HERITAGE REPORT

O'BRIEN HOUSE 458 STE. MARIE STREET, COLLINGWOOD



PREPARED FOR THE TOWN OF COLLINGWOOD

SU MURDOCH HISTORICAL CONSULTING

47 RODNEY STREET BARRIE, ON L4M 4B6 705.728.5342 FAX 705.728.0334

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SUMMARY

Based on the documentary and physical research, it is concluded that the property known municipally as 458 Ste. Marie Street in the Town of Collingwood may be suitable as a candidate for consideration under s.29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. This property contains a dwelling built about 1906 for local merchant Henry O'Brien and his spouse Euphemia Simpson. It also features a concrete block wall with pillars and a wood pergola along the streetscape boundary.

The final evaluation of this property and the decision on whether to proceed with protection under the Ontario Heritage Act, and if so, which heritage attributes to include, rest with the Town of Collingwood municipal council.

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HERITAGE REPORT

458 STE. MARIE STREET, TOWN OF COLLINGWOOD

PART BLOCK A, EAST SIDE, HURONTARIO STREET, PLAN 156; PART 1, PLAN 51R17700

1.0 REPORT OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

This Heritage Report is intended to provide the Town of Collingwood with the research necessary to do a final evaluation of the property known municipally as 458 Ste. Marie Street for cultural heritage purposes and to consider its potential for protection under section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.0. 1990, c.O18, as amended 2009 ("the Act") (municipal designation of individual property).

The findings and recommendations of this report are based on the Town of Collingwood's property file, a property title search at the Simcoe County Land Registry Office, documentary research, and a site visit on September 16, 2010, during which the current owners were interviewed.

This report does not include the identification of any archaeological resources or areas of archaeological potential. Only an archaeologist licensed under the Ontario Heritage Act can undertake that fieldwork.

2.0 Subject Property

The subject property at 458 Ste. Marie Street is part Lot A, east side, Hurontario Street, Plan 156; now Part 1, Plan 51R17700 (shown next page). It is between Hamilton Street to the north and George (formerly Eighth) Street to the south, and fronts on Ste. Marie Street. This property is outside of the Downtown Collingwood Heritage Conservation District. Ste. Marie Street is an older residential area with mature landscaping.

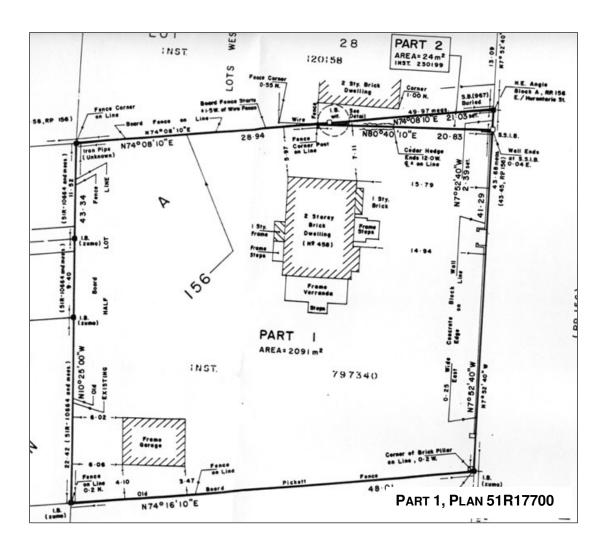
The property contains a dwelling, mature trees, and gardens, as well as a concrete block wall with pillars and a wood pergola along the Ste. Marie streetscape. The dwelling faces east to Ste. Marie Street and there is a driveway along the south boundary to a garage at the rear of the property.

3.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Ontario Heritage Act Regulation 9/06 sets the minimum standard for criteria to be used when evaluating the cultural heritage value or interest of a property being considered for designation under s.29 of the Act. One or more of the criterion in the categories of Design or Physical Value,

Historical or Associative Value, and Contextual Value must be met for the property to be designated.

As the Town of Collingwood does not have alternate evaluation criteria, Regulation 9/06 applies by default. The role of the Municipal Heritage Committee in the designation process is to apply Regulation 9/06, determine whether the property meets one or more of the criterion, and, if so, decide if the findings are sufficient to recommend protection under s.29 of the Act. Council will make the final decision on whether to designate or otherwise conserve the property for cultural heritage reasons.



4.0 HISTORICAL OR ASSOCIATIVE VALUE

4.1 Overview History of Collingwood

Collingwood owes its existence to the arrival on January 1, 1855, of the Ontario, Simcoe & Huron Union Railroad, later known as the Northern Railway, connecting Toronto, through the

Barrie area, to the harbour on Georgian Bay. The arrival of the railway rapidly transformed the Collingwood area from a roadless "impenetrable mass of cedar swamp" into an incorporated Town in 1858.

Knowledge that the railway would terminate at this Georgian Bay shoreline location prompted considerable land speculation and building construction. The port at Collingwood quickly developed and other railways like the Hamilton & North Western constructed lines into the area in the late 1870s. The growing populous eagerly pursued the opportunities offered by this transportation terminal. Fishing, lumbering, grain handling, mills, and boat building became important industries in the local economy.

Part of what became the town site is within Lot 42, Concession 8, Nottawasaga Township. Plan 156, which contains the subject property, was registered in 1871 as a subdivision within this township lot.

Collingwood prospered and was able to overcome the setback of a devastating fire in 1881 that left much of the business district along Hurontario Street in ruins. In 1882, J.D. Silcox and S.D. Andrews formed the Collingwood Dry Dock, Shipbuilding and Foundry Company and opened a dry dock the following year. Realizing that the future of Great Lakes shipping was in steel construction, the Collingwood Shipbuilding Company was formed in 1889. The establishment of the shipyards was followed by a period of rapid residential development and general prosperity. The community became a mix of single, semi detached, and row housing, as well as large estate houses. The dwelling at 458 Ste. Marie Street was built about 1906.

As early as 1907, the port started to experience competition from Canada's transcontinental railways. When the shipyard economy began to suffer, the period of Collingwood's rapid expansion and guaranteed prosperity came to an end.

4.2 Subject Property History

4.2.1 Crown Patent; and George Manning

The 100 acres of the south half of Lot 42, Concession 8, Nottawasaga Township, were patented from the Crown by John McInnis in 1845. Ownership changed several times before May 1869 when the acreage was acquired for \$1,500 by George Langtry Manning of West Gwillimbury Township.

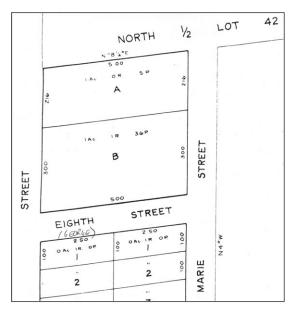
In 1870, Manning had surveyor J. Lestock Reid subdivide a portion of Lot 42, Concession 8, into building lots. This survey was registered at the Land Registry Office on May 28, 1871, as Plan 156. The subject property is part of the acre of Block A, Plan 156 (extract shown next page).

On March 31, 1874, George Manning of the Town of Collingwood, a yeoman (farmer) and widower¹ made legal provision for his children James Brock Manning (born November 12, 1868)

and Julia Elizabeth Manning (born May 22, 1872). He transferred the ownership of the acre of Block A, Plan 156, on the east side of Hurontario Street:

Whereas the said party of the first part is desirous of making provision for his said children and for that purpose to convey to them the lands hereinafter mentioned reserving nevertheless to himself the use and management of the said lands until the younger of said children attain the age of twenty one years.

George Manning died in Tecumseth Township on March 24, 1880. His Last Will and Testament instructed his executors (his brother James Manning, brother-in law John Wilson, and friend Nicholas B. Hillborn) to sell all of his holdings in Collingwood (with some exceptions) and invest the proceeds. The interest from these investments was assigned for:



Extract, Plan 156, 1871

Block A fronts on Hurontario Street (west) and Ste. Marie Street (east)

The support, maintenance and education of my children Julia Elizabeth Manning and James Brock Manning, until the youngest of them arrives at the full age of twenty one years at which time I order and direct my said executors or the survivors or survivor of them to pay over the said principal moneys to my said son James Brock Manning.

George also instructed his executors to lease Lot 27, Concession 11, Elma Township, Perth County; and Block A, Plan 156, Town of Collingwood. The proceeds again were for the support, maintenance, and education of his children.

The 1902 property tax assessment roll for Collingwood lists Julia (Manning) Stickney as the non resident owner of Block A, Plan 156. The 130 x 342-foot parcel was valued at \$1,400 and occupied by a tenant, Alex Baker, age 41. In 1904 and 1905, the value was \$1,700.

4.2.2 O'BRIEN FAMILY

It was George Manning's daughter Julia Elizabeth Stickney, wife of Edwin Wilmot Stickney of the village of Newburgh, Lennox and Addington County, who sold the acre of Block A, Plan 156, on July 6, 1905. It was bought for \$1,900 by Catharine Amelia (Robertson) O'Brien, wife of Collingwood merchant Robert O'Brien.

In August 1905, Catharine sold for \$600 the east half of Block A (half acre) to her son, Henry Byrne O'Brien. This is the subject property with frontage on Ste. Marie Street. The 1901 personal census lists Henry as age 24, born in Canada on December 25, 1876, and of Irish ancestry. He was Presbyterian and a commercial traveller. In 1905, Henry was identified as a merchant in Collingwood.

On May 18, 1906, Henry, an unmarried man, sold Block A to Euphemia Pauline Simpson, the daughter of Robert Simpson and Ann Kernahan, of Collingwood. The "consideration" was "contemplated marriage and the sum of one dollar." Henry and Euphemia were married June 11, 1906.

The 1906 tax assessment roll lists merchant Robert O'Brien on Block A. The 136 x 385-foot parcel had buildings valued at \$1,100 and land valued at \$600. This is likely the west part of Block A, fronting on Hurontario Street. Assessed with him was "Harry" O'Brien.

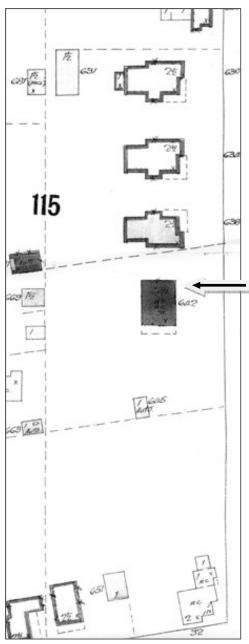
The 1907 assessment roll lists Euphemia O'Brien as the owner of the east half acre of Block A. The land was valued at \$500 and the buildings at \$1,500. Also in the household was Henry O'Brien, a merchant, age 30. This is believed to be the dwelling at 458 Ste. Marie Street.

The 1910-1911 and 1912-1913 directories for Collingwood list Henry B. O'Brien in "real estate," on the west side of Hurontario Street. The residence of "Harry" O'Brien was plotted as the first house north of George Street on the west side of Ste. Marie Street. Assuming that the only dwelling on Block B, which abuts the south boundary of Block A and north boundary of George Street, had a George Street address, then "Harry's" is the subject dwelling at 458 Ste. Marie Street.

4.2.3 ROBENA AND DAVID MANSON

On August 11, 1915, Euphemia O'Brien sold the east half of Block A to Robena M. Manson, wife of David Manson, all of Collingwood. The purchase price was one dollar plus the assumption of a \$2,000 mortgage.

The 1904 insurance plan of Collingwood (shown right) was updated in June 1917. The update includes the subject dwelling, known at that date as 642 Ste. Marie



Insurance Plan, 1904/1917 (Collingwood Museum)

Street. The plan shows a 2.5 storey, brick dwelling with the top storey finished in roughcast plaster. A verandah is marked on the south facade.

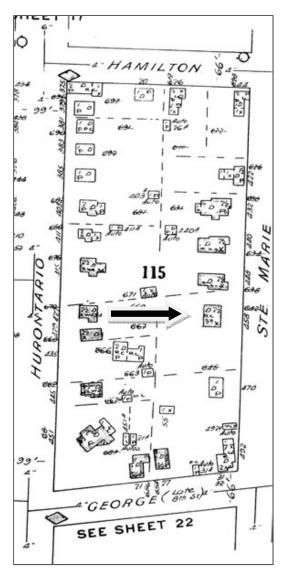
The 1923 directory for Collingwood lists David A. Manson as the proprietor of Manson's Music Store. His residence is listed as the west side of Ste. Marie Street, the first north of George Street (the subject dwelling).

4.2.4 EDWARD AND EILEEN SMART

Robena Manson was a widow on August 24, 1950, when she sold the half acre of Block A to Edward M. Smart and his wife Eileen Mary Smart. The purchase price was \$8,500.

Edward Smart was the son of George "W.G." Smart, a founder of Smart Bros. Ltd. The company was started in 1890 when John Smart bought seven acres of land on Campbell Street for a market garden. His son Norman joined in the endeavour; followed in 1892 by another son, George. John retired and in 1901 Norman and George formed Smart Bros. Ltd. They soon started a canning operation. When the original location became too small, a factory was built in 1925 on First Street. "By 1926 six greenhouses covering over 25,000 sq feet and heated cold frames covering 12,000 square feet were in operation."

After the war WG's son John returned from the service and took over management operations at the farm. Herbert, Norman's son took over management of the factory from his dad.



Underwriter's Insurance Plan, 1955

(Collingwood Museum)

Herbert died early in life & W G's son Edward assumed management of the canning factory. WG remained very active in the operation of the farm until his passing at age 96.

In 1964 WG died in January & John died in July. Later that year Canada Vinegars purchased Smart Bros. Canada Vinegars was then purchased by a UK firm Cerebos which in due course sold off all of Smarts properties and surrendered the charter in 1970.

Eileen Smart died about 1983. As her executor, in June 1983 Edward had the ownership transferred to himself and his daughter Audrey K. Matthews.

Frances and George Alwyn Christie stated that they bought the property in 1989 and are the 2010 owners. George Christie is the son of Mabel, a daughter of George ("W.G.") and Mary Smart. This makes George a nephew of the previous owner, Edward Smart.

5.0 DESIGN OR PHYSICAL VALUE

Two images (shown next page) believed to date to the 1950s, after the property was acquired by Edward and Eileen Smart, and a few years later after some of the vegetation was removed, were provided by the 2010 owners for purposes of this Heritage Report. These were used for comparison to the 2010 appearance.

5.1 DATE OF CONSTRUCTION

Based on the documentary evidence, it is likely that this dwelling was built for Henry and Euphemia (Simpson) O'Brien in 1906 as their first matrimonial home. In 1991, a large, one storey addition was integrated into the west facade.

The 2010 owner is of the understanding that the builder "lived across from the Presbyterian church" and was "an uncle to Dr. Storey." Further research may reveal the name of this individual.

5.2 STYLE AND FORM

By the beginning of the 20th century in Ontario, the Queen Anne style of architecture had been simplified and adapted for modest urban housing. The complexity of shapes, towers, and mix of materials and exterior treatments seen in the large, 19th century examples was reduced. The rectangular plan of the subject dwelling, with its gable roof, mix of exterior finishes, and some decorative elements, is an example of this "modern" form.

Also by this date, few building components were handcrafted. They were manufactured by industries and ordered from catalogues such as the 1904 *Universal Design Book* published in St. John, New Brunswick; as well as several American sources.

5.3 MASONRY

The masonry is a grey-tan coloured concrete brick laid in a common bond pattern. Each window opening has a brick voussoir or head. The mortar is red coloured.



These two images were provided by George Christie (2010 owner). He believes both date to just after his uncle and aunt, Edward and Eileen Smart, bought the property in August 1950. Based on the amount of overgrown vegetation and the trellis in the south verandah, the top image appears to be earlier than the bottom image. Both are before any significant changes were made to the structure.



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Above: East facade (R); south facade showing enclosed verandah (L)

Below: East and north facades



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Above: South facade showing enclosed verandah (L); east facade (R)

Below: South (C) and west (L) facades of 1991 rear addition





Above: South facade showing gable end formerly plastered and now clad in metal siding; window sash replacing the Queen Anne style sash in the gable; wood trim band applied to brick masonry; segmental window openings with voussoirs or heads

Below: West facade showing 1991 addition in foreground with original dwelling behind



The use of concrete brick was a new trend in the first decade of the 20th century. The construction of a solid concrete brick structure, such as the subject dwelling, was a more expensive undertaking, but the fireproofing characteristics were considered superior to the traditional wood frame with clay brick.

According to the 2010 owner, few houses in Collingwood were built using this type of concrete brick. Other known examples are just south of Hamilton Street, on the east side of Ste. Marie Street; and at the northeast corner of Napier and Hume streets.³

A band of moulded wood trim applied to the masonry just below the eaves is visible in the 1950s images and in 2010. The foundation is rubblestone. The existing chimney replicates the original.

5.4 Roof

The roof is a medium pitched gable type. The current owners added the four roof dormers. The original fascia boards with slightly flared ends survive but are now metal clad. All roofs have a modern metal shingling. The soffits and gutters are new.

In the 1950s and likely as built, the south and presumably north gable ends of the roof were clad in plaster and strapped vertically with six, narrow, dark coloured, wood boards to give a pseudo Tudoresque appearance. The combined use of plaster, wood, and bricks is in keeping with the Queen Anne style characteristic of mixing types of exterior finishes. These gable ends have since been clad in metal siding.

5.5 ENTRYWAYS

The east facade shown in the 1950s images has a centre doorcase flanked by two bay windows. Each element (two bay windows and doorcase) has a separate shed roof. The roof over the doorcase is slightly lower in elevation than the other two and is supported by wood brackets. Shed roofs were popular in the early 20th century. These were in place in 2010.

In the 1950s, the stairway led to a landing with a handrail and support posts. The front doorcase and the landing have been remodelled and/or replaced.

The 1917 insurance plan indicates a south facing verandah. An entryway within this open verandah is shown in the 1950s images. This verandah has been enclosed and the wood steps replaced with concrete. The doorcase has been replaced.

5.6 WINDOW OPENINGS

The original window units have been replaced with reproduction 1x1 panes with painted wood sashes and frames. The openings are still slightly segmental (as built) and the sashes are flat at

the top. The lugsills appear to be the original concrete.

The second storey, centre window opening on the east facade appears in the 1950s images to be in three parts: a centre sash with a narrow sash on each side. Although since replaced with three sashes, the centre sash is still the widest.

The 1950s images show a window sash with a diagonal pattern positioned within the south gable end. This type of sash was marketed at that time as a "Queen Anne Window." The page shown right is from the 1904 Universal Design Book. The example in the centre, top row, is similar to that originally used in the gable(s) of the subject dwelling.

5.7 **CULTURAL HERITAGE LANDSCAPE FEATURES**

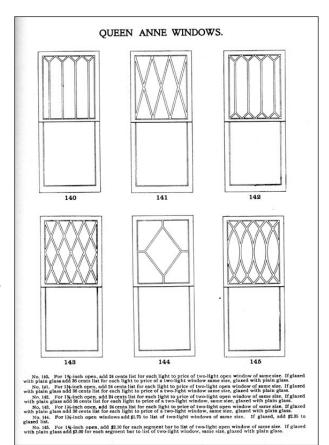
5.7.1 GARAGE

The 1917 insurance plan plots an automobile garage at the south boundary of the property. No garage is plotted on the 1955 insurance plan. The current owners believe the existing garage (shown right) was built by Edward Smart.

5.7.2 CONCRETE BLOCK WALL, PILLARS, AND WOOD PERGOLA

The concrete block wall and pillars with a wood pergola (entryway) along the Ste. Marie streetscape is believed to be an original or early feature.

Perimeter walls and fencing were a common landscape feature in Ontario until the early decades of the 20th century. They had the practical purpose of keeping domestic animals in







Above: Concrete block wall looking north

Below: Concrete block wall looking south





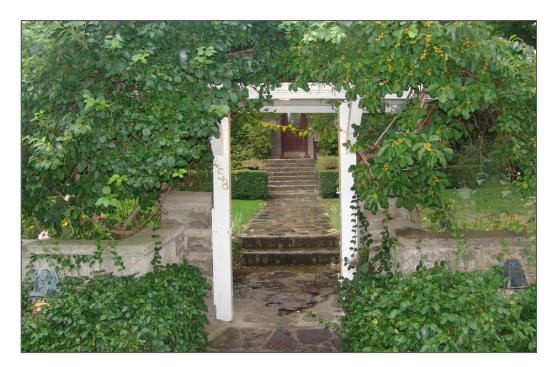
Above: Concrete block pillars flanking the driveway at south end of property

Below Left: Concrete block pillar showing metal pintle for a gate

Below Right: Inside face of concrete block wall, north of the pergola







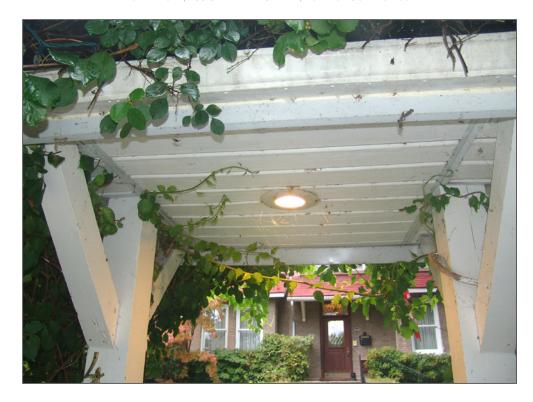
Above: Street side of pergola

Below Left: Hardware for gate on north support post of pergola

Below Right: Hardware for gate on south support post of pergola







Above: Roof structure, Y-brackets, and support posts of pergola

Below: Inside of pergola



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the yard, and roaming animals out. They also provided privacy to the dwelling and often formed the back drop to gardens. Many of these were removed due to deterioration and/or lost to street widenings and for the construction of sidewalks.

The 2010 owner of the subject property believes this wall with its entrance pergola to be the only surviving example in Collingwood.

The wall is constructed of four courses of split-faced concrete block, capped in concrete slabs. The rough, stone-like, textured side of the block faces the street to give the appearance of cut and dressed stone. The smooth face is on the property side. The original mortar appears to be tooled and red in colour.

The wall follows the streetscape, terminating at the south end with a pair of six course pillars that flank the driveway. Metal pintles on each pillar indicate there must have been a gate in place. Each pillar has a hipped concrete cap. The wall terminates at the north end of the property.

The north and south sections of the wall turn a short distance west at the walkway to the front (east) entrance to the dwelling. At this point there is a wood pergola that forms an entryway through the wall into the front yard. What appears to be forged hardware on the support columns of the pergola suggests there was gate. The roof is wood slats supported on plain, square, wood columns with Y-brackets.

All of the lighting fixtures on the wall and pillars are a later addition.

In the 1950s images, the textured face of the block appears to be more distinct and regular. The change in appearance to 2010 may be due to erosion of the surface detail. Some of the blocks in the south section have been replaced with similar materials.

5.7.3 VEGETATION

The two 1950s images show a progression from somewhat overgrown vegetation, to a groomed yard with new plantings. Much of the terrain was altered by the 1991 addition. There are some mature trees.

6.0 CONTEXTUAL VALUE

The subject dwelling is in keeping with the residential character of Ste. Marie Street although it appears to be a larger than average lot. The concrete block wall with pillars and a wood pergola form an important streetscape feature.

7.0 DISCUSSION

In considering the findings of this Heritage Report in the context of the evaluation criteria of Regulation 9/06, the case for protection under the Act could be debated.

One interpretation is that the dwelling was constructed about 1906 for a member of the O'Brien family, known as pioneers in Simcoe County. Long term (1915-1950) owners David and Robena Manson are known for their local music store. Robena sold the Ste. Marie Street property in 1950 to Edward and Eileen Smart. Edward was integral to Collingwood's industrial history through Smart Bros. Ltd. The dwelling retains its original rectangular form and massing. The original triple shed roof treatment of the east (front) facade is in place. All of the window openings and bay windows on the east and south facades remain. The "modern" concrete brick and coloured mortar with applied wood moulding is in good condition. Although metal clad, the flared fascias of the gable ends are visible. The dwelling is part of the residential character of Ste. Marie Street. The concrete block wall with pillars and a wood pergola form an important streetscape feature.

Another interpretation is that the O'Brien connection was short term (1906-1915) and Henry O'Brien not really of the pioneering family generation. The contribution of Smart Bros. Ltd. to Collingwood is being more appropriately commemorated at the Campbell Street site of the original operation. The appearance of the dwelling has been substantially altered by the addition of the large roof dormers and 1991 rear addition. All the window sashes and doorcases have been replaced. The south verandah has been enclosed and the east entrance landing changed. The roof has new cladding, the plastered gable ends have been clad in metal siding, the chimney replicated, and the soffits replaced. There are other examples in Collingwood of the use of concrete brick and red mortar. Even with this interpretation, the concrete block wall with pillars and a wood pergola form an important streetscape feature.

To be comprehensive, Council's deliberation on whether or not to proceed with protection under the Act should involve such factors as the research findings, the position of the property owners (although not required under the Act), and a discussion of how this property does or does not contribute to the understanding of Collingwood's built heritage, for the long term.

8.0 Draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

This draft statement of cultural heritage value or interest and description of heritage attributes is written to encompass two scenarios: protecting the real property and identifying the dwelling and concrete block wall with pillars and a wood pergola as the heritage attributes; or protecting only the concrete block wall with pillars and a wood pergola as the heritage attribute.

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

This property contains a dwelling believed to be built in 1906 for local merchant Henry O'Brien and his fiancé/wife Euphemia Simpson. It was owned by music store owners David and Robena Manson from 1915-1950. Edward Smart of Collingwood's Smart Bros. Ltd., and his spouse Eileen Smart bought the property in 1950. Their nephew George Christie and his spouse Frances acquired the property from the Smarts and are the 2010 owners. When built, this was a modern dwelling with elements of the new form of Queen Anne styling, such as in the use of mixed (plaster and brick) exterior finishes, a Queen Anne window sash, flared fascias, and shed roofs. It incorporates the then new trend of construction in concrete brick with red coloured mortar.

The concrete block wall with pillars and a wood pergola along the east boundary are a relic of a cultural landscape feature that at one time was common on urban lots but is now rare.

SUGGESTED DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

The cultural heritage value or interest of this property is expressed by the heritage attributes of the 1906, concrete brick dwelling; and the concrete block wall with pillars and a wood pergola.

DWELLING

The dwelling, but not the 1991 west (rear) addition, including all original components such as the:

- overall rectangular form, massing, height, and scale
- gable roof with flared fascias, but not the roof dormers
- bay windows with shed roofs
- shed roof over the centre doorcase, but not the doorcase
- segmental window openings and lugsills but not the reproduction sashes and frames
- remnants of the south verandah, such as the shed roof
- concrete bricks and the red coloured mortar, including the voussoirs or heads over the window openings

CONCRETE BLOCK WALL WITH PILLARS AND A WOOD PERGOLA

The concrete block wall with pillars and a wood pergola along the Ste. Marie streetscape, including all original and vintage components such as the:

- components of the block wall, including the split faced concrete blocks, concrete capstones (flat and hipped), tooled red mortar, and pillars
- four course height of the wall and six course height of the pillars
- orientation of the block wall to the streetscape
- location of the wood pergola aligned with the entryway on the east facade of the dwelling
- components of the pergola including the roof, support columns, and Y brackets
- gate hardware on the pergola and the pillars

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is the conclusion of this report that this property warrants consideration under s.29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, but the inclusion of the dwelling as a heritage attribute requires careful evaluation. It is recommended that the Collingwood Heritage Committee undertake an inspection of the property and share this report and any subsequent findings with the current owners. The Committee can then make the final determination on whether to recommend that the Council of the Town of Collingwood consider designation under the Act and for what reasons.

Sources

Abstract of Title and related documents, Block A, Plan 126. Simcoe County Land Registry Office

Collingwood Newspaper Collection. Collingwood Public Library

Family History Collection. Collingwood Public Library

Collingwood Directories. Collingwood Public Library

Insurance Plans, 1905/1917 and November 1955. Collingwood Museum

Personal Census, 1901 and 1911. Ancestry.ca

Collingwood Tax Assessment Rolls. Simcoe County Archives

Universal Design Book, 1904. Published in St. John, New Brunswick; Reprint Edition: Lee Valley Tools Ltd., 1984.

Blumenson, John. Ontario Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building Terms 1784 to the present. Toronto, 1989.

The assistance of George and Frances Christie is appreciated.

ENDNOTES

¹ George may have married Mary Lucinda Aylesworth on January 1, 1868, in Lloydtown. She died of meningitis on December 11, 1873. Marriage and death records, Ancestry.ca.

² "The Story of Smart Bros. Ltd." Typescript provided by George Christie.

³ These locations were provided by George Christie (2010 owner).