Munshaw Hotel
Built c. 1864 by Aaron Munshaw
1 Toronto Street, Flesherton
Map link: http://goo.gl/maps/5TQPn

History: Aaron Munshaw Sr (born 1796) is acknowledged as the first settler in Artemesia Corners, now the village of Flesherton (named for W.K. Flesher, another early settler and land owner). Munshaw's ancestors (originally Mundschauser) who had immigrated 1743 to Philadelphia from the Palatinate in the Old German Empire, moved to Upper Canada in 1792 to benefit from Governor Simcoe's offer of free land to settlers. Aaron Sr. was a veteran of the War of 1812, serving in Captain Button's Light Horse Militia. When he got into trouble for activities as a political reformer and a supporter of William Lyon Mackenzie's 1837 Rebellion, he first escaped to the United States, then later he and his wife walked from Thornhill along roads “not yet brushed out” to the junction of the Toronto-Sydenham Road with the Durham Rd (a location he possibly knew of from his fellow rebel, David Gibson who was surveying the area at that time). The first hotel was south of the intersection (across from the cemetery.) In 1849 he relocated to the present site: the south east corner of Hwy 10 and the Durham Rd (Hwy 4). “Pioneers in the Queens Bush” mentions the hotel as a welcome stop-over place for new settlers. In 1864 the existing two-storey structure was added to the establishment which provided stables and lodging for travellers making the slow journey north on horseback. The hotel, which fell on hard times during prohibition in the 1920s, was successively owned until 1964 by five generations of the Munshaw family.

Architecture: The structure is an excellent example of the well-balanced proportions typical of the Georgian style which is quite rare in the local area, since the style was out of fashion by the time early settlers began permanent buildings. Built of local timber and brick, the use of contrasting brick for corner quoins and segmented voussoirs further accents the careful placement of all design elements. In 1989 Architect Paul Dawson replicated the original porch from an early photo.

Cultural Significance: Before any churches were built, services were held in the taproom, as were elections and political meetings. In the early 1900’s, the square in front of the hotel was the site of the important Spring Horse Fair which attracted buyers from a wide area. When cars became more prominent, gasoline pumps were installed, and then later removed. The building still functions as an Inn and Bistro, and continues to be a prominent social and visual community landmark.
Designation: April 3, 1990 bylaw7-90 (Village of Flesher) for visual and historic importance to the community. The Ontario Heritage Foundation donated $150,000 for restoration.