

Location: 14 Bridge Street,
Almonte, Ontario.
Lots 1-6, Colin King Survey.

Present Owner: The Corporation of the Town of Almonte

Present Occupant :
Same

Present Use: Municipal Offices, Library, County Courtroom.

Statement of Significance:

Built in 1885, this building has continued as the centre of municipal life in Almonte. It has housed the municipal offices, fire station, county court and library over the years. The towers remain as important landmarks along Bridge Street.

Part 1: Historical Information.

A Physical History

1. Original and Subsequent Owners:

The building itself has always been owned by the Town of Almonte. The property was purchased from a number of house and store owners in 1884, for a total of \$6000.

2 Date of Erection:
1885

3 Architect:

The contractor was Mr. George Willoughby, who may have also acted as designer of the structure.

4 Alterations and Additions:

There was extensive alteration done to the front entrance in 1966, which involved the construction of a new portico. A small, one-storey addition was constructed at the rear and a small wooden porch and sunroom were built over the southwest door.

B Historical Events and Persons connected with the Structure:

The Almonte Town Hall was built about the time of the Riel Rebellion in the North West. This stone building which was begun in 1884 was completed the following year. Bennett Rosamond, a well-known citizen of his time, was the first mayor. In order to build this Town Hall, a whole triangle of houses, including ten small homes and a few stores had to be torn down. The stone for the Town Hall was brought from Hogan's Quarry and the stone for the trimmings was brought from the Beckwith Quarry.

Historical Persons and Events (cont.)

Bennett Rosamund was the first mayor after the Town Hall was built. Dr. Metcalfe, a well-known citizen of this town, was mayor for seven years; one of the longest terms served as mayor.

Sources of Information:

Old Views:

Photograph of Town Hall, c.1910. From the Collection of Mrs. H. Lowry.

Books: Bond, C.C.J. The Ottawa Country , Queen's Printer, Ottawa, 1968.

McGill, Jean. A Pioneer History of the County of Lanark, T.H. Best Co., Ltd., Toronto, 1968.

Lanark County Old Days , Prepared by the students of Almonte District High School, 1943. Held by the Almonte Library.

Other Materials:

File on Almonte Town Hall. Held by the National Capital Commission, Heritage Division, Ottawa.

Deeds, etc.:

North Lanark Registry Office, Almonte, Ontario.

Part 11: Architectural Information.

A. General Statement

1 Architectural Character:

The building is a good example of German Romanesque Revival.

2 Condition: Good.

B Description of Exterior:

1 Overall Dimensions:

The Town Hall is 3½ stories high including the attic. It is designed along the central hall plan. It is 79'9" long (8 bays) and 34' wide (9 bays). The east tower is 90' high while the west tower is 60' high.

2 Foundations: The foundations are of rough ashlar stone.

3 Wall Construction, finish and colour:

The walls are of rough ashlar accented at the corners by dark ashlar quoins and by a dark ashlar string coursing running between the first and second storey. The grouting was originally red in colour.

4 Structural System and Framing:

Masonry, load-bearing walls.

5 Porches: There are four stone piers plus an enclosed porch at the front of the building. This is a replacement of the original wooden one. There is also an enclosed entrance for the southwest door, which is a modern addition.

6 Chimneys: There are pierced, stone chimneys on both the north and south sides of the buildings.

7 Openings:

a) Doors and doorways: There is a centre door in the gable facade. This used to be a double panelled, Gothic style door with stone voussoirs and a fanlight. These have since been replaced with modern glass doors.

There are also doors located in the base of each tower; both of these have been altered. The north tower had a large wooden door which was used for fire engines, when the station was located there. The doors which are located on the third floor of the north and south sides (as fire escapes) are new additions. Doors are also located at the southwest corner and in the centre of the rear facade. These are all plain, wooden doors.

b) Windows: There is a wide variety of windows reflecting the eclectic nature of the structure. All the windows have either lintels or voussoirs of stone. They vary from Gothic style (some with tracery) to plain, rectangular windows. The main window is a large, Gothic style filled in with glass brick. It originally had several separate panes of glass divided by tracery.

8 Roof:

a) Shape, Covering:

There is a cross-gabled roof covered with shingles. Some polychromy has been done through the use of different coloured shingles. There is a plain, boxed cornice.

b) Dormers:

There are wooden dormers, with decorated pediments, on the north and south sides of the roof.

c) Towers:

There are two asymmetric towers which contribute character to the structure. The south tower is of stone construction and is gabled, with wooden dormers. The larger north tower is more elaborate in design. It is also of stone with a cupola of wood. The eaves are bracketed and the windows are decorated. The upper half which has finials and wooden pediments, once housed the fire bell.

It was removed in 1968, upon completion of the new fire hall.

C Description of Interior: Not done.

D Site:

a) General Setting and Orientation:

The Town Hall is located at the intersection of Bridge, Water and Little Bridge Streets. It faces south to Bridge Street and has as its northern boundary, the Mississippi River. The structure is well situated to command attention from all directions in the town.

b) Outbuildings:

There is a new one storey building in the rear of the property which serves as the town's fire hall. This was constructed in 1968. It should also be noted that two pieces of sculpture by R.Tait McKenzie enhance the grounds of the Town Hall.

Part 111: Project Information:

Compiled by Susan Algie under the auspices of the Almonte Local Architectural Advisory Committee and the Ontario Heritage Foundation, July, 1977.