



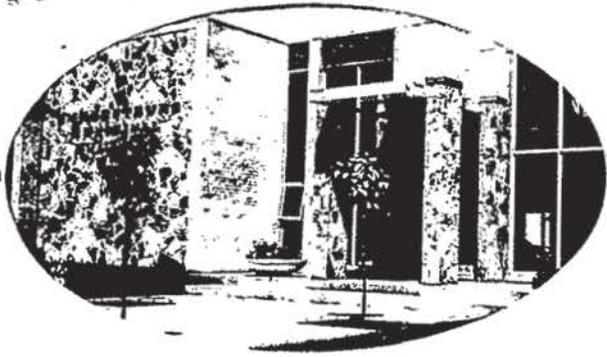
An agency of the Government of Ontario



Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

This document was retrieved from the Ontario Heritage Act e-Register, which is accessible through the website of the Ontario Heritage Trust at **www.heritagetrust.on.ca**.

Ce document est tiré du registre électronique, tenu aux fins de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, accessible à partir du site Web de la Fiducie du patrimoine ontarien sur **www.heritagetrust.on.ca**.



TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE
MUNICIPAL BUILDING,
271 SANDWICH STREET SOUTH,
AMHERSTBURG, ONTARIO
N9V 2A5

July 7, 1978

Ontario Heritage Foundation,
77 Grenville Street, 6th Floor,
Toronto, Ont.
M7A 1E8

Att: Mr. Stephen Otto

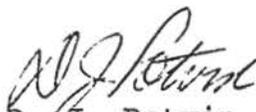
Dear Sir:

Further to your requirements, I attach hereto a certified copy of By-law No. 1528, being a by-law to designate the property known as the First Baptist Church in the Town of Amherstburg as being of Historical and Architectural Value to the heritage of our Community.

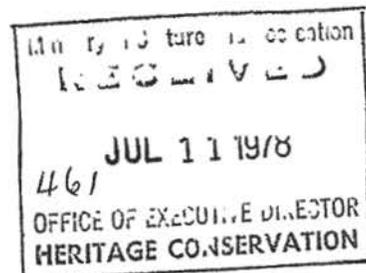
The property so described in this by-law is in the process of being registered in our local Registry Office.

Trusting this is satisfactory, and thanking you, I remain

Yours sincerely,


D. J. Potvin,
Deputy-Clerk.

DJP/sm
Enc.



"a modern town with old world charm"

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG

BY-LAW NO. 1528

Being a by-law to designate property located within the Town of Amherstburg as being of Historical and Architectural Value to the Heritage of the Town of Amherstburg.

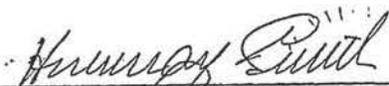
WHEREAS certain lands and buildings located thereon, within the Town of Amherstburg and hereinafter described, are deemed to be of historical and architectural significance;

AND WHEREAS in the opinion of the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Amherstburg, it is expedient and desirable to designate the said property to be of historical and architectural significance;

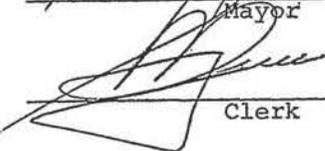
NOW THEREFORE THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF AMHERSTBURG HEREBY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. That for the reasons aforesaid, the property including buildings and lands within the Town of Amherstburg, as described in Schedule "A" attached hereto, which schedule forms part of this By-law, be and the same is hereby proclaimed to be designated in accordance with the provisions of Section 4, Bill 176 of The Ontario Heritage Act and Amendments thereto.
2. This by-law shall come into force and take effect on the day following the final passing thereof.

Passed this 26th day of June, 1978.



Mayor



Clerk

1st Reading: June 26, 1978
2nd Reading: June 26, 1978
3rd Reading: June 26, 1978.

Certified to be a true copy of
By-law No. 1528 passed in open
Council on the 26th day of June,
1978.



Deputy Clerk

SCHEDULE "A"

First Baptist ChurchArchitectural Description

The First Baptist Church, as one of the oldest churches in Ontario, is practically of the 'meeting-house' type and conceived in a simple version of the Neo-classic style. The body of the church is a rectangular form. In the 1840's, Gothic was the proper style for churches. The windows have pointed arches and the glazing bars interlace so as to form a simple type of tracery. However, in this case, the windows are the only suggestion of Gothic in the whole building. The result is a mixed style with a good deal of charm. There is evidence of its builders' intention to recreate a traditional English Church but the building's bold massing and simple form look somewhat naive in contrast to the subtleties of English churches.

The Church is a small one-storey building, covered in white, six inches wide asbestos siding. The building is of barn-frame construction, with white oak beam 2" x 16" board and 6" x 6" stud 2 feet on centre. It rests on a cement block foundation, which replaced the original limestone foundation. The asbestos siding is applied over the original 6" hand-hewn wood siding.

The Church has a gable roof with a generous overhang, topped by a tall brick chimney at the rear. The roofing is asphalt shingles over a previous wood-shingles covering.

The entranceway is in a vestibule at the gable end and facing George Street. It has a double solid door, a later replacement, topped with Gothic Arched transom. The symbolism of the entrance plays an important role in Christian churches -- "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be served." The windows on either side of the vestibule are long and narrow each with a pointed arch and a simple wood surround.

The North and south walls are three bays wide. The windows recall Gothic forms. The church's ecclesiastical function is suggested by the pointed windows, with intersecting glazing bars in the double-hung sash - the so-called switch-line tracery. The original windows have plain glasses pasted over with paper flowers and later replaced with stained glasses. The intention is to alter the effect of the church internally as well as externally.

The one storey new addition to the back has an entrance flanked by four double windows with simple wood surrounds. The rear addition is topped by a gable roof. It has the same broad overhang. The windows on the north and south sides are double windows. Asbestos siding has been used to visually join the old section with the new one.

Architectural Significance:

The building is one of the oldest Baptist Churches in Ontario. The church is of barn frame construction. Its ecclesiastical function is suggested by the pointed windows, and intersecting glazing bars in the double-hung sash.

The representative for the Town presented additional information from a publication titled "Pathfinders of Liberty and Truth, published in 1940 by H. A. Talbot of Windsor and authorized by the congregation, which ran as follows:

Amherstburg Church existed as a Mission as early as 1838, services being held in the homes of members. Rev. Anthony Binga appears to have been the first Pastor.

It was here, in 1840, that representatives of a few colored Baptist congregations met and formed the Amherstburg Baptist Association.

The Church began to hold regular meetings in a house on George Street, next to the present church building.

This history is all too brief to mention the names of everyone who helped make the Mission successful. Elders Peter Stokes, Horace Hawkins, Isaac Rice; Deacons N. W. Brown, Valentine, Duncan, Lightfoot, French, and D. Medley, are only a few of the sturdy pioneers who helped to carry on the Mission before the erection of the present edifice.

Missionary activity amongst fugitive slaves added rapidly to the membership of the little Church, and in 1845 it was decided to build.

The Pastor, Rev. Anthony Binga, became an itinerant preacher. On foot and horseback he travelled through the bush to the sparsely settled communities of Southwestern Ontario, establishing new Missions, and collecting funds for the building. Thus Amherstburg confirmed her title of 'Mother Church of the Association'.

The erection of this church is a story of pioneer days, and of primitive methods, and hardships. All the timber were hauled from the bush, and hewn by hand. All the lumber used, from the sheeting to the clapboards that covered the first roof, was procured in the same way.

The master carpenter was Deacon George Crawford (grandfather of the present Association Clerk). His first assistant was Nathan McCurdy, who was a member of the British American Methodist Episcopal Church which had been established on King Street. The Board of Deacons made up the carpenters' helpers. They were: Valentine, Stevens, Lyons, Adams and Medley. Their descendants are mostly scattered, but a few of them still live in homes built in the vicinity of the church.

The dedication of the new church was an occasion for great rejoicing. The new Missions were represented, as well as the affiliated churches in Detroit.

Father Binga continued this pastorate until 1857 when he was transferred to Mount Pleasant. In 1858, the church had no paster, and services were conducted by Deacon F. Bush and E. Valentine. At that time Rev. J. D. Holbert was a local licentiate minister, but was not stationed in Amherstburg. A few years later, he came to Amherstburg as full pastor of the Church. Few have given more faithful service to the Cause than he.

At this period two well-known names in Amherstburg's civil life, Dr. Pearson and M. Stevens, were prominent in the life of the Church and the Association.

In 1865 Father Binga returned as pastor for a short time. He was followed in 1866 by Elder R. M. Duling. J. Smith was clerk at that time and Henry Foster and Dr. W. W. Edwards were on the Board of Deacons.

Shortly after this Rev. Anthony Binga Jr., was ordained and later pastored this Church. However, he was only with us a short while, becoming one of our worthy contributions to the work in the much wider field of the United States.

In 1870 Rev. R. Fairfax was pastor. He was succeeded in 1871 by Rev. William Pitt, a white minister. This was the only occasion in the history of the church when it was pastored by a white minister. He was followed by Rev. Jos. O. Johnston.

A local historian wrote the following account of the Church:

ALL PART OF LOT 27 RP#1
This structure located at 232 George Street dates from its dedication December 25, 1849. Its congregation is older still and had earlier worshipped in a building only recently razed (at the south-east corner of Richmond and George). It was the first Baptist Church in Ontario and became the mother church of the First Regular Baptist Association. The congregation was formed almost entirely of former slaves, fugitives from the United States. About 26 churches of this denomination extended from Ypsilanti, Michigan to Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Amherstburg church figures in literary history as in Harriet Beecher Stowe's book, "Uncle Tom's Cabin", the principal character "Eliza Harris" was united with her husband at this church.

The church was built by members of the congregation under the direction of one of their members, a master builder. With the exception of the addition, the church remains much as it was when built.