Oscar Phillips House
Built 1904 by Oscar Phillips
13 Collingwood Street, Fleshterton
Map Link: http://goo.gl/maps/3RE0j
(private residence)

History: The house is built atop a hill, on a lot severed from behind Munshaw Hotel. Born 1881 on a farm in Artemesia Township, Oscar Phillips came to Fleshterton in 1900 to learn the harness-making trade (probably at Heard’s Carriage-works). In 1909 he set up a harness-making and shoe repair business directly opposite his home, so each morning he merely had to descend the long set of stairs and cross over to his place of business. Oscar loved harness racing and his skill at making show harnesses for the sport was greatly prized. He drove a car until he was 80 and ran his business for fifty years, helped after 1933 by his son Bob, also a community icon very involved in local hockey. At some point (probably in a road improvement scheme) the stairs were removed and the hill buttressed with a cement wall. In 2001 the house was acquired by brothers: Jim and Stewart Halliday, the latter serving on the Council of Grey Highlands 2006 - .

Architecture: The Second Empire style, popular for Canadian public buildings from about 1867 to 1900, mimics the Grand Boulevards of Paris created during the reign of Napoleon III. Private homes built in the elaborate Second Empire style were generally quite large and were intended to demonstrate wealth, status and sophisticated tastes. Although this building is unusually small for a Second Empire house, the usual stylistic details have been perfectly adapted. Attractive brickwork includes segmented brick arches in contrasting colors that flatter perfectly proportioned windows and doorways, all still having original glass. The central opening front door with its double rounded panes is especially tasteful. Ornate, decorative dormers painted in contrasting colors jut from the bell curve mansard roof. The extended portico allows a second floor balcony which originally had an ornate railing and is skillfully delineated by the signature up-sweep of the eaves. The crowning glory of this elegant little gem is the attractive grillwork framing a square belvedere which gives a fine view to the north. (This feature is sometimes called a Widow’s Walk because in British Coastal towns, wives of sea-faring men would hopefully look for their husband’s ship amongst the returning fleet, all too often only to learn they had been widowed that day).