

HISTORIC PORT ELGIN

Walking Tours



Walking Tour



1 515 Goderich Street

Maple Square Mall (Old High School)

This building was constructed as the High School in 1939 and served as a school of learning until 1975. There were several additions to the structure since its original construction in 1939. It was renamed in 1951 as Saugeen District High School. The current Saugeen District Secondary School is presently on Gustavus Street east of Wellington Street. The former high school building now contains several stores, an elementary school and the third floor contains apartments.

The southeast corner of the building has three ceramic tile murals representing sports, music, business and commerce.

2 521 Bricker Street

Lakeview Hall (Reany House)

This home was built in 1871 by Samuel Bricker Sr., the first Elder of Port Elgin. The house was situated on a parcel of land consisting of 10 lots. In 1876, Samuel Sr., and his wife Catherine sold the house and 4 lots to their son for the sum of \$1.00, and the remainder of the lots to their other son also for \$1.00. On July 19, 1882, as a result of a poker game Sam lost ownership of the house to John Campbell. The next day, Ada Bricker, Sam's wife repurchased the house. In 1883, Thomas Chambers

bought the house and the other 10 lots. The house changed ownership several times and was renovated as apartments and then a nursing home. The nursing home manager's wife had a serious accident while shaking heavy rugs over the balcony. The balcony fell and she broke both of her wrists. In 1967, the house was purchased by Bob and Grace Reany, who still own it. They are continuing to restore this building.



3 780 Gustavus Street

Saugeen District Secondary School

Port Elgin Public School:

A.D. 1889 Corner Stone

The return of the public school corner stone was to commemorate the building of the Port Elgin Public School in September 1889. The location is described as "the plot of land lying west of Stafford Street between Gustavus Street and Johnston Avenue". Saugeen District Secondary School is also the location of the Heritage Garden which was initiated by the teachers, students and local support

4 594 Goderich Street

Shield Hotel Site

The former Shield Hotel was constructed on the south west corner of Goderich and Gustavus Streets in 1900. It was a frequent stopping place for travelers. Loads of cord wood were brought into the town and sold on this corner.

5 603 Goderich Street

The Queen's

The Queen's Hotel was built by J.C. Kennedy in approximately 1890. It was constructed of brick from the Barthold Smith brick plant located on the east side of Mill Creek Road, east of Port Elgin. The Queen's is still operating. The previous owner, Kerry D'Arcy, had been its owner and proprietor for over 30 years.

6 613 Goderich Street

Eby Barber Shop

In 1894, Hiram Eby began his barbering in a little shop at 650 Goderich Street. In 1903, the shop was moved across the street to 617 Goderich Street. Members of the Eby family have been trimming hair and beards for over 100 years. If you require a shave and a hair cut it will cost more than 2 bits today, but the friendly, personal service is still available.

**7 625 Goderich Street
The Arlington**

The Arlington Block was also built from bricks from the Barthold Smith plant. It was built by D.O. Bricker in 1880. In 1992, the upper floors were renovated into apartments and the lower floor for stores.



**8 575 Green Street
Fenton House**

As we come to the main downtown corner, Green Street and Goderich Street, relax in the Coulter Parkette. The benches have been donated in memory of town residents. To the west, the house at 575 Green Street is owned by Betty and Tim Simpson. The house was moved from its original location on Goderich Street across from Maple Square Mall in 1989. It was a remarkable sight to see this house moving down the main street to its present location. The exterior of the house has been restored to its former condition.

**9 676 Goderich Street
Hilker Block**

Hilker and Company, formerly Ruby and Hilker, was one of the earliest commercial enterprises in Port Elgin. This commercial building was built in 1889. It has retained most of its appearance after 100 years. The structure, which bears a carved stone plaque dubbing it "The Commercial Building", is three stories high. It was constructed of local yellow brick, which is common to Victorian buildings in the region. It does however, boast a sandstone façade in the front (Goderich Street) side, and is the only building in the town to do so. Along the north (Mill Street) side of the building are a series of what appears from the ground to be shallow ornamental buttresses. From the roof, however, it is obvious that these brick protrusions are chimneys. In total there are five chimneys on the north side, and three less visible ones built into the south side wall. Originally, Mr. Hilker operated a store in one half of the ground floor and rented the other half out to another storekeeper. The second floor was intended for commercial and professional offices, and the third floor contained the meeting rooms for the local lodge. From the traces of gilded insignia which remains on the third floor windows, it appears that this group was the IOOF.

10 708 Goderich Street Port Elgin Library

This prominent Port Elgin landmark is one of a decreasing number of Carnegie Libraries remaining in Ontario. Andrew Carnegie was born in Dumferline, Scotland and emigrated to the United States with his parents at the age of 13. He lived a life of poverty in the back streets of Pittsburgh. Later in life he became a multi-millionaire. He spent the last part of his life giving away his wealth, and as a self-educated man, he ranked free public libraries high on his list of priorities. A total of 2811 Carnegie Libraries were built throughout the world with 111 of them constructed in Ontario. The Port Elgin Library was erected in 1908. The symmetrical façade of the building, the four pillars with large Ionic capitals, the oval windows on the north and south walls of the entrance incorporating a lamp of learning in their design, are characteristic of the Carnegie Library style. In the past the library was the centre of community activities, including the town and township Councils. In 1990, this building was designated by the Council as a Heritage Property under the Ontario Heritage Act.



11 705 Goderich Street Wismer House

The Wismer House was built in 1856 by Henry Hilker, who was elected as the first Reeve of Port Elgin in 1856. Later it was owned by Emery Wismer. Today it is still believed that we have Emery's Ghost in the building with odd occurrences happening. It was a mid-wife house in the 1940's. In the 1970's it housed a law office, hairdresser, and insurance office. Since 1987 it has been a restaurant.



12 699 Goderich Street Tolmie Memorial Presbyterian Church

This church was erected and dedicated in 1926. The "complimentary" addition was completed in 2002. Although 76 years difference between the blending of the old and new – interior and exterior – is architectural integrity at its best. The Tolmie Memorial Presbyterian Church was the 2004 recipient of the Heritage Conservation Award which was presented by the Saugeen Shores Municipal Heritage Committee (LACAC) to the church members for their respect and pride in heritage conservation.

13 683 Goderich Street The American Hotel

In 1890, this building was built by Henry Hilker, as the American Hotel. It was originally three storeys high and one of Port Elgin's finest hotels. At the rear of the building was Port Elgin's first silent movies theatre. The building was renovated in 1947 to house Fenton's Garage. In 1969, a fire destroyed the upper storey and the building was renovated to a two storey building.

14 618 Mill Street Town Hall Square

This Square stood adjacent to the original Town Hall. Until 2005 it was the greens for the Port Elgin Lawn Bowling Club. This ever popular sport began in Port Elgin in 1903. The monument in the centre was erected in 1903, in honour of Trooper Gordon Cummings, a Saugeen Township native and local school teacher. He was killed in action on December 13, 1900 at the battle of Nooitgedacht, the Boer War.



15 736 Wellington Street
Stevens, Hepner and Company

In 1883, the Port Elgin Brush Works was established by John Hepner. A disastrous fire and severe financial difficulties forced the enterprise into receivership in 1894. Two years later Herbert Stevens, in partnership with Hepner and E.H. Schiedel, purchased the company's assets and reconstituted the firm as Stevens, Hepner and Company. In 1969 a new addition to the Factory was opened. A section of the factory has been demolished. For many years the sound of the company's whistle could be heard at 7 a.m., 12 noon and 6 p.m. The whistle also doubled as a fire alarm. The company is still running today from this building. The world famous Keystone Curling brooms were made at the plant for decades.

16 **Nodwell Park on Highland Street**
Nodwell First Nations Village Site

This important Iroquoian Village Site was identified about 1900, and named after the family which then owned the property. Archaeological examinations in 1969 have uncovered a mid 14th century village, consisting of 12 long houses, from 42 – 139 feet in length, protected by a double palisade. It appears to have been occupied for about 10 to 20 years by a group of some 500 people who were predecessors of the Huron and Petun Indians. Although primarily farmers, growing pumpkins and sunflowers, they also engaged in considerable fishing and hunting. A large number of artifacts have been retrieved from the site including fragments of pottery from cooking vessels, smoking pipes, arrow heads, adzes, awls, and netting needles. The complete excavation of the village started in 1969 and was completed in 1971 as a joint National Museum of Man and the Royal Ontario Museum project. Some of the artifacts are on display at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto. On July 15, 1973 a plaque commemorating the Nodwell Site was erected. In 1993 the Nodwell First Nations Village Site was designated by the Port Elgin Council as a Heritage Property under the Ontario Heritage Act.