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THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF PEMBROKE

BY-LAW 91-22

A BY-LAW TO DESIGNATE THE PROPERTY KNOWN
MUNICIPALLY AS 84 ISABELLA STREET
AS BEING OF ARCHITECTURAL AND/OR HISTORICAL
VALUE OR INTEREST

WHEREAS Section 29 of The Ontario Heritage Act, 1974 authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all buildings and structures thereon, to be of architectural or historic value or interest; and

WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the City of Pembroke has caused to be served on the owners of the lands and premises known as Pembroke Public School (Pembroke Police Station) at 84 Isabella Street and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, notice of intention to so designate the aforesaid real property and has caused such notice of intention to be published in the same newspaper having general circulation in the municipality once for each of three consecutive weeks; and

WHEREAS no notice of objection to the proposed designation has been served on the Chief Administrative Officer of the municipality;

THEREFORE the Council of the Corporation of the City of Pembroke enacts as follows:

1. There is designated as being of architectural and/or historical value or interest the real property known as Pembroke Public School (Pembroke Police Station) at 84 Isabella Street, more particularly described in Schedule A and Schedule B hereto.
2. The municipal solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule A hereto in the proper land registry office.
3. The Chief Administrative Officer is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served on the owner of the aforesaid property and on the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of the passing of this by-law to be published in the same newspaper having general circulation in the municipality once for each of three consecutive weeks.

READ A FIRST AND SECOND TIME THIS 16TH DAY OF APRIL, 1991.

Mayo

Mayor

John Stoye

C.A.O.

READ A THIRD TIME AND PASSED THIS 16TH DAY OF APRIL, 1991.

Mayo

Mayor

John Stoye

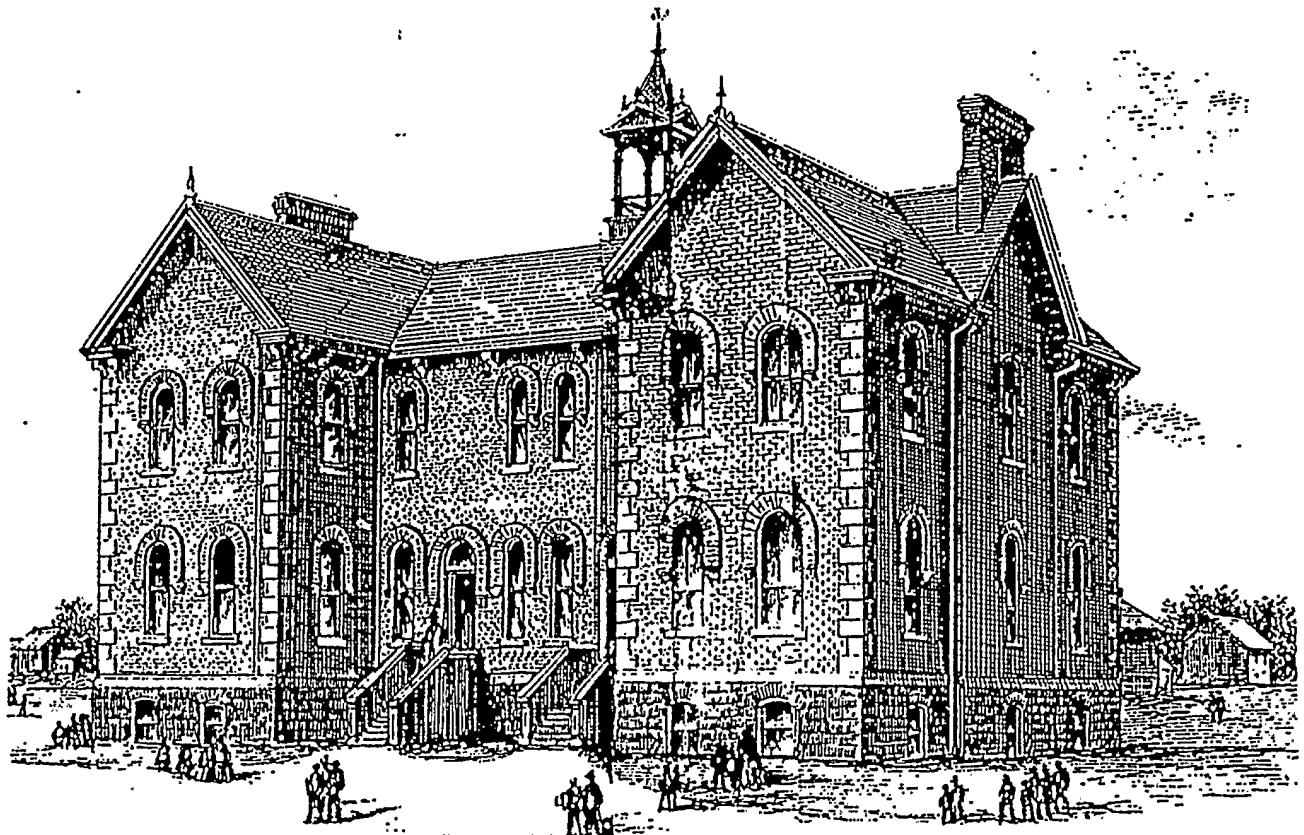
C.A.O.




Designation Report:

The Pembroke Public School

- erected 1875
- architect: John Mitchell, Pembroke
- builders: , John McDonald, Pembroke





The Pembroke Public School - 1875

Pembroke Public School/Pembroke Police Station

At its April 1875 meeting the Pembroke Board of Education decided to erect a new school house which would be large enough to accommodate 400 pupils to meet the demands placed on the education system by the growing population¹. The fact that the Pembroke Separate School Board had erected one of a similarly imposing size at the corner of Isabella and Moffat Streets the previous year was also, no doubt, an important consideration². Pembroke architect John Mitchell was instructed to prepare plans for the next meeting, Wednesday, April 28, 1875³.

Mitchell submitted the plans at that meeting and they were approved and tenders called⁴.

On May 14, 1875 the Pembroke Observer and Upper Ottawa Advertiser reported that the tenders were opened by A. Thomson, secretary of the board. The tenders were as follows:⁴

Daniel Moran - \$8,200
Charles Cruikshanks - \$7,872
Dowsly and O'Brien - \$7,400
Walter Beatty - \$7,350
John McDonald - \$7,225
George Greives - \$6,426

On June 4, 1875, the Observer reported that John McDonald, having provided the necessary securities, had been awarded the contract to build the new school. Mitchell was hired to supervise construction at salary of \$300.00. At the request of the trustees, the Free Masons laid the cornerstone of the new school, with "the customary ceremonies", at 3 o'clock, July 10, 1875.⁵

The earliest known illustration of the building is an 1878 engraving published in an illustrated feature on Pembroke which is in the possession of the Champlain Trail Museum. The building is noted in the 1881 Belden Atlas as a "very fine brick building", and contrasted with the Town Hall which was "of wood, antiquated in design and appearance."⁶

The building housed both public and high schools until the construction of the Pembroke High School in 1885.

Around the turn of the century the original back section of the school, a frame structure finished in board and batten, was replaced by the current brick addition.

In 1948 an unfortunate "improvement" led to the removal of the gabled roof and bell tower and the construction of a boxy entrance addition.

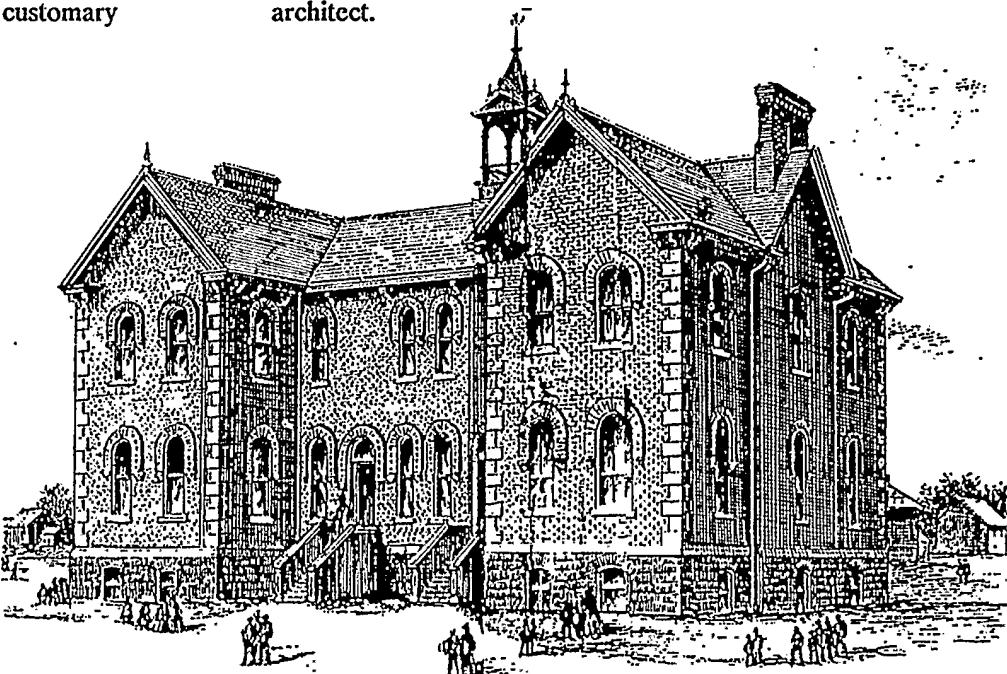
As originally designed, the public school was a fine example of the Italianate or "bracketed" style with strong gothic influences. Mitchell, the architect, was responsible for a number of important gothic revival buildings in Pembroke including the 1876 W.W. Dickson residence, The Maples⁷ (demolished c. 1947), and the W.B. McAllister residence at 348 Pembroke Street East⁸.

The school building is mentioned and/or illustrated in much of the literature regarding Pembroke, including the above noted Belden Atlas, several commemorative and souvenir books and the historical work "But This is Our War" by Grace Morris Craig.

Socially, the building has served as a focal point for the central section of Pembroke for 115 years; as a school for 95 years and more recently as public offices. It is the last survivor of the group of schools that made the neighborhood the educational centre of the town until well into the current century. It is also the oldest surviving municipal public building, built during a period of rapid growth as an expression of optimism and faith in the future of Pembroke.

Architecturally, the building is one of the few surviving of this period and style in the city and is probably the most prominent.

Although little is known of the architect, John Mitchell, he was a local man and quite probably Pembroke's first local architect.



Pembroke Public School, c. 1878.

Architectural Description

Architect John Mitchell's 1875 design of the former Pembroke Public School is a fine example of the two main architectural styles popular in north-eastern North America between 1830 and 1880. The detailing of the building exhibits the contemporary (1850-1880) intuitive Italianate styling, while the planning and massing principles strongly exemplify the more formal Gothic Revival style most popular between 1830 and 1850.

The building's Italianate styling is best noted in its rich detailing:

1. All the windows were tall and slender, with large glass panes, topped by a full arch and accented by graceful brick voissoirs.
2. The two entrance doors were double leaf two-panel doors capped with a round headed arch with radial glazing. Approaching each door was an exterior wooden staircase with solid tongue and groove railings and, at the base, substantial newel posts. The original entrance was covered by the 1948 addition.
3. The original gabled roof ended in a large box cornice, constructed of relatively simple moldings, and visually supported at the corners by characteristic paired brackets. (the Italianate style was often referred to as the "bracketed style") Single brackets were evenly spaced along the less articulated parts of the eaves.
4. Also strongly Italianate in conception was the original bell-cote located in the ridge of the central gabled roof.
5. The most dramatic feature surviving on the building is the masonry treatment. The tall foundation of neatly coursed rock-faced limestone is pierced regularly by arched window openings beneath each of the primary sets of windows. The foundation is battered slightly and capped by a pronounced belt course.

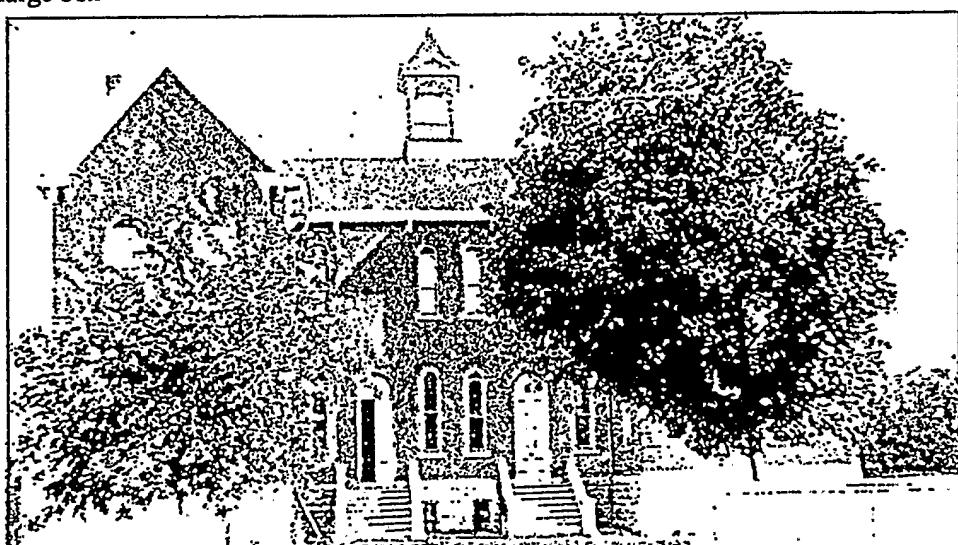
From the belt course to the eaves, the building is local clay brick with each exterior corner decorated in high relief brick coining.

Several of the characteristics of the Pembroke Public School illustrating the Gothic Revival roots of the building are:

1. The uncompromisingly symmetrical treatment of the "U"



The Maples, c. 1878, built 1875. Designed by John Mitchell.



Front view of the Pembroke Public School, c. 1905.



Rear view of the Pembroke Public School, c. 1895.

shaped floor plan and door and window placement.
2. The paired gables which are extended forward into protecting wings flanking the entrance, and backward to create a prominent crossed gable with the central section of the building.

3. The building was originally topped by a dramatic open-raked, steeply pitched gable roof. Small wooden finials decorated the end of each gable, while over the east and west gables were ornate, multi-flue, brick chimneys in the Italianate style. This roof was removed in 1948 and replaced with a flat, built-up roof, evidently in an attempt to emulate the contemporary "international style".

See Schedule "B"

Reason to designate:

The Pembroke Public School is recommended for designation for its historical and architectural significance to the community.

The school, built in 1875, is one of the earliest surviving municipal buildings and one of the first large public buildings locally designed and built. The architect, John Mitchell, was also responsible for a number of other important buildings, including Dr. W.W. Dickson's 1875 residence, the Maples, one of Pembroke's most important early residences. Mitchell was quite probably Pembroke's first architect.

The scale of the building, which was designed to accommodate 400 pupils, and the quality of its construction are representative of the optimism and rapid growth of the period, which saw the construction of a number of these buildings in what was known as the "Moffat Section".

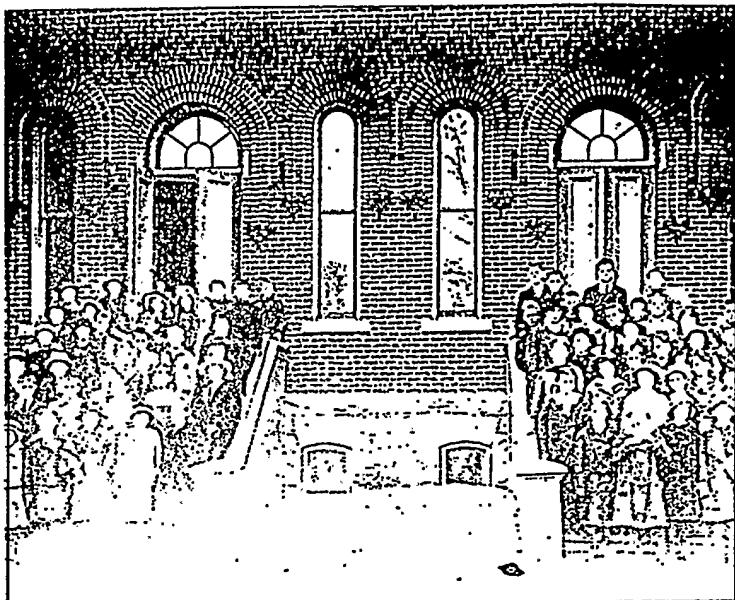
The building is the sole survivor of four educational buildings erected between 1874 and 1885 (Convent of Mary Immaculate, 1874; Pembroke Separate School, 1874; Pembroke Public School, 1875; and Pembroke Public High School, 1885) which made the Moffat Section the educational centre of the town.

It is mentioned and/or illustrated in most of the literature regarding Pembroke, including the historical work "But This is Our War", by Grace Morris Craig.

Architecturally, the Pembroke Public School, as constructed, is a fine example of the Italianate style with strong gothic revival influences and one of the only surviving local examples of its type.

References:

- 1) Pembroke Observer and Upper Ottawa Advertiser, April 16, 1875
- 2) Pembroke - Canada's Next City, Pembroke. Desmond D. Morris, June 1915. p.15
- 3) Observer and Upper Ottawa Advertiser, April 30, 1875
- 4) Pembroke Observer and Upper Ottawa Advertiser, May 14, 1875
- 5) Pembroke Observer and Upper Ottawa Advertiser, June 4, 1875
- 6) Belden Atlas of Renfrew County, 1881 - reprinted 1973
- 7) Pembroke Observer and Upper Ottawa Advertiser, November 19, 1875
- 8) Information supplied by Dr. W.W.D. Williams, grandson of the builder of the Maples, April 1988



Entrance detail, early 20th century.

Appendix A: Reasons to designate to be published with notice of intention to designate:

The Pembroke Public School is recommended for designation for its historical and architectural significance to the community.

The school, built in 1875, is one of the earliest surviving municipal buildings and one of the first large public buildings locally designed and built. The architect, John Mitchell, was also responsible for a number of other important buildings, including The Maples, one of the most important early residences. The scale and quality of construction are representative of the optimism and rapid growth of the period.

The building is the sole survivor of four such buildings which made the immediate area the educational centre of the town. It is mentioned and/or illustrated in most of the literature regarding Pembroke, including the historical work "But This is Our War", by Grace Morris Craig.

Architecturally, the Pembroke Public School, as constructed, is a fine example of the Italianate style with strong gothic revival influences and one of the only surviving local examples of its type

SCHEDULE "B"

Reasons for Designation, Pembroke Public School/Pembroke Police Station

Property to be designated: 84 Isabella Street, Pembroke, Ontario, more particularly Lots Number 8, 9 and 10, and parts of lots 11, 12 and 13, Block W, in the Moffat Section of Pembroke, shown as part one on registered plan 49R7280, dated February 1, 1985, in the County of Renfrew, in the Province of Ontario.

The Pembroke Public School is recommended for designation for both its historical and architectural significance to the community.

Historically, the school, built in 1875, is one of Pembroke's earliest surviving municipal buildings and one of the first large public buildings locally designed and built. The architect, John Mitchell, was also responsible for a number of other influential local buildings, including Dr. W.W. Dickson's 1875 residence, "The Maples", one of Pembroke's most important early residences. Mitchell was quite probably Pembroke's first architect.

The scale of the building, which was designed to accommodate 400 pupils, and the quality of its construction are representative of the optimism and rapid growth of the period, which saw the construction of a number of these buildings in what was known as the "Moffat Section".

Fifty-four Isabella Street is the sole survivor of four educational buildings erected between 1874 and 1885 (Convent of Mary Immaculate, 1874; Pembroke Separate School, 1874; Pembroke Public School, 1875; and Pembroke Public High School, 1885) which made the Moffat Section the educational centre of the town.

It is mentioned and/or illustrated in most of the literature regarding Pembroke, including the historical work "But This is Our War", by Grace Morris Craig.

Architecturally, the Pembroke Public School, as constructed, is a fine example of the Italianate style with strong gothic revival influences and one of the only surviving local examples of its type. Architect John Mitchell's 1875 design of the former Pembroke Public School is a fine example of eclecticism drawing from the two main architectural styles popular in north-eastern North America between 1830 and 1880. The detailing of the building exhibits the contemporary (1850-1880) intuitive Italianate styling, while the planning and massing principles strongly exemplify the more formal gothic revival style most popular between 1830 and 1850.

Several of the characteristics of the Pembroke Public School illustrating the gothic revival roots of the building are:

1. The uncompromisingly symmetrical treatment of the "U" shaped floor plan and door and window placement.
2. The paired gables which are extended forward into protecting wings flanking the entrance, and backward to create a prominent crossed gable with the central section of the building.

3. The building was originally topped by a dramatic open-racked, steeply pitched gable roof. Small wooden finials decorated the end of each gable, while over the east and west gables were ornate, multi-flue, brick chimneys in the Italianate style. This roof was removed in 1948 and replaced with a flat, built-up roof, evidently in an attempt to emulate the 'contemporary "international style".

The building's Italianate styling is best noted in its rich detailing:

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3. The original gabled roof ended in a large box cornice, constructed of relatively simple moldings, and visually supported at the corners by characteristic paired brackets. (the Italianate style was often referred to as the "bracketed style") Single brackets were evenly spaced along the less articulated parts of the eaves.

4. Also strongly Italianate in conception was the original bell-cote located in the ridge of the central gabled roof.

5. The most dramatic feature surviving on the building is the masonry treatment. The tall foundation of neatly coursed rock-faced limestone is pierced regularly by arched window openings beneath each of the primary sets of windows. The foundation is battered slightly and capped by a pronounced belt course.

From the belt course to the eaves, the building is local clay brick with each exterior corner decorated in high relief brick quoining.

While much original detailing was removed in the 1948 renovation, most of the original brick and stonework, including brick quoining and the ornamental detailing over the window arches, remains.

It is the recommendation of the LACAC that original features such as the gabled roof, ornamental chimneys and the bell tower be eventually restored and that the 1948 addition on the front of the building be removed, in order to restore the important architectural character of the building.