

GRAVENHURST *Heritage* WALKING TOUR



Once known as Sawdust City, Gravenhurst has a colourful history built on a pioneering spirit. From sawmills and lumber to great fires, and medical innovation and industry to tourism, Gravenhurst has an unwavering spirit that has endured through both difficult and bountiful times.

Our Heritage Walking Tour program will take you through historical points of interest throughout Gravenhurst's downtown. This tour will give residents and visitors a chance to bring to life the history of our Town and to explore our story.

More information on each point of interest is also available online by scanning on the QR code or visiting the link provided on every page.

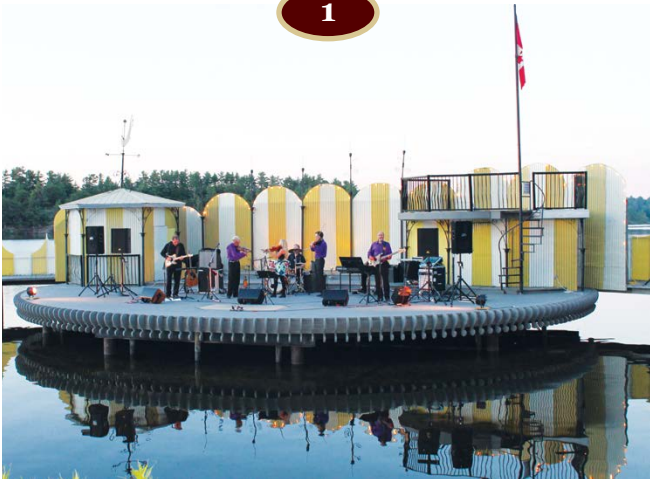


GRAVENHURST

Heritage

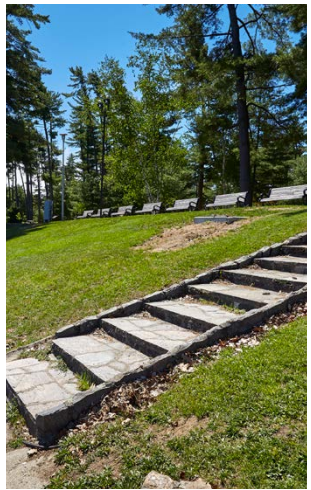
WALKING TOUR

- 1 Music On The Barge - Gull Lake Park
- 2 Railway Station - 150 Second St.
- 3 Vincent/Fry Residence - 190 Royal St.
- 4 Masonic Lodge - 235 Muskoka Rd. S.
- 5 Carnegie Library - 275 Muskoka Rd. S.
- 6 Gravenhurst Opera House - 295 Muskoka Rd. S.
- 7 Empress Hotel - 310 Muskoka Rd. S.
- 8 Clipsham House - 180 Phillip St. W.
- 9 St. James Anglican Church - 191 Hotchkiss St.
- 10 Albert Hill Building - 181 Bay St.
- 11 Brown's Beverages - 220 Bay St.
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- 13 Mowry Residence - 320 Bay St.
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- 24 Gateway Arch - 1100 Muskoka Rd. S.
- 25 Fire Station No. 1 (former Town Hall) - 190 Harvie St.



Music on the Barge

Gull Lake Park



Barge concerts in Gull Lake Park predate 1959 and are a time honoured tradition in Gravenhurst. The permanent structure in the park today was completed for the arrival of Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip for an opening day concert July 4th, 1959. The exotic array of music can still be heard every Sunday with new acts and the ever faithful staple “The Good Brothers”. As an aside to this, Gull Lake was the site of ice harvesting during winter up until electric refrigeration replaced the need. The stairs and wall located in Gull Lake Park were constructed by three German prisoners. These prisoners came from Camp 20, a Canadian Government run German POW camp.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/WTBARGE to learn
more about this historical building.



Railway Station

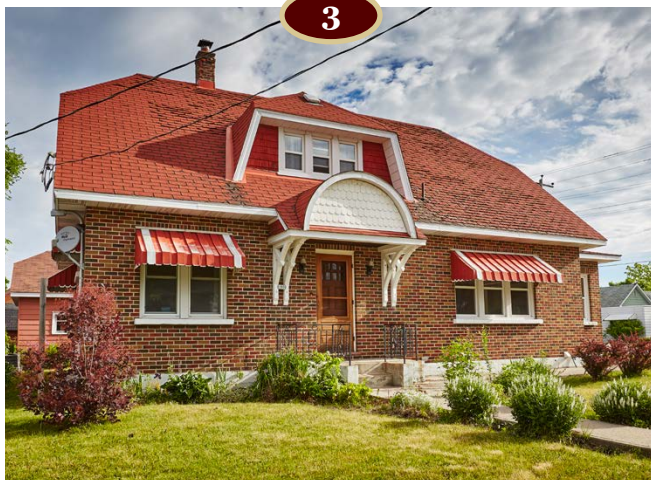
150 Second St.



The first railway to reach Gravenhurst was the Northern Railway of Canada, which arrived in 1875, and made possible a thriving lumber and tourist industry. The original station was in the south end of town. Taken over by the Grand Trunk Railway in 1887, it was destroyed by fire in 1913. The present station was opened in 1919 by the Prince of Wales, who later became King Edward VIII. It has been used by the Canadian National Railway for many decades, as well as by Ontario Northland. Today it serves as a bus depot and coffee shop, and also house relics of the railway era. It was designated as a heritage structure in 2012.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/150SECOND to
 learn more about this historical building.



Fry/Vincent Residence

190 Royal St.



This historic family residence was constructed in 1942 and is an architectural twin of the rectory of St. James Anglican Church located next door. The Vincent's, former owners of this residence, were quite active in local business and politics. They owned a restaurant, retail store, and a shipping company. Cyril Vincent was mayor of Gravenhurst for a term in the 1950s. In addition, Order of Canada earning photographer Henry Fry who married Dorothy Vincent lived here and worked from a dark room located in this home.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/190ROYAL to learn
 more about this historical building.



Masonic Lodge

235 Muskoka Rd. S.



The present three storey brick building, formerly the H.H. Marter Furniture Store, was built in the 1890's. It was purchased from Mr. Marter in 1920 by seven leading Masons; the mortgage was paid off in 1948 and the building was handed over to the membership. The upper storey was ornately fitted for Masonic meetings, which continued until 2014. The building was put up for sale at that time, but the Masons permitted public visits in 2011 and 2014. The heritage photo above shows the construction of this building in the 1890s.

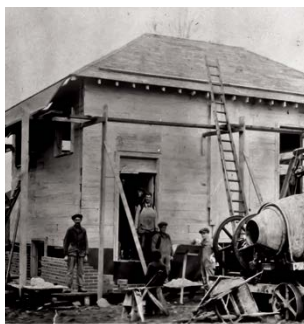


Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/235MUSKOKA to
 learn more about this historical building.



Carnegie Library

275 Muskoka Rd. S.



Between 1886 and 1919, Andrew Carnegie, a Scottish born steel magnate and philanthropist established a foundation which funded the building of public libraries in communities across North America. The town sought funding from the foundation and was granted \$7000US in March of 1906. Subsequently, the town felt it could not meet the requirements for operation and dropped the project. The project was reopened in 1922 and the town was granted special dispensation; the building was completed by Andrew Ferguson in 1923. The library is the last one in Ontario to be funded by the foundation and is one of 90 “Carnegies” left. Carnegie’s philanthropy is legendary, having given away nearly 90% of his earned fortune. This building was completed three years after his death.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/275MUSKOKA to
 learn more about this historical building.



Gravenhurst Opera House

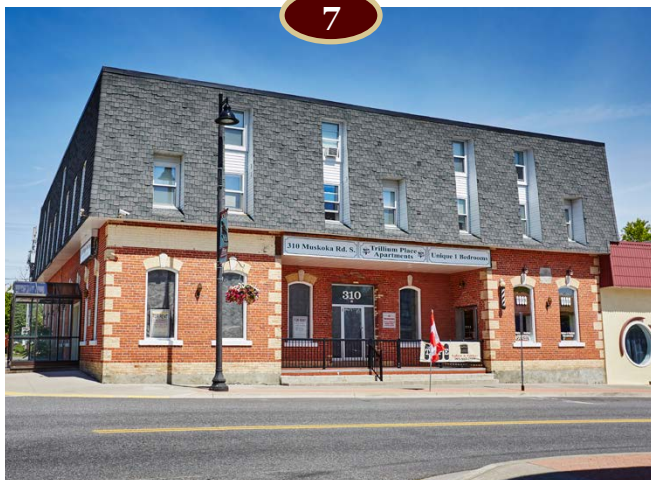
295 Muskoka Rd. S.



The Opera House dates to 1901, built on the site of the first Central Public School. After the Great Fire of 1887, and another fire in 1897 took down Town Hall and the Fire station, the town decided to build a multi-purpose facility that would be a more fire resistant brick structure. The building costs \$5000 and was deemed extravagant by some, earning the building the nickname “Mickle’s Folly” after Charles Mickle the presiding mayor. Since March 12th, 1901, the building has been the cultural centre of the town and has seen over six million patrons, making it more like Mickle’s vision than his folly.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/295MUSKOKA to
learn more about this historical building.



Empress Hotel

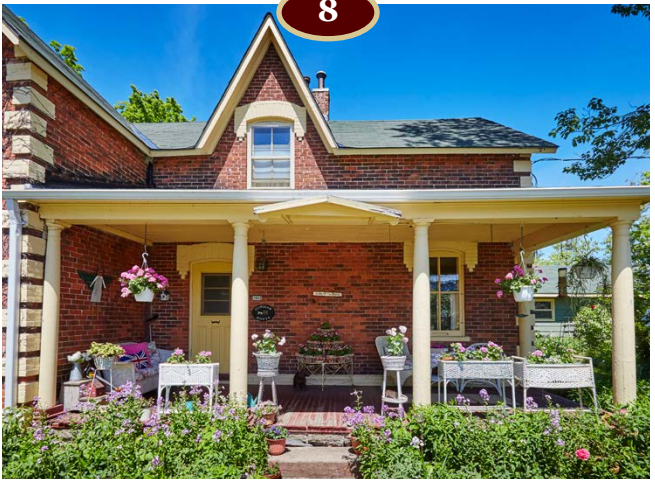
310 Muskoka Rd. S.



James Sharpe opened the Caledonia Hotel here in 1881, only to see it destroyed in the Great Fire of 1887. In 1888 it was reconstructed as the Empress Hotel and later purchased by James Gilmour in 1906. Mr. Gilmour sold it and left town, only to return and repurchase the hotel in 1916, naming it “The Gilmour”. The hotel and its name operated as such under different owners until the mid-1980’s when it was converted into commercial space on the ground floor and apartments above.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/310MUSKOKA to
 learn more about this historical building.



Clipsham House

180 Phillip St. W.



Built in 1877, it is thought to be one of the oldest surviving residences in Downtown Gravenhurst. The structure reflects the prominence of James Clipsham, a blacksmith who owned the adjacent Carriage Works. The Great Fire of 1887 destroyed the Carriage Works, but the house survived. In addition to being constructed of brick (exceptional in a lumber town at the time), the home has a large porch, contrasting brick trim to resemble quoins, gable windows and a single storey annex. The inset Heritage photo shows the Clipsham Carriage Works, which was located at Muskoka Rd. And Phillip St.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/180PHILLIP to learn
 more about this historical building.



St. James Anglican Church

191 Hotchkiss St.



The second St. James Church (first on this site), built in the spring of 1882, was a wood structure that burned in the Great Fire of 1887; F.A. Fowler was contracted as the architect of the church that stands today, which was dedicated at Christmas in 1888. This cost approximately \$2,215 to complete. This red brick church features a noteworthy belfry housing a 700-pound bell. This bell was funded by money raised by The Ladies' Aid Society and was first rung on March 21, 1939. The church sold its parish hall on Sharpe St. to the 1st Gravenhurst Boy Scouts and used the \$600 to excavate and construct a basement. In 2010, the Bishop of Algoma dedicated a commemorative plaque in celebration of the 143rd anniversary.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/191HOTCHKISS to
 learn more about this historical building.



Albert Hill Building

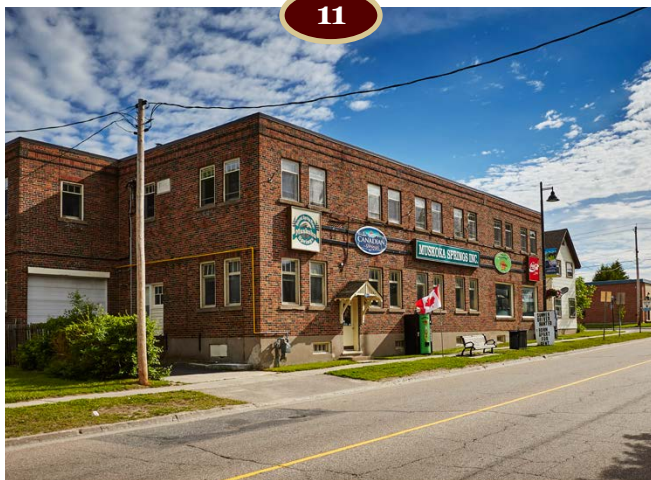
181 Bay St.



Built in 1887, this building was home to former mayor Albert Hill, a noted blacksmith who operated a major livery stable in town. The wrought iron fence which is still in place was his work. This building received a Muskoka Foundation Stewardship Award in 2001 and it was added to the Municipal Register in 2012.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/181BAY to learn
 more about this historical building.



Brown's Beverages

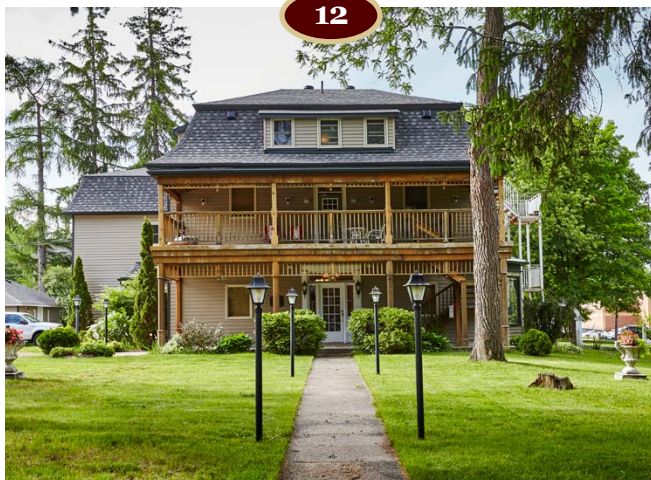
220 Bay St



The bottling plant originally on Hotchkiss St. was established in 1873 utilizing a nearby spring of crystal clear water. Later the operation relocated to Bay St. in a brown two storey brick building. The owner, Dugald Brown was a popular entrepreneur and hotelier. Product was delivered on wooden buckboards pulled by big draft horses. As soft drinks became popular in the early 1900s, Brown's devised its ginger ale recipe. The factory became a Coca-Cola bottler and distributor in 1926. The brown brick section of the current large complex was added to the Municipal Register in 2012.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/220BAY to learn
 more about this historical building.



Rosehurst Manor

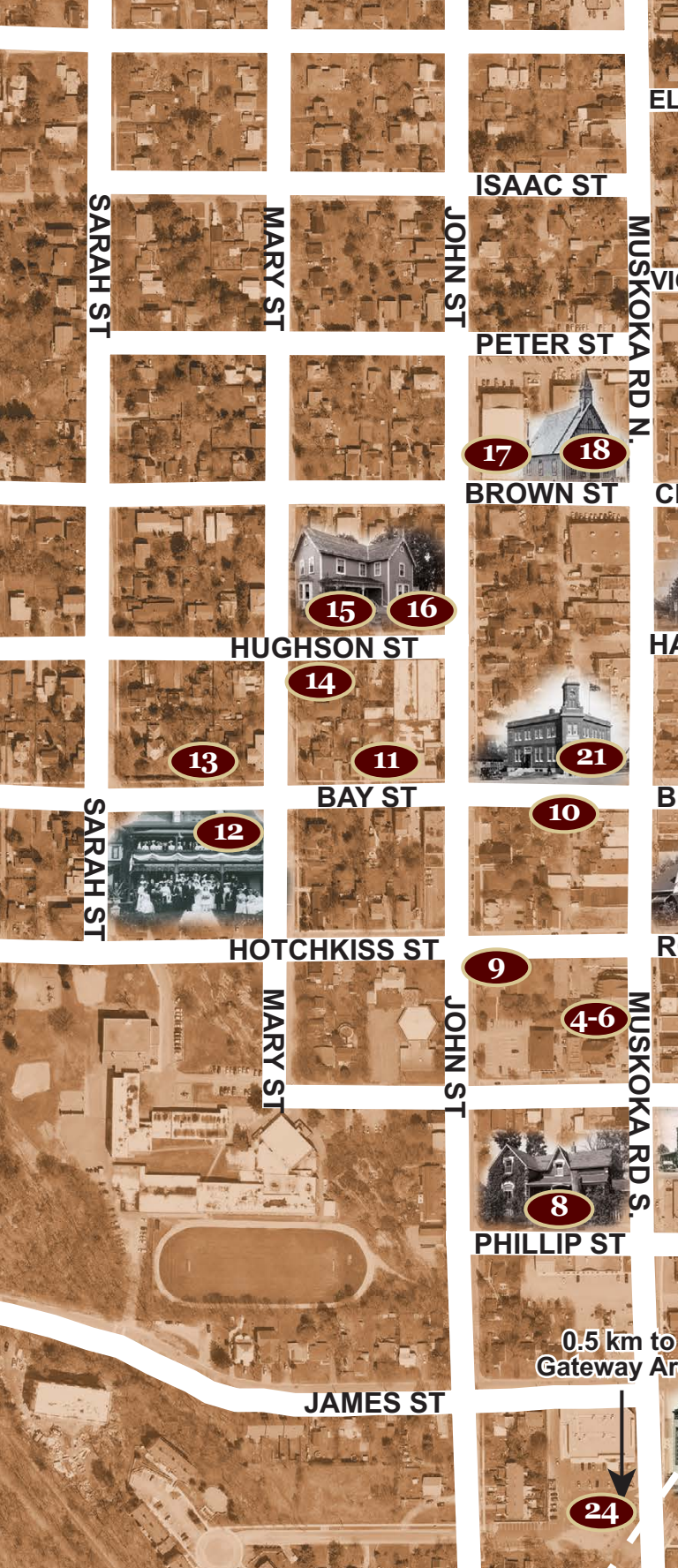
315 Bay St.



Rosehurst Manor was built in 1884, and served as the stately home of Charles Mickle, owner of one of Gravenhurst's largest sawmills and twice mayor. Mr. Mickle built it with a mansard roof, a bay window, three garden arches, and some carriage steps on Bay St., all of which survive today. Under Mrs. Emma Mickle, Rosehurst was the social hub of Gravenhurst and a cultural centre. After their parents' deaths, Bertha and Grace sold it to Michael and Viola Garner, who renamed it Garner Lodge and used it for tourist accommodations and long term lodgings. It continued to serve as thus for another sixty years under ten different owners. Rosehurst was completely renovated in 2013-14 and is now a multi-residential building. The property was designated as a heritage property in 2015.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/315BAY to learn
 more about this historical building.



SARAH ST

MARY ST

JOHN ST

ISAAC ST

MUSKOKA RD N.

PETER ST

17

18

BROWN ST

15

16

HUGHSON ST

14

11

21

BAY ST

SARAH ST

12

BAY ST

10

HOTCHKISS ST

9

4-6

MARY ST

JOHN ST

MUSKOKA RD S.

8

PHILLIP ST

0.5 km to Gateway Ar

JAMES ST

24

DER ST

CTORIA ST

HURCH ST

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20

25

ARVIE ST.

22

ROCK ST

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23

1

ROYAL ST

3

SECOND ST

FIRST ST

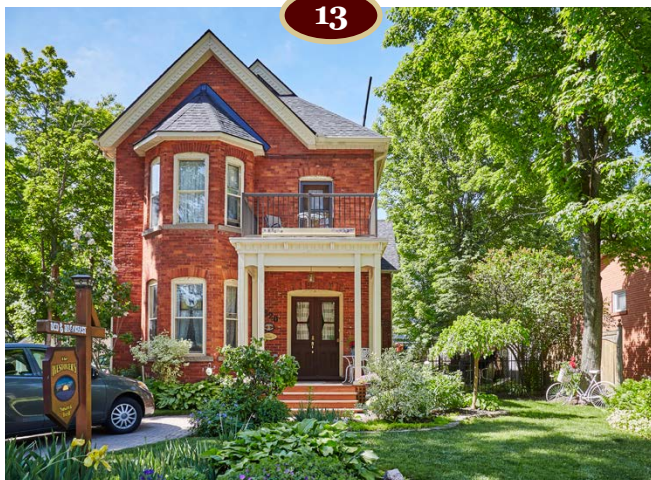
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PHILLIP ST

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BISHOP ST





Mowry Residence

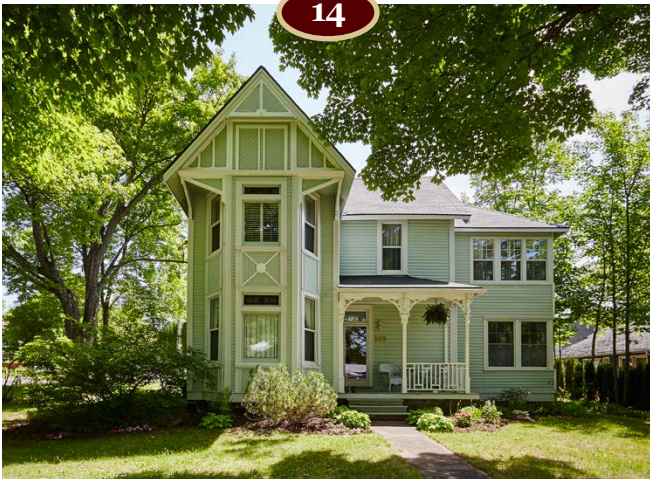
320 Bay St.



This Victorian two storey red brick residence dates to circa 1886. Bradley Roe Mowry was the original owner who built the house on a lot once the property of Dugald Brown. Mowry also owned the iron foundry, the source of the Great Fire of 1887 which devastated the heart of Gravenhurst, wiping out 83 buildings. In 1908 the house was owned by the Link sisters, Annie and Greta. Afterwards the home was acquired by the East's who also owned Muskoka Sands, which later became Taboo Resort. An imposing portico was added in 2012. It was placed on the Gravenhurst Municipal Register in 2012. It received a Muskoka Heritage Foundation Built Heritage plaque in 2002.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/320BAY to learn
 more about this historical building.



Finch House

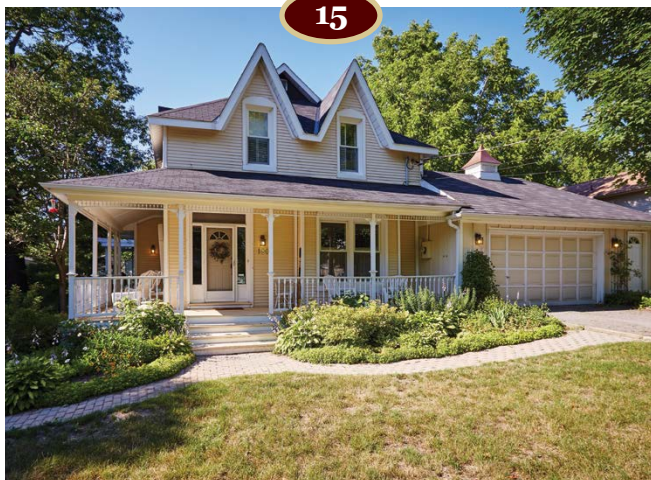
190 Mary St. N.



Finch House resembles (#16) Bethune Memorial House nearby and represents stately accommodation of a bygone era. It was built around 1880 in a 'StickStyle' architecture developed in New England. A one-time resident was a Mr. Thibault who was once a patient at the local tuberculosis sanatorium. The property was originally part of Dugald Brown's land grant. In 1926, Archdeacon Linsdell purchased the house and passed it along to his daughter May, a local newspaper columnist. The Griffith's purchased the property upon her passing and held it as a Bed and Breakfast until 1997. The wood frame house with large bay windows was listed on the Municipal Register in 2012.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/190MARY to learn
 more about this historical building.



LaFranier House

180 Hughson St.



LaFranier House, aka Blaincroft, was built around 1887, just adjacent to the Bethune Memorial House, on a lot first owned by the noted hotel-keeper and beverage merchant Dugald Brown. A one-and-a-half storey Victorian cottage built in Gothic Revival style, it was purchased in 1896 by David LaFranier, who ran the Fraser House hotel in downtown Gravenhurst. In 1912 the home went to JJ McNabb of the Mickle-Dyment Lumber Company, and in 1939 to postmaster Frederick Freeman, whose family kept it until 1991 and called it Maple Hall. Since then it has served as a bed and breakfast. It is notable for its gable windows, its wrap-around verandah, and the wooden ceilings in the living rooms. The inset heritage photo is of the Fraser Hotel run by David LaFranier.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/180HUGHSON to
 learn more about this historical building.



Bethune Memorial House

235 John St. N.



This former Presbyterian Church manse, built in 1880, is the birthplace of Dr. Norman Bethune (1890-1939), arguably the best known Canadian abroad given his status as a national hero in China. In 1936-37, he implemented mobile blood transfusion units at the battlefield during the Spanish Civil War. In 1939, he died performing surgery in China during the Second Sino-Japanese War. He was a non-conformist surgeon of note, a humanitarian and an advocate of socialized medicine in Canada, even before Tommy Douglas. This National Historic Site of Canada has been operated by Parks Canada since 1976. In 2015, it received over 15,000 visitors in part owing to its new Visitor Centre which offers many interactive displays. More than half the visitors come expressly from the People's Republic of China.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/235JOHN to learn
 more about this historical building.



Gravenhurst Curling Club

330 John St. N.



The Curling Club building occupies the site of the first Gravenhurst Arena, built in 1905 on the site of James Scott's skating rink. The old shed-like building was torn down in 1958 and the present six sheet facility, the largest in Muskoka, erected. The current structure was built in 1959 through volunteer labour. It is built with cement block curtain walls and preformed wooden roof/wall trusses. It features a heated arena, ice-making equipment, concrete floors and a two storey lounge with a viewing area that includes a kitchen and washrooms. This space continues to be a popular spot for residents and visitors alike.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/330JOHN to learn
 more about this historical building.



Knox Presbyterian Church

315 Muskoka Rd. N.



Knox is one of the oldest churches in Gravenhurst. The congregation was formed in 1875 and initially held services in North Ward School. The building dates to 1877, but it was a year later before it was dedicated by Reverend McDonnell of St Andrew's, Toronto. It is a fine example of Carpenter's Gothic style using board-and-batten wall construction. The one time steeple housed an 800-pound bell to summon churchgoers, and also to raise the alarm for firefighters. The bell was removed in 1932. Reverend Malcolm Bethune was minister from 1889 to 1893. His son, Dr. Norman Bethune, became famous for his dedication to social causes in Canada and for his medical care to victims of war in Spain and China. In 1922, the Presbyterians merged with the Methodists and the church was out of Presbyterian hands until 1937. Knox was designated a heritage property by the Town in 2014 when a plaque was erected.

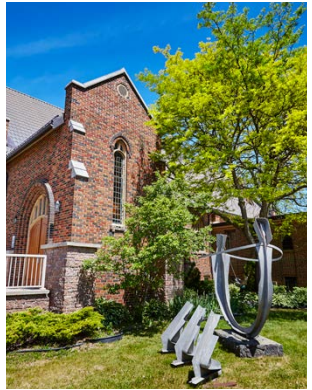


Scan the QR Code or visit
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 learn more about this historical building.



Trinity United Church

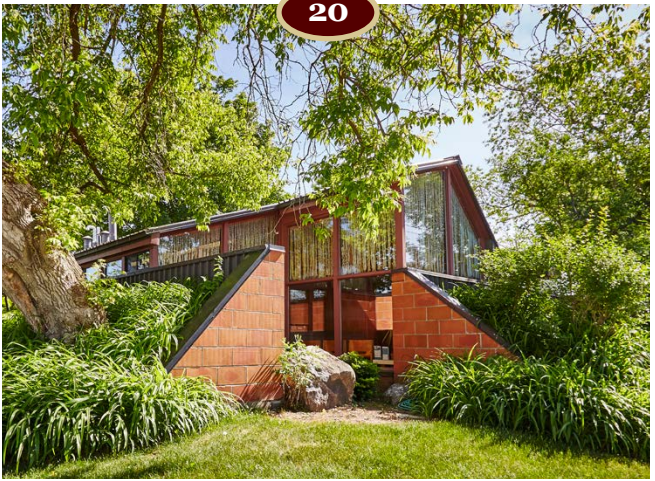
290 Muskoka Rd. N.



Trinity United Church was built in 1926 and expanded in 1959. It replaced the Methodist Church originally built on this site in 1877. When the church was rebuilt help was offered from many sources. Leslie Cain worked as contractor on the building and helped fit the pews, seats and pulpit brought from Wesley Church in Fergus. The pipe organ was donated by Dr. W.B. Kendall, chief physician of the Muskoka Cottage Sanatorium. Locals created the aluminum sculpture and flowers beds which adorn the lawn. The dark brick is highlighted by colourful florals displays each summer.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/290MUSKOKA to
 learn more about this historical building.



Stuart & Cruickshank Law Firm

195 Church St.



Constructed in 1973, the building brought an architectural design award to the firm of Howard Walker and Anthony Campfens of Toronto. The look of this modern architecture is so appealing that weddings have been performed in the courtyard. Mr. Walker also designed additions to St. James Anglican Church and the Opera House. In 2011, this building received the Built Urban Heritage Award from Muskoka Conservancy.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/195CHURCH to
learn more about this historical building.



Post Office Gravenhurst

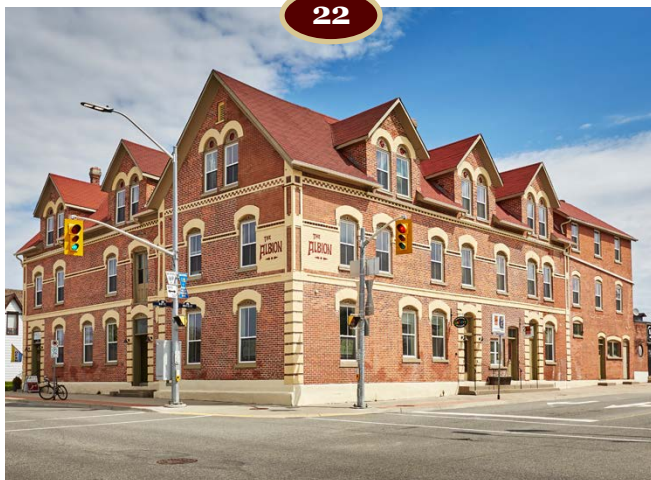
101 Muskoka Rd. N.



Gravenhurst Post Office stands on the most prominent intersection of town, Bay St. and Muskoka Rd. It was opened in 1926, more than three decades after the spurt of Thomas Fuller designed postal outlets which had appeared across the country. The choice lot had been purchased by the federal government in 1913. Originally the post office was a one storey building. Care was taken to match the colour and detailing of the dark brick and stone work of the floor below when a second storey, featuring a clock tower angled to the intersection, was added in 1931. Further additions were made to the building in 1934 and 1951 and the retail lobby was upgraded in the early 2000s. The tower is topped by a metal cupola. All four faces of the clock were restored to functioning in late 2015. The second storey handled customs and served as accommodation for the caretaker. The Post Office was designated a heritage property by the Town in 2015.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/101MUSKOKA to
 learn more about this historical building.



Albion Hotel

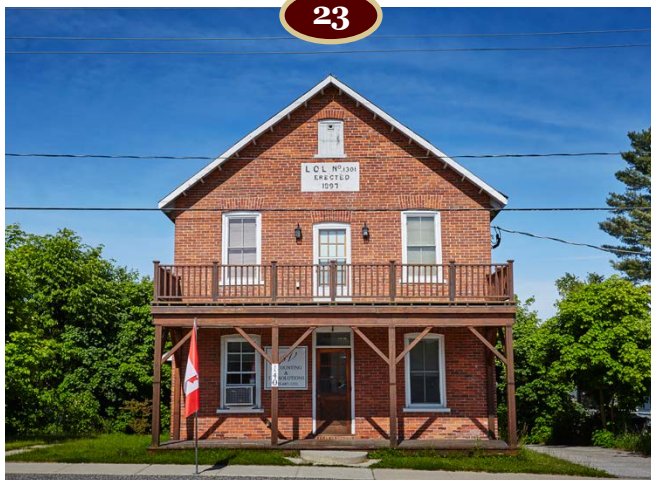
100 Muskoka Rd. N.



The original Albion Hotel was a frame building built by George Washington Taylor in 1879. It perished in the Great Fire of 1887. The present red brick hotel of Gothic Revival style rose the following year. It was known for its pleasant parlors, spacious dining room and well-equipped bar. A horse-drawn bus transported hotel guests free of charge to and from the railway station and the wharf station on the bay. In the late 1980s the exterior was restored and the interior converted to apartments and business premises. It was designated a heritage structure in 1983.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/100MUSKOKA to
 learn more about this historical building.



Loyal Orange Lodge Hall

140 First St.



Loyal Orange Lodge No. 1301 was built on a lot in the historic precinct next to the town hall and fire station of the day. The lodge, along with the town hall burned, in 1897. The original inscription on the upper part of the two storey brick building can be read from the street to this day. Long a focus of social life in rural communities and a religious and political power in Ontario, The Orange Lodge declined after World War II. Some of the most popular public Lodge activities were the July 12 parades down Muskoka Rd. These continued into the 1960s even after the virtual demise of the organization; however, no longer are secret passwords whispered through 1897 peepholes.

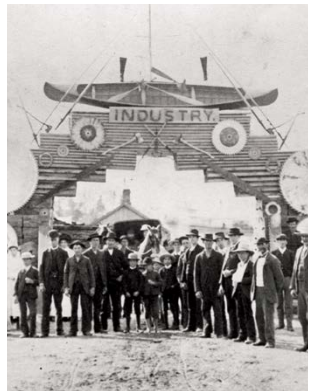


Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/140FIRST to learn
 more about this historical building.



Gateway Arch

1100 Muskoka Rd. S.



An archway has welcomed visitors since 1874 when the first, made from pine bows and flowers, was erected to mark the visit of Governor-General Lord Dufferin. A subsequent arch, called “Lumberman’s Arch” was erected in 1885 at the Muskoka Wharf. The heritage photo above depicts the arch that welcomed train passengers. Since then thousands of tourists have passed under one or other of the five subsequent arches. The present arch at the southern end of town was erected in 2009 after the roadway was widened. It is one of the few civic archways to survive in Ontario, with wording from an earlier version faithfully maintained. The Gateway Arch was designated a heritage structure in 2009.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/1100MUSKOKA
 to learn more about this historical building.



Fire Station No.1 (former Town Hall)

190 Harvie St.



A single level building was built in 1969 on historic Harvie St. to house the Town's fire station and police station. In 1993 a two storey addition was made to the structure which could accommodate the municipal offices that previously had been located in the Opera House. The fire station had been manned on a volunteer basis for most of the 20th century. The municipal office moved to its present location on Pineridge Gate in 2010. Today the former town hall continues as Fire Station No. 1, as well as the Ontario Provincial Police's Community Policing Office.



Scan the QR Code or visit
WWW.GRAVENHURST.CA/190HARVIE to learn
more about this historical building.

Gravenhurst Timeline

1859 Muskoka Road reaches area that is now downtown Gravenhurst.

1862 First Post Office opened under the name Gravenhurst, chosen from a book read by a secretary in the department called Gravenhurst, or Thoughts on Good and Evil.

1864 First school house built.

1866 A. P. Cockburn launches the Wenonah in Gravenhurst.

1873 Dougald Brown establishes Brown's Beverages.

1874 First royal visitors to Gravenhurst, the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava and Lady Dufferin.

1875 Northern Railway reaches Gravenhurst.

1877 Incorporation of the Village of Gravenhurst.

1878 The first Council Meeting of the Village of Gravenhurst.

1884 Rosehurst Manor is built as the home of Charles Mickle.

1887 John T. Harvie becomes Gravenhurst's first mayor.

1887 The Great Fire destroyed 83 buildings in the centre of town.

1887 Village of Gravenhurst becomes Town of Gravenhurst.

1890 Dr. Norman Bethune is born in Gravenhurst.

1897 Muskoka Cottage Sanatorium opens, first in Canada.

1897 Town Hall and Fire Hall burn down in fire.

1901 The first chartered bank, Dominion Bank, opens.

1901 Grand Opening of Gravenhurst Opera House.

1902 Muskoka Free Hospital for Consumptives is built, becoming the first in the world.

1920 Most of Muskoka Free Hospital for Consumptives burns down.

Muskoka Cottage Sanatorium and Muskoka Free Hospital for Consumptives combine and become the Muskoka Hospital.

1923 Gravenhurst Carnegie Library is built.

1926 New Post Office opens on corner of Muskoka and Bay streets.

1932 Council purchases Gull Lake Park from Canadian National Railway.

1933 Streets begin getting paved.

1940 Prisoner of War Camp 20 officially opens.

1941 Royal Norwegian Air Force purchases land adjacent to Muskoka Airport for training center.

1956 Canadian National Railway withdraws Muskoka Wharf train service.

1958 Ontario Fire College officially opens on former site of Muskoka Hospital.

1959 First performance on Gull Lake Barge for Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.

1970 District of Muskoka is incorporated. Townships of Ryde, Wood, Morrison, Muskoka and the Town of Gravenhurst amalgamate into one municipality.



Municipal Heritage Committee
"Preserving Gravenhurst's Past and Present for our Future"



www.Gravenhurst.ca/WalkingTour