MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 175 Dorset Street West

Known as: David Smart House (The Hillcrest)

Architectural Style: Beaux Artes

Date Built: Circa 1874

Date Designated: September 19, 1983 to By-Law No. 51/83, SCHEDULE B-5

Lot Description: SEC 9 CON 1



Architectural Description

This house is the only example of "Beaux Arts" architecture in Port Hope. The style, founded in Paris, is rare in this area. An addition to the house was made around 1900. This consists of the large Jeffersonian portico on the north. This massive two and a half-storey structure is held by fluted columns with large Corinthian capitals, the main original portion of the house is hipped roof section with two polygonal wings at each end. This section sports beautiful Palladian dormers, bracketed eaves and a grand verandah. A balcony caps the large verandah. Grecian urn-like decorations, and moulded posts trim the balustrade.

Historical Abstract

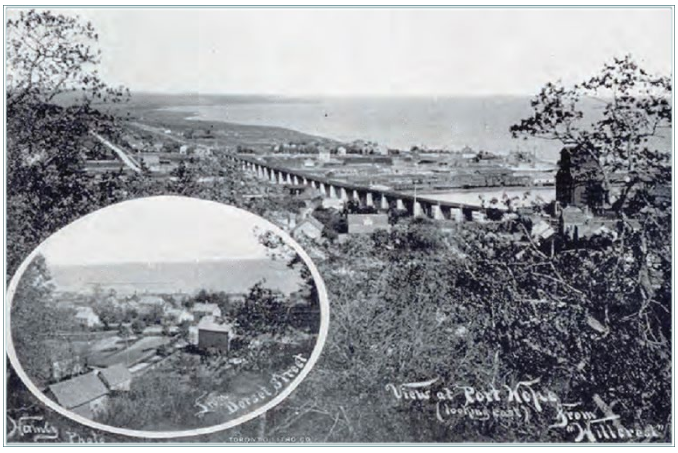
Although once believed to have been built about 1871, this house is definitely absent on the Bird's Eye View of Port Hope of 1874, suggesting a construction date of 1874. It is possible it had been started in 1871 and not completed until after the publication of the 1874 map. The house was built for David Smart, a barrister who married Emily A. Worts of Gooderham and Worts Distilleries of Toronto. Smart became a director of that distillery.

David Smart (1840-1893) was a barrister and notary public by 1865. In a business directory of 1871, he lists his areas of expertise as "barrister, insolvency, conveyancer, and solicitor for the Ontario Bank, commercial collection, land and investment agency". He married Emily A. Worts in 1874, and purchased fifteen acres on the hilltop of Dorset Street for the location of his estate.

David Smart died in 1893 survived by his wife Emily. Emily died in Toronto in 1897. By 1895, shortly after the death of David Smart, Emily appears to have moved back to Toronto and the house was then rented. A book entitled "The Days of My Pilgrimage" by Fanny Willis makes mention of her life in Port Hope. In 1895, the Willis family rented "Hillcrest" for $20.00 a month, later moving because they found the house so large. Fanny Willis later became a Christian missionary in China. John L. Willis was the manager of the Traders Bank (now the Royal Bank) for many years.

By the late 1890's, the house had been purchased by John Schwartz (who later anglicized his name to Black), an American who became aware of Port Hope as a summer retreat. John Black enlarged the house for his bride around 1900 and added the library and large portico on the northern elevation. Another Schwartz, James, built the house across the street, Homewood, circa 1900. The Hillcrest remained in the Black family until 1973.

Archival Photo



The View from the Hillcrest circa 1901.



The main original portion of the house is the hipped roof section with two polygonal wings at each end. This section sports beautiful Palladian dormers, bracketed eaves and a grand verandah as viewed from the lake side in this archival photo.



The large Jeffersonian portico added to the north facade circa 1900.