

Norleigh



250 King Street East



The NORSWORTHY home was originally constructed as a yellow brick farmhouse, the building and surrounding 200 acres became part of the Mary Jane (Miss May) Cuthbert's dowry when she married James. (Newspaper) It was built in the Queen Ann style in the early 1850's and boasted of turrets, bays, chimneys of cut brick, multi-coloured brickwork, slate roofs and stain glass windows. This is generally an irregular shaped home with no plain surfaces. The 21 room home is three stories high. There are 6 bedrooms, a double drawing room, living room, library, dining room, kitchen, etc. The foundation is said to be 43" thick. The cellar was composed of many rooms - a preserve room with cupboards, a root cellar, wine cellar, coal cellar and furnace room. "Cool rooms" for foods, ventilated by early type air conditioning was composed of vents in the basement walls which drew in the air from outside all around the house - the first natural air conditioned home in Ingersoll. This home was the only one in town that had running tap water, in all the rooms. A cistern was built, with pipes going through the kitchen roof, and these were connected to the cistern about 5 feet above the height of the house. When the pipes were connected, taps were installed in each room for the gravity-forced water. As the cistern's level dropped, more water was pumped up from the well. Mr. and Mrs. J. Robbins are the present owners of this beautiful home, and they try to keep it in it's original state



Mr. J. C. Norsworthy

At age 75

Of "Norleigh", Ingersoll

Taken from a painting by G. Horne Russell

OBITUARY

JAS. NORSWORTHY DIES AT AGE OF 90

Father of Two Montrealers
Was Son of Ontario
Pioneer **1936**

(Special to The Gazette.)

Ingersoll, Ont., November 4. — James Counter Norsworthy, son of one of the pioneers of the Ingersoll, Ontario, district, and father of Stanley C. Norsworthy and John W. Norsworthy of Montreal, died yesterday at his home here in his 91st year.

A native of Widdicombe-on-the-Moor, Devonshire, England, Mr. Norsworthy when six years of age came with his parents to Canada. His family settled near Ingersoll in 1852 and were among the pioneers of that district. In his later years Mr. Norsworthy resided in Ingersoll where he was active in the insurance business, until his retirement on pension some 30 years ago. He acted for a number of years as chief inspector for Canada of the North British and Mercantile Insurance Company, travelling for the company from his home in Ingersoll.

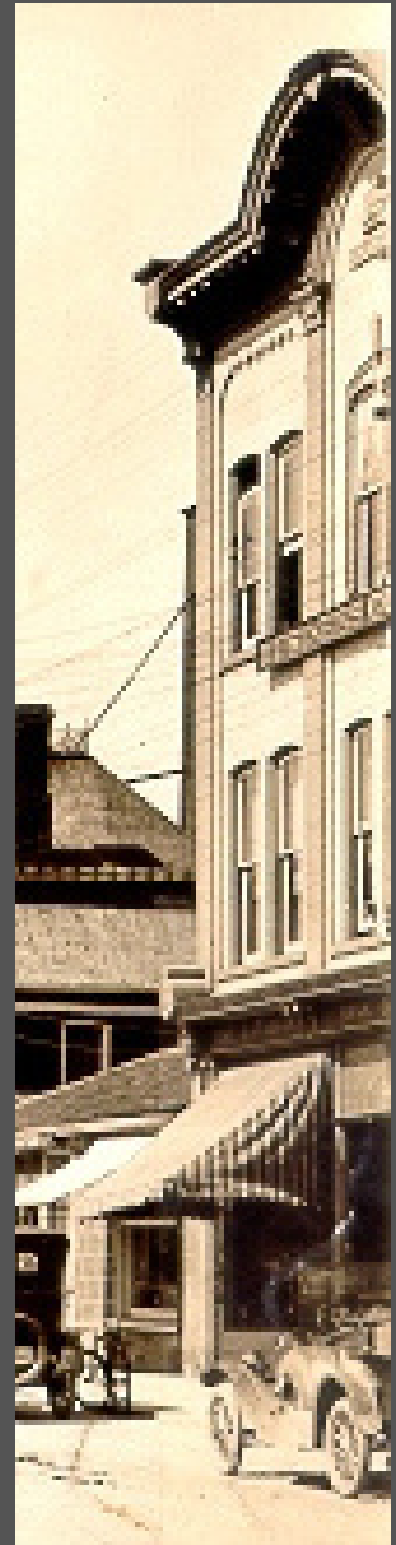
Two of his sons were killed during the Great War. Major Edward C. Norsworthy of the 13th Canadian Infantry Battalion and Lieut Alfred Norsworthy of the 73rd Canadian Infantry Battalion.

Survivors are his widow, formerly Jane Elizabeth Taylor of Watford, Ont., his two sons in Montreal, his daughter Miss Helen Norsworthy, Ingersoll; and several grand-children.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday at 2 o'clock from St. James Anglican Church, Ingersoll, and interment will be in the Ingersoll Cemetery.

The Norsworthy Building, 17 King Street, just west of Thames, sits a handsome structure known as the Norsworthy Building. Mr. J. C. Norsworthy was a general banker and broker who was also in the insurance business and who was an agent for various steamship lines. A branch of the London Bank was located in this building for a few years. In 1887, the Traders Bank took over the business of the London Bank and began operating in this building. The business prospered so that it was necessary to secure larger quarters and a new building was erected on the northwest corner of Thames and King Streets, the present location of the Royal Bank.

The Royal Bank merged with the Traders Bank to form the present Royal Bank of Canada. The Norsworthy Building is an example of Italianate design. The building has strong Classical features as noted in the pilasters on the corners. The arches in the brickwork just under the cornice are also indicative of Classical design. The windows, wide cornice and brackets are Italianate.



THE PORCHES OF INGERSOLL

BY SUSAN MASTERS

One of the most eye-catching and interesting features of our domestic architecture is the porch. Early architectural styles in Canada closely reflected European models, which were minus the sheltered areas which we have come to refer to as porches or verandahs. Not until the mid 19th century did the porch come into common use. Following the War of 1812, when much rebuilding was being done, the attitude toward architectural design became more mature. Gone were the days of primitive log cabins and basic Georgian design, as individuals started to seek aesthetic details to embellish their homes.

What better way to demonstrate a conquering of the wilderness than in the construction of civilized homes and gardens? The detailed architectural features that appointed the interiors of homes naturally extended to the exteriors and can be seen most clearly in the porches that were incorporated into the various styles of home construction. As the Neoclassical, Italianate and Victorian periods progressed, the porch developed in the same fashion, becoming more and more elaborate until the turn of the century when, in the Edwardian era, the detail of design retreated somewhat, becoming more subdued in the Arts and Crafts period.

Upon touring Ingersoll, it is easy to spot fine examples of the various porch styles. What began as a simple project, rooted in nostalgia, soon became a rather extensive exploration of domestic architectural styles. The first thing that becomes evident when studying porches is that they cannot be viewed in isolation from the architectural style of which they are a part. However, with this in mind, it is also important to note that porches can be deceiving. Not only can porches represent an alternative architectural style to the main structure, but they have typically been altered and adapted over the years. Thus, one cannot reliably date a house based solely upon the porch. With the climate we live in and the resultant rapid deterioration of wooden structures, as well as the tendency to embellish an earlier basic design with a more elaborate design of a later era, as was common during the Victorian era, it sometimes takes a little detective work to sort out origins. In addition, the porch is a structure that readily lends itself to the imaginative whims of the homeowner. "Anything goes" has often been the guiding principle in the construction of porches. Consequently, one can readily spot interpretations of various styles, from various periods, combined together in a folksy manner.

It was difficult to choose from the multitude of porches in Ingersoll for this article. An attempt has been made to use the limited space available to represent an overview of both pure examples of a particular style, as well as examples combining various influences in the porch structure.

All in all, the porch is much more than just a spot to sweep the snow off your boots in the winter, or a refuge from rain in the summer. The next time that you decorate your porch for the Christmas season, or relax on a hot summer's night with a cool lemonade, perhaps you will give some thought to the origins of your porch.

CLASSICAL REVIVAL - Albert St.

This beautiful example of Classical architectural influences boasts a porch with Ionic columns supporting a Greek style temple front. Square brackets are a forerunner of the more shapely Italianate type typical of a later era. Square posts and spindles on the second level suggest an Italianate influence.



NORSWORTHY HOUSE - King St. E.

An example of the High Victorian era, the Norsworthy house features embellishments of various styles. A Georgian Revival house, Greek Revival features may be noted in the full height entry porch. Tuscan columns and a wide cornice trimmed with dentils and Italianate brackets are features of this style. Also incorporated on the west end is a band-shell porch, more typical of the Queen Anne and Edwardian periods.

The haunted Norsworthy home

BY HELEN W. FOSTER

Behind an impressive screen of shade trees, the Norsworthy home broods over Ingersoll.

James Counter Norsworthy came with his parents to Canada from Devonshire, England in 1852 and eventually established himself as "Banker and Broker, Insurance and Loan Agent" on King Street.

Originally Crown Land, the 200 acres was granted in 1806 to Ebenezer Whiting, one of Ingersoll's early settlers. The present owner of the home, Jessie Robins, believes that the house was built in the 1850's and it came with the dowry of Norsworthy's first wife, Mary Jane.

The marriage was announced in the Ingersoll Chronicle, May 2, 1978, "Thursday evening last, our townsman J.C. Norsworthy was united in marriage with Miss May, eldest daughter of Mrs. Cuthbert of West Oxford in the presence of a number of invited guests. Mr. and Mrs. Norsworthy left on the midnight train for New York. We wish them every happiness."

The following week there appeared a letter with the bold headline - Advice to the Newly Married Man from an Experienced Benedict -. The long column of free advice contained, among other things. "Don't scold your wife and don't beat your children, if you have any. ..Bathe often, look after your health....and never go home drunk....Keep clear of your wife's relations....Yours, John" Just who "John" was and why he felt empowered to give such advice is lost in the pages of time.

Norsworthy elaborated upon the plain red brick Ontario farmhouse until he had a structure worthy of the dignity of the position that he held in town. The result is a melange of styles that nonetheless presents a picaresque view to the observer.

A veranda, usually thought to give a house a fashionable urban air, is graced with solid Doric columns. The left side is enclosed with stone and has beautiful stained glass windows. There are sumptuous glass windows throughout the home both exterior and interior. The right veranda sports a bandshell design, topped with a very Victorian pinacle.

Above the pillared portico is a stately circular balcony which in turn is topped by a curiously curved gable. Although the pointed arches suggest Gothic, the window is curved Romanesque. The rounded design is echoed in the carved wooden fans of the flanking gables and in the tri-windows on either side of the house. An Italianate tower is not only a decorative addition but practical as well. It housed a water tower and the giant steel tanks are still in place.

The main door has a transom extending over the sidelights. It is less sound structurally than a shortened transom, but a pleasing arrangement and a typical pattern in Ontario.

The interior of the home is magnificently finished in wood and it is said that Norsworthy had a carpenter in residence for over a year to complete the work. Frank Leake, a noted local woodcarver, did the elaborate mantelpieces.

Interior doors are all equipped with locks and each one has a keyhole cover, a delightful eccentricity of a moneylender who held mortgages on hundreds of properties in town.

The ghost of Norsworthy's first wife, Mary Jane, is said to have haunted the house. Owner Jessie Robins attests to hearing and being aware of a "presence" in the home for many years. She believes that Mary Jane, who died of diphtheria in 1891 while nursing her sick children, was looking for her daughter. The myterious Lady in Grey has not been seen on the balcony since the daughter Nellie died a few years ago.

The house shelters many secrets, chief among them an inexplicable natural flow of air that cools the house in summer. There is also a mysterious room under the basement that has never been explored.

It is rumoured that following his death in 1936, Norsworthy's strongbox was not found. Mrs. Robins says that guests amuse themselves probing the rich wood carvings, hoping to find the hidden spring that will disclose the molding secrets.

The bronze bust of his son Edward, who died in action in 1915, is now atop the family monument in the Rural Cemetery. Oddly enough it does not face the front of the stone but is positioned so that he can keep an eye on his father's strongbox across the river. This is the last article in the series "Echoes of the Past"

Beautiful old Ingersoll home was part of bride's dowry

By MARILYN SMULDERS
of The Sentinel-Review

One of a series

INGERSOLL — Nine years ago when the Maat family went searching for a big house, they really meant BIG.

Annita and Derek Maat settled on the Norsworthy House, one of Ingersoll's most beautiful of homes. The century old structure is divided for the use of two families, the Maats and the Sjaarda family. Although each family has their privacy, central rooms are shared.

"As Christians, we needed a large house in order to live our lives in a deeper way. We need to support each other," said Annita Maat.

Family members were able to adapt the red brick home to their lifestyles. There's also an upper apartment that is rented out to people in need.

But in purchasing the home, they became aware of its rich history.

The house is named for the Norsworthy family. James Counter Norsworthy came to Canada with his parents from Devonshire, England.

Built in the mid-1850s, the house actually came with the dowry of Norsworthy's first wife, Mary Jane Cuthbert. It features some of his work as a stonemason but also that of other skilled tradesmen.

Leslie Daniel, a craftsman, was commissioned to paint elaborate ceiling frescoes. A woodworker, Frank Leake, carved four different fire place fronts. Some of these are decorated with the depictions of

Ingersoll's limits. From the hill at Ingersoll Rural Cemetery across town, its gables can be seen above other buildings. And at the cemetery, a bust of Major Edward Cuthbert Norsworthy sits atop a family monument, supposedly keeping watch on his birthplace.

historic homes

Norsemen in honor of the Norsworthy name. The 21-room house is also filled with dozens of pieces of stained glass and leaded windows.

A number of styles were borrowed for the exterior. The verendah is graced with the doric columns of a Greek temple. It hugs the house, cornered with a bandshell in Victorian fashion. A tower, to the rear of the house, was constructed in an Italianate style. At one time the tower had a practical use as well being aesthetically pleasing; it stored water.

The Norseworthy home is an imposing structure on King Street, near



MAJOR Edward Cuthbert Norsworthy keeps guard on his home from a hill at Ingersoll Rural Cemetery. A soldier in World War I, Norsworthy was killed in action at Langemarck.

SENTINEL REVIEW

July 9, 1988

Old home cleaned out first time

By ARMITA JANES

Sentinel-Review staff writer
INGERSOLL — One of the town's finest manor homes will be emptied for the first time in more than 100 years following an auction Saturday at the home of Jim and Jessie Robins.

The auction follows sale by the Robins of the Norsworthy home, as it is known, on its four-acre site for the highest price ever paid for a residential property in Ingersoll.

The nearest contender, according to Ms. Robins, was sale of a Thames Street South home for \$115,000, that does not even come close.

It was in 1878 James Norsworthy brought his bride Mary Jane Cuthbert to Norleigh, the centre of a prosperous 160-acre farm on the outskirts of Ingersoll.

Margaret Nash, a resident of the senior citizen complex on Carroll Street recalls as a child watching grand scale entertaining and large outdoor meetings held on the grounds of the Norsworthy home.

Her father bought the farm where the hired help lived on the Norsworthy property.

The second Mrs. Norsworthy, the former Elizabeth Taylor, entertained many church groups, she said, and it is for her the Norsworthy Chapter of the IODE is named.

Coun. Jim Robins and his wife bought their home at 250 King St. E. 20 years ago furnished from Donald Quinn, manager of Roper Moto Mower. He lived only a year in the 21-room house he had bought furnished from relatives of the Norsworthy family, Dr. Gilbert Field and his wife Irma of Grosse Pointe, Mich.

Jessie Robins said Tuesday not all of the Norsworthy furnishings, nor the Robins' possessions, will be sold at auction Saturday.

She and her husband, who

retires in July, will keep enough things to furnish the 10-room house they have bought that was the former home of the Ingersoll Creative Arts Centre on King Street East.

And now the home of the local insurance man who in 1890 sold his insurance business above Layton's Meat Market in the Norsworthy Building to become inspector of the North British and Mercantile Insurance Co. of Montreal has been sold to two London couples—Mr. and Mrs. Derk Maat and Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Sjaarda who will turn it into a two-family dwelling.

SENTINEL REVIEW

June 20, 1979

Local family plans to restore historic home

BY LIZ DADSON

Ken Hickey has always been interested in older homes.

Now he and his family are living in a piece of Ingersoll's history and plan to restore it.

The Hickeys have lived in Ingersoll for 11 years but just moved into the century-old, former-Norsworthy residence at 250 King St. E. on Sept. 1.

"We owned a lot in Woodstock and planned to build a new home with a Victorian influence," Hickey said. "But when we saw this place for sale, it was game over. We've admired this place for years."

The financial supervisor for General Motors in Woodstock said he would like to restore the home right back to its original state. It was built in the 1850s by Nathaniel Whiting, one of the early founders of Ingersoll, for whom Whiting Street was named.

The house passed into the hands of another esteemed early pioneer, Alex Cuthbert, and the property came into the Norsworthy name as it was part of the dowry of Mary Jane Cuthbert when she married James Cuthbert Norsworthy.

"We're really interested in researching the history of the house and the people who lived in it," Hickey said. "It's not just a place to live, it becomes a whole lot of other things."

Hickey has asked Ingersoll Council to consider granting a heritage designation to the property. Council has deferred the issue to the public works and planning committee which meets early next month.

With the designation, Hickey said he could receive funding for some things, such as restoring the exterior. The funding could equal half of the cost, up to a maximum figure set by the heritage branch of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications.

He noted there are also information resources he can turn to, such as literature from the Heritage Foundation and the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC).

Hickey expects the restoration to be a lifelong project, with the 21-room, 6,800-square-foot structure requiring a lot of work to return it to its original state.

"We'll do what we have to do and what we can afford to do," he said. "We're not attempting to put a dollar value on anything."

Just before the Hickeys moved in, the house was being used as a multi-family dwelling. The new owners plan to revert it back by removing the kitchen from the front livingroom and remove that wall, creating a front and back livingroom joined by an archway.

The house is a unique piece of history, Hickey said, noting it incorporates the Beaux Arts style Classics, a form of Arts Deco architecture. He knows of only three other structures in this style, the Norsworthy building in Ingersoll, and two homes, one in London and the other in Kitchener.

At the time of his ownership, James Norsworthy commissioned dozens of stained and leaded windows made for the house, as well as hardwood floors laid with intricate parquet in a variety of woods. He also had elaborate ceiling frescoes and covings done.

The very finest materials were put into Norsworthy's refurbished house. He also had built the wraparound front porch and the study front in cut fieldstone.

The third floor is large enough to provide the Hickeys with a guest apartment.

Hickey pointed out that the huge house is heated by a combination of hot water and oil heat. He plans to compliment it with two wood stoves and some electrical heat.

The heat to provide hot water for daily use is supplemented with solar panels.

Hickey said he is fascinated by the gorgeous stained glass in the front entranceway. The windows appear different every day as the variant lighting causes different colors to shine. He said the historical house is very beautiful and he will enjoy fixing it up. "I've found my home here."

INGERSOLL
TIMES

September 20,
1989

Family to restore historical Norsworthy home

By MARY ANNE STEPHENSON

Ken and Shirley Hickey have plans that will keep them knee-deep in history for quite awhile.

The couple and their family moved into the old Norsworthy home at 250 King St. E. last September and now that Ingersoll Council has designated it an historical home, they hope to restore it to its original grandeur.

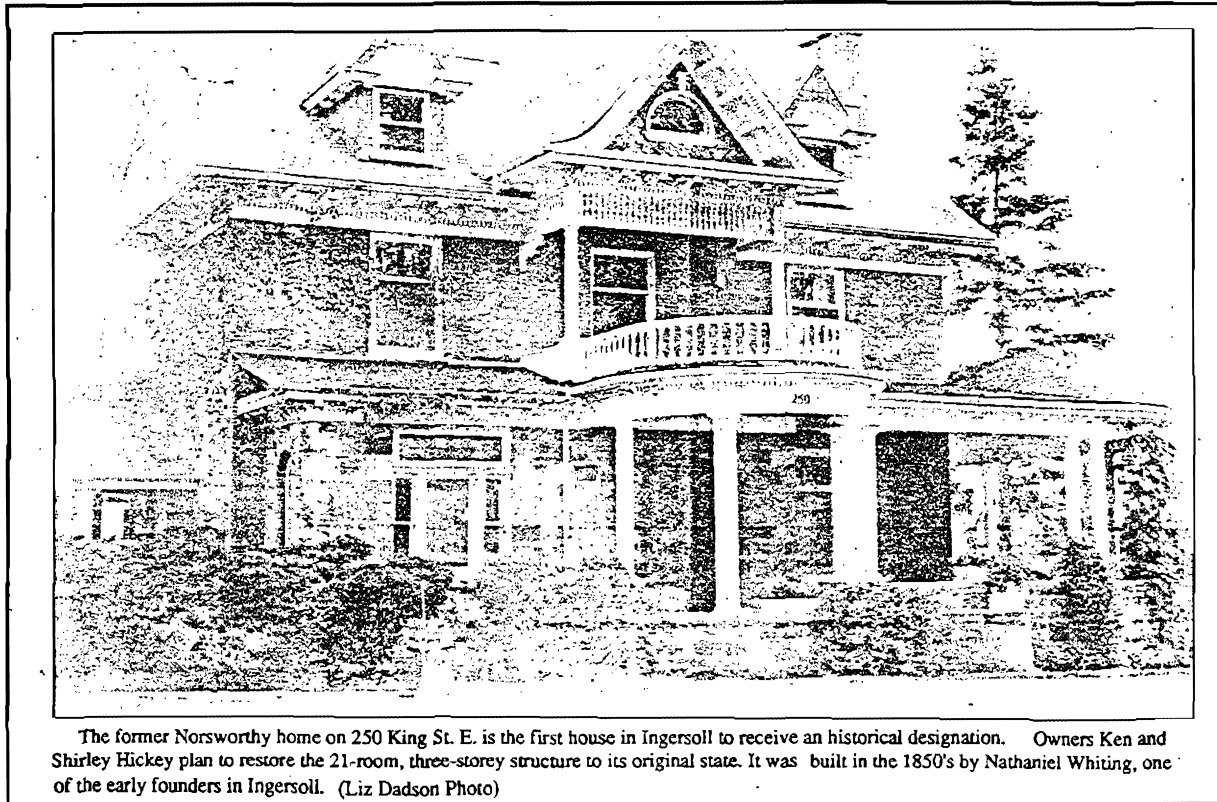
After moving in, Hickey said they first wanted to build a new home with a Victorian influence. "But when we saw this place for sale, it was game over. We've admired this place for years."

The financial supervisor for General Motors in Woodstock said he would like to restore the home right back to its original state. It was built in the 1850s by Nathaniel Whiting, one of the early founders of Ingersoll, for whom Whiting Street was named.

The house passed into the hands of another esteemed early pioneer, Alex Cuthbert, and the property came into the Norsworthy name as it was part of the dowry of Mary Jane Cuthbert when she married James Cuthbert Norsworthy.

"We're really interested in researching the history of the house and the people who lived in it," Hickey said. "It's not just a place to live, it becomes a whole lot of other things."

He had asked town council to consider granting a heritage designation to the property last fall. Now that the 21-room, three-storey home has been deemed an historical and



The former Norsworthy home on 250 King St. E. is the first house in Ingersoll to receive an historical designation. Owners Ken and Shirley Hickey plan to restore the 21-room, three-storey structure to its original state. It was built in the 1850's by Nathaniel Whiting, one of the early founders in Ingersoll. (Liz Dadson Photo)

architectural landmark, he can receive funding for such things as restoring the exterior.

The funding could equal half the cost, up to a maximum figure set by the heritage branch of the Ontario

Ministry of Culture and Communications.

The couple's first priority is to prevent any deterioration to the home, Hickey said. He plans to replace some of the metal on the roof and

said some of the cement work needs rejoining.

A fresh coat of paint on the house's exterior is also in the works.

"The house had been divided into a double-family dwelling (before the

Hickeys bought it) so we want to restore the original living room," Hickey said.

A wall had been put up, dividing the living room to accommodate a front kitchen. The Hickeys plan to

remove the wall and put the kitchen back into the front part of the living room. This requires removal of the tile corked floor to reveal the original wood floor.

In addition, the dry wall will be taken down to reveal the wood work beneath.

"It's fortunate none of the original wood work was demolished," Shirley Hickey said.

Fascinating stained glass

Ken wants to remove the 22 windows in the house because some are painted shut. The stained glass windows, which fascinate him, will also be restored.

There are four fireplaces in the house, some requiring new liners and chimney work. The wood work around them also needs repair.

The bright-windowed solarium is another focus for the Hickeys' attention. They want to put in a stone floor to add to its Victorian atmosphere. "We plan to add some wicker furniture," Hickey said. "We got a lot of ideas from magazines."

To make the dining room more convenient to the kitchen, they plan to move the family room from the west side to the east side. Shirley said the family room will be the only modern part of the home with the rest maintained in the Victorian setting.

They will add a laundry room and a washroom to the first floor of the house. It boasts four washrooms but none on the first floor.

The landscaping around the home will also reflect its Victorian grace.

"We don't want to put in a lot of

(continued on page 2)

INGERSOLL TIMES MARCH 28, 1990

Home becomes historical

The old Norsworthy home at 250 King St. E. has been designated as having historical and architectural importance by the town.

Council passed a bylaw making the designation last week. It is the first time council has taken such action.

The home, now owned by Ken and Shirley Hickey, was built in the early 1850's by Nathaniel Whiting, an early founder of Ingersoll.

Later, it passed into the hands of James Norsworthy, who undertook major renovations in the 1880's.

It is a 21-room, three-storey home which includes such features as turrets, bays, multicolored brick work, stain glass windows and slate roofs.

The house also includes wood carvings and elaborate ceiling frescoes.

Ingersoll Times
March 21 1990