

ST. JAMES-ON-THE-LINES

Architectural Description

This 1836 Anglican Church is a single detached rectangular building, with wings added onto the south and east sides. This single storey wood frame structure has a partial basement with the walls being constructed from cut stone. The clapboard siding, presumably nailed on a wood frame and painted white, seems to be the original.

It has been well looked after and has been painted when needed. End boards, which are painted grey, are on all the edges and corners over the clapboard siding.

The bell, which was bought by a woman parishioner for the church sits in the bell turret which is centered on the front (west) facade of the high gable roof. A single, brick chimney, which was added at a later date is also at the front end to the left of the bell turret. A wood fascia and frieze, painted grey, surrounds the whole building. On the underside of the overhang there is no soffit and the roof rafters are visible. Upon closer inspection it is noticed that they are not the real roof rafters, but, give the impression that the rafters come out past the supporting walls to make an overhang.

The lugsill, moulded trim surround-head and surround sides, on the main windows on the front are all made with wood and are painted grey. The casement windows have a sash with a mullion, the four panes of frosted glass on both the left and right side have an edge of stained glass. A clear etched design on the frosted glass is surrounded with about a 2" strip of either red, violet, blue or green stained glass.

The double main doors on the front are made of vertical plain shellaced wood. It is interesting to note the uniquely designed hinges on the main doors, as they are hand wrought by an unknown artisan from the military establishment. A shelf or entablature surround-head, and a moulded trim pilaster surround-side made of wood, surrounds the double main door.

Cement steps with an iron railing lead up to the main doors from the west side.

Overall, the building is in excellent condition. It has been well kept and appears as it did in the 1840's. The cemetery and crypt add to the age of the building as many head stones are dated back to the late 1830's. The landscape also adds to the beauty of the building with it's trees, chain-link fence and flag posts in the front yard.

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

St. James-on-the-Lines is located on the North-east corner of Church Street (formerly Reformatory Road) and Cambridge Street.

In the early 1830's the Fort Adjutant at the Penetanguishene Military Establishment, James Keating encouraged the construction of a church for the military men of the Establishment.

By 1835 a Captain R. M. Bonnycastle, a Royal Engineer surveyed four acres of land mid-way between the village of Penetanguishene and the Military Establishment. His Excellency Sir John Colborne, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, at that time, designated the land for a church and cemetery. With the help of Lieutenant Ingall and James Keating of the Military Establishment, an order was signed setting the land aside for St. James.

The retired Captain Moberly was the founder of St. James. He was also the superintendent of the building and oversaw the completion of St. James.

The erection of the building was started in 1836. The completion date is uncertain as two different dates were obtained from different historical sources: Pioneer Papers by Simcoe County Historical Society states 1838, and an article in Penetanguishene 1875-1975 by Barb McConell states 1842.

Money raised locally, and donations from England, helped to finance the construction of the church. Lieutenant Ingall also wrote the department of the British Government requesting financial aid to complete the church.

The first Rector Rev. George Hallan from England moved his wife and eight children from a British garrison. He was induced

to come to the Military Establishment to act as Chaplain to the forces and to inaugurate the necessary steps toward the development of a parish.

In 1855 a woman parishioner raised money for the purchase of a bell. The congregation provided the necessary funds for the construction of a bell turret.

The term "on-the-lines" has reference to the communication lines or road between Fort York (Toronto), and Fort Penetanguishene.

St. James still has its original use as a church with services held every Sunday.