



156 Aberdeen Road

Before it became one of the busiest intersections in town, where North Street meets Aberdeen Road was once home to this delight of a house, nestled in amongst a cluster of trees. In the background of the photo, the beginning of what was to become Glen Allan drive can already be seen. This home was demolished between 1985 and 1996.

The home was likely built by Dean Beck, a carpenter, shortly before him and his wife Emma the property in 1915. It was acquired by Melbourne E. Hiltz, a railway employee, who owned it for 66 years before passing it on to his son Douglas I. Hiltz and his daughter Margaret Hiltz. Thus, for almost its entire lifetime, a single family called this house home.

Though built at a time when the Arts and Crafts architectural styles and the bungalow were beginning to usurp the Four Square house design and the remnants of Queen Anne decoration, this home was clearly the latter. It may well have been one of the last of its kind to have been built in Bridgewater. As well, while newer styles were favouring low-slung houses and horizontal elevations, this home – with a two-bay façade and a prominent second storey – stressed very much the vertical.

The first level, though having a veranda with a spindle-work balustrade, turned posts supporting the ceiling, and decorative brackets, was cast in the shadows by the veranda roof– the bay window on the left wasn't immediately evident, and the door wasn't accentuated. The roof of the veranda actually even protruded beyond the veranda itself. Meanwhile, the second storey balcony was very bright and immediately drew attention to itself. The two projecting bay windows were a very uncommon feature, but stood out magnificently here, giving the relatively compact house a dash of decorative form. Though the balcony had no roof, the bay windows were formed more by a recess in the wall in between them and sloped-off corners on each side, so the balcony was partially protected by the prominent overhanging eaves. The railing of the balcony also had nice balusters, and lovely ball-top posts spaced regularly along the front. Interestingly, the entryway onto the balcony was not from a central door in between the windows, as was more common, but from a windowed door discretely placed at the front of the bay window. It also escapes one's notice with the way its window blended in with the others.

Besides the interesting form, the pyramidal hipped roof was broken by a lone hipped dormer projecting from the upper side of the front roof slope. This had prominent eaves as well, and its twin windows boosted its size. As well, there was a corbelled chimney visible in back with intricate brickwork. Even the rather plain sides of the house had little touches of design, with a slightly flared belt course defining the division between the two floors. This is another aspect, besides the turned posts and brackets that was borrowed from the Queen Anne Revival style. The nice mix of asymmetrical, decorative Queen Anne style with the geometric, Italianate *palace* inspired Four Square design lead to a wonderfully blended home. Unfortunately, progress is always more attractive than preservation.

From the *156 Aberdeen Road* Built Heritage File