MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 117 King Street

Known as: Elias Peter Smith House (The Little Bluestone)

Architectural Style: Neo-Classic

Date Built: Circa 1834 (RESTORED)

Date Designated: December 6, 1982 to By-Law No. 03/82-83, SCHEDULE B-4

Lot Description: PT 86 TO 88 E OF KING ST



Architectural Description

The little Bluestone is particularly worthy architecturally as a design of distinction for a small Upper Canadian house. This small building, little more than a cottage in the scale of its accommodation, is grandly treated on the principal front and is a noteworthy example of local design in the classical tradition.

Certain elements are related to the Bluestone, but here the local stone also stuccoed is supplemented by limestone of better quality for sills, lintels and string course instead of the red sandstone used in the larger house. The principal external feature which gives such distinction to the facade is the door case, but its dominance over the adjoining windows is relieved by the judiciously placed semi-circular attic light in the gable.

The house was also notable for its complement of elaborate interior trim including gesso pattern to corner blocks of architraves, symmetrical pilaster trim, panelled reveals, mantels, six panel doors, plaster cornices and a magnificent rosette to the principal room in the front upstairs.

Historical Abstract

In 1834, John David Smith married his second wife Augusta and built the Bluestone (21 Dorset Street East). In that same year, J.D. Smith's eldest son, Elias Peter Smith (1807-1860) married Sophia Soper (1803-1885) and the Little Bluestone was built on the same estate. This small cottage is as architecturally ambitious as its "parent" the Bluestone. It is constructed of limestone with stucco covering. Decorative details such as the elaborate main entranceway, interior mouldings and plasterwork are strikingly similar but on a more diminutive scale to the Bluestone.

Elias Peter Smith was named after his grandfather, Elias Smith, one of the founding fathers of Port Hope. He was the Manager of the local branch of the Bank of Upper Canada located in the 1840's on Walton Street (118-120 Walton Street). In 1857, the bank moved to a more commodious location on John Street (86 John Street). In addition to his banking career, he also was a crown land agent.

In 1844, E.P. Smith erected a commercial block on Walton Street (34-46 Walton Street). A disastrous fire in the spring of 1850 burnt this first structure and its neighbour to the ground. Not to be discouraged, Elias wasted no time in erecting a new, three-story commercial block in the current style with a simple and well-proportioned pilastered façade designed by Rochester architect, Merwin Austin. Austin also designed the Town Hall in 1851 (56 Queen Street), the Smith Block in 1850 (16-26 Walton Street) and St. Lawrence Hotel (87-97 Walton Street) in 1853.

By the late 1850's, Elias Peter and his wife moved to a house on Brown Street. By the next century, the Little Bluestone had been abandoned and vandalized. By the mid 1980's, the building had been painstakingly restored, reinstating its former period charm.

Archival Photo



The Little Bluestone was built long before the railroad passed within close proximity. Photo courtesy of Canadian Science and Technology Museum Collection.



Architectural Detail

The principal external features which give the front facade of the the Little Bluestone such distinction are the door case and semi-circular fanlight in the gable.