

Please note that these walking tours do not provide access to privately owned homes and properties.

## SEAFORTH HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

Known as Guide Board Swamp in the early 1800s, Seaforth became a thriving community after the first train passed through in June of 1958. The railway company officials did not consider putting a station in Seaforth until locals persuaded them by donating the land and building for it. In fact, at the time, the neighbouring communities of Egmondville and Harpurhey were larger, thriving centres.

Seaforth had a post office by December 1859, was incorporated as a village in 1868, and as a town in 1975. In the late 1800s, the salt industry was booming in Seaforth, with three large salt works. In September of 1876, a fire broke out in Mrs. Griffith's Candy and Grocery store raging through Main Street and destroying 12 acres of the business section. The town rebounded and Main Street was rebuilt with the brick and block structures which we see today.

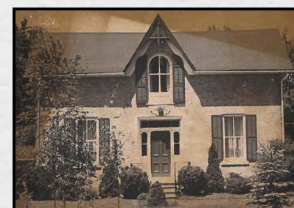
Seaforth's Main Street has been described by architectural critics as one of the finest late 19th century streetscapes remaining in Ontario, and is a designated Heritage Conservation District. Along this tour, you will also see a few of the many designated heritage homes in Seaforth.



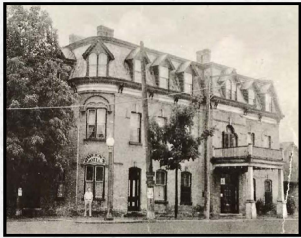
### Cardno Route



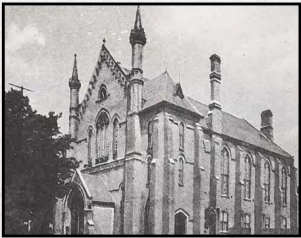
**1 The Round House - 122 Duke St.**  
The Round House was built in 1902 and was formerly referred to as the "Crystal Palace" because of its many large windows. This two-storey octagonal exhibition hall is one of two remaining in Ontario. The first fair at this site was held in September of 1902 and the building is still being used as part of Seaforth's Fair Grounds.



**2 The Horthy Residence - 87 Main St. N.**  
Built in 1872, this house is one of the earliest brick houses built by John Ament. This is an example of a one-and-a-half storey centre gable, centre hall, Ontario farmhouse. It is recognized as Ontario's truly original vernacular architecture.



**3 Queen's Hotel - 4 Goderich St. East**  
The Queen's Hotel was built in 1877 consisting of two storeys with a mansard roof third storey. There was a livery just east of the hotel for horses and carriages. Unfortunately, this heritage building was gutted by fire in 2014.



**4 Northside United Church - 54 Goderich St. West**  
Known in the early days as the Wesleyan Methodist Church, this beautiful church was built in 1877 with an adjacent manse. Two spires were removed some time in the 1950s.



**5 Maplewood Manor - 13 Church St.**  
In Georgian-style with Italianate influences, this structure was built in 1867 as Seaforth Public School with a symmetrical "T" plan. It is set on a fieldstone foundation with Flemish bond, buff brick walls. The building was used as a school until 1953 and then a warehouse until 1986 when it was renovated as a distinctive seniors' residence and nursing home.



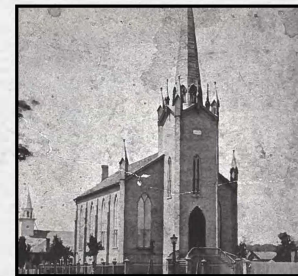
**6 The Cornish Residence - 17 Helen St.**  
This residence was originally built in 1870 on Main Street. Only one of two portions was relocated to the wrought iron fenced Helen Street property. The front entrance is crowned by an elliptical fanlight and is flanked by side-lights. Noteworthy are the two corner bay windows and Victorian grounds.



**7 The Carnochan House - 123 James St.**  
This clapboard frame house built in 1873 with an asymmetrical floor plan, fine trim details and stained glass windows is a fanciful example of Victorian "cottage" architecture. It is one of the "most fun and eclectic" homes in Seaforth.



**8 Lorne Villa Apartments - 92 Goderich St. West**  
Built between 1886 and 1890. The large proportions, asymmetrical layout, slate roof, multiple chimneys, wrought iron work and coach-house to the rear typify late Victorian architecture for the affluent in Huron County. It was named after the Marquess of Lorne, Governor General of Canada from 1878 to 1883. The home was turned into apartments in the early 1970s and eventually became the home of the Canadian Mental Health Association.



**9 First Presbyterian Church - 59 Goderich St. West**  
This church was built in 1867 from the union of the congregations of Harpurhey and Seaforth, each of which were originally established under the United Secession Church of Scotland in 1904. The church Manse was built in 1879.



**10 Mansion House and the Royal Hotel - 1-3 Main St.**  
After the Carmichael Hotel burned down, the brick "Mansion House" replaced it in 1869. Following another fire, the present building was built in 1877 with two stores south of it. It later become the home of the Royal Hotel.



**11 John Kidd Hardware - 15-17 Main St. S**  
 In 1878, John Kidd, who operated a hardware business, rebuilt his store following the devastating fire of 1876. Mullett and Jackson's Hardware was operating from this location by 1900. The building was home to Hildebrand Paint and Paper for many years before being taken over by a floral shop and financial office.



**12 Nifty Korner - 33 Main St. S**  
 This is the first brick store in Seaforth, which was built in 1863. The Post Office was here between 1863 and 1869. A variety of proprietors occupied the street level store after this selling such things as dry goods, groceries, boots, shoes, and pharmaceuticals. In 1996, the variety store that had been operating since the 1960s, was transformed into a business called Nifty Corners that carried giftware and electronics. It was converted into a real estate office following the closure of Nifty Corners in 2009.



**13 The Cardno Block - 39-47 Main St. S**  
 This is the largest building on Main Street and was erected in 1877 by Alexander Cardno. The building was originally lit by gas that was manufactured on the premise. The upstairs was the site of Cardno's Music and Concert Hall, which was also a gathering place for community events. The Music Hall was in use until 1954.



**14 Sills Home Hardware - 69 Main St. S**  
 This building was constructed in 1869 by Thomas Kidd. He operated a general store in the south storefront, which expanded to the north storefront when William Robertson and Company's "Sign of the Circular Saw" hardware business vacated the space. George A. Sills and Sons operated a

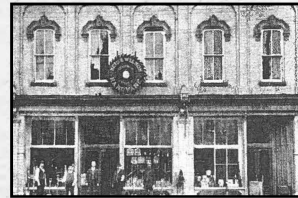
hardware business in the block just north of the Cardno Block until moving to this location in 1921-22. In 2018, the fifth generation of the Sill's family took over the hardware business.



**15 Post Office - 52 Main St. S**  
 The three floor red brick building with the central clock tower is Seaforth's Post Office built in 1911-13. Prior to 1913, the Post Office had been located in the James Dickson Block (1863-1869) and at 87 Main St. S, in the Samuel Dickson Block. The first Post Office in Seaforth opened in December of 1859; however, there is no record of its location.



**16 CIBC - 44 Main St. S**  
 The Canadian Bank of Commerce, or Royal Canadian Bank as it was known then, relocated to this building when it was constructed in 1905. The Bank had been operating from the Dominion Block since 1878. This building is a good example of the Classical Revival Style of architecture.



**17 William Robertson Block - 20-22 Main St. S**  
 This building was built in 1877 for William M. Robertson, a hardware merchant. William O. Reid was the manager. They sold builder's hardware in one store and carriage hardware, wagon and carriage material (upstairs), oils, paint, glass and more in the other store. Robertson and Reid's "Sign of the Circular Saw" Hardware became Reid and Wilson Hardware by 1884 (and still used "Sign of the Circular Saw" in their name). Box Furniture relocated to one of the stores in 1945, and by 1955, took over the entire William Robertson block. In 1990, the block and adjoining block to the North



was beautifully restored to its original design. For a history of Box Furniture, please see location #34.



**18 St. James Roman Catholic Church - 14 Victoria St.**  
 Built in 1869 with adjacent Rectory constructed in 1897. The front addition to the Church was built in 1990. The St. James Roman Catholic Cemetery is located east of Seaforth at 43048 Huron Road.

## Robert Bell Route



**19 Victoria Park - Gouinlock St.**  
The land for Victoria Park was donated to the Town by Dr. William Gouinlock in 1875, which was one year after Seaforth was officially incorporated. The bandshell was constructed in 1920. The front wall is actually a series of folding doors. The bandshell, having excellent acoustics, is apparently designed with the same proportions and coved ceiling as the bandshell at the CNE.



**20 Seaforth Flour Mills - 27 Crombie St.**  
A four-storey flour mill was constructed here in 1868 and had a capacity of producing 150 barrels of flour a day to start and 1800 barrels of flour a day by 1909. The building was sold to Topnotch Feeds Ltd. in 1953. The building is now occupied by Seaforth Elevators and Expediting Inc.



**21 Robert Bell Engine and Thresher Company - 156 Main St. S**  
Robert Bell and John Finlayson took over the Coleman Foundry and Machine Shop at this location in 1899. In 1903, the Robert Bell Engine and Thresher Company was formed specializing in threshing machines,

which were popular until combines were introduced. The company also made high and low pressure boilers. The plant was sold in 1949 and the company was reorganized as Robert Bell Industries Ltd. Boilersmith Ltd. commenced the manufacturing of packaged boilers and associated equipment in 1986.



**22 Seaforth Electric Light, Heat and Power Co. - 151 Main St. S**  
Between 1889 and 1894, this was the site of the Seaforth Electric Light, Heat and Power Co., which was operated by the town council. In 1914, the power house was converted to the Seaforth Creamery. Over the years, products such as spreadable dairy products and salad dressings were made here.

Following the closure of the creamery in 2013, Everspring Farms Inc. purchased the facility where they sprout more than thirty grains, seeds and beans and create finished sprouted ingredients.

## Detour



**Van Egmond House Museum - 80 KIPPEN RD.**

The Van Egmond House was built in 1847 by Constant Louis Van Egmond, who founded the village of Egmondville two years prior. The Van Egmond House Museum is owned and operated by the Van Egmond Foundation, which hosts a number of events on the property each year, including their popular Ciderfest. Take a tour of the home while attending one of their events and learn more about the history of Egmondville.



**23 Boshart Furniture - 126 Main St. S**  
Houghton's Hotel and stables, was located here in 1870. A shoe factory opened in 1906, then a clothing factory and eventually a furniture factory starting in the late 1930s. John Boshart & Sons Ltd manufactured a wide range of furniture until 1965. After being vacant for a number of

years, a Canadian Tire store opened in 1974 and served the community until the late 1980s. In 1999, the Bethel Bible Church, a longstanding local organization, purchased the 24,000 square foot structure, renovating and opening a new place of worship for Seaforth and area.



**24 The Dick House - 117 Main St. S.**  
This former hotel was built in 1873 and with changes in ownership, came changes in the hotel name. It was first known as McCallum's, then Hawkshaw House, Kling's Hotel and lastly The Dick House. The building was converted into apartments in 1986.



**25 The Library - 108 Main St. S**  
Built in 1913, this is one of many libraries funded by Andrew Carnegie. It is in "Victorian Palladian Style" as seen in the impressive portico. The library at one time had a tennis court on the side lawn, and its exterior walls were once entirely covered with ivy. Renovations were made to the building in 1984, and again in 1995, modernizing it and adding wheel chair accessibility.



## **26 John Gallop Building “The Livery” - 100 Main St. S**

The first livery on the property (and carriage storage building), was built in 1873. It remained a livery until 1915 when it burned to the ground. After being vacant for over a decade, John Gallop purchased the property in 1928 and built the existing building.

He ran an implement business, a garage complete with gasoline pumps, a machine shop, and car sales out of it over the next 16 years. Among other ventures, this building has accommodated, the Huron Expositor (the town’s newspaper), municipal offices, and a professional physiotherapy business.



## **27 Dominion Block - 90-94 Main St. S.**

Upon completion in 1874, the first tenant in the Dominion Block’s north section was the Canadian Bank of Commerce. After the bank moved down the street, a butcher shop operated here between 1905 and 1907. John Beattie moved his grocery/dry goods/variety store enterprise from across the street to

the northernmost Dominion Block storefront in 1907. Following its closure in 1935, the building has had a number of tenants including a telegraph office, Vincent’s Farm Equipment, and more recently, the Cotton Harvest Quilt Shop.



## **28 Commercial Hotel - 84 Main St. S**

This beautiful building was built in 1895 after fire raged through the original Commercial Hotel. The north part of the ground floor of the hotel originally housed a bank, complete with vault, and in 1898, the space was used as a telegraph and express office that operated through to the 1950’s. The building was converted into apartments in 2008.



## **29 The Town Hall - 72 Main St. S**

The Town Hall (Municipality of Huron East Municipal Office) was built in 1893/94 and is an impressive civic building. It is an integral part of the historic streetscape and is distinguished by its high front tower and gabled front elevation. The front porch was removed in 1957 and a replica was built in 1989. Back in the 1930s, there was an active badminton club who utilized the third floor!



## **30 The Box Residence - 57 High St.**

This Queen Anne style dwelling has a corner turret, wood shingles, exterior paneled doors, decorative garlands over the front bay windows, and decorative finials on the roof. It was built in 1907.



## **31 Parish of the Holy Spirit - 21 Jarvis St. N**

This was the first permanent place of worship in Seaforth, built in 1863. It is a fine example of “Carpenter’s Gothic” architecture in religious buildings. The chancel was added in 1872 and the wings in 1878.



## **32 The Pletsch Residence - 17-19 Sparling St.**

This home is associated with I.V. Fear, who was involved in the founding of the first telephone system in Seaforth. This house, built in 1895, has curved cast-stone window heads, ornamental gables, curved stained glass window heads in the living room and upper hall and a keyhole window opening to the front porch.



## **33 The Hansen Residence - 23 Sparling St.**

Built in 1885, this was the residence of William Gray, a partner in Gray, Young and Sparling Salt Works. With its mixture of stylish elements, it becomes a “nameless vernacular” style of mid-nineteenth century domestic architecture having a Queen Anne-like circular veranda and Italianate window hoods.



## **34 Broadfoot Planing Mill - 50 Market St.**

An apartment building is here today, but in the late 1860s, John Broadfoot moved his planing mill business from Harpurhey to this location. William T. Box, a cabinet maker from Stratford, joined the business in 1876. By 1878, they had a planing mill and a two-storey factory. In 1894, they took over John Porter’s Furniture business at 36 and 40 Main St. S (where the Seaforth BIA Office is) to use as their showroom. The factory buildings were left vacant for a decade before the Hesky Flax Company took them over in 1941.