MUNICIPALITY OF PORT HOPE

HERITAGE DESIGNATION

Address: 44 Pine Street North

Known as: Nesbitt Kirchhoffer House (Pinehurst)

Architectural Style: Gothic Revival

Date Built: Circa 1846

Date Designated: December 6, 1982 to By-Law No. 03/82-83, SCHEDULE B-1

Lot Description: W PT LOT 521 PINE ST



Architectural Description

The two-storey brick house sits majestically on 1.417 acres of land, is rectangular in plan and measures approximately forty-seven feet by thirty-seven feet. The pattern of brick is Flemish bond, the roof is a steeply pitched gable and has two offset brick chimneys. Although the house has gothic characteristics it is not typical of the Gothic Revival style in Upper Canada. Rather it imitates the early Tudor Manor house, which was popular in the British Isles during the 30's and 40's with the use of the decorative buttresses, the stepped gables containing thickly moulded windows and the enclosed brick porch. The flying buttresses and the brick wall terrace in front of the house enhance its scale and its sense of dignity and importance. Gothic overtones are derived from the four-centre arched openings, from the gothic tracery in the windows, and at one time from the several finials which once adorned the gable peaks.

The front facade is divided into three bays, with a slightly projecting frontispiece in front of which is the enclosed brick porch. In each of the side bays on the ground floor is a double casement sash with gothic tracery and a quatrefoil pattern in the top two panes. On the second storey, each of the side bays contains a double casement sash under the stepped gables. On the frontispiece above the brick porch is a gothic arched double casement sash. The brick porch is reinforced at the corners by attached pillars, which are surmounted by finials, and is crowned by a heavy wood balustrade with gothic arched opening. On either side of the porch is a tall arched sash with brick voussoirs. The lovely front entrance contains a single leaf four panel four centre arched door with thick four centre arched moulded label surrounds. Within the vestibule is a set of panelled double doors rising to a four-centre arch.

The south wall of the house has three double casement sash and a bay window containing five four-pane, gothic arched windows with two small panes above each window. The north wall has three double casement sash, one with Gothic tracery and a quatrefoil design in the upper panes. On the rear (west) wall there are seven double casement sash, and two entrances: one with a flat head and the other with a four-centre arch. The principal fenestration on the front and side facades has moulded label surrounds and moulded wooden sills. On the grounds at the rear of the house is a brick shed in the same style as the house, with a gable roof and three four centre point arches on the side (east) wall.

The interior of the house in notable for its many four centre pointed gothic arched openings, including the arch, which introduces the bay window in the living room. The moulded surrounds of the bay area form attached pillars at the sides like those on the front porch. Deep cornices enhance the two principal rooms of the ground floor, and the panelled doors have moulded surrounds. The floors are hardwood. The front hall is enriched by dark wood panelling and by the massive pine and oak staircase with heavy turned balusters, square-edged panelled newels topped by small globes, and the delicate carved design along the sides of the steps. The house has four fireplaces, two upstairs, one in the living room and a particularly fine one in the dining room.

Historical Abstract

Nesbitt Kirchhoffer, a prominent lawyer, built this majestic house in 1846. The name Pinehurst is derived from its setting amongst the tall pines that surrounded the property. The date of construction is commemorated in the front gable.

Nesbitt Kirchhoffer (1813-1879) was originally from Cork, Ireland. In 1845, he erected one of the downtown blocks, originally known as the Kirchhoffer or Ontario Block (25-27 Walton Street). He settled in Port Hope in 1835, and practised law from 1840 until his death in 1879. In addition to establishing his law practice and being appointed QC, he was very active in municipal affairs as a president of the Port Hope Police Board (1848) and Mayor of the town in 1872. He was Captain of the Union Fire Department from 1856-57, and supporter of the Midland Railway.

Pinehurst has often been described as being British in inspiration, which is not surprising since Kirchhoffer's wife Julia (1811-1881) was born in London, England. Comparisons have been made to Gothic designs published in John Claudius Loudon's, Scottish landscape gardener and architect, Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Village Architecture in 1833. An illustration of the house appeared on the 1853 Wall & Forrest Map with tall finials at each roof corner and gable peak.

In 1890, Seth Soper Smith (1843-1930), a lawyer and also a mayor of Port Hope (1887) and son of Elias P. Smith (1807-1860), manager of the Bank of Upper Canada, purchased the house. Seth and his wife Theresa, and their three children moved to Pinehurst. Seth's daughter, Phyllis Smith aptly describes her mother's first impressions of the house in her memoirs of 1967. The Smith's would make Pinehurst their home for the next forty-five years.



Architectural Detail

Pinehurst as it appeared on the Wall & Forrest Map of 1853 with prominent finials at each gable peak.