MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 168 King Street

Known as: Elias Smith House (Canada House)

Architectural Style: Loyalist

Date Built: Circa 1800 (RESTORED)

Date Designated: April 7, 1982 to By-Law No. 16/82, SCHEDULE B-9

Lot Description: PT 29



Architectural Description

This original inn is typical of early Upper Canada architecture. It is a frame story and a half house, post and beam construction with symmetrically placed six over six and twelve over twelve windows. There are seven dormers with moderate details and hand-hewn eaves troughs. The large chimney gives hints of the importance of the hearth and cooking device so central to early Upper Canada life. The strong foundation is built of two feet thick beach stones.

Historical Abstract

In Arnot Craick's Local Sketches of Port Hope, he describes Port Hope as it appeared from the Lake in 1813:"To a traveller approaching Smith's Creek from the Lake in the year 1813, the most prominent structure to attract his eye would be the Smith Homestead on the Point. The Point, it may be explained, is the piece of land abutting on the Lake at the foot of King Street and the Homestead stood about where the last house on the east side of the street now stands. The house, which was the first frame structure to be erected between Belleville and Toronto, was built by Peter Smith, the son of Elias Smith in 1797. The building faced the west, and if all accounts are true, it was completely partitioned off into two portions. Its dimensions were about twenty-five feet by thirty feet and it possessed an upper storey. Prior to its occupation by Elias Smith and his family in 1798, it was used as a store and school house. Mr. Smith had sent up a young man named Collins with a supply of goods and this same young man kept the first store and taught the first school in Port Hope. Besides being the earliest school house and store in the Town, the old place may be said to have been the first farm house in the Township of Hope.".

The early history of this building has been debated in the past. Some historians believed the house was built in the late 1820's by Captain Wallace and his relative, William Brogdin, a well known local builder responsible for building some of the early frame commercial blocks and churches, while others maintained it was the oldest surviving structure located between Oshawa and Belleville built by one of the original founding settlers, Elias Smith (1736-1820).

When Phyllis Smith White, a fourth generation Smith wrote the History of Elias Smith, U.E. 1736-1820, she revealed the content of letters exchanged between Mr. Smith and an Irish carpenter named Collins. Owners of the building had found the name COLLINS scratched on one of the interior beams of the house. Phyllis Smith strongly believed this house was the house that Elias Smith and his second wife and twelve offspring occupied in their early years of residency. Since completion of her extensive family research, maps have been discovered dating from 1814 in the Taunton Hydrographic Naval Museum in England that show seven buildings in Port Hope, one in this location.

The house was owned by a Wallace and a Brogdin but much later in its history. In 1868, Robert Wallace, formerly Captain Wallace of the Schooner Leander, provides his occupation as a grain merchant and his address as Walton Street, and King Street in business directories. In 1871, Jane Wallace, widow of Robert Wallace provides her address as King and

Madison Street. Jane Wallace sold the property to her mother Elizabeth Brogdin, wife of early builder William Brogdin in 1885. Later history of the house does include sailors and lake travellers. In 1888, the property was sold to David Fisher and renamed the Seaman's Inn, and later Canada House.

The house has been well preserved having served the community in a variety of capacities. It is once again an Inn for weary travellers serving as a Bed and Breakfast.

Archival Photo



Evident in this archival photo, the verandah at one time extended around three sides of the building.