

69 POYNTZ STREET

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

The architectural value of 69 Poyntz Street outweighs its historical value. The building's legal description is Plan 37, Lot 34 W.Pt., Lot 35 E. Pt. on the north side of Poyntz Street. In 1880, the assessment roll shows that the vacant land lot 34 was owned by H.H. Thompson, Penetanguishene's first merchant. Walter J. Keating, a solicitor owned vacant lot 35.

In 1905, George Pelletier, a carpenter, built on the east half of lot 35 and part of lot 34. Its initial assessment was \$550. Pelletier was the freeholder until 1913. At this time the owner became Alfonse Nault, another carpenter. The assessed value reached \$1000.

In 1919 William R. Benson took over the ownership of 69 Poyntz Street. Mr. Benson was the manager of the Firstbrook Box Company from at least 1919 until he retired in 1934. He remained a resident in this building until well into the 1950's. In 1952, the assessed value reached a high of \$2550.

Mr. Benson was also a member of the Penetanguishene town council from 1933 to 1936 and again in 1940 until 1951.

The Firstbrook Box Company, based in Toronto, had a large factory in Penetanguishene. The box factory was located on Fox Street and it covered about 68 acres. The plant operated on as great a scale as Charles Beck's factory, using 700,000 feet of lumber per month. The sawmill attached to it did custom sawing with a capacity of 100,000 feet per day. These operations employed about 250 men.

For a few years the International Fireboard Company operated in conjunction with Firstbrook's having built a factory beside theirs. Both companies were forced to discontinue operations when they were totally destroyed by fire in less than two hours on August 18, 1923.

Brothers John and W. A. Firstbrook ran the company and had a home in Penetanguishene, although A.F. Young was in charge of the Penetanguishene operation. William firstbrook sold the Harriet Street home in 1910 and in 1912 it became Penetanguishene first local hospital. With the opening of the present Penetanguishene General Hospital in 1954, the former Firstbrook home was sold to the county for one dollar to be used as a home for the aged. It was later torn down to make way for the Georgian Manor.

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ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The contrast at 69 Poyntz Street which catches the viewer's eye is the elaborately decorated white corner brackets and pendants against the red painted brick exterior walls. This irregularly-shaped, two storey house has had no apparent alterations to the main structure. There has been a major addition, however, onto the back of the building.

The high gable roof has a cross gable and a centrally located brick chimney. The triangular dormer on the front façade has a half-round window for lighting. Above the dormer is an open walk, which commands an excellent view of Penetang Bay if it is still in use. Roof trim on the raking is a boxed cornice with a decorated frieze and brackets (as already mentioned) and on the eaves are plain boxed cornices of wood.

The ground floor main window has a segmental opening shape. The head and sides are trimmed in plain wood and the bottom is trimmed with a concrete lugsill. The sash is fixed.

The main entrance is located centrally on the short façade. It has a flat opening shape with plain wooden trim. Above the door is a flat transom and a single transom light. Plain recessed panels decorate the door which is partly glazed.

The closed verandah is at ground level therefore there are no stairs. Columns of wood support the one storey high verandah.

The property of 69 Poyntz Street is enclosed by an iron fence. Inside the fence is a tall old-fashioned water pump and two urns, planted with flowers. The verandah is surrounded with elevated stone flower beds.