



Frontenac Heritage Foundation

2007 Heritage Renovation and Restoration Awards

**Presented
November 12, 2007**

**Robert J. Crothers, OAA
Chair, Awards Committee**

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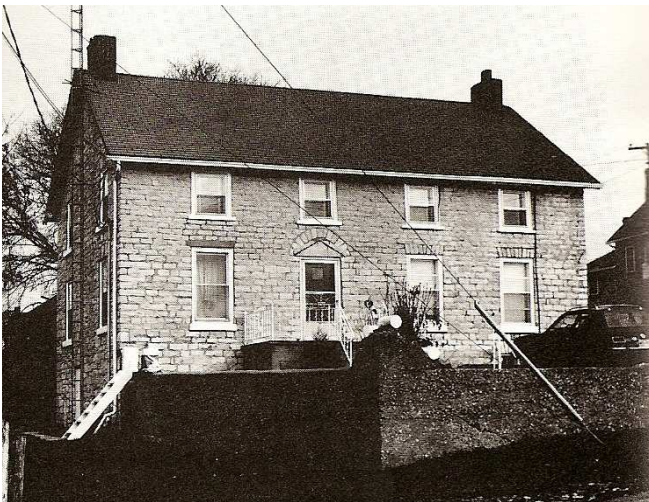
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The Pittsburgh Inn

236 James Street
Barriefield, Ontario

“Built by William Walker in 1838-1840 as a tavern, this two-storey stone building was operated by several tenants under the name Pittsburgh Inn. It was purchased by William Hutton in 1867 renamed Dominion House and operated by him until 1900. James Medley was tavern keeper at the time the meetings were held here to promote the building of St. Marks Church.” (from Barriefield Heritage Area Study).

In 1859 the rates for a tavern license were changed from English to decimal currency and were set at \$30 with a 75 cent annual fee even though it only cost \$20 to sell liquor from a shop. In 1866 regulations required each tavern to have at least four bedrooms, stabling for 6 horses and sheds for four carriages. They had to serve meals and there was to be no intoxication, no gambling or immoral persons, no noise on Sundays with taverns closed from 9 pm Saturday until 6 am Monday and these rules applied to both male and female persons.



Pittsburgh Inn – Photo D. McCallum



2007 – Photo R. Crothers

Subsequent to its use as a tavern, this simply designed building was used in the 1960's as a local convenience store up until 2004 accommodated three separate apartments. The building is presently owned by Heidi Robinson and Tom Bergeron, who over the last two years, have restored it's exterior and modified the interior to provide a modern living space in a historical context.

The limestone walls have been completely re-pointed and new replica windows have been installed on all elevations. The many layers of interior finishes have been removed and the renovation exposes much of the original timber frame support structure. A new staircase has been installed and three fireplaces were discovered with one being restored to full operation. The original timber rafter framing of the roof structure has been exposed on the interior for aesthetic reasons. This approach required adding rigid

insulation from the exterior and required some minor modifications to the original eaves profile before new cedar shingles were applied.

As the Owners are well aware, a project such as this takes time and effort and is a continual process of challenge and compromise. They intend to tackle the exterior landscaping over the next few years, completing the fencing and landscaping work that has been started.



The Frontenac Heritage Foundation applauds the efforts of the present Owners in reclaiming and restoring the exterior of the Pittsburgh Inn. Completion of this project secures another visible landmark in the history of Barriefield and ensures the architectural and historic integrity of an important and visible corner of the village.

Certificate of Commendation

Owners: Ms. Heidi Robinson & Mr. Ted Bergeron
236 James Street, Barriefield, Ontario

Certificate

**The Red Brick Building
Empire Life Insurance Company
261 – 263 King Street West,
Kingston, Ontario**



261-263 King Street East – Photos by Richard Martin

The Empire Life Insurance Company must certainly be recognized and congratulated for their successful efforts at reconstruction of the Red Brick Building and addition to their corporate head office project at 259 King Street East.

Demolition of this 3 storey masonry building was seriously being considered as one of the available options after a fire during the winter of 2005 destroyed Cards Bakery, the middle of 3 retail commercial/residential units in this very visible location. It is interesting to note that a previous fire in approximately the same location was responsible for this site being available for construction of this building in 1904.

After the most recent fire, architectural & structural reviews advised that although the original building was well constructed with masonry separations between apartment units, the potential costs associated with reconstruction to meet modern codes would be abnormally high for the expanded office space that Empire Life so desperately needed.

Conceptual designs prepared by architect Ernest A. (Al) Cromarty suggested the highest and best use of the site could be achieved while retaining the building's character in its urban context. Empire Life's Steering Committee considered all options and decided that if additional floor space could be created, the

costs associated with retaining the brick façade, roof line and architectural detail could make good economic sense. This matched Empire Life's proven philosophy of supporting the urban heritage of Kingston even though in this case the building was not a designated structure.

Emmons & Mitchell Construction Ltd. secured the red brick walls on Johnson and King Streets, gutted the interior structure and installed foundations for a new steel column beam and joist structure. The rear porch was removed and replaced with a an addition to create a larger floor plate and a link to the pre-cast concrete office building behind. A new main floor was installed at grade level and the roof was raised to allow three floors above. The facade was re-pointed, new windows were installed and many of the original details were either restored or replicated in a sympathetic fashion.



Johnson St. (rear) view summer 2005



Original and replicated balcony trim..

The Second Empire styling of the Red Brick Building has been retained with the characteristic features of the mansard roof with round head dormers, detailed window surrounds and applied wooden corner balcony trim). Empire Life has included an original fireplace saved from the building, coach lights from a previously demolished structure and original clay brick in the new lobby. Iron trim or cresting previously decorated the parapet edge. Other artifacts of interest include a yellow yo-yo, a chromed handheld cigarette roller, a 1923 newspaper a tongue & groove board, signed by two workmen in 1929 and a difficult to read signature behind some plaster with a date thought o be 1904 Or 1909.

The Second Empire style was popularized in during the Victorian era in Europe reaching its zenith between 1865 and 1880. Kingston's best example of this style is the towered Mackenzie Block at RMC. Certainly, Empire life has made itself popular with the citizens of Kingston after following up so well on their decision to retain the architectural character of the previous building.

Certificate of Commendation

Owner: The Empire Life Insurance Company

Certificates

Architect: Ernest A. Cromarty Architects Inc.

General Contractor: Emmons & Mitchell Construction Limited.

Contact Information:

Owner

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Regency Cottage

86 Main Street, Odessa



86 Main Street, Odessa – Photo By Stephen Arnold

The significance of this Regency cottage owned by R. Philip Smart is indicated by numerous references in texts on heritage buildings. These texts include Margaret McBurney and Mary Byers' *Homesteads*, Larry Turner's *Ernestown: Rural Spaces, Urban Places*, Marion MacRae's, *The Ancestral Roof: Domestic Architecture of Upper Canada* and John Blumenson's *Ontario Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building Terms, 1784 to the Present*. It is also the first of twelve illustrations of the Regency building style in Ontario found on the website <http://www.ontarioarchitecture.com/regency.htm>.

The Regency style was named after George IV, Prince of Wales, who ruled as regent for his father, King George III, from 1811 to 1820. According to the Ontario Architecture website, the architecture reflects the son's "exuberant and colourful nature. Most of the original owners of Regency buildings were retired military men from Britain's colonies. These men ... brought their families to Canada and created lovely cottages with huge front verandas and large French doors. ... Designers took location seriously and the buildings are always situated for maximum visual effect and the best possible view. "

In the case of the Philip Smart house, a magnificent, 52-trussed, gingerbread trim-topped veranda surrounds a square floor plan. A very interesting double-sectioned roof features tin shingles in the lower curved "awning." The top section tin roof is crowned with an iron cresting. The cottage commands the west side of Millhaven Creek and is very visible from the main highway when traveling through Odessa. The Regency building style was popular in the period 1820-1860 and the Odessa cottage was built by 1851. Philip Dorland Booth, a prosperous mill owner, as well as a councilor, reeve and warden of the

surrounding municipality, township and county, respectively, inhabited the cottage from 1851 until he died in 1883. His father and Loyalist grandfather were also successful millers.

An initial diagnosis of rot by Mr. Smart suddenly became complicated when the now applicable building code required an extra post in each of the two front veranda sections. David Doiron, the very meticulous carpenter for the three-season, three-year project, integrated into the veranda the new posts as well as new railings and new gingerbread trim. In completing this restoration project, Mr. Smart, according to the nominator for this heritage award, went the “extra mile for historic purposes.”

Certificate of Commendation

Philip Smart
86 Main Street
Odessa, Ontario
(613) 386-7459

Certificate

David Doiron, Carpenter

The John Marks House

232 Main Street, Barriefield, Ontario

The diary of John Bennett Marks (1777 – 1872) records he was actively building this house in 1820 on the foundation of an earlier log structure built by John Grant circa 1800. The original construction is reported to have been in good condition and recent renovation activities have uncovered that subsequent alterations that included a second floor constructed using a posts and beams with a wrap around porch added to the east (front) and south sides. Later, a limestone addition was attached to the north and a gabled addition connected to the west. The recently constructed garage recalls previous out buildings that would have supported the Marks farmstead on this hillside site over looking the Great Cataraqui River. In 2006 the house was completely reconstructed and restored by Pat Powers Construction and a team of advisors, skilled trade workers and students.

John Marks, after serving in the Royal Navy, retired from his role as purser and paymaster on the HMS St. Lawrence and became a well known landowner, agriculturist, business leader and politician who helped establish in the Village of Barriefield. He was very active and instrumental in supporting the growth of the community and provided the land for the construction of St, Marks Anglican Church across the street. One of the stained glass windows in the church illustrates the Marks house and records indicate that the building was used as the church rectory for sixty years after his death.



Photo from Clarke Collection



October 2007 - Photo by R. Crothers

The Frontenac Heritage Foundation has deemed this project worthy of receiving special recognition for several reasons.

First, for many years there appeared to be a stalemate between the property owner who had applied to demolish the building and subdivide the waterfront property into three regular shaped building lots and the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) who believed the unique character of the building and its historical associations were worthy of preservation. The owner had done precious little to maintain or protect the building from deterioration and LACAC was not willing to grant approval for a severance if it meant the loss of the Marks house and the character of its site. Meanwhile the building

fabric was deteriorating and becoming overgrown with vegetation. It was only through a process of cooperative consultation and compromise between the Owner and a sub committee of LACAC that a modified subdivision application was granted with the condition that the Marks house would be restored to sound and habitable condition.

Secondly the project involved students in the 2005-06 Building Construction Internship Program (BCIP) program from Queen Elizabeth Collegiate and Vocational Institute (QECVI). The 25 students in the program provided enthusiastic labour to reduce the Contractor's costs in exchange for the opportunity to study the building and both observe and participate in its reconstruction, renovation and restoration. In acknowledgment of this assistance, the Contractor contributed \$5,000, of which \$2,500 was donated directly to the BCIP program and \$2,500 donated to the Kingston Community Learning Foundation.



North Stone Addition and Garage



Front Entrance Detail, Photos by R. Crothers

Finally, the General Contractor and trade contractors must be acknowledged for their leadership, workmanship and faith in the success of this heritage rescue project. Parts of the original log and post and beam structures have been left exposed and visible with 90% of the original interior layout remaining intact. Historic paneled doors, wood trim and hardware have been used throughout the interior where only minor compromises have been made for modern convenience. Much of the original material was reused wherever possible and/or used as a pattern for reconstruction with similar materials.

The renewed Marks House on its waterfront lot and the two severed water front lots are now being offered for sale to interested buyers. Without the effort of many well intentioned individuals the conclusion of the Marks House story could have had a much different ending.

Source material from: Lilacs and Limestone, An Illustrated history of Pittsburgh Township by William J. Patterson.

Certificate of Commendation

Patrick Powers Construction, General Contractor & Owner

Certificate

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Contact Information

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