

TAKE A WALK IN HISTORIC Trent Hills

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Downtown Campbellford

Have you ever seen an interesting old building in your neighbourhood and wondered when it was constructed, and who once lived or worked there? Trent Hills has a rich history, reflected in its landmarks and place names, told through the stories of the Indigenous Peoples and those who came to settle here.

The Municipality of Trent Hills has created a series of four heritage walking or driving tours for Hastings, Seymour Township, Campbellford and Warkworth that highlight buildings of historic or architectural interest. The interactive guides with maps can be found at TrentHills.ca. Download a map to your phone, and get out in your community to discover the history around you.

Hastings

Nicknamed “The Hub” due to its prime location within Trent Hills – straddling the Trent River northeast of Rice Lake – the village of Hastings was incorporated in 1874 and continued to self-govern until 2003.

In 1810, Scottish entrepreneur James Crooks purchased 850 acres of Crown land, but his plans to develop it were mostly abandoned after he was called to assist General Brock at Niagara-on-the-Lake during the War of 1812. In 1851, Henry

Fowlds, a Scottish lumber and construction businessman, purchased the land – then known as Crooks Rapids – and set up a brickworks and a sawmill. Immigrants were attracted to the area, and businesses such as foundries, wool mills, retail stores, fishers, and various trades prospered there.

In 1882 a terrible fire destroyed the core downtown area, save one building, which sits today at Hastings’ main intersection at 2 Front St. E. First known as the “Montreal House,” this striking brick building – marked by its contrasting quoins and keystone window arches, as well as a bracketed frieze with cornice along the roofline – was built in 1862 on the site of Fowlds’ original lumber mill that had been, coincidentally, destroyed by fire.

Walking along Front Street and turning



onto Bridge Street South, you will see grand homes built in the mid-1800s for Fowlds and his sons. Tucked into the bush at the east end of Front Street are the Fowlds Mill and the tannery water tower and smoke stack – reminders of Hasting’s industrial beginnings. On Albert Street East, you will find charming clapboard houses, built in the style made popular by United Empire Loyalists who emigrated to Upper Canada after the American Revolution.

Seymour Township

In the early 1830s, brothers Lieutenant Colonel Robert Campbell and Major David Campbell settled land on both sides of the Trent River, in a shallow area that became known as Campbell’s Ford.

During the 1850s the area attracted Scottish settlers, many of whom were stonemasons. As limestone was a common building material, the masons used it to imitate the buildings they were familiar with back home. Today, you can see their legacy in rural stone homes found throughout Seymour Township.

You’ll have to drive around the township for this tour. Make sure to find a safe place to park along the way, and get out for a country stroll to stretch your legs.

Campbellford

By 1876, the main settlement’s population near Campbell’s Ford grew such that it was separated from Seymour Township and became the village of Campbellford. In 1906, it was incorporated as a town.

Historic buildings are scattered throughout the town, so you’ll want to keep your tour map

handy. Some highlights are the limestone buildings on Front Street North, the former carriage-makers’ business on Queen Street, the former post office and town hall on Front Street South, and the Campbellford-Seymour Public Library on Bridge Street East.

At 50 Bridge St. W. stands St. John’s United Church, with 12 stained glass windows made by Christopher Wallis, known for exemplary glasswork designs featured in other prominent Canadian buildings such as Rideau Hall and Osgoode Hall.

Warkworth

The village of Warkworth is part of a parcel of land originally purchased from the Mississauga First Nation in 1784. Settled by Loyalists, the area became known as Benfield, and then in 1857 was named Warkworth by Major Henry Humphries, a prominent figure in the community.

In 2004 Trent Hills Council acknowledged Warkworth as a Designated Arts Community, as it has become a hub for artistic expression in the area.

Walk along Warkworth’s charming Main Street to see historic mid-19th-century commercial buildings. Common features of this style include mansard roofs, bracketed dormer windows, decorative shingles and contrasting brickwork.

You’ll also find grand homes with big bay windows and elaborate verandahs, and cute gabled cottages. And you’ll definitely want to stop in the artsy shops and cafés along the way!

Sources: TrentHills.ca; HastingsVillage.ca; TSWTrailTowns.ca; Warkworth.ca

