regard to the toll and effects on the lives of workers, male or female, coal miner or mill hand. To alleviate the suffering of American workers, the first beneficial fraternal group, The Knights of Pythias, was created by an Act of Congress in Washington D.C. February 9th, 1864.*

*Wherever industrial center rose, the Knight built their "Castle Halls". The Knights provided death benefits and some limited medical relief. It was left to the Rathbone Sisterhood, the organized but unrecognized wives of the Pythians, to provide for the first insurance for the single female workers and widows left to support orphaned children. This was most common in the Company Coal towns surrounding Florence when widows were forced out of company owned homes at the death of a spouse.*

*The Castle's building design was always the same: a commercial space on the ground floor with the meeting hall above. Being non-denominational, many church, social or other fraternal groups availed themselves of the meeting halls until their own structures could be built. Florence's Petroleum Lodge 36, 1887, was the first Pythian built and owned Castle in Colorado. The building was completed in 1888, one year before the town's incorporation, at the beginning of a building boom occasioned by the discovery of the 2nd operational oil field in the United States. Although Pennsylvania was the first oil field, the Florence field is still producing oil though at a much reduced rate.*

*Florence served as a railroad hub during the oil boom, coal boom, and gold refining boom, as it played its role in the Manifest Destiny period of American expansion (Pike and Hayden). Its fertile valley supported major agricultural center, exporting fruits and vegetables out to national markets. Its sugar beet fields played a part in the rise and fall in the national drama of the Golden Era industrial barons..*

*Although the railroad no longer stops in Florence, the town's beautiful 1880's Main Street and historical residential side streets are again emerging into whatever the next century will bring.*

#### Architectural Significance:

**Please describe if this property:**

- Portrays the environment in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.
- Embodies those distinguishing characteristics of an architectural-type or engineering.
- Is the example of a designer whose individual work has significantly influenced the development of the City.
- Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation.

**Please attach additional sheets if necessary.**

*The 1900 year built date provided by the Assessor is incorrect. According to the date stone on the building, it was erected in 1888. The building was shown on the 1890 map (the earliest providing coverage) when it was shown as a two-story rectangular building with an outside stairway at the rear (south side). The foot print changed by a 20 feet addition to the rear (south) side in 1903, when the first floor level was dropped two feet to just above the street level. The storefront was rebuilt to the new level while the second floor fenestration remained the same. The 1903 map also shows a stairway to the second floor appearing on the outside of the west wall. The footprint, and the outside stairway remain unchanged on the Sanborn maps from 1903 to 1949. The outside stairway became incorporated into an alley between the two floor building to the west, and provided access to both 2nd floors. The stairway was later incorporated into the structure of 105 with both ends of the alley sealed off in 1927. The infill between the 2 buildings being Victorian pressed metal in a brick pattern. Castle Hall experienced fire damage in December 1949 when the Blunt Building, to the east, burned to the ground. Several floods, the worst being in 1921, flooded Main Street so severely that several basement level entrances, including Castle Hall, were bricked up to the street level. Extensive interior improvements to the interior heat, water and electrical systems were made.*

*In 1950 a one story extension was added to the rear (south wall). In 2009 that extension was removed and the building returned to its 1903 footprint, leaving the original 1888 structure exposed on the interior. The exposed brick walls show reclaimed bricks from many different brickyards and uses (firebrick to soft handmolded). Wood "logs" act as interior window lintels to the stone arches on the outside front wall. Rear and side wall windows sport filled-in brick arches. Wood brick sized plugs fill in for missing brick courses. Ceilings of Victorian pressed metal, original window and door trim, and initials carved into soft brick walls attest to a building "well loved".*



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### Section IV

#### Resources:

Please cite the articles, books, personal contacts or any other sources used in preparing the application.

Fremont Count Heritage Commission. Site Registry 2013.

Colorado Cultural Resource Survey, Hist. Co., 2007-71-00

Downtown Florence Co. Historic District, Nat. Register Historic Places

Presentation: National Register Proposal. 2012. Hist. Colorado Staff.

Photo: 1913 West Main St. Co. Carl Babberger

Canon City Daily Record Newspaper: 09-06-1972

Back in Time: Canon City Daily Record 94 26, 2010

Map: Sanborn Fire Insurance, 1890

Architectural Inventory Form 2013, History Colorado

Florence Historic District Maps, 1981

History of Colorado Handbook: Nomination of Historic Sites/Districts 2011

Field Guide of Historic Architecture: History Colorado.

#### Review Process:

Please return the owner consent form, the completed application and the \$ 35.00 non-refundable application fee to the City of Florence at the address below in person, by mail or email.  
[planning@florencecolorado.org](mailto:planning@florencecolorado.org)

City of Florence  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Planning Department  
600 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street  
Florence, CO 81226

Historic Preservation and City staff will review application and be in contact with applicant to schedule a meeting for the discussion of the nomination.

## KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS CASTLE HALL

The Knights of Pythias is a National Fraternal Group. It was the first such beneficial fraternal group created by an act of Congress for the relief of suffering of the ordinary American Worker.

The beginning of the Industrial Revolution saw great strides in the creation of machines and the environments in which they functioned....with no regard to the toll and effects on the lives of the workers, male or female.

The Knights provided death benefits and some limited medical relief. It was left to the Rathbone Sisterhood, the organized and unrecognized, wife's of the Pythians to provide for the first insurance on the single female workers and widows let to support orphaned children. Where industrial centers rose, the Knights of Pythias built their "Castle Halls" The building design was always the same, commercial space on the ground floor with the meeting hall above. Being non-denominational many church, social, and other fraternal groups availed themselves of the meeting halls.

Funeral, weddings, balls and celebrations took place in the meeting hall of Petroleum 36, the Knights Castle built in Florence in 1888, the year before the city's incorporation. At the leading edge of the Florence building boom, occasioned by the discovery of the second operation oil field in the United States, Castle hall is the first commercial brick building on Main Street.

The basement level was open to the street and was occupied by a theater at the time the first floor was occupied by the Florence post office.

Time brought fires and floods. One of the worst floods, in 1921 flooded Main Street so badly that all the basement level entrances, including Castle Hall, were bricked up and buried raising the street level many feet. A disastrous fire in 1949 wiped out the large adjoining Blunt block threatening to take Castle Hall with it. Except for a short period for repairing that damage, the building has been in constant occupancy since 1888.

The building was reclaimed in 2010 and returned to its original 1900 foot print. It was placed on the Fremont County Inventory of Historic Sites in 2014.

# Knights of Pythias, Castle Hall, Petroleum Lodge 36

2024

105 West Main Street, Florence Colorado, 81226



East wall.  
1888 Original 2  
floor stand-alone to  
20feet from rear.

Last 20 feet is 1903  
addition.

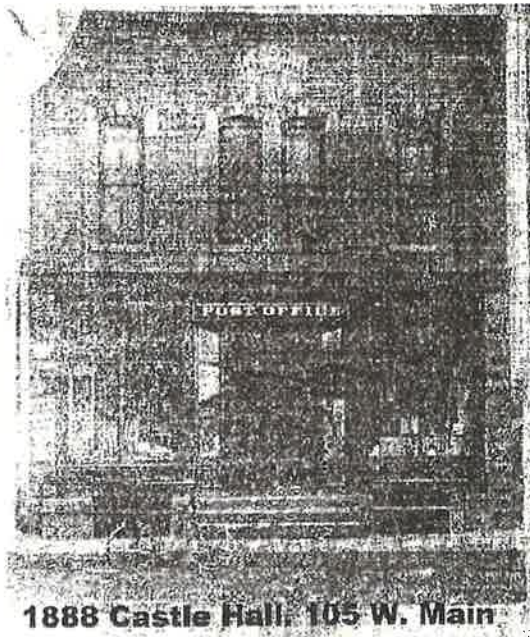
Partywall adjacent  
2 story Blunt  
building burned in  
1949

West 2 floor wall.  
1888 facade intact  
between quoins.  
Glass transom.

Infilled alley and  
stairway 1903.  
Original exterior  
doors and windows  
of 105 and  
neighboring  
building still  
exposed in stairway



North wall on Main Street.  
The facade between the quoins and  
above the beam are original to  
1888. The glass transom at the 1st  
floor is two feet deeper as the floor  
of the commercial space was  
dropped to street level in 1903. The  
theater basement entrances were  
bricked and buried with the raising  
of the street level.



1888 Castle Hall, 105 W. Main



As the 1888 building was free  
standing, an alley was created  
between it and the new building  
next door. Sanborn's 1903 map  
shows a shared outside stairway  
connecting 2nd floor entrances. In  
1927 the space was sealed and  
became part of th 105 property.  
Sealed doors and windows remain



South side courtyard  
replaced the post  
1949 addition. The  
original porch line  
and roofline restored.  
A stand alone garage  
was added on the  
alley along with the  
courtyard security  
gate. The 2nd floor  
parch was returned  
and widened.

The south wall on the  
courtyard shows the rear  
of the 1903 20 ft addition  
with the stairway to the  
2nd floor. The original  
alley is marked by the  
white door to the  
elevator installed in the  
old alley. Red doors lead  
into the commercial  
shop. The wall on the left  
is the one floor wall of  
the west side building.  
2nd floor and Roof line  
are original 1888

