

## Heritage Designation Brief



**678 Bethune Street**

Peterborough Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

September 2018

Heritage Designation Status Sheet

Street Address:	678 Bethune Street
Roll Number:	040080093000000
Short Legal Description:	PT LT 9 S OF ANTRIM ST & W OF GEORGE ST PL 1 TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH PTS 2 & 3 45R9508 ; PETERBOROUGH CITY
Owners' Mailing Address:	678 Bethune Street Peterborough ON K9H 4A3
PACAC Application Review Date:	September 6, 2018
Heritage Type:	Built Structure
Designation Type:	Ontario Heritage Act – Part IV
Designation Brief Completion Date:	August 2018
Designation Brief Completed by:	Emily Turner
Comments:	

## **STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST**

The subject property has been researched and evaluated in order to determine its cultural heritage significance under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990. A property is eligible for designation if it has physical, historical, associative or contextual value and meets **any one** of the nine criteria set out under Regulation 9/06 of the Act. Staff have determined that 678 Bethune Street has cultural heritage value or interest and merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

### **1. The property has design value or physical value because it:**

#### **i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method:**

678 Bethune Street is an excellent, early, and intact example of a mid-nineteenth century Ontario Gothic cottage. Constructed around 1853, it is a frame building that was clad in brick. It is an important, representative example of this housing type in the Peterborough area.

#### **ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit:**

The house displays a standard degree of craftsmanship typical of the era.

#### **iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement:**

There are no specific technical or scientific achievements associated with this property.

### **2. The property has historical value or associative value because it:**

#### **i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community:**

The property has had a series of owners since its construction, many of whom were tradespeople working in Peterborough. In the early twentieth century, the property was owned by prominent Peterborough businessman George A. Cox, who accumulated significant real estate holdings in the city.

#### **ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture:**

The property has the potential to yield additional information on how the lower middle classes in Peterborough approached the construction of their homes in contemporary architectural styles through the use of pattern books as a design source.

**iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community:**

The designer of the building is not known, although it is recorded that the builder was a Mr. Smith of Otonabee. There is no additional information on the builder.

**3. The property has contextual value because it:**

**i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area:**

The property is important in maintaining and supporting the character of the surrounding neighbourhood which is comprised primarily of historic properties that date from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. It is one of the oldest properties in the neighbourhood.

**ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings**

678 Bethune Street is historically and visually linked to its surroundings by its placement facing away from both Antrim and Bethune Streets and towards downtown Peterborough and the Otonabee River. Located at the top of the Bethune Street hill, the house was oriented in such a way to take advantage of the sweeping view towards the river and downtown core. The relationship of the house to the surrounding physical landscape and its associated viewshed is an important heritage attribute of the property.

**iii. is a landmark.** O. Reg. 9/06, s. 1 (2).

The property is a landmark within the neighbourhood due to its longstanding historic presence and visible presence on a corner lot.



**Design and Physical Value**

678 Bethune Street has design value as an excellent, early, and intact example of a mid-nineteenth century Ontario Gothic cottage. Constructed around 1853, it is a frame structure, clad in brick, and includes a main, rectangular section of the house and a kitchen wing, which is typical of this house type. While this was a style of house that was extremely popular in both

Peterborough and Ontario as a whole during the mid-nineteenth century, 678

Bethune Street is one of the best examples of an Ontario Gothic cottage in Peterborough because it integrates and retains many of the key elements of this housing type as executed in the middle of the nineteenth century. It is representative of the style in that it demonstrates and retains the key elements of the style in its built form. Its date of construction also makes it an early example of this style which was just beginning to develop around the time the house was constructed.

The Gothic cottage was probably the most popular architectural form in mid-nineteenth century domestic design in Ontario. While the ornate Gothic Revival style had become increasingly popular throughout the early nineteenth century, it was generally applied to larger houses for more prosperous clients. At the same time, there was increasing concern that working and lower middle class people were not appropriately housed, both from the perspective of building quality and architectural taste. Since the late seventeenth century, architects and theorists, particularly in the United Kingdom, had promoted the development of designs for “cottages” aimed at these lower classes, including labourers, farmers and tradespeople, which blended structural improvements with the aesthetic theory of the picturesque into buildings that were architecturally interesting,



practical, and affordable. By the early nineteenth century, many cottage designs had been produced and published in architectural texts, including those which integrated features of the increasingly popular Gothic Revival movement, such as steeply pitched roofs and decorative woodwork, into smaller buildings that were appropriate for less wealthy segments of the population.



The Gothic cottage form was popularized in print media where numerous books and journals published patterns for cottage architecture using forms associated with the Gothic Revival movement. These publications originated in the United Kingdom in the late seventeenth century and quickly spread to North America where they provided extremely popular models in new and developing communities. By the end of the nineteenth century, the use of this housing type

had become so widespread in Ontario that the house type is generally known as an Ontario Gothic cottage, despite the fact that it had more widespread origins.

While published after the initial construction of 678 Bethune Street, one of the most influential texts on this subject in Ontario was *The Canadian Farmer*, a periodical which began publication in 1864 and had a regular column on rural architecture featuring designs for Gothic cottages similar to the subject property; while the periodical was primarily aimed at rural populations, these designs were frequently used by people in small towns and on the outskirts of larger ones looking to build in the picturesque aesthetic promoted both in the magazine and by other designers. While the designs published in this periodical assisted in the spread of the style, they were not original and drew on existing sources dating back to the 1830s which, directly or indirectly, would have informed the design of 678 Bethune Street. Images published in the magazine show the ubiquitous three-bay, symmetrical form with a front gable and kitchen wing. An article discussing “A Small Gothic Cottage” even recommends the use of red brick with buff brick quoins as a means to introduce ornamentation in the house through structural polychromy, one of the defining features of 678 Bethune Street. While 678 Bethune Street was constructed before the publication of this article, the discussion of this specific element in a well-known publication places the house firmly within this tradition and demonstrates the familiarity of the builder with these wider trends in domestic design.

678 Bethune Street has a number of important and well-preserved features that are characteristic of the Ontario Gothic cottage. These include a gable roof; the use of polychromatic brick to add ornamentation to a basic, rectangular overall design; symmetrical front and side elevations with central doorway and sash windows; and a central gable with a steeply pitched roof and rounded window. The house also retains most of its original windows, including a significant amount of original glass. The south elevation is defined by a verandah with an awning roof, chamfered columns and ornate wooden brackets that extends across the front of the house; while the verandah and its decorative elements were likely added after the initial construction of the house, they are an important part of this architectural style and were recommended in print publications for practical and aesthetic purposes.



One of the notable features of this design is the kitchen wing, a one-storey wooden addition that was clad in brick in the early twentieth century to match the rest of the house. The majority of Ontario Gothic cottages, both in Peterborough and elsewhere, were constructed with a kitchen wing to keep the cooking separate from the main body of the house. Kitchen wings were primarily constructed on the back of the house in order to preserve the symmetry of the overall design when viewed from the front of the building; this is the case both in practice and as recommended in published material, including *The Canadian Farmer*. The kitchen wing on 678 Bethune Street, however, is on the side of the house because of the placement of the house at the back of the lot adjacent to Antrim Street. The placement of the house in this location was likely to take advantage of its picturesque setting at the top of the hill with sloping lawns which would have originally had a view of the town below and the river. This consideration also accounts for the fact that the house faces away from both Bethune and Antrim streets.



### Historical and Associative Value

678 Bethune Street has historical value as a house constructed for a tradesperson in mid-nineteenth century Peterborough. The property has important historical value in its use of popular design features as published in pattern books and other textual sources and integrated into a modest residential design without the use of a professional architect.



The house was constructed around 1853 for William West, a local millwright who purchased the property in 1852. West, however, did not live in the house and rented it out. The first tenants were James Doris, a carpenter, his wife Ellen, and their family. The family lived at the property until at least 1860 when James froze to death on Monaghan Road; the *Examiner* for February 23, 1860 speculated that

he had “indulged too freely in spirituous liquors and mistook his way.” The property was purchased in 1870 by George Cook, a sawyer, and in 1876, John Cook, a millwright who lived in the property until 1879.

The property was eventually purchased by George A. Cox in 1905, although he did not live there. The house was occupied by Philip Lane and his wife Martha, a relative of Cox. Martha Lane, along with her daughter Emma, was bequeathed the house in Cox’ will for the term of their natural lives. The property was purchased by Henry Bradshaw, a milkman, and his wife Alice in 1921 and it remained in the Bradshaw family until 1989.

However, the property’s primary historical and associative importance lies in its role as an example of mid-nineteenth century housing for Peterborough’s lower middle classes, as exemplified by the early occupants of the house who were primarily tradespeople. During this period, while many people of these means wished to construct houses that reflected the current fashion of the day, they likely did not have the means to hire a professional architect. As a result, the use of pattern books proliferated as an inexpensive way to procure fashionable designs for houses. While the source of the design for 678 Bethune Street is not known, the property has specific design features which can also be found in contemporary pattern book publications. The property has the potential to yield information as to how Peterborough’s lower middle classes viewed and approached the construction of their homes and used means other than professional architects to achieve a design that was both fashionable and cost effective.



### **Contextual Value**

678 Bethune Street has contextual value as part of the wider Smith Town Hill historic neighbourhood, comprised primarily of nineteenth century homes. This includes a number of other properties, likely constructed around the mid-nineteenth century, with which it shares architectural features, including a Gothic cottage directly to the north on Antrim Street. 678 Bethune Street is one of the oldest

properties in the neighbourhood. Overall, it is an important contributing feature of the local historic neighbourhood and an important local landmark due to its longstanding presence in the area and its prominent location on a corner lot.

The property also has important contextual value in its relationship to the physical landscape. Constructed on the corner of Bethune and Antrim street on what was originally a much larger lot, the house faces away from both roads, towards downtown Peterborough and the Otonabee River. In the 1850s, prior to much of the surrounding development, it would have commanded a sweeping view of the city's downtown core, the river and the rural landscape beyond with few physical obstructions. This view was not only pleasant for the occupant of the house, but is also reflective of the picturesque genre with which this housing type was originally associated and which romanticized the views and aesthetics of the scenic pastoral landscape and its integrated, but subsidiary, architectural forms. While the surrounding area was built up throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and some of the view obstructed by tree growth, the house retains its important relationship with the landscape and its associated views of the river and city. The relationship of the house to the surrounding physical landscape and its associated viewshed is an important historic attribute of the property.



*"The short statement of reason for designation, including a description of the heritage attributes along with all other components of the Heritage Designation Brief constitute the "Reasons for the Designation" required under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Heritage Designation Brief is available for viewing in the City Clerk's office during regular business hours."*

## **SHORT STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DESIGNATION**

678 Bethune Street has cultural heritage value or interest as an intact, early, and excellent example of an Ontario Gothic cottage in Peterborough. Constructed in the mid-1850s, the property retains many of its original architectural features including the red brick cladding with buff brick quoins, steeply pitched central gable with a rounded window, and a verandah extending across the front of the house. Its setting at the top of the hill gave the property an historic view toward the Otonabee River and downtown Peterborough which exemplifies the qualities of the picturesque that were associated with this housing type. It is one of the oldest houses in a historic neighbourhood of primarily nineteenth and early twentieth century homes and maintains the character of the wider area through its retained historic features.

## **SUMMARY OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES TO BE DESIGNATED**

The Reasons for Designation include the following heritage attributes and apply to all elevations and the roof including all façades, entrances, windows, chimneys, and trim, together with construction materials of wood, brick, stone, stucco, concrete, plaster parging, metal, and glazing, their related building techniques and landscape features:

### **Exterior Features**

- One-and-a-half storey frame residential building with red brick cladding
- Rubble stone foundation
- Rectangular massing of main portion of the building
- One storey kitchen addition on the east elevation
- Gable roof
- Symmetry of the south and west elevations
- Buff brick quoins and base
- Brick chimneys on the north and east elevations
- Centre gable on the south elevation
- Soffits and fascia with decorative wooden moulding
- Central rounded window on south elevation with six over six sash window and radiating buff brick voussoir
- South elevation verandah including:
  - Awning roof
  - Chamfered columns
  - Decorative wooden porch brackets

- Central entrance including:
  - Sidelights
  - Transom window
  - Buff brick flat voussoir
  - Associated moulding
- West elevation kitchen addition doorway
- All original fenestration including:
  - Six over six sash windows
  - Two over two sash windows
  - Original window openings
  - Window openings and their associated elements including sash, mould, jamb, and trim
  - Original wooden windows
  - Symmetrical placement of windows on the south and west elevations
  - Original glass
  - Wooden shutters and hardware
  - Buff brick flat and radiating voussoirs
- Viewshed from the house toward the Otonabee River and downtown Peterborough
- View of the south elevation of the house from Bethune Street
- View of the house from the intersection of Parkhill Road and Bethune Street
- Orientation of the house relative to the roads, hill, and garden