MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

# HERITAGE DESIGNATION

## Address: 162 Dorset Street East

**Known as**: David Smith House (Fairmont)

**Architectural Style:** Gothic Revival

**Date Built:** Circa 1858

**Date Designated:** February 18, 1980 to By-Law No. 9/80, SCHEDULE B-3

**Lot Description:** CON 1 PT LOT 3



## Architectural Description

This house was built in 1858 and is a rare example of the poured "concrete" (beach gravel, pebbles, sand and lime) construction advocated by Orson Fowler in his 1848 book A Home for All: or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building. It is one of Port Hope's best examples of the "Cottage Gothic" style of architecture characterized by irregular roof lines with varied steep gable peaks. Decorative finials and elaborate bargeboard trim at the gables, the irregular plan, and the unusual construction techniques make this a very unique house.

## Historical Abstract

The crown deeds for Hope Township indicate that lot 3 of concession 1 was originally assigned to Myndert Harris, one of the original settlers of Port Hope. In 1819, Harris sold the property to John David Smith, son of Elias Smith, and builder of the Bluestone (21 Dorset Street E.) This house was built for David Smith (1809-1877), son of John David Smith, and his wife Sarah Russell Smith (1821-1871) on land David inherited from his father. David Smith was a lumberman managing the Smith family's lumber interests. His brother Sidney Smith, who was Postmaster General of Canada from 1858-1862, later appointed him postmaster for Oshawa.

Built in 1858, the house is a rare example of the poured "concrete" (beach gravel, pebbles, sand and lime) construction advocated by Orson Fowler in his book published in 1848, A Home for All: or the Gravel Wall and Octagon Mode of Building New Cheap, Convenient, Superior and Adapted to Rich or Poor.

Fowler was a well-known American writer and lecturer on phrenology, a pseudo-science that placed great significance on the shape of a person's head in determining an individual's character and mental capacity. Fowler advocated the use of concrete as an affordable building material that was readily available and capable of maintaining even temperatures in winter or summer.

David and Sarah Smith sold Fairmount in 1870. The property was owned by several families until purchased by Dr. and Mrs. Ketchum in 1936 for Mrs. Ketchum's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ormsby, who came from Ireland to settle in Canada. Dr. Ketchum was headmaster at Trinity College School at the time. The family owned the house for many decades.



**Architectural Detail**

A rare example of the poured "concrete" (beach gravel, pebbles, sand and lime) construction advocated by Orson Fowler, a 19th century phrenologist.