

## **The Imperial Hotel in New Hamburg**

John and Fanny Jackson built The Imperial Hotel in 1872. It was a two-storey-yellow brick structure with an attached livery.



In the early 1890s, the building was painted red. In 1902, its sixth owner, John Buckel Jr., added a third floor to the hotel using a different shade of yellow brick. From this point on, the hotel was painted white, cream or yellow until 2014. In 1907, Buckel added a first-floor addition to the rear of the building and redecorated the entire hotel.

### **The Imperial in 1908**

The hotel was used primarily for lodging of commercial travelers. New Hamburg had become a growing village with many industries locating there. Men came to New Hamburg for jobs in the factories and stayed in the hotel until they found a house they could rent for their family.

The Industrial Boom deflated before WWI and continued throughout the war: thus, The Imperial Hotel's business began to decline. The need for ammunition and wheat diminished after the war. Prohibition in 1919 was the final blow to the hotel industry. The third floor was closed off: a few lights on cords hung from ceilings and a rusty wood stove sat at the end of a hallway. There was never indoor plumbing or central heating on this floor.

The second floor of the hotel was used less often in the ensuing years. More electric lights were evident and quasi-central heating was added. The owners of the hotel lived on the second floor until the late 1980s. Since 1990, no tenants have lived in the hotel. Only the tavern on the first floor was in operation. The name of the hotel was changed to Eddly's Tavern in 1982.

In May 2014, Marie Voisin became the seventeenth owner and changed the name back to The Imperial. Marie removed all the debris, ceilings, walls and floors from the building and discovered that the quality of workmanship was disturbingly poor. The first order of business was to reinforce the existing structure through the addition of a new steel structure. The new structure of 13 columns was threaded through the building from the roof to the basement. 125 steel beams were welded to the columns throughout each floor. The former livery and an old kitchen were removed for an addition. All windows were replaced with high quality, aluminum-clad windows. Several layers of paint were chemically removed from the bricks; over 10,000 bricks were replaced; all the bricks were repointed; original rotted wood sills were replaced with limestone sills.

The Imperial has been transformed into apartments for active seniors who wanted to live downtown, closer to amenities – Sobeys, churches, restaurants, banks, library, hair stylists, bakery, brew pub and pharmacies. They sold their large homes and moved into the centre of New Hamburg so they could walk to their favourite places.

Gone are the tiny hotel rooms on the second and third floors – they have been transformed into 12 luxury one-bedroom apartments with wood floors, high ceilings, crystal chandeliers, large windows and original trim. Each apartment is self-contained with a full kitchen, furnace, A/C, water heater and washer & dryer. They range in size from 730 – 1029 square feet. An all-season sunroom on the second floor and an outdoor terrace with raised garden beds on the third floor has been added for the residents.



**The Imperial in 2016**

The main floor of the hotel with the Mill Street addition was refurbished to accommodate a restaurant/bar [the Imperial Market & Eatery, a German micro-brewery, Bitte Schon, a bakery, Sweets and a travel agency, Imagine Travel.

The Imperial is once again offering accommodation in the downtown core to its citizens – ironically to the seniors who are the descendants of New Hamburg's early residents.

