

Grafton couple honoured for civic contributions

CECILIA NASMITH
Northumberland Today

GRAFTON — The contributions of Peter and Camilla Dalglish to the Village of Grafton were recognized recently with the conferring of the Alnwick-Haldimand Township Citizen of the Year title.

It all began in 1988, when they purchased the former stagecoach stop now known as the Grafton Village Inn and began a massive renovation.

That building originally opened in 1820 as John Grover's Tavern. According to the Heritage Alnwick-Haldimand heritage walking tour booklet, this was a log building that was replaced in 1833 by the present building.

"The current appearance is designed to duplicate how it looked when it was a stagecoach stop greeting travellers approaching from Kingston, York or the Grafton harbour," the caption said.

"Distinctive features include a front-door surround with carved oak leaves and acorns and demi-lune windows at each gable end. The addition to the west came later and, at one time, housed the local telephone exchange."

Before the Dalglishes purchased the inn, Mayor Dalton McDonald said in conferring the honour at the township's Canada Day celebrations, it had 18 different owners. At one time, it was broken up into apartments.

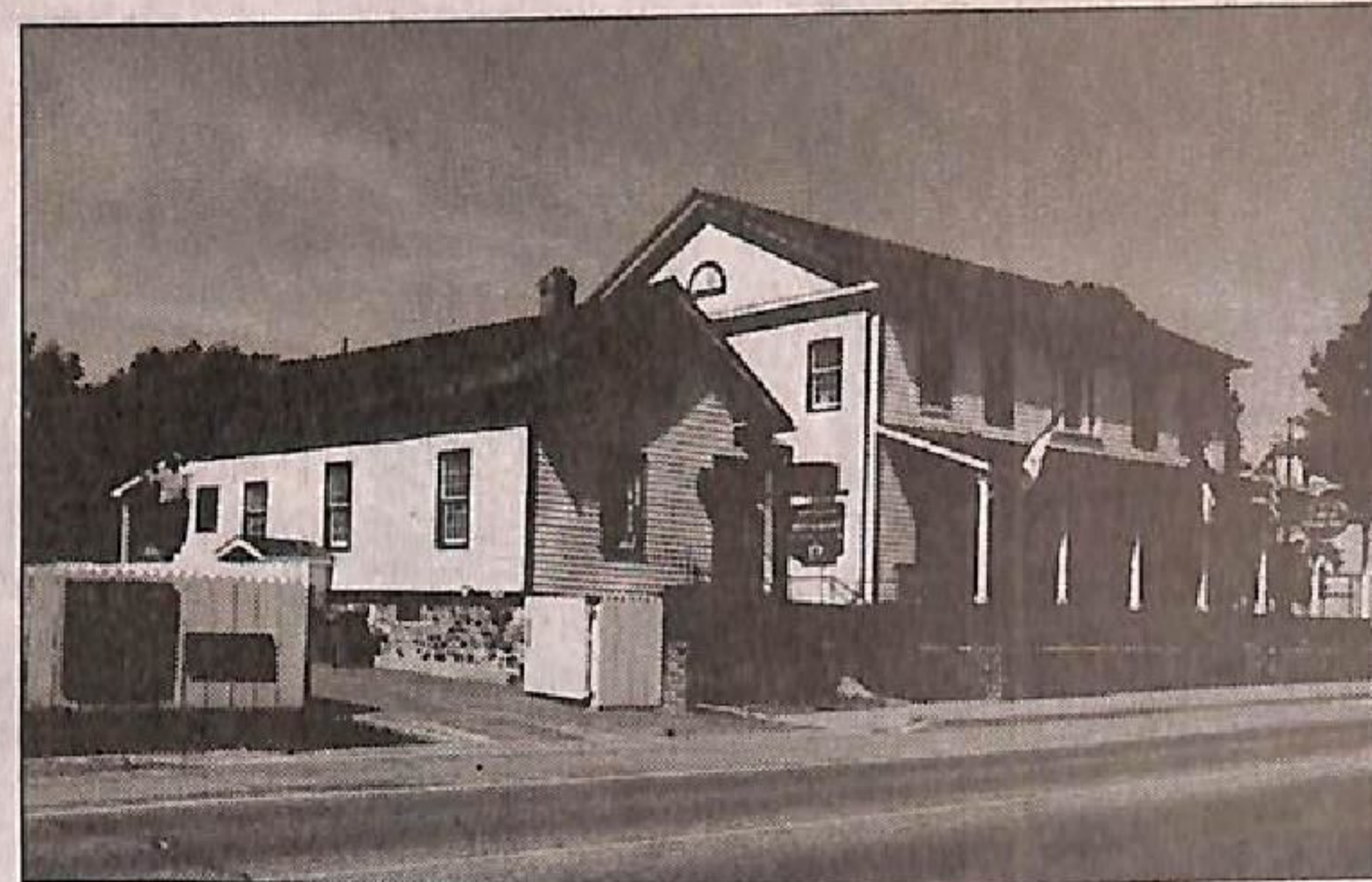
"Most villagers will remember that it was a major project," he said.

"A full basement was put in, and the second floor was converted from rooms to an auditorium, with all-new beams and a new roof complete with skylights. A dining room and part of the kitchen was added at the back.

"With its completion in 1995, we have today the beautiful building we call the Grafton Village Inn," McDonald said.

"Presently the Inn is a restaurant where they serve breakfast and lunch seven days a week and it is managed by Jackie Berdar."

The Dalglishes went on to pur-



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The Grafton Village Inn had 18 owners before Peter and Camilla Dalglish restored it to its original appearance when it was a stagecoach stop welcoming travellers from all over.



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Interments in the cemetery attached to Grafton's former Methodist meeting hall (restored by Peter and Camilla Dalglish) date between 1831 and 1913.

chase four other properties in the village.

The house immediately west of the inn is referred to by staff as the B&B. Restoration to make this former residence a bed-and-breakfast began in 2002. Over three years, it was completely renovated from top to bottom to create six beautiful bed-and-bath suites.

The next place the Dalglishes renovated is a clapboard house built in 1859 that stands at the corner of County Road 2 and Aird

Street. It is called the Pumpkin House after the colour of the exterior paint that has been applied to the original siding. Between 2005 and 2006, it got a new roof and was completely redone inside.

"The next project is one that probably stands out most in the minds of the local people. This was the restoration of the old church on Aird Street," McDonald said.

The heritage booklet said that, in 1856, the Wesleyan Methodist congregation acquired a half-acre



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Over three years, Peter and Camilla Dalglish renovated this former Grafton residence into a B&B with six lovely bed-and-bathroom suites.



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This 1859 house in Grafton restored by Peter and Camilla Dalglish is known as the Pumpkin House for its exterior colour.

of land for the cemetery (interments date between 1831 and 1913), the two-storey meeting house and the residence immediately north of that.

The meeting house ceased to function as a church in 1926, and the building was later subdivided into two two-storey residences.

"From 1926 to 2006, the building was allowed to deteriorate to a point that it became a blight on the village," McDonald declared.

"Peter and Camilla purchased the property in 2006.

"I am sure that most people saw the place as an eyesore and a fire trap and that the only answer was a wrecking ball. But, thanks to Peter and Camilla's foresight, they saw things differently. They saw what was once a beautiful old church that was brought back to life.

"Because of their foresight, Grafton can once again boast that they have a gem in their village."

They have also purchased the house north of the church, the 142 Aird St. address that was once



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This westward view of the porch at the Grafton Village Inn shows the most popular place to be each year when the village holds its Canada Day celebrations, offering a cool, shade vantage from which to view the parade.



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The sign by the door of the restored Methodist meeting hall in Grafton carries its new name: The Meeting Place.

home to former councillor Jackie Innis and her husband Jim — and other members of her family prior to that.

"This house has had a new veranda, new roof and a paint job outside, and has been completely renovated inside. It will be finished this year," McDonald said.

"As a result of your love of old buildings and your desire to see them restored to their original beauty, we thank you," he said to the couple.

"Thanks as well to the villagers who maintain their properties and help keep Grafton the beautiful place that it is."

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