



Heritage Barrie Tours



Grand Homes Tour



Grand Homes Tour

The *Grand Homes Tour* is a self-guided tour sponsored by Heritage to highlight the heritage of the City of Barrie. It was published in 1983, reprinted in 1989, and revised and updated in 2000 for Heritage Barrie by Su Murdoch Historical Consulting, with electronic imaging and composition by Kurt Harding Schick. Other tours available include *Downtown East*, *Downtown West*, *Allandale*, *Rodney and Blake Streets*, and *Discovering the Waterfront*. Copies can be obtained from Barrie City Hall, PO Box 400, Barrie, ON, L4M 4TS, Barrie Public Library, and can be downloaded from Tourism Barrie's website at www.tourismbarrie.com. Information and photographs on any of the buildings and sites featured in this tour or on other aspects of Barrie's architectural heritage are welcomed.

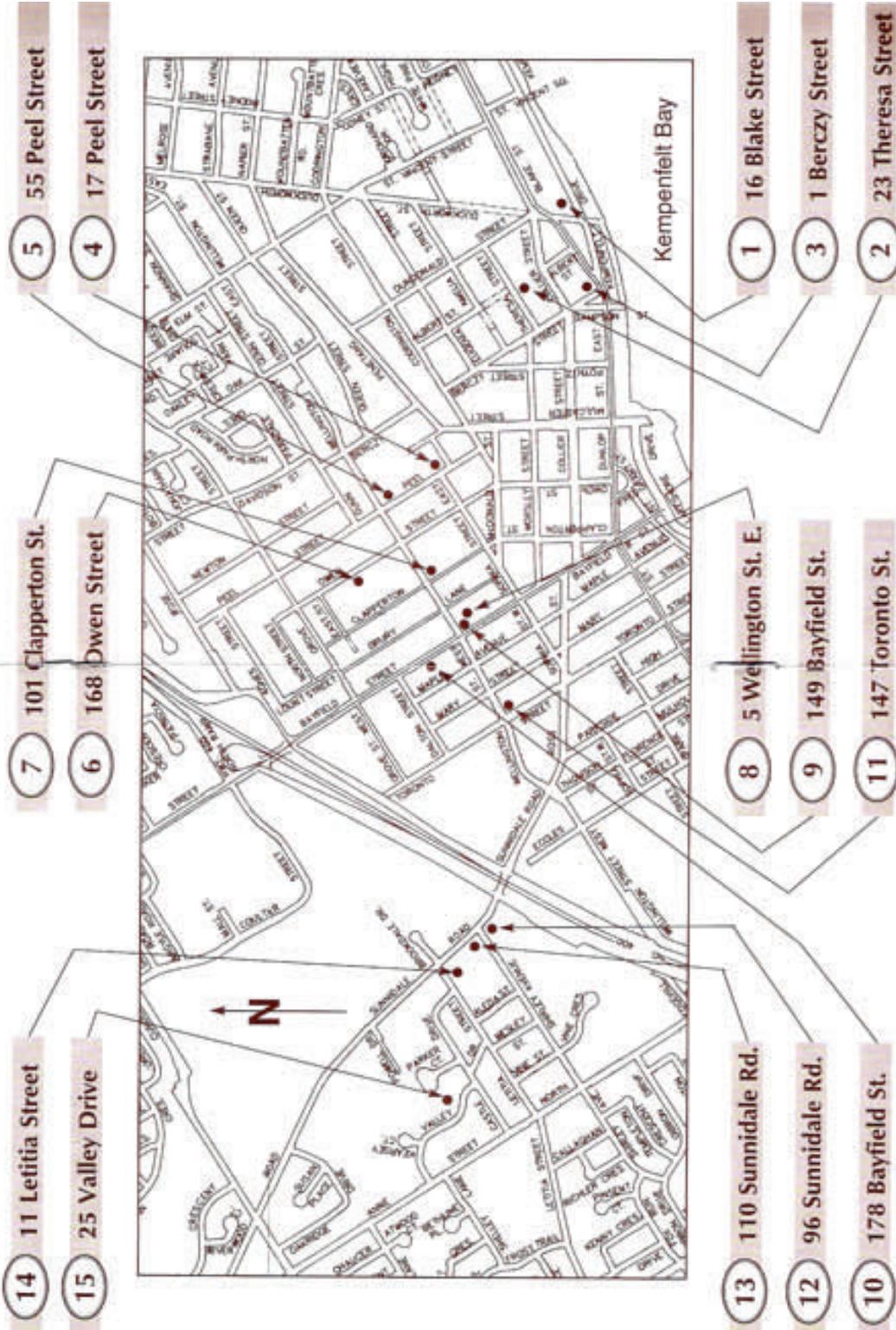
What is Heritage Barrie?

Heritage Barrie was established in 1977 by a City of Barrie bylaw as the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Its role is to advise Council in heritage conservation matters and to implement the heritage policy of the Official Plan. Members are volunteers appointed by Council, an alderman, and a liaison from the Planning and Development Department. Funds for Heritage Barrie are provided annually as part of the city operating budget.

What is a Heritage Designation?

Heritage designation is an important aspect of the mandate of Heritage Barrie. Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* allows municipal councils to pass bylaws to protect properties that have architectural and/or historical significance to the community. The designation bylaw does not prevent alteration nor does it require the owner to restore the building. Its purpose is to ensure that any proposed changes to the designated features are in keeping with, or are sympathetic to, the reasons for designation. For further information and the list of properties designated or on the Cultural Heritage Resources Inventory, contact Heritage Barrie, c/o Planning and Development, Barrie City Hall, PO Box 400, Barrie, ON, L4M

GRAND HOMES TOUR MAP



Grand Homes Tour

As the centre of commerce and county government, Barrie was the location of choice for many prominent families in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their stylish homes survive along street-scapes or tucked away from view as the once large estate lots are carved into smaller parcels. The Grand Homes Tour presents a few of the finer and more interesting historic dwellings in Barrie. Some of the selections are in near original condition, while others will need your imagination to envision their former splendour. They represent only a small portion of Barrie's architectural heritage.



1

16 Blake Street

1. 16 Blake Street

At first glance, this dwelling at 16 Blake Street appears to be in the Georgian or Neoclassical style that was popular during the first half of the nineteenth century. Built in 1911, Foxley is categorized as a period revival. The property was first acquired by Judge James Robert Gowan in 1844 as part of a larger block of land. Gowan built his residence, Ardraven (demolished), on the south side of Blake Street, east of the Foxley location. He sold this corner lot in 1898 to his nephew, Henry Hatton Strathy. Although owners, neither Henry nor his son Gerard are believed to have lived at 16 Blake. Henry was across the street in his house, Ovenden (later a school for girls, demolished). The tradition is that Foxley was designed for Emily Foster (Mrs. George Morton) by her brother-in-law, architect Eustace Bird. Later occupants were Judge George Wismer and Peter Sinclair. The lovely large windows with interior shutters, attached gazebo, and portico are architectural achievements, given the poured concrete construction of the dwelling.

2. 23 Theresa Street

This Gothic Revival style house was built about 1863 for Henry and Sara Creswicke. Creswicke was an engineer and surveyor for the County of Simcoe and a Barrie alderman. He died in 1883, but the family retained ownership until selling in 1924 to Charles Hewson. Hewson was Henry's executor and son-in-law. In 1950, he sold to Ralph and Valerie Snelgrove, the founders of Barrie's CKBB radio and CKVR television stations. Although wing sections and a garage have been added, partially obscuring the original design, the house features many classic Gothic Revival elements such as the steep pitched roof, bargeboard, finials, gables, and window openings. Both the Creswicke and W.D. Ardagh house next door at 33 Theresa Street were known as "The Hill," with the area referred to as "Creswicke's Hill."



2

23 Theresa Street



3

1 Berczy Street

3. 1 Berczy Street

At the corner of what was called Louisa Street (now a section of Dunlop Street

East) at 1 Berczy Street, sits this large dwelling. It is believed to have been built about 1885 for John Forsythe, Chief Clerk in the post office, who by 1891 was described simply as a gentleman. The house is on the former site of Meldrum's hotel. There is a tradition that it may be two houses, the rear (Berczy Street) section being the oldest, possibly dating to the mid 1850s. The dwelling is in the Gothic Revival style, with arched windows, red with contrasting buff brickwork, and a complex roof with multiple chimney stacks. The irregular plan gives the impression that it is oriented to both street facades. Although missing some of its original elements, this is an attractive building now used for commercial purposes.



4

17 Peel Street

4. 17 Peel Street

This unique dwelling at 17 Peel Street was designed and owned by Lieutenant Sherman Godfrey Bird and his wife, Amy Laura (Amoi Chun). Bird was a British army officer stationed in South China. There he met his future Cantonese wife during an evacuation of the women and children from an area where the British planned an attack. Trained as an engineer and architect, Bird designed Sans Souci in 1872 using a less typical form of the Gothic Revival style. Bird is responsible for several of Barrie's public buildings including the 1872 post office on Owen Street and St. Mary's church (both demolished). Tragically, he contracted pneumonia at the housewarming of Sans Souci, and died within months. Several of their eight children were sent to live with relatives in England and attend school. One of these was a son, Eustace, who achieved notoriety as a Canadian architect. Early in the twentieth century when Amy found Sans Souci too large for her comfort, Eustace designed the Tudoresque Queen Anne style house next door at 88 Sophia Street East. Sans Souci is also known as the China Bird House for its pagoda-like roof and finials, as well as the tea house that formerly graced the edge of the stream at the rear. The original colour of the roughcast plaster of the exterior walls was a dark red. The property is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its architectural and historical significance.



5 55 Peel Street

5. 55 Peel Street

The previous owners of 55 Peel Street, known as Statenborough, are as interesting as the house itself: the modestly Georgian eastern half having suffered a collision with a somewhat Italianate, slightly Gothic western half. County treasurer, Henry R.A. Boys, who built here in the 1860s, was the object of several threatening letters to the editor over his dealings as a land speculator. Boys was succeeded in 1884 by the Assistant Treasurer, Sidney M. Sanford. Sidney died the following year and the position of Treasurer was filled by his son, Sidney James Sanford. Jim bought Statenborough in 1886 for \$4000, and added a ballroom wing to the west in 1890. He also opened the Grand Opera House in 1895, part of which is standing

at 23 Collier Street. Apparently some of this construction was financed by a \$63,000 shortfall in the County's accounts. Jim moved to South America where he gained a fortune in mining, repaying all his borrowed wealth. A subsequent occupant, geologist Henry Cecil, encouraged his brothers-in-law in prospecting and in 1911; Ed Hargreaves and William Wright struck gold at Kirkland Lake. When fire destroyed the Hargreaves' Haileybury home in 1922, Wright bought Statenborough and they all moved in. Wright was the owner of the renowned Brookdale Racing Stables in Barrie. In 1936, he purchased the *Globe* and the *Mail and Empire* and founded the *Globe and Mail*. As chief owner and publisher of the newspaper, he broke tradition and published racing odds figures of various tracks, as well as cigarette and tobacco advertisements. He funded the furnishing of the nurses' residence of the Royal Victoria Hospital and made a large donation to build the Barrie arena. Statenborough has served as a nursing and retirement home for several years.

6. 168 Owen Street

This large dwelling at 168 Owen Street was built about 1900 for James L. R. Cotter. Appointed in 1862 as the second Crown Attorney for Simcoe County, Cotter held the position for sixty-one years. The Cotter's first home at 54 Peel Street (demolished) was known as Rockforest for the town where the family originated in Ireland. He sold it in 1897 to the Plummers, and then built this large house at 168 Owen Street, Rockforest II. Although still within the Gothic Revival form, Cotter was looking to the twentieth century with the arched entrance,



6 168 Owen Street

stained glass, red brick with contrasting trim, and lack of ornamentation. The interior was designed in the more streamlined form of the Craftsman period. Cotter was related by marriage to the Lount family, formerly of Pennsylvania. The tradition is that his father-in-law gave Cotter Black Walnut trees for the property. In 1928, it was reported that there were 250 of these trees on his lot. In the 1980s, a portion of the property was severed for the Walnut Grove condominium complex.



7 101 Clapperton Street

7. 101 Clapperton Street
 This splendid Gothic Revival style house at 101 Clapperton Street was known at various dates as Ardtrae and Pinecroft Apartments. It was built for Thomas David McConkey in the mid 1870s as part of what was becoming a row of trendy Wellington Street ridge mansions. McConkey opened a dry goods store in Barrie in 1843. A politician and entrepreneur, "Oily Tom" was a member of the first Town Council in 1854, and served as Reeve, Warden of Simcoe County, and Sheriff. In 1863, he was elected Liberal member of the old Canadian Parliament and the next year helped found the Barrie *Examiner* newspaper as a party paper. He supported Confederation and in 1867 was elected to

the first House of Commons of the new country. McConkey died in 1890. His daughter Anne (Mrs. J. H. Plummer) inherited the house and used it as a summer residence. It later was sold to the Dignams. The tall windows, steep pitched roofs, scallop, wheel, star bargeboard, and spiky finials give the structure exaggerated verticality. The decorative brickwork of the chimney stacks is a tribute to the skill of nineteenth-century masons. The dwelling has been converted to apartment use.

8. 5 Wellington Street East
 Built in 1863-4, this large scale house at 5 Wellington Street East, known as Carnoevar, was built by Toronto builder William Rolston for D'Alton McCarthy, Jr. Like his father, D'Alton Sr., D'Alton was a barrister. Apart from his law practice, he became very wealthy at a young age in the lumber trade, but suffered huge financial losses in the 1870s. First elected to Parliament in 1876 as the Conservative member for the Cardwell riding of South Simcoe, and then in North Simcoe in 1878, his "radical right" views led to a split with the party in 1889. A speech he made in support of the abolition of the dual language system in the then Northwest Territories was described alternately as "unduly violent and exhibiting the most extreme



8 5 Wellington Street East

Protestant Bigotry," and as embodying "the true principles of civil and religious liberty." Following the death of his wife, Emma Lally, in 1870, McCarthy married her sister, Agnes, the widow of R.B. Bernard. Through this union, he became an in-law to Canada's first prime-minister, John A. Macdonald. D'Alton's law partner, also a Conservative Member of Parliament and later a mayor of Barrie, W.A. "Pro" Boys, occupied the house in 1889. Before this, the McCarthys had used Carnoevar as their summer residence while living in Toronto. D'Alton died in a runaway horse accident in 1898. Like the other Wellington Street mansions, Carnoevar faces the bay and when built was the focal point of a larger estate lot. Although none of its verandahs, balconies, or decorative trim survives, the house is nonetheless of handsome shape. It retains many of the Tudor-arched window and door openings with cast label surrounds.



9

149 Bayfield Street

9. 149 Bayfield Street
 W.A. "Pro" Boys sold this corner of the former McCarthy property to barrister John McCosh in 1908. The same year, McCosh had the house at 149 Bayfield Street built. McCosh is remembered as the somewhat eccentric, four times mayor of Orillia. In 1916, he sold the property to athlete William J. Moore, sculler, outstanding football player, and member of the Dominion lacrosse team in 1892. Giving up sports, William operated a Dunlop Street shoe store for fifty years. He and his wife, Agnes, were avid supporters of the canonization of the

Jesuit martyrs associated with Saint-Marie among the Hurons. The house, later a restaurant, and then retail store, is in the style of Edwardian Classicism, with French doors opening onto a generous, classically-columned verandah looking down to the bay and sporting pediment-like gables. Inside is a panellled stairhall of oak, lavish wood trim, and art glass.

10. 178 Bayfield Street

In September 1889, Toronto architects Edwards and Webster published a design for a Queen Anne dwelling in *Canadian Architects and Builders*. In 1895, the firm erected a similar house at 178 Bayfield Street for John H. Bennett. This is a very refined and stylish building with design elements not commonly seen in Barrie. From about 1888 to 1917, Bennett served in several public offices including alderman, mayor, reeve, Water and Light commissioner, and Collegiate Institute trustee. President of the Ontario



10

178 Bayfield Street

Horticultural Association, he was inspired by gardening and had a greenhouse built behind his home. Bennett's series of reminiscences in the local newspaper capture anecdotal information about Barrie's history and development that is not available elsewhere. This was Bennett's home until 1941.

11. 147 Toronto Street

Maple Hill was built in 1868-69 for Charles Hammond Ross and his wife, Mary Gowan George. Ross started his business career in the general store of his brother-in-law, T.D. McConkey. In 1855, they announced their partnership. Three years later, Charles and other prominent Barrie Reformers founded a weekly newspaper, *The Spirit of the Age*. In 1872, he was elected as a Town councillor, was mayor for 1887-88, then police magistrate from 1891. Charles died on Valentine's Day 1912, followed by Mary in 1914. The couple had no children of their own but raised three nieces, Mary Emma, Georgina, and Annie Louise Maconchy. In 1901, Georgie married Dr. W.D. MacLaren, brother to James Alexander MacLaren. Alex, also known as Mac, and his wife Geraldine Madeleine Haskins, bought Maple Hill in 1914. Alex was the copublisher and editor of the *Examiner* newspaper from 1895 to 1951 and was

known as the dean of weekly newspaper editors. He and "Maddy" were supporters of St. Andrew's Presbyterian church and active in many organizations including the Royal Victoria Hospital Board, Public Utilities Commission, Board of Education, Carnegie Library Board, Horticultural Society, and Red Cross. Alex died in 1952; Maddy in 1960. Their son, Alexander Fitzmaurice

MacLaren became an accountant, establishing

A. F. MacLaren & Co. in Barrie. Like his parents, Maurice was involved in his community. He was instrumental in establishing the arboretum in Sunnidale Park, the Huronia Festival of the Arts, and the Barrie Yacht Club (where he sponsored the construction of the lighthouse at Johnson's Beach). At his death in 1989, Maurice bequeathed Maple Hill to the City of Barrie and the Barrie Gallery Project for use as an art gallery. Of sturdy Georgian style, there must have been something of a Southern air about Maple Hill when it was graced with its original three-sided verandah. The brown-red with contrasting buff brick, square window openings with shutters, Classical doorcase entrance, and eaves brackets are typical of the period. The square plan with its low-pitched hip roof and iron cresting is believed to be the result of early renovations that changed the house from an L-plan. The bay windows are additions. The Maple Hill property is designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its architectural and historical significance.



11

147 Toronto Street

12. 96 Sunnidale Road

Originally part of Dr. Llwellyn Oliver's extensive holdings, dry goods merchant Duncan J. Murchison bought several acres in 1873 and proceeded to have Woodlawn built at 96 Sunnidale Road. There is a tradition that the house was rented in the 1880s and 1890s to lumberman Francis Baker. Duncan J. died



in 1900, leaving Woodlawn to his son, Duncan Charles Murchison, partner in the law firm McCarthy, Boys and Murchison. He sold the house to Alexander Wallace. In 1950, James and Margaret Kelly became the new owners. Backing onto a wooded ravine, this is another example of Barrie's architectural heritage that is partially hidden from view. It is a classic of Gothic Revival design in deep red brick, with contrasting shutters. It is dominated equally by its precipitous roof, gables, and marvelous woodwork on the verandah and balconies. Woodlawn is a well-preserved nineteenth century treasure.

12 96 Sunnidale Road

13. 110 Sunnidale Road

At the corner of Sunnidale Road and Shirley Avenue is Bellevoir, the former home of Frederick M. and Harriet Adelaide Smith. Frederick was appointed in 1874 to the position of Deputy Sheriff of Simcoe County. This followed in the tradition of his father, Benjamin Walker Smith, who was appointed the first County Sheriff in 1843. Bellevoir is about one mile from the court house, offering Frederick a scenic route to work. It is also near the home of in-laws, the Plaxtons, at 11 Letitia Street. Constructed in 1883, the house was described as a "brick villa in the Queen Anne style" and is based on plans furnished by an American architect. It is red brick, accented with black painted bricks, and geometric latticework in the prominent gable. The original grounds consisted of two acres laid out in lawns, garden and a paddock. Bordered on all sides with shade and ornamental trees and shrubs, the dwelling is still picturesquely set on a corner lot.



13 110 Sunnidale Road

14. Letitia Street

Known as First Place for being the first in the area, this engaging dwelling at 11 Letitia Street was built for George Plaxton about 1874. George arrived in Barrie about 1849. Between 1859 and 1872, he owned a tinsmith and plumbing store on Dunlop Street but transferred it to a nephew, John Plaxton, when he made the decision to move to Kansas. The venture proved unsuccessful, as George returned to Barrie the following year and bought the property for his new dwelling. During his life, George was a local building inspector, served on Town Council, and was chief of the fire brigade during the seventies when Barrie's downtown district was devastated by several fires. His selection as fire chief may have been related to his North American record for the 100-yard dash in 9.53 seconds. The family sold First Place to James Patton immediately after George's death in 1908. Later it was converted to apartments, but was restored to single family use in the 1970s by Irving and Peg Harris. Originally oriented to Sunnidale Road, the occupants of this Gothic Revival dwelling have been able to enjoy the tranquility offered by the wooded area. The two storey front porch with its attractive posts, doorcase complete with a fan transom, bargeboard, segmental window openings, and decorative brickwork are a tribute to the style.



14 11 Letitia Street



15 25 Valley Drive

15. 25 Valley Drive

Judge of the High Court of Ontario and parliamentarian, William Lount, had his residence at 25 Valley Drive built in 1877-8 on a hilltop location near Sunnidale Road. William was educated at the Barrie Grammar School and the University of Toronto. He was admitted to the legal profession in 1863 and opened criminal law practices in Barrie and Toronto. His uncle, Samuel Lount, Reform member for Simcoe County in the Legislative Assembly from 1834 to 1836, was hanged for high treason following the ill-fated 1837 Rebellion in Upper Canada. Although also a Reformer as well as President of the North Simcoe Reform Association, instead of being hanged for treason, William was appointed high court justice in 1901. Known as The Oaks or Lount's Castle, the house eventually became William's summer residence, with his permanent home in Toronto. As with the other rare examples of Second Empire style buildings in Barrie, the design is by architect George H. Brown, with contractor George Ball. This complex house features a mansard style roof and tower clad in slate with a floral motif, bracketing, hooded window openings, stacked bays, and multiple entrances. Although faded, the woodwork, etched glass, staircase, third storey ballroom, and other details are features of a stylish and lavish home.