

McGibbon Lumber Company Office

Historical Significance

Although this building has gained its recognition as being the office of the McGibbon Lumber Company, it has not always been occupied by the McGibbon's. We cannot pin point the exact date of construction, but we do know that it was built before 1878 as it is shown in the 1878 Assessment Rolls¹.

From the assessment rolls, dating back to 1878, we have noted the previous owners and uses of the McGibbon Lumber Company Office. From 1878 to 1882 a Mr. Dodge, a merchant, used the building as a grocery store called Charlwood Grocery. In 1882 David Davidson occupied the building as an office for his lumber company. He owned the building up until around the 1900's. From 1900 to 1905 the Imperial Loan Company of Toronto owned the building. It is unknown if the loan company used the building for its own use or whether they just owned it and left it vacant. The assessment rolls do not indicate the use for this period. A Mr. H. Hawkes who lived in the house to the east of the office bought the building in 1905. He in turn rented the office out to the McGibbon Lumber Company. Between 1905 and 1910 the McGibbon Lumber Company bought the building. From 1910 to 1960 the building has been under the ownership of the McGibbons. Assessment rolls from 1950 to 1970 are missing. Therefore we were unable to determine any other owners of the building.

Charles McGibbon one of three sons of Finlay McGibbon came to Penetanguishene in 1873 at the age of seventeen to buy

out the Davidson lumber mill in the name of Finlay McGibbon and Sons. Charles took complete control of the mill from his brothers in the 1890's. Later on, his four sons got involved in the business with the office on the south side and the lumber mill on the north side of Water Street.

As well as being a good businessman, Charles was a good citizen of the town. He acted as Indian Agent for the Christian Island Indians. In 1889 he was provincial Inspector and Warden of Simcoe County. He was elected mayor of the town in 1905, 1906 and 1907 and before that he had been reeve and served on town council. He was also on the local board of health and school board for some time². After his death, Charles' sons took over the business at the office and the mill. The mill burnt down but the office remained under the ownership of the McGibbons until 1960 when the company came to it's end.

Today the building is used as an office for the Penetanguishene Chamber of Commerce.

1. Earliest Assessment Roll unavailable to us.
2. Taken from Prominent Families of Penetanguishene.

Architectural Description

Constructed sometime before 1878 this small office building, with the exception of the asphalt shingles roof, seems to be in its original state today.

Located on Lot # 8 on the south side of Water Street, the building has served the community predominately as a single office building.

This single detached office of rectangular construction, is plain, has been well kept and has some architectural value.

Wooden steps on the east side of the building leads up to a wood constructed verandah. This open verandah extends along the front facade only. Three turned wooden posts support this open verandah on the front.

The door which is situated on the east side of the front facade is met by the wooden steps which lead to the verandah. The door itself, is a plain recessed single leafed panel with a partly glazed upper half. The flat structural opening is surrounded with plain trim on the head and sides.

Just off to the right of the door are two double hung windows, which are separated by a four inch mullion. All the windows in the building have nine panes of glass in the upper sash and a single pane in the lower sash. Again all the window structural openings are flat, like the door with plain head surround and sides. Each window has a simple slip sill.

The presumable wood frame structure is sheathed on the exterior with white painted clapboard. End boards painted green cover the clapboard at all corners.

At the top of the exterior wall underneath the soffit a wide board frieze surrounds the whole building.

The medium hip roof which has been re-covered with asphalt shingles has plain fascia, eaves, and boxed soffit.

This wood frame structure sits on a poured concrete foundation. The poured concrete does not correspond with the building material used for foundation walls in that time period in which the building was built.

The shed just behind the office has been built of similar construction to the office. The roof on the shed seems to be covered with its original wood shingles. This leads us to believe that the office roof was once covered with wood shingles also.

Although plain and simple in design this building which has been well kept throughout the years reveals a touch of the simple but functional architecture.