

THE DAVID GIBSON HOUSE

To the West of Yonge Street, almost in the heart of Willowdale, set well back from the hustle and bustle of the traffic of this year 1965 there stands the stately two storey brick home of David Gibson, Provincial Land Surveyor. David Gibson came out to Canada from Scotland as a young man, after a course in surveying and civil engineering in the Old Land. He received his commission as Deputy Surveyor for Canada on December 27, 1825. His family consisted of three daughters and four sons, the latter being James Alexander, William, Peter Silas and George. All took part in surveying work under their father although commissions were taken out only by James Alexander and Peter Silas. The surveying practice of the family covered a large field, beginning with the survey of the boundary line between Lower Canada and the United States and comprising many surveys of Crown Lands, colonization roads etc., in what was termed then, "The Queen's Bush", in addition to work for organized Municipalities, including Toronto, as well as many private surveys. David Gibson was an adherent of William Lyon McKenzie's Reform Party and indeed was the Controller of the Treasury. His signature appeared on the currency which was to be issued.

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52,200 Bricks	34 Rafters 18' long for the house
100 Barrels of lime to lay Brick	11 Rafters 11'6" long for the kitchen
45 Barrels of lime for Plastering	1600 feet run of Scantling for partitioning
12 Tons of stone for cellar & foundation walls	128 feet eaves trough
50 Barrels of lime for Rubble stone work	21 squares of sheeting for Roofs
900 yards of Plastering	247 yards of excavation for cellar
22 squares of flooring in house	7 Bushels of hair to every 140 yards
6½ squares of flooring in kitchen	80 Wagon loads of sand in all
70 Joists 14'2" long for 1st Storey	1800 feet 1½ flooring
70 Joists 14'2" long for 2nd Storey	400 2 inch Plank
33 Ceiling joists all in one length	500 1½ inch Plank
	400 feet ½ inch either siding or Broad board



David Gibson House - Christmas 1962

* Abstracted from Biography of David Gibson, microfilm library, North York Public Library

At the time of the rebellion in 1837, the Gibson's first house on the south half of Lot 18 in Concession 1 West of Yonge Street was burned by the loyalists forces. The existing house is an excellent example of Colonial Georgian architecture. It is of reddish orange brick two full storeys in height with a half a storey attic. There is a large chimney, in this case having three separate outlets, at each end of the house. The entrance is typical of the design having a wide door with narrow side-lights. Above the door is a semi-elliptical window with the traditional sun-ray design, surmounted by an arch of yellow brick. The storeys are separated on the outside by a three course band also of yellow brick which runs completely around the house. Each of the four main corners has alternate long and short lengths of yellow brick inset with the red to give a square dovetailed effect. The second storey has five windows across the front, over each of which is an inset of yellow brick tapering from the top of the window up to the band at the top of the second storey. This is approximately a brick and a half wide and

extends up to the white framing around the eaves. The first storey of the house has two windows on either side of the door. Each of the large windows in the house contains twelve small panes of glass. It would seem at first that this constitutes a lot of maintenance work in the way of painting as far as the owner was concerned but actually it was a saving in the original cost of the house. It seems that there was a tax on large panes of glass in force at the time and in order to get around paying this the people bought the smaller size panes instead. At the back of the house a brick addition has been built which was the summer kitchen. It has the same yellow pattern brick as the front part of the house. There is a large chimney rising out of the back which contains the flue from the cooking fireplace inside and also a flue from a dutch oven which can be seen at the back of the house on outside wall of the back kitchen. This latter extension of the house now contains a self-contained apartment. The fireplace inside the back kitchen is about seven feet across and contains a warming oven for pots and pans after they have been taken out of the fireplace.

The interior of the house is in exceptionally good condition, some of the woodwork having been restored by previous owners who were interested in the house for its history and classic beauty. There are fireplaces contained in the living room and dining room on the first floor and each of the two front bedrooms on the upper floor. Minor structural changes have been made in the house itself one of which increases the living room from one half the total length of the south side of the house to the complete length thereof. All that remains of the partition between the front and back rooms is the dropped beam which is still in evidence. A door has been cut out at the southwest corner at the back of the house, where originally a window had been placed, affording access from the living room to a covered patio which extends across practically the full width of the south end of the house. This patio itself is classic in design having wooden columns to support the roof. These are placed in groups of three in each corner and singly along each side. The ceiling of the patio has been panelled with knotty pine. The upstairs of the house has apparently been changed considerably from the original design.

The attic of the house, although not seen from the inside could provide additional living quarters. This has been found to exist in other examples of this particular type of architecture. From the outside there is visible on either end of the house the quadrant-shaped windows which afford ventilation to that part of the house. These windows are framed in a sun-ray design emanating from the centre of the circle or the right-angle of the quadrant. On the north side of the house, one of these windows has been bricked in.

The house was built between the years 1843 and 1854 and is obviously the residence of a man who was held in considerable esteem in his community and who also was a man of considerable means. This was in most cases the normal situation with respect to the early surveyors. They became established and became men of means as well of social position. This is strictly a man's house. It is a man's house as far as functional design and lay-out are concerned. From a woman's outlook I think it would be considered a monstrosity because of the terrific amount of housework entailed in keeping the home in the condition which most of our wives like to maintain.

A traditional design which deserves to be preserved, it is one of the few examples of the progress of Canadian living from the log cabin to the designs which are used in modern day construction. It is one of the very few places existing which we can indicate to our children as an authentic example of how our pioneer ancestors lived in this area.

The house and a rectangular area around it have been acquired by the Township of North York as a Museum. B. Napier Simpson, Jr. an architect well-known for his knowledge of and experience in early Canadian Architecture has been commissioned to restore the house. His plan is to make The Surveyor the main theme and to build the museum around the profession. The Association of Ontario Land Surveyors will house part of the Survey Museum here. It is hoped that we will be able to have a changing display both in the David Gibson House and at our annual meetings.

W.C. Yates

-OLS-

PROCEEDINGS OF COUNCIL

MEETING OF DECEMBER 13, 1965

Tariff - Eastern Regional Group - The Secretary reported that the percentage of signatures on the petition in favour of the proposed By-law was 82% of the total number of Surveyors in practice for their own account in the described area. The Association Solicitor approved the wording of the By-law as presented with one change in that the words "and electronic computer fees" be eliminated. Council then enacted By-law 66 to provide for a new minimum tariff for the Eastern Region of Ontario.

Tariff - Kawartha-Haliburton Regional Group - The Secretary reported that the percentage of signatures on the petition in favour of the proposed By-law was 79% of the total number of Surveyors in practice for their own account in the described area. The Association Solicitor approved the wording of the By-law as presented. Council then enacted By-law 67 to provide for a new minimum tariff for the Kawartha-Haliburton Region of Ontario.

Tariff - Hamilton & District Regional Group - The Secretary reported that the percentage of signatures on the petition in favour of the proposed By-law was 70% of the total number of Surveyors in practice for their own account in the described area. The Association Solicitor suggested that an addition should be made to the wording of the By-law. Council directed that this draft By-law be referred back to the Hamilton and District Regional Group with the Solicitor's amendments to the wording and that the Group be advised to resubmit the petition with the required 75% of Surveyors in private practice approving it.

Honorary O.L.S. - It was noted that there are two honorary O.L.S. - Mr. C.C. Lindsay and Mr. A. Phillips Bill. Council then enacted By-law 68 to provide for the appointment of an honorary member of the Association by resolution of Council, and to repeal By-law 28.

Professional Liability Insurance - The Secretary had circularized members of Council with a report of his investigations. Council decided that the Secretary's report and other data should be sent to all Regional Groups with the request that the Group discuss this topic and, if interested, appoint a member of the Group to represent them on a special committee to be set up by Council if enough persons are so appointed.

The Proposed Surveyors Act - The result of the ballot, as attested to by the scrutineers Messrs. Crewe and Manser, was read as follows: for 266, against 33. Council decided to forward the result to the President of the Association (who was absent from the meeting due to illness), and that he be requested to bring this result to the attention of the Minister of Lands and Forests.

Gas Explosion in Waterloo - The Association Solicitor reported that there are actions