



The Parker House located at 16 Yonge Street South, Elmvale was built in 1899 for Albert Parker and his wife Jennie (nee Drysdale). Albert Parker of Barrie was a stone and brick mason who became well known for building fine brick homes in the Elmvale/Flos area at the turn of the century. The Parkers purchased the vacant lot where the Parker House now stands in the year of their marriage, 1897. His wife Jennie was the daughter of James Drysdale and Mary Ritchie.

The Parker House is constructed of solid brick supplied by Thomas McGrath of Saurin (24,000 bricks at \$7.00 per thousand). The carpenter is not known, but can be tentatively attributed to John R. Graham of Elmvale.

The architect was very probably Smith & Bird of Barrie (based upon reference in Smith's surviving accounts of a house on Mary St. in Barrie which is almost identical to the Parker/Preston House).

The Parkers probably built the house as a showplace, but to be sold. In 1902, the House was conveyed to Isabella Preston-Presney who at the same time purchased adjoining Block C with the wagon shop. At some date not long after, the shop was moved from Block C to the rear of Block D to be used as a stable in connection with the Parker House. The shop remained there until it was moved to another location in about 1981.

Isobella (Thompson) and her husband William Presney-Preston retired to the Parker House. In 1904, the Prestons had the brick kitchen added to the Parker House. The large double lot was developed into lawns and gardens.

After the Prestons died, the house was owned by their widowed daughter Minnie (Mrs. Albert) Chesley. On her death, the House was transferred to her sister Violet (Letty) who had married William Drysdale at Willow Bank in 1898. After the Drysdales died, the House was left in 1961 to their son, Earl. Ten years later, Earl Drysdale sold Block C, reserving an easement, and an apartment building was built where the wagon shop had once been.

Upon his death, the House passed to his cousin Isobel (daughter of William and Isobella Preston's son Charles). Miss Preston took great care of the House which containing most of her grandparents original furnishings. She was careful to preserve the historic character of the house, in particular during the rebuilding of the chimney by John and Peter Tinney. After her death, the house was bequeathed to her nephew and a short time thereafter was sold to David and Anne Robbins in 1999.

Designated Features

The important characteristics and features worthy of designation and protection are:

- Use of arches throughout including exterior brickwork at front entrance; stained glass windows in front living room, dining room and entranceway alcove; and faux arches above windows, recessed alcove over fireplace and both upper and lower alcoves;
- Original central box hall layout including original room layout for the front entranceway, central box hall, front living room, dining room and upper hall as well as the building perimeter plan on the north, south and east sides;
- Location, size and designs of the doors and windows. In particular, the use of stained glass panels in the doors and windows on the lower level including the windows in the front entranceway, above the picture windows in the front living room and dining room, in the unique alcove for the fireplace, and the French doors leading to porch on northern side of house. Also notable is the pocket doors leading to the front living room and movable transoms on upper level;
- Interior wood trim, including asymmetrical carved fireplace mantle, central staircase, original baseboard, wooden floors, mouldings and doors including unique crown mouldings, corner blocks and dados. This includes the existing stained finish in the front entranceway and alcove, central box hall and staircase, front living room and dining room;
- Original door latches, hinges, switch plates and register grates;
- Exterior unpainted brick finish and the accompanying wood trim as well as the side porches (upper and lower) on the north side. Unobstructed view of eastern (front) northern and southern sides to maintain the building form and envelope;
- Roofline and chimneys, including the detailed brickwork on the south side.