

KEFFER HOUSE, Almonte, Ontario.

Location : 109 Princess St., Almonte, Lanark County, Ontario.
Lot 45, Mitcheson Section.
Present Owner : Michael Albert Charles Keffer and Darlene Valerie Keffer
Present Occupant: Michael Albert Charles Keffer and Darlene Valerie Keffer
Present Use : Dwelling House

Statement of Significance : This house appears to date from 1861. It is significant as an early example of domestic architecture in Almonte. It has retained much of its original wood finish and trim and has an attractive setting because of its location towards the back of the lot. It was built by a local carpenter and shows influence of both the Classic Revival and Regency styles.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and Subsequent Owners: In 1829 the Crown granted David Shepherd land in what is now Almonte, including 100 acres in the northeast half of lot 16 in concession 9 of Ramsay township. David Shepherd sold that land to Daniel Shipman in the same year for \$600. In 1830, Daniel Shipman sold 52 acres of land in lots 15 and 16 to Isaiah K. Boyce. Edward Mitcheson then bought 50 acres from Isaiah K. Boyce in 1846 consisting of 46 acres in lot 16 and 4 acres in lot 15 for \$800. In 1848 Edward Mitcheson sold the land to James Wylie and William Wylie for \$1744.50 and then bought it back for the same price. Edward Mitcheson died in 1856 and in his will he left the land to Rachel Mitcheson, his widow. The land was divided into village lots and in 1860, John Scott, the executor for Edward Mitcheson's will and Rachel Mitcheson sold lot 45 of the Mitcheson section to a carpenter, George McLellan, for \$100. In the same year George McLellan and wife sold the lot for \$250. to John Hunter who was a spinner. John Briggs bought the land in 1867. In 1899 Briggs died and his estate went to his wife, Martha Briggs. Martha Briggs died in 1910 and her estate went to her executor, William Beck. In 1937 William Beck died leaving his wife, Elizabeth J. Beck as his sole beneficiary. William C. Armstrong bought lot 45 from Elizabeth J. Beck in 1941 for \$500. In 1943 William C. Armstrong died and his daughter, Lillian Ann Pink, who was the executrix of the will, inherited his estate. However, this information wasn't officially registered so in 1979 declarations were made and registered in the Registry Office stating that Lillian Ann Pink was the legal owner of lot 45 on Princess Street. Lillian Ann Pink sold the land to her children Eleanor Barnes, William Pink, Douglas Pink and Donald Pink for \$1. in 1983. She died 2 years later. In 1986 lot 45 and lot 44 were sold to Michael Albert Charles Keffer and Darlene Valerie Keffer for \$47,000.

2. Date of Erection: It is known that the house was present on the lot in 1861 and judging from the rise in the price of the property it seems likely that the house was built in 1860.

3. Architect: Unknown. The builder could have been George McLellan, the carpenter who owned the land at the time the house is assumed to have been built.

4. Alterations and Additions: One of the neighbours remembers that there was a roof extending over the entire verandah which was torn down and replaced with a small roof just over the entrance way. There was also a shed built on to the back of the house but the date of this is uncertain. The present owners bought the house in early 1986 and since then they have torn down the 3 brick chimneys which used to be situated side right, side left and at the rear of the house. There is now a single metal chimney at the exterior rear of the house. There was also a door on the east side of the rear wing which was moved to the west side. There is evidence suggesting that there had been a door previously in this location. A shed dormer has been added along the back of the main gable during the last year to create more room upstairs.

B. Historical Events or Persons Connected with the Structure:

In February of 1860 George McLellan bought lot 45 and in the same year he sold it for over twice the amount he paid for it. George McLellan was a carpenter in the village of Almonte, so it is possible that he bought the land, built a house on it and sold it to John Hunter who was a spinner.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This house shows influences from the Regency period as well as from the Classic Revival period. Regency touches include the large front gallery with geometric treillage in the railing and the small-paned windows. The medium pitched gable roof with returned eaves is characteristic of the Classic Revival period.

2. Condition: good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The house is 1½ storeys in height with the facade being about 8 metres (3 bays) wide by 10 metres deep.

2. Foundation: Stone. The basement is a crawl space.

3. Wall Construction, Finish, Colour: The walls are of wood construction with horizontal cove siding painted yellow. There are also white corner boards, window and door surrounds, eave trim and skirting boards.

4. Structural system and framing: undetermined.

5. Porches: There is a verandah across the front facade and extending down one side of the house built on a stone foundation. There is white treillage in the railing across the facade but there is no railing down the side. There is a small porch roof with a pediment covering the main entrance; the rest of the verandah is open. The small roof is apparently of fairly recent date. The main stairs up to the verandah and entrance are straight with an open railing.

6. Chimneys: The original chimney is not present. There is a single metal chimney at the exterior rear of the house.

7. Openings:

a) Doors and doorways: The main entrance is slightly off-centre in the facade. The structural opening is flat with moulded flat trim outside the opening and eared at the bottom. There is a flat transom with three lights at the head of the door. There is also a door on the rear wing of the house facing west.

b) Windows: The typical window has simple moulded trim, with six over six single-hung sash.

8. Roof:

a) Shape, covering: The roof type is a medium gable covered with black asphalt shingles. It has projecting eaves with a plain fascia, soffit and a moulded frieze. The verges also project and have a moulded fascia, soffit and frieze. The eaves and verges are painted white and the eaves are returned.

C. Description of Interior: Not done.

D. Site:

a) General setting and orientation: The house faces north at the back of the lot on Princess Street. The lot is long and narrow with a large front lawn and large trees including one on either side of the verandah.

b) Outbuildings: None.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

1. North Lanark Registry Office. Almonte, Ontario.
2. Province of Ontario Census for 1861, 1871 and 1881. Available on microfilm at the Elizabeth Kelly Library, Almonte, Ontario.
3. Assessment Rolls for the village of Almonte 1871-1877. Almonte Town Hall.
4. Elizabeth Kelly Library files, Almonte, Ontario.

PART IV PROJECT INFORMATION

Compiled by Sue Martin under the auspices of the Almonte/Ramsay Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee, August, 1987.