

### *15 – 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, KECL 1063 (formerly 29-31 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street)*

This property was an especially intact and interesting example of combined commercial and domestic spaces, so it was decided to document it pretty thoroughly, including a floor plan of the ground floor. At the latest stages of its existence, 15 – 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street was a large brick duplex with a projecting storefront at # 17 (Figure 1). The basic outline of the building's evolution became clear on inspection: it began as a single townhouse dwelling at # 17, on the left hand side of the building: by 1877 when it appears in the Hopkins *City Atlas* (Figure 3), the building had doubled in size: it became a duplex with the addition of a two bay wide dwelling on the west side at #15. That # 17 came first was clear by the way that # 15 adjoined the party wall and blocked a window opening next to the hearth at # 17 (see floor plan, Figure 2). The sheds at the back and the storefront were clearly additions, but what about the front stair hall and side porch on # 17? Those appeared to be original to # 17 on inspection, but the depiction of the property in the 1877 Hopkins *Atlas* as it compares with the rendering in the 1884 Sanborn map (Figure 4) strongly suggests that the side passage stair and the open side porch was constructed in the interim, and thus well after the enlargement of the house into a duplex. The brick front of the building was heavily coated with paint and difficult to read, but a seam for the stair hall addition was not readily visible. It is possible that when the stair hall was added, the whole front of the building was reworked, adding the handsome parapet wall and Italianate cornice (Figure 6).

The original structure was likely constructed in the 1850s – 1860s, and had modest Greek Revival trim. The original house was two bays wide and three rooms deep, a typical Northern Kentucky Townhouse type: each main floor had two rooms at the front divided by a lateral stair hall from a single room at the back (see floor plan in Figure 2). Each room had its own fireplace. The second floor plan mirrored the first: on both floors, the two rooms in front of the back stair had a higher level of architectural finish than the single room behind the back stair (see Figure 17, Figure 18, Figure 20, Figure 22, Figure 23, and Figure 24). The two front rooms on each floor were also *en suite*, with a wide opening between them. The rooms behind the back stair on both floors were heated, but comparatively plainer. The structure had a cellar underneath, accessed by a bulkhead entry to the left of the side entry.

By 1877, the dwelling at # 15 had been added to the west side of # 17, and shed additions appear to be present at the back of the structure (Figure 3). The dwelling at # 15 had a similar layout to # 17, but the circulation patterns were not entirely clear at the time of documentation. Later alterations to this side

divided the space into at least three apartments. As the building stood in its final days, there was no interior access to the stair hall or the back rooms from the front two rooms. Many original architectural details in these spaces were absent, although the front room still retained an attractive late 19<sup>th</sup> century mantle (Figure 25 and Figure 26).

As mentioned, sometime between 1877 and 1884, the addition of the front stair hall and side porch to the east side of the building changed #17 into a modified side passage plan. Behind the front stair hall, running alongside the back two rooms was a two story open porch. This renovation may reflect the adaptation of # 17 for some commercial uses on the ground floor or the separation of some of the upstairs space into an apartment. Later alterations for the 20<sup>th</sup> century storefront obscured some of the details of this addition. It wasn't clear if there was access from the street to both the front stair hall and the front room, or just to the stair hall. As it last stood, the only access to the front stair was the doorway at the side of the building near the front (the door with the awning, Figure 1). The stair itself was walled off from the rest of the hallway, as seen in the plan. Most likely, the original access to the stair was through a front door, the side door was cut through later, and the stair was walled off to divide the second floor from the downstairs commercial space.

Sometime in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, a concrete block store front was added to the front of # 17 (Figure 7). Its rounded corners hint at a moderne style. Inside was a small show room with glass counters and shelves (Figure 16). The two ground floor rooms behind this space were also given over to the commercial interest, a furniture and odds and ends store as indicated by its mid-century box signage (Figure 1, Figure 8, and Figure 9). The rather large light fixture found in the second room of # 17 may also relate to this commercial renovation (Figure 19).

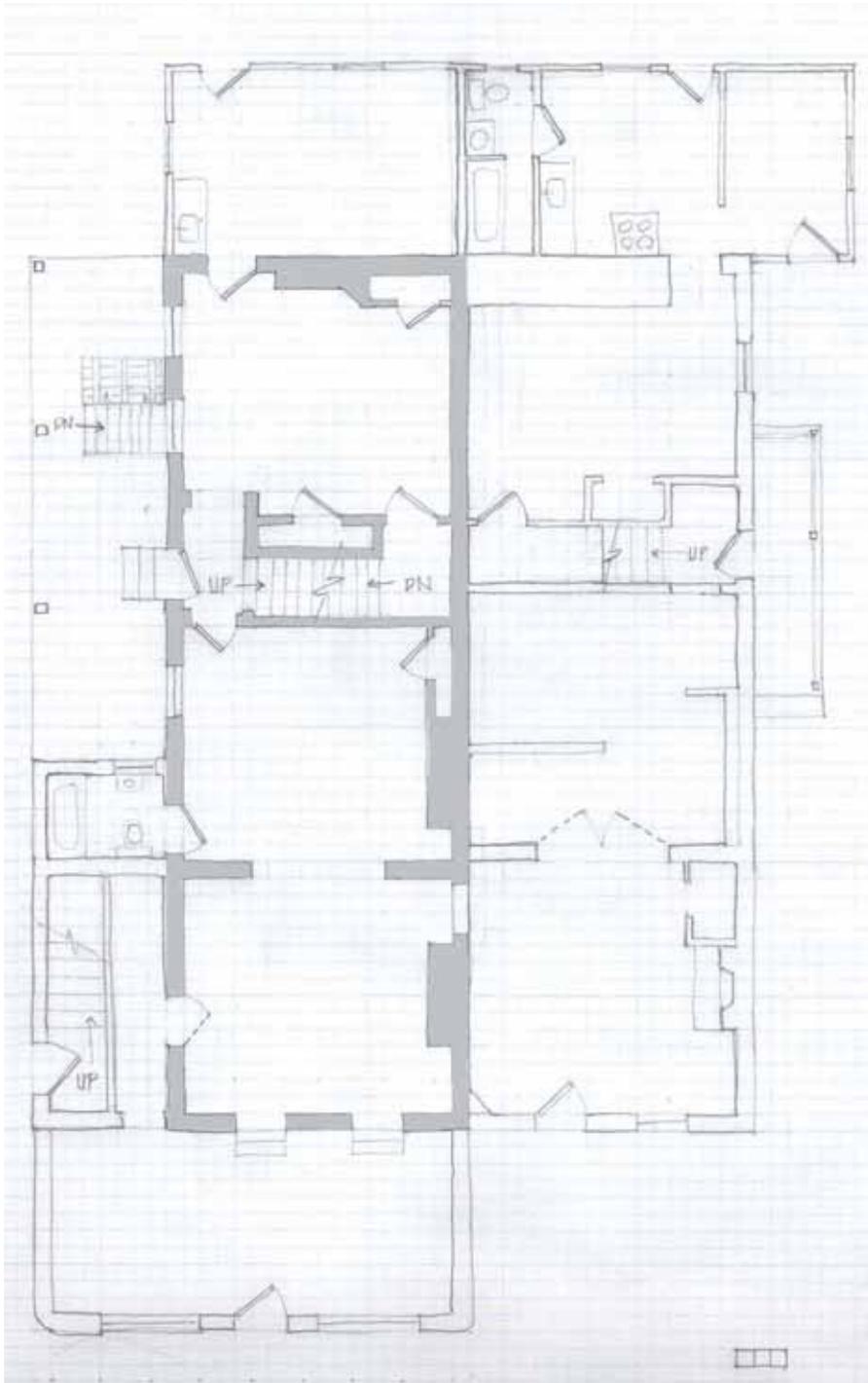
Other notable features documented at 15-17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street include the wrought iron fence surrounding the yard at # 15 (Figure 11 and Figure 12), and the Art Deco "Magic Queen" kitchen faucet in the back shed kitchen of # 17 (Figure 21). Both dwellings had unheated attic spaces that served most recently as bedrooms, but may have had other purposes such as storage in the past (Figure 28).

One snapshot of this building in the past is provided by the the census of 1880. At that time, the residents of # 15 (#29 in 1880), were the Hartwig family, including Anna Hartwig, a 54 year old widow keeping house; her children, including a 28 year old daughter Elisabeth Sheppard, a clerk in the post office; a 25

year old daughter Julia Hartwig “at home”; a 19 year old son Spencer Hartwig, also a clerk in the post office; 16 year old Henry Hartwig, another clerk in the Post office; Elisabeth’s six year old daughter Effie; and an 18 year old servant named Lizzie Wiehmann. The late Mr. Hartwig was from Denmark, his wife Anna’s father was from Ireland, her mother from Virginia. At # 17 (then # 31) was the Copeland family, including 38 year old Henry Copeland, a clerk in a hardware store; his 31 year old wife Martha, housekeeper; their nine year old daughter Florence, at school; and their five year old daughter Mattie. The couple had formerly lived in Indiana. What seems surprising here is that the smaller of the two dwellings housed seven people while the larger dwelling housed just four, even though the larger Hartwig family apparently owned the whole structure in 1877 when H. Hartwig is listed as the owner in the 1877 Atlas (Figure 3). However, it is certainly possible that a business occupied part of the house at # 17.



**Figure 1:** 15-17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, from northeast.



**Figure 2:** Plan of 15-17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street. The original house is shaded.

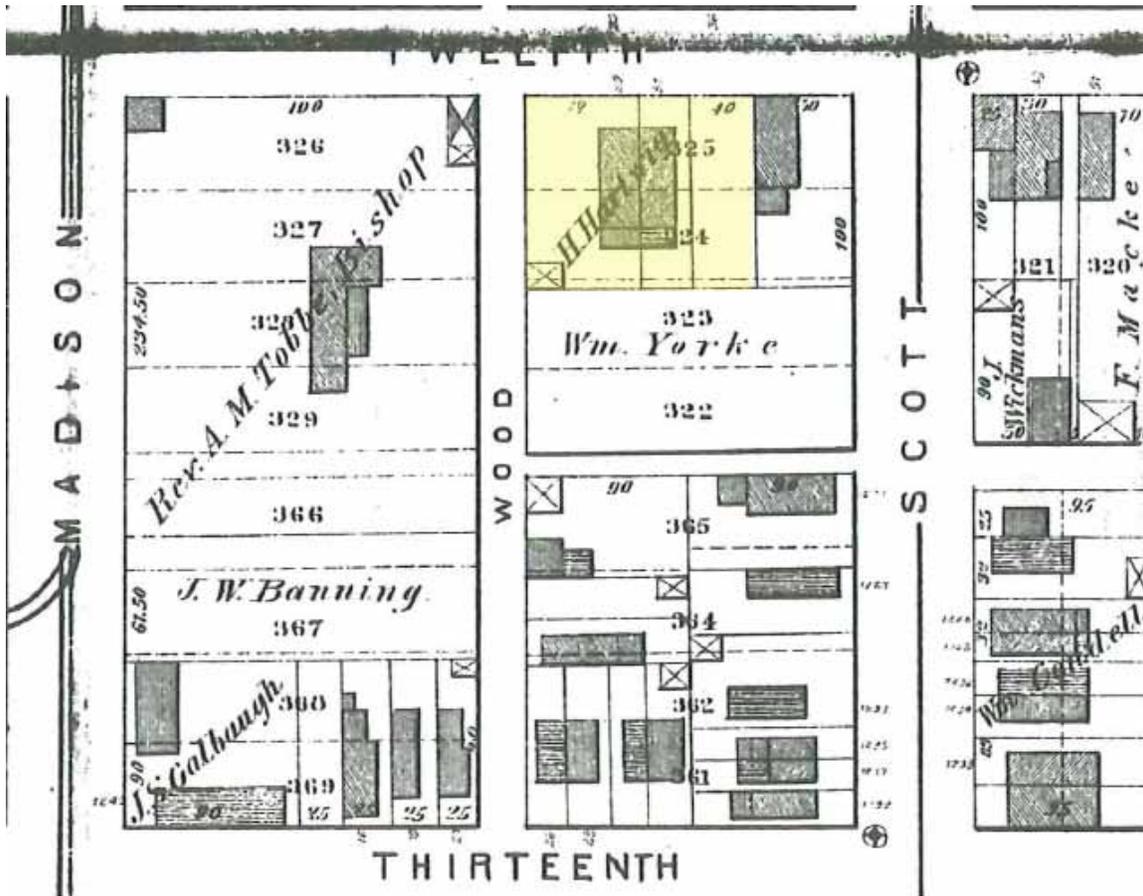


Figure 3: Detail of 1877 C. M. Hopkins City Atlas of Covington, with the 15-17 East 12<sup>th</sup> street property highlighted.

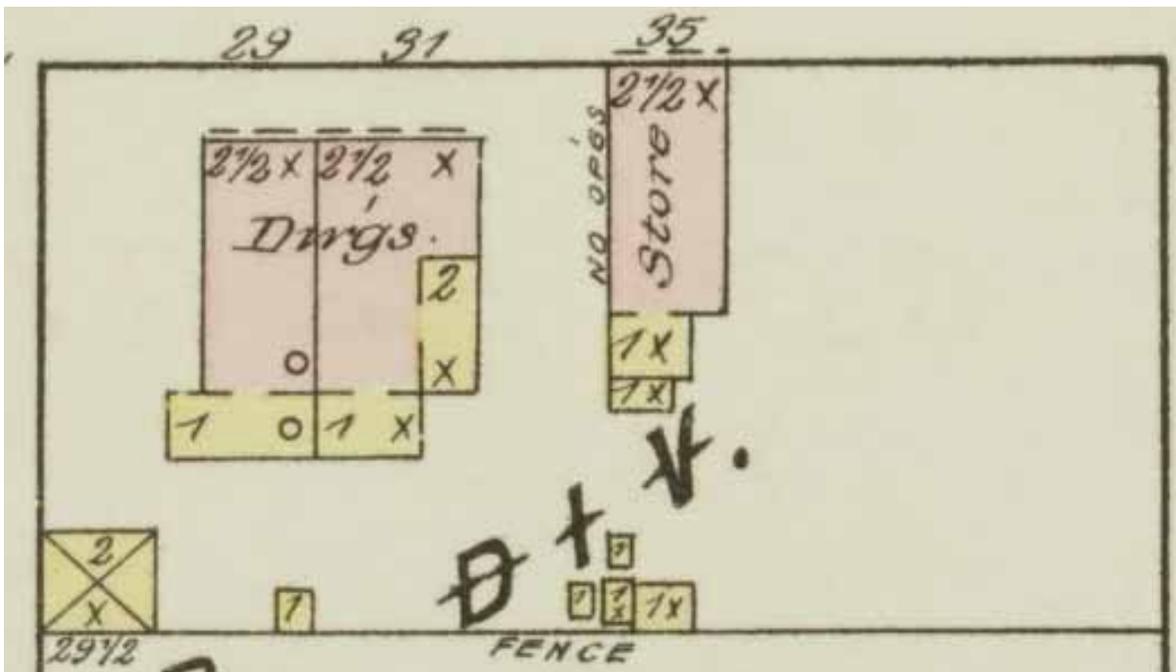


Figure 4: Detail of the 1884 Sanborn Insurance map showing 15-17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street on the left.



**Figure 5:** 15 – 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, from West.



**Figure 6:** 15-17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, detail of cornice.



**Figure 7:** Store front at 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.



**Figure 8:** Exterior of 15-17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, from west.



**Figure 9:** Detail of signage at 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.



**Figure 10:** Details of 15 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Left: Side entry porch. Right: detail of back corner of the building, note the cornice on the shed addition.



**Figure 11:** *Iron fence at 15 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.*



**Figure 12:** *Detail of Iron Fence at 15 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.*



**Figure 13:** *Side Entry Porch to 15 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.*



**Figure 14:** *Exterior, 15-17 East 12<sup>th</sup> from Southwest, back of building.*



**Figure 15:** Exterior, 15-17 East 12<sup>th</sup> from Southeast, back of building.



**Figure 16:** Interior of the concrete block storefront at 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.



**Figure 17:** Interior front room at 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.



**Figure 18:** Interior of 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, ground floor, looking from front room into second room.



**Figure 19:** *Detail of light fixture in second ground floor room of 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> St.*



**Figure 20:** *Interior of the third room back on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of 17 East 12<sup>nd</sup> street, looking toward back stair hall.*



**Figure 21:** *Faucet in the kitchen addition of 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.*



**Figure 22:** *Interior of 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, second floor front room.*



**Figure 23:** Interior of 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, second floor, center room, looking toward back stair hall.



**Figure 24:** Interior of 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, second floor, center room, hearth wall.



**Figure 25:** Mantle in front room of 15 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.



**Figure 26:** Left: detail of mantle in front room of 15 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street. Middle: open porch, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, East side of building. Right: back of the open porch and the shed addition to 17 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street.



**Figure 27:** Interior of 15 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, front room, hearth wall.



**Figure 28:** Interior of 15 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, third floor attic loft.