Heritage Research Guide

Understanding the historical significance of a property enriches our appreciation of local heritage and contributes to the preservation of the Town of New Tecumseth's cultural landscape. Whether you are a homeowner, researcher, or heritage enthusiast, this guide outlines the most effective methods and resources for uncovering the design, historical, associative, and contextual value of a building.

Principles of Effective Research

Before beginning historical research, consider the following best practices:

- **Exercise patience and persistence:** Historical records may be incomplete or require interpretation.
- **Consult multiple sources:** Cross-referencing enhances accuracy and reliability.
- **Document all sources:** Record full citations, including titles, page numbers, accession numbers, microfilm reels, and repository names.
- **Avoid premature conclusions:** Let the evidence guide your understanding.

Legal Description

Begin by identifying the legal description of the property:

- **Rural properties:** Lot and Concession numbers
- **Urban properties:** Plan and Lot numbers

This information is typically found on the deed or municipal tax bill. The tax bill also includes the Assessment Roll number, which will be helpful for accessing land records and researching through the Land Registry Office.

Research Resources

1. Land Registry Records

To access the Abstract of Title for your property on self-serve microfilm, or to conduct a title search (for a fee), you can visit the Simcoe County Land Registry Office at 114 Worsley St. in Barrie. These records will give you information on transactions related to your property over time (grants, sales, mortgages etc.).

2. Historical Maps and Atlases

Detailed maps located in the Simcoe County Atlas (1881) can be found online through the Canadian County Atlas Project, at your local library branch, or at Museum on the Boyne.

3. Fire Insurance Plans

Various Fire Insurance Plans covering Beeton, Alliston and Tottenham exist at the Simcoe County Archives and Western University Archives. Usually created in the 1920s and edited over time, they provide details about the construction material, shape, size and position of buildings.

4. Tax Assessment Rolls

Tax Assessment Rolls provide the annual assessed value of a property, as well as information on its occupants. Increases in the assessed value can help pinpoint the year a house was constructed. New Tecumseth Assessment Rolls can be found at the Simcoe County Archives.

5. Census Records

Census records can be found on the Library and Archives Canada website, or on Ancestry.ca (accessible for free at libraries). You will need the name of the property's occupant to search census records. This can be found by checking local directories, tax assessment, or land registry records.

6. Directories

Simcoe County Directories can tell you who lived or worked at an address. Some directories are available online (ex. 1866 and 1884), and others can be found at the Simcoe County Archives, local libraries, or the Archives of Ontario.

7. Photographs

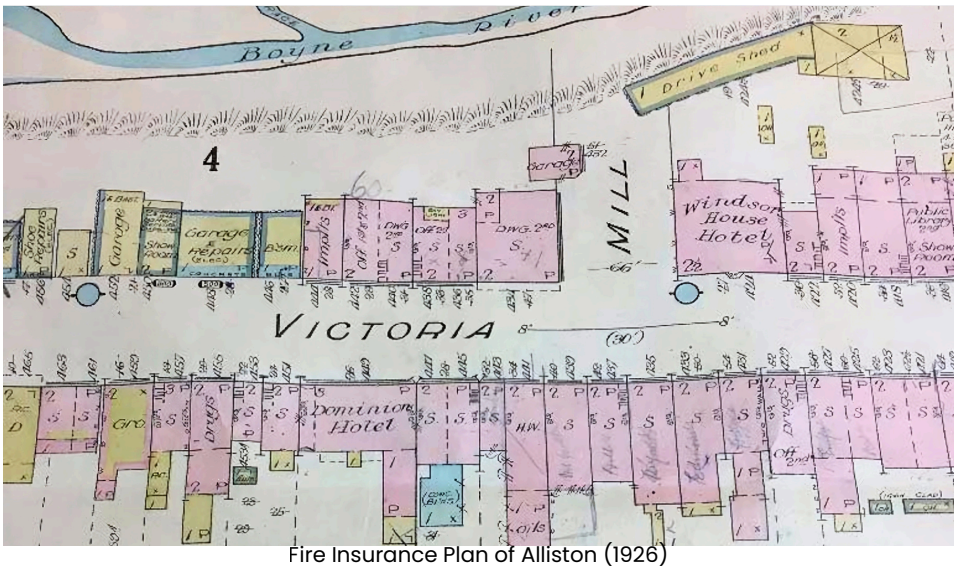
Archival photographs are great sources for observing how your property has changed over time, and learning more about the people who lived there. The collections of the Simcoe County Archives, Archives of Ontario and Library and Archives Canada can be searched on their websites.

8. Newspapers

Local newspapers can be found on microfilm at the Alliston Memorial Library Branch and at the Archives of Ontario. Newspapers can corroborate construction dates or provide information about past owners.

9. Women's Institute Tweedsmuir Histories

In the mid-20th century Women's Institutes across Canada made scrapbook histories of their communities. They include photographs and summaries of locally significant people, places and events. New Tecumseth Tweedsmuir histories can be found at either the Simcoe County Archives or local libraries.



Fire Insurance Plan of Alliston (1926)

Researching the history of a heritage property contributes to the collective memory and identity of the Town of New Tecumseth. By following the steps outlined in this guide and consulting the recommended resources, you can gain a deeper understanding of your property's past and its place within the broader historical narrative of the community.

For further assistance, contact the Town of New Tecumseth's Heritage Planning at heritage@newtecumseth.ca.