

Over 15 things to see this Saturday for Doors Open Aurora



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If you are driving toward Aurora Town Hall or enjoying an afternoon at the Aurora Community Arboretum, it is hard to miss the nineteenth century log cabin located at the entrance of the Arboretum.

The building is said to be built in 1844. When it was originally built, the Petch House was part of the larger Petch family settlement and farm located at the north-east corner of Wellington Street and Leslie Street.

The house was situated on the north half of the lot and belonged to Isaac Petch while his brother John lived on and maintained the southern half of the property.

In 1844, Isaac married Emma Hacking and together they lived in the cabin for over fifty years. After the death of Isaac (in 1899) and Emma (in 1904) the house and farm were sold outside of the family.

Despite a few changes, the home maintained most of its original rustic qualities and charm. Much of this is thanks to the new owners who continued caring for it. This high quality of attention and care undoubtedly added to the lifespan and preservation of Petch House.

Eventually the area of the Petch settlement and farm was sold to developers. Eventually the Petch farm land turned into a Smart Center shopping area with urban stores.

The agreement was to ensure that Petch House would be taken off the site and relocated as opposed to being torn down and demolished. For a number of years the house sat unprotected south of Wellington on the eastern side of Leslie Street.

Unmaintained, exposed to the elements and lacking proper conservation care, this historic cabin began to rapidly deteriorate.

After many years and thoughtful debates the decision was made to relocate Petch House to the main entrance of the Aurora Arboretum. The Town of Aurora Parks staff, with the help of local timber expert Peter van Nostrand, completely dismantled the cabin and stored it in its many pieces while it waited to be rebuilt. Re-assembly of the historic cabin commenced in 2012 and was done so with historically accurate restoration.

Often referred to as a 'log-cabin' visitors are sometimes surprised to see the exterior of Petch House now covered in cladding. The cladding is not a modern indulgence; it is in fact true to the period when the cabin was originally built.

Cladding provides another layer of insulation to keep those inside safe from wind and moisture. It also demonstrates to the community that its owners were relatively wealthy.

Be sure to visit Petch House to see the charm of this mid-nineteenth century cabin. The historical details and elements from the recent restoration are best explored in person so be sure to take advantage of Doors Open Aurora on Saturday, August 15!