Sainte-Croix Church

Address: 327 Rue Lafontaine Road West
Legal Description: Part of the North Half of Lots 17 and 18, Concession 15 as in OS87514, OS87515, OS91171, TI7969 except RO480571
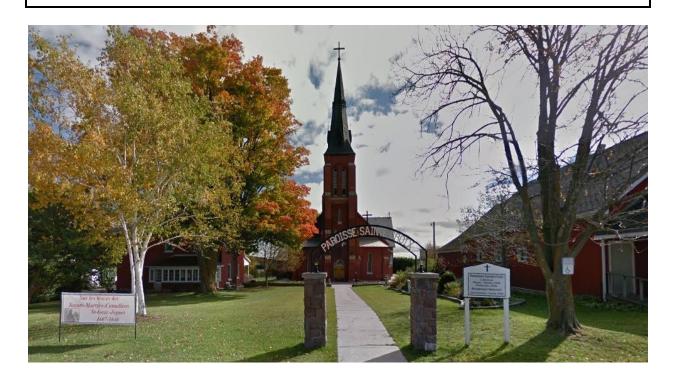**Roll#:** 43-68-0000-10-056-000000
Current Owner: Roman Catholic Episcopal
Date First Listed with Heritage Inventory: April 11th, 2016
By-law #16-025

History

The Sainte-Croix Church was born of humble beginnings and community needs in the early 1850`s. Parishioners in the village of Sainte-Croix, later known as Lafontaine, had to travel to Penetanguishene to fulfill their spiritual needs. In 1850, Father Amable Charest began celebrating mass at a residential house on Concession 16. The Mission of Sainte-Croix was founded in the same year.

Sainte-Croix Church, through its affiliation with saint Patrick`s Church in Perkinsfeild traces its roots right back to the earliest introduction of Christianity to First Nations Residents of the large village of Ossossane.

The first Church was a small wooden structure made of squared off logs constructed in 1856. The wooden logs were chosen as a result of their vast availability. The Church, Exaltation de la

Sainte-Croix, was dedicated after the original name of the village of Lafontaine. The first pastor, Reverend Etienne Gibra, arrived in 1861. Reverend Gibra would be credited with enlarging the small wooden Church by thirty feet and adding a sacristy.

Between 1873 and 1896 was a period of immense construction for the Sainte-Croix Church. Father Michel arrived in 1872 and used some of this own money build a rectory. In 1874, construction on the new Church began. It was built behind the old one, explaining why the current Eglise Sainte-Croix sits so far back from the road. The new Church was opened in 1877 and had cost roughly $18,000.00 to build. All of the materials used in the construction of the Church came from the local area. Louis Thenasse, a parishioner, fired bricks made from clay on his farm. Local trees and fieldstones were also used in construction.

The Sainte-Croix Church has remained a vital part of the community ever since.

Heritage Attributes

The exterior of the Sainte-Croix Church is an example of late nineteenth century brickwork. In addition the bricks were made locally by the parishioners, demonstrating the level of community involvement with the Church.
The interior of the Church reflects the quality and availability of local sawmills and woodworkers. The steeple is of particular heritage interest due to its symmetrical design and visual presence in the village of Lafontaine.

Exclusions from Designation

The sacred space of the building shall be excluded from the provisions of the heritage designation by-law. For the purposes of the by law, "sacred space" shall mean the portion or portions of the religious heritage building where worship occurs and liturgical elements are present.