5 South Main Street



West side of street

This Italian Revival brick building looks much as it did when constructed in 1877/78 for the Howe brothers.

Long known as the "Walter Building", this brick Italian Revival style building was constructed in 1877/78 for the Howe brothers. Henry H. and James P. Howe bought the property in 1877 from Reuben and Nelson W. Clark. Originally a part of the Clarkston mill property, according to an Oakland County Atlas, pub., 1877, Nelson W. Clark had a store in 1842 in a large frame building "which at present is used as a store by the Howe brothers". The Howe brothers also did business in a wooden building on the northwest corner of S. Main & Depot Rd. The Howe brothers had a dry goods store on the first floor of the new 5 South Main brick building while the Clarkston Grange was deeded rights to a portion of the second floor. Hay scales are noted on this site in the abstract of title. (Henry H. Howe and Emma, his wife, lived in the house built for them at 91 N. Main.) The 5 South Main St. property changed hands three times before Frank Walter bought it in 1919. Walter began his grocery and dry goods business using a horse-drawn wagon (see photo, Heritage, pg.53), and a small wood frame store behind his home at 23 S. Holcomb (see photo, Heritage, pg.51). In the 1880s Walter was listed in tax records for the large building which was on the site of the Maccabee building which now stands across the street, 4, 6, 8 S. Main. That building was originally built as Bingham Hall, owner

Lee Bingham. When Walter owned the building the second floor was known as Walter Hall. (Frank bought a home at 18/20 Buffalo about 1915 where he lived until he died in 1929.) The Walter family, Frank's son Louis, then grandson, Ronald, and his wife, Virginia, continued to operate the business for the next twenty years. Ronald was an attorney who had his office in a portion of the second floor, while Walter's Department Store occupied the first. (In 1937 the business was an agent for the Pontiac Laundry according to newspaper ads). An interior photo of 1910, Heritage, pg.52, shows Louis and his sister, Mrs. Grace Cambrey tending the wares of Frank Walter & Son Dry Goods, Footwear and Groceries. Later some interior changes may be seen in a photo of Louis inside the store, Heritage, pg.64. In 1960 Genry's Colonial House, furniture and gifts, opened here. When it closed in 1964, Auten Furniture moved in to the space. Clarkston Lumber's Do - It - Yourself Center occupied the space in the fall of 1966. The owner of the Clarkston News purchased the building in 1966. (See a Clarkston News article of 2/23/1967 regarding Clarkston newspapers.) Architecturally, the Main Street facade of the building has changed little since it was constructed. An Italianate style building, the second story corbeled brick frieze; brick engaged pilasters which separate the openings on both stories; and round - arched windows and window hoods are elements typical of the style. The doorway on the northeast corner of the Main St. facade was altered in the early 1990s when the original door was removed. Traces of the original second story windows which matched the existing ones on the second story of the street facing facade may be seen on the south facade.

Official Property Description

- This Lot was originally a part of the mill property , which later became known as the "unencumbered Block", of Nelson W. Clark's Original Plat of the Village in theSouthwest 1/4 of Section 20 of Independence Township.
- Lot 80 of the Assessor's plat.

Significant Property History

- 1835 Butler Holcomb to Jeremiah Clark III, the east 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 (35.25 acres more or less) including the water rights to the mill pond.
- 1839 Jeremiah Clark III to N. W. Clark, the undivided 1/2 of the east 1/2 of the Southwest 1/4 (35.25 acres, more or less, including the water rights to the mill pond.
- 1842 J. Clark to N. W. Clark, more land except the exclusive mill rights. Jeremiah III & N. W. Clark, and A. (Abram/Abraham) Houghtellin owned the mill

together. (J. Clark reserved the east 1/2 of Lot Block 17)

- 1844 A. Houghtellin-quit claim to Nelson W. and Jeremiah Clark III.
- 1844 Jeremiah III & Nelson W. Clark, Mill property, assessed value $2000.
- 1846 Jeremiah III & Nelson W. Clark, Mill property, assessed value $2000.
- 1847 to Nelson W. Clark from Polly (Mrs. J. Clark). Edwin G. and Mary Clark. Wash. L. and Lucy Clark. Nelson and Pheobe Abbey. Milton H. Clark. Newton J. Clark. The mill property began at the junction of Washington & Main St., west 36 rods, south 38 rods., east 36 rods, to the center of Main, then 38 rods back to the beginning.
- 1848 Nelson W. Clark, Mill "Lott" on the Southwest 1/4, assessed value $2000. Nelson W.Clark, the northeast corner of the Mill "Lott", assessed value $90. Milton H. Clark, the northeast corner of the Mill "Lott", assessed value $92.
- 1849 Clark and Davis, the northeast corner of the Mill Lot, assessed value $93.
- 1849 Nelson W. Clark, the northwest corner of the Mill Lot, assessed value $100.
- 1849 Abram & Elmira E. Houghtellin to N. W. Clark, - mill and all interests.
- 1853 N. W. and Phidelia C. Clark to Aked and Ed. S. Hirst,- the mill property (see drawing in abstract).
- 1855 Aked and Ed. Hirst, & wives, to Henry T. Hirst an undivided 1/3 in the mill and the south side of Lot 2 Block 18, & Lot 2 Block 19, except Lots 1, 2, & 3, Block 26, & the east 1/2 of Lot 1 Block 25, & N. W. Clark's store, & 50' front on Main, 5 rods back.
- 1856 Aked & Esther Hirst to Henry Hirst & Ed. Stiff /Stieff, the undivided 1/3 in the mill, & the south side of Lot 2 Block 19, with the above exception.
- 1861 E. S. Hirst & Co., 33' and 5 rods between M. H. Clark's property & Pheobe Edmonson's store.
- 1864 Clark to Hirst-quit claim. Edward and Cordelia Hirst 1/2 to Erastus Stiff except Washington, Scranton's store and N. W. Clark's store.
- 1869 Ed. & Henry Hirst to Margaret S. Ross, - property of M. H. Clark's store.
- 1875 Margaret S. Green to Reuben N. Clark, as above.
- 1876 Reuben & N. W. Clark to Henry H. & James P. Howe, 26'x5 rods back, assessed value $100.
- 1877 Howe Brothers, assessed value $50. The Independence Grange as of October 30,1877 for $500 bought the undivided 1/3, 56' back from the front on the second story & the entrance in the northeast corner.
- 1879 Mary Stiff to Henry H. Howe & James P. Howe. "Including the Hay scales which are to remain free for all mill use as long as the scales are in use, & a 10'

passage from Washington St., & the salt & lime house."

- 1881 J. P. Howe, $1500
- 1885 James P. & Laura E. Howe to Henry H. Howe & Ed. A. Urch, the building excluding Grange rights, & 36 1/2' wide property which is now bound on the north by M. H. Clark & Washington St., west by Wm. Holcomb, also a 10' alley, the hay scales, & the salt & lime house.
- 1887 Henry & Emma Howe to Ed. A. Urch, the store except the Grange interest & mill property.
- 1888 E. A. & Alice M. Urch to Charlie M. Smith, the undivided 1/2 of 26' x 5 rods, excluding the Grange rights & as above.
- 1891 C.M. Smith, assessed value $1800.
- 1892 C.M. Smith (& Josephine Smith) & son to N.B. Smith. N.B. Smith, assessed value $1800.
- 1895 Nicholas B. Smith died July 3, 1895.
- 1919 Emeline W. Smith & heirs to Frank Walter, 26'x82 1/2'
- 1929 Frank Walter died.
- 1933 F. Walter estate, assessed value $2700.
- 1934 Louis Walter.
- 1954 Ronald A. Walter.

Architecture Style
Italian Revival Style