

Heritage New Tecumseth

Researching Your Heritage Home

Are you interested in your home's history? Want to know more about who lived there? Curious about plaquing or designating a heritage building? This guide will introduce you to the best sources for locating historical information on a property. As you start your research journey, remember that:

- Patience is the key to quality research
- Assemble as much information as possible before drawing conclusions
- Corroborate your sources to make sure the information is accurate
- Always record the source of your information (title, page, accession number, microfilm reel, library or archive, etc.)



McDonald Cabin, Museum on the Boyne (Designated 2002)

Where to Start:

If your property is listed on the Town of New Tecumseth's Registers of Designated and Significant Properties (on our website), you can contact the Heritage Lead at the Museum on the Boyne to see if there is a research file on the building. If it's not listed, this is where your research begins:

Start with your property's legal description. For rural locations, you will need the Lot and Concession numbers, and for town properties you will need the Plan and Lot numbers. This information can usually be found on the deed to the property or on your tax bill. The tax bill will also have your Assessment Roll number, which you will need if your research takes you to the Land Registry Office.



Fire Insurance Plan of Alliston (1926)

Sources to Consult:

Land 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.).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

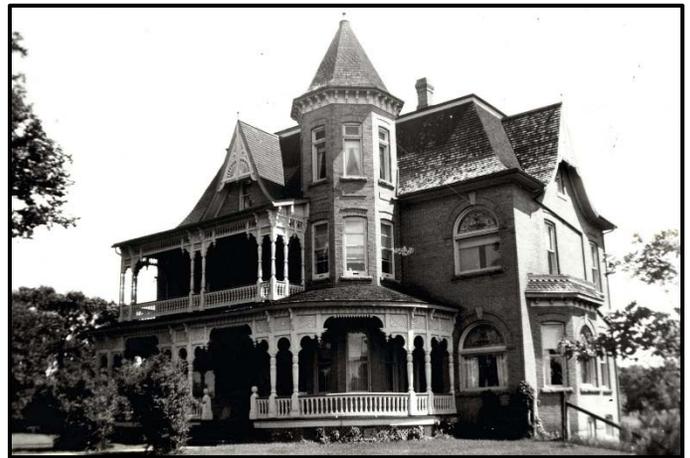


Williams-Kitney House, Line 7 in Beeton (Designated 1986)

Understanding Heritage Designation:

Under the *Ontario Heritage Act* municipalities are obligated to identify and conserve their community's cultural heritage assets. When a property or Conservation District is designated, its architectural and historical attributes are itemized and a designation by-law is passed by Council.

The designation by-law requires consultation with the Municipal Heritage Committee to ensure that any approved alterations take the property's heritage attributes into consideration and preserve our community's cultural heritage.



'The Castle' (Victoria St. E. in Alliston) was demolished in 1968

Debunking Myths about Designation:

- It does not prevent alteration of a property; it ensures that changes are sympathetic to the property's historically significant features
- It does not restrict routine maintenance work
- It does not impose expenses beyond those expected of any property owner
- It does not increase insurance premiums
- It does not restrict use of the property
- It does not require owners to restore the property to a certain time period
- It does not negatively impact property values; designated properties are proven to retain more of their value during economic downturns and sell as fast or faster than non-designated properties

Questions about Heritage Designation or Property Research?

Contact Heritage New Tecumseth at Museum on the Boyne for more information!