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City of Orillia

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Sincere

OFFICE
OF THE
CLERK-ADMINISTRATOR

Fax (705) 325-5178

August 21, 1989

REGISTERED

The Ontario Heritage Foundation
77 Bloor Street
TORONTO, Ontario
M7A 2R9

RECEIVED

AUG 24 1989

ONTARIO HERITAGE
FOUNDATION

Dear Sirs:

Re: City of Orillia Designating By-law 1989-112

Please find enclosed the following:

1. Copy of By-law Number 1989-112, a By-law to designate the Begg House as being of architectural and historical value or interest, together with a copy of the Reasons for Designation.

These documents are forwarded to you pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1980, Chapter 337, Section 29(6).

Yours truly,

for - Ronald J. Ellett, A.M.C.T.
Deputy Clerk

:jb
Encl.



CITY ON THE LAKES — BIRTHPLACE OF CENTRAL ONTARIO



BY-LAW NUMBER 1989-112 OF THE CITY OF ORILLIA

A BY-LAW TO DESIGNATE THE BEGG HOUSE AS BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL VALUE OR INTEREST

WHEREAS the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1980, Chapter 337, authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all buildings and structures thereon, to be of architectural and historic value or interest.

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the City of Orillia has caused to be served on the owners of the lands and premises known as the Begg House and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, notice of intention to so designate the aforesaid real property and has caused such notice of intention to be published in the same newspaper having general circulation in the municipality once for each of three consecutive weeks;

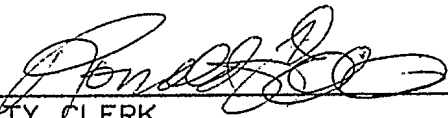
AND WHEREAS no notice of objection to the proposed designation has been served on the Clerk of the municipality.

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF ORILLIA HEREBY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. THAT the Begg House, more particularly described in Schedule "A" attached hereto, be and it is hereby designated as being of architectural and historic value or interest.
2. THE Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "A" attached hereto in the Registry Office for the division of Simcoe.
3. THE Clerk is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owner of the aforesaid property and on the Ontario Heritage Foundation and cause notice of the passing of this by-law to be published in the same newspaper having general circulation in the municipality once for each of three consecutive weeks.

BY-LAW read a first, second and third time and finally passed this 24th day of July, A.D. 1989.


MAYOR


DEPUTY CLERK

SCHEDULE "A" TO BY-LAW NUMBER 1989-112 OF THE CITY OF ORILLIA

FIRSTLY: West Half of Lot 2, Plan 8 on the south side of Neywash Street according to Plan of Subdivision Eight (8).

Save and except the southerly fifty feet in perpendicular width throughout Lot 2, Plan 8 south side of Neywash Street.

SECONDLY: Part of Lot 1, on the south side of Neywash Street, according to Plan 8 and being more particularly described as follows:

Commencing at a point where the southerly limit of said Neywash Street intersects the lot line between Lots 1 and 2.

Thence westerly along said Neywash Street fifteen feet to an iron post.

Thence southerly parallel to the said lot line seventy feet to a point.

Thence easterly parallel to said Neywash Street fifteen feet to a point on the lot line.

Thence northerly along the lot line between Lots 1 and 2 seventy feet to the place of beginning, being the lands in Instrument 610457.

Save and except Parts 1 and 2 on 51R-8586 as in Instrument 698122.

IN THE MATTER OF The Ontario
Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1980,
Chapter 337

- and -

IN THE MATTER OF By-law Number
1989- , a by-law to designate
certain property pursuant to
the Act.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

THE BEGG HOUSE

HISTORY

The Crown Patent for the W 1/2 Lot 2, Plan 8 South Neywash Street was granted to Robert Bailey on April 12, 1856. The property was acquired by Alexander Begg on July 1st, 1876 from Alice and Samuel Bailey for \$615.00. It is not known whether Alexander Begg had the house built or whether it was built by Alice and Samuel during the six months that they owned the property. However, the price the Beggs' paid for it was less than half that paid for the E 1/2 of the lot a year earlier, and historical accounts state that the family moved from New York in 1877. Therefore, it is entirely feasible that the house was built for/by the Begg family and a construction date of 1876 would appear to be a reasonable assumption.

The Beggs' owned this house for 58 years. However, an article published in the British Columbia Historical Quarterly in 1938 stated that:

"In 1877, and for years subsequently, the Beggs' lived at Orillia... Alexander Begg retired from public life in 1903 and moved from Victoria to New York City"

It therefore appears that for several years Alexander Begg and later Emily his widow were absentee owners of 9 Neywash Street, although family members may well have continued to live there. Emily M. Begg acquired the property from her husband shortly before his death in 1905. She continued to live in New York until her death in 1932. Two years later, on November 1, 1934, 9 Neywash was sold to Alfred J. Lloyd, Orillia industrialist, who lived there with his family until 1946.

For a brief time during this period, the house was heated by a sawdust burning furnace invented by Mr. Lloyd to take advantage of the supplies of sawdust that were available during that time from local manufacturers. Alfred Lloyd's son Bruce, now residing in Marchmont, recalls hauling sawdust from the frame barn, which still sits behind the house, to the furnace as part of his daily chores. Mr. Lloyd also recalls that when his family acquired the house, it had been empty for some time and believes that it had been previously occupied by two spinster sisters, daughters of Alexander and Emily Begg, who may have eventually rejoined the rest of their family in New York.

Subsequent owners

The historical significance of 9 Neywash Street is primarily due to the prominence of its first owner, Alexander Begg.

Alexander Begg was born at Watten, Caithness, Scotland, on May 7, 1825. He obtained a teaching diploma in Edinburgh and taught for a time in Scotland before emigrating to Canada in 1846 at the age of 21. He taught at Madoc and Oshawa. In 1854 he started a career in journalism which included becoming publisher of The Messenger (the first newspaper of Bowmanville), established the Brighton Sentinel and later published the Trenton Advocate.

For a number of years, Alexander Begg was employed by the Department of Internal Revenue at Ottawa and in 1869 was appointed Collector of Customs for the North West Territories. However, he was turned back at Pembina by Riel's followers while a member of Governor McDougall's expedition, and was never able to assume this position.

In 1872, Begg was appointed Emigration Commissioner in Scotland for the Province of Ontario. Lecturing throughout Scotland, he was responsible for the settlement of thousands of Crofters in Canada.

Two years later, he established a temperance colony near Parry Sound at Beggsboro. He then became owner and editor of the Muskoka Herald and started publication of the Canadian Lumberman.

During this period, he and his family leased the asylum building in Couchiching Beach Park and for a very brief time, ran it as a summer hotel. (1)

In 1881, he travelled to the Canadian Northwest as a correspondent of the Toronto Mail. He tried his hand at ranching in Alberta for a brief period and then passed the venture on to his son Robert. It appears that Begg moved to Victoria, B.C. in 1887 where he stayed until 1903. During this period, Begg authorized several significant works including the "History of British Columbia from It's Earliest Discovery to the Present Time (1894), and the Report on the Alaskan Boundary Question, Queen's Printer 1896. Begg also authorized several articles for the Journal of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society, of which he was a Fellow.

After retiring in 1903, the Beggs' moved to New York City where five of their 11 children were engaged in law. He died at the age of 80 in March, 1905 and was buried at the family plot at Orillia. (2)

Alexander's wife Emily is also worthy of mention. Born in 1839, Emily Maria Begg (nee Luke) was the great granddaughter of Sir James Ash and Elizabeth Dobbs whose ancestors were the original owners of Dobbs Ferry and Philip Manor on the Hudson. She and her husband raised 11 children, six sons and five daughters. Five of the children became lawyers and a sixth became a prominent physician. Daughter Emma Helen Begg was the first woman delegate to the State convention of the New York State Bar. (3) Emily is buried with her husband and ten of their children in St. Andrew's Cemetery, Orillia.

In 1935, the Begg Memorial Fountain, created by sculptor Allan Cameron, was dedicated in the memory of Emily M. Begg through a bequest at his death by her son Ralph. This lovely statue stands in Couchiching Beach Park and is a fitting reminder, along with the graceful brick house at 9 Neywash Street, of an accomplished family who at one time made their home in Orillia.

(1) From research by D. A. Hunter.

(2) This account of Alexander Begg's life is taken from an article by Miss Madge Wolfenden, published in the British Columbia Historical Quarterly 1938 and reprinted in the Orillia Packet shortly thereafter.

(3) From an article entitled "Who Was the Greatest Mother?" by Charles F. Carter, published in The Scrap Book, Vol. VI, No. 2, August, 1908.

ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES

The Begg House, built in 1876 is in a style of architecture that was popular in Orillia at that time. The house is a gabled two-storey red brick structure on a stone foundation.

The special features of the house are the decorative brickwork and interesting gable treatment.

The notable elements of the house are:

Brickwork

The red clay brick is laid in common bond and was probably manufactured in Huntsville. The corners are a flush quoin. This quoin is a yellow clay brick which is staggered every three courses. The window arches are segmental and are of yellow brick except at the second floor level where the keystones are red brick.

Gable Trim

The bargeboard on the three main gables is free-flowing with some suggestion of the Gothic style. It appears that the king posts once terminated in finials (as seen on the coach house) but have been cut off at the roof line.

Porte Cochere

A porte cochere was added to the west side of the house in the early 1920's. This structure was later closed in to create a garage; however, the original corner pillars are still in place.

Vestibule

At about the same time, a vestibule was added to the front entrance with very ornate curved, etched and bevelled glass panels. To accommodate the new vestibule, the existing front verandah was extended. This addition to the verandah is trimmed by a bargeboard treatment quite different from the main gables.

Doors and Windows

The windows are of wood and double hung. French doors lead into the front verandah from the diningroom. These were later covered with a storm window using the same ornate glass panels as are found in the vestibule.

Coach House

On the east side of the residence at the rear is a two-storey frame coach house which appears to have been constructed at the same time as the house. The front gable treatment matches that of the house and, as noted elsewhere, the finial is in tact.