

Heritage Research Report



148 Balsam Drive

February 2015

HERITAGE RESEARCH REPORT STATUS SHEET

Street Address:	148 Balsam Drive
Roll Number:	24810-0060
Short Legal Description:	LT 7, PL 1009; OAKVILLE
Heritage Type:	Residence
Heritage Status:	Listed Heritage Property
Zoning:	R3
Land Use:	Residential
Research Report Completion Date:	March 10, 2015
Heritage Committee Meeting Date:	March 31, 2015
Designation Brief Completed by:	Megan Hobson Heritage Planner
Sources Consulted:	Land Registry Records <i>Oakville: A Small Town 1900-1930</i> <i>Charles & Louisa Brooman Family Photo Album</i> Town of Oakville files Historical maps and photographs, Oakville Historical Society and Oakville Public Library Archives

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The subject property has been researched and evaluated in order to determine its cultural heritage significance according to Ontario Regulation 9/06. This Regulation, defined in the *Ontario Heritage Act*, outlines several criteria for determining whether a property is of cultural heritage value or interest. In order for a property to be designated under section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* it must meet one or more of these criteria, which are outlined below. By using these criteria, staff can determine if the property's cultural heritage value or interest merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

1. The property has design value or physical value because it,
 - i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,
The subject house is a modified example of a c.1912 vernacular residence with Tudor Revival influences.
 - ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit
The property displays a modest degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit that is consistent with the materials of the era in which it was constructed.
 - iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement
There are no technical or scientific achievements associated with this property.
2. The property has historical value or associative value because it,
 - i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community,
The subject property is associated with Charles Brooman who was the gardener employed by Rebecca Wass to maintain the grounds at Balsam Lawn. Charles Brooman has minor significance to the community that is based on his association with Rebecca Wass and Balsam Lawn.
 - ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or
The property contributes somewhat to understanding the early suburban development of this part of Trafalgar Township between 1900 and 1945.
demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
The property is not associated with an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is known to the community.
3. The property has contextual value because it,
 - i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,
The subject house supports the residential character of Balsam Drive.
 - ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or
The subject property is historically linked to Balsam Lawn during the period between 1912 and 1925 when Charles Brooman was employed by Rebecca Wass to maintain the grounds at Balsam Lawn. The former functional, visual and physical links between these two properties no longer exist.
 - iii. is a landmark.
The property is not considered to be a landmark.

Design and Physical Value

Records indicate that the residence at 148 Balsam Drive was constructed c.1912. The house is a 1-1/2-storey frame building with a cross gable roof and walls clad in stucco. Original design features include Tudor Revival details such as the pebble-dash stucco, faux half-timber in the gables, and two small diamond pane windows on the ground floor at the north-east corner. The original entrance was recessed under an open porch with a hipped roof. There was a small barn located behind the house.



Figure 1: 148 Balsam Drive, main elevation showing the original half timbering in the gable, stucco finish and hipped roof front porch. [Source; OHS, 1912]



Figure 2: 148 Balsam Drive, south elevation showing the original front porch and inset front entrance. [Source: OHS, 1912]



Figure 3: 148 Balsam Drive, south elevation showing the original pebble-dash stucco. [Source: OHS, 1919]



Figure 4: 148 Balsam Drive, main elevation showing original diamond-pane window and front porch. [Source; OHS, 1912]

The property has been substantially modified over the years. The original cross gable roof has not changed but many of the original features have been removed or significantly altered. The barn building and the wood rail fence have disappeared. The original hipped-roof porch on the front has been removed and replaced by a smaller porch with a gable. The recessed entry has been built out and the two diamond-paned windows on the south-east corner have been removed. The exterior has been re-clad with wood cladding. All the original doors and windows have been recently replaced with modern windows. New decorative features have been added to the exterior including wood window shutters, wood trim around the windows, and wood barge boards in the gables. Substantial additions have been added at the rear and on both side elevations. The interior has been completely altered and no original finishes remain.

Due to the considerable alterations and the removal of character-defining features, this property has limited design and physical heritage value.



Figure 5: 148 Balsam Drive, main elevation showing alterations and removal of character-defining features: 1. Removal of half timbering in the gables. 2. Re-cladding with wood siding. 3. Removal and replacement of the hipped roof porch. 4. Removal and replacement of all original windows and doors. 5. Introduction of new barge boards. 6. Extensive side and rear additions. [Source; M. Hobson, 2014]



Figure 6: 148 Balsam Drive, south elevation. [M. Hobson, 2014]

Historical and Associative Value

The property currently known as 148 Balsam Drive consists of Lot 7 on Plan no. 1009, a subdivision registered in 1959. It was originally part of Lot 11, Concession 3, SDS (South of Dundas Street) in Trafalgar Township. Prior to construction of the subject house, this parcel was part of a 100 acre farm purchased by William Wass in 1869.

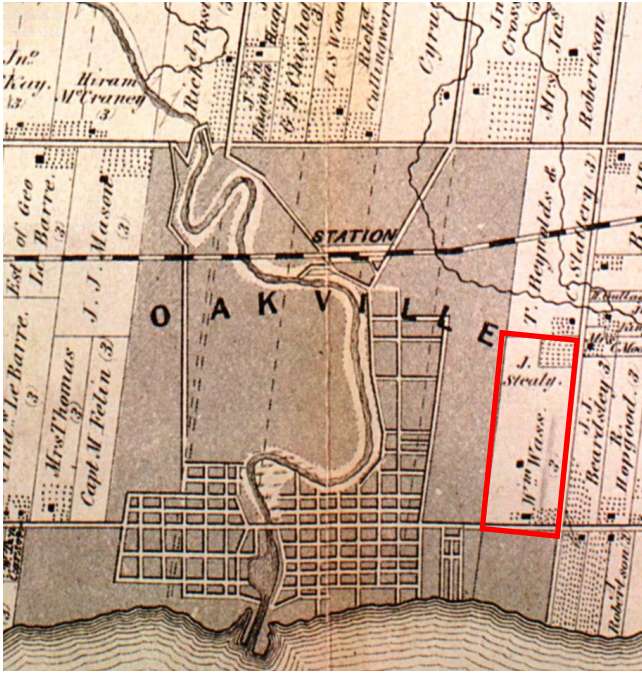


Figure 7: Location of the 100 acre farm purchased by William Wass in 1869. [Source; 1878 Halton County Atlas]

In 1878 William Wass built a large home at the south end of his property that he named Balsam Lawn. After the death of William Wass in 1892 and his wife in 1903, their daughter Miss Rebecca Wass inherited Balsam Lawn and lived there until her death in 1925. Miss Wass gradually disposed of the farmland that extended to MacDonald Road but Centre Road (later Balsam Drive) had only seven residences on it by the time of her death.

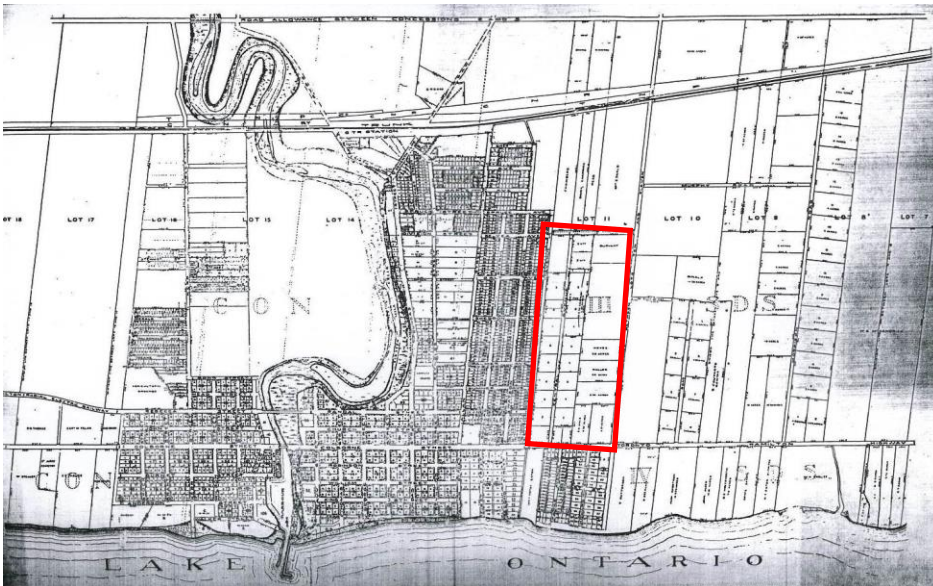


Figure 8: 1924 map showing the division of the Wass farm into suburban lots. [Source: 1924 Brochure]

Records indicate that Rebecca Wass had the house at 148 Balsam Drive constructed to house Charles Brooman and his family. Charles Brooman was employed by Miss Wass as the gardener that maintained her estate.



Figure 9: 1918 photo of Charles Brooman mowing the grass at Balsam Lawn. [Source: OHS]

Upon the death of Miss Wass in 1926, the property passed to William Sinclair Davis who immediately transferred the property to Agnes Galt Davis. In 1950, the property passed to Dolena M. Steele. A fire insurance map from 1949 indicates that the property originally extended through to Gloucester Road.

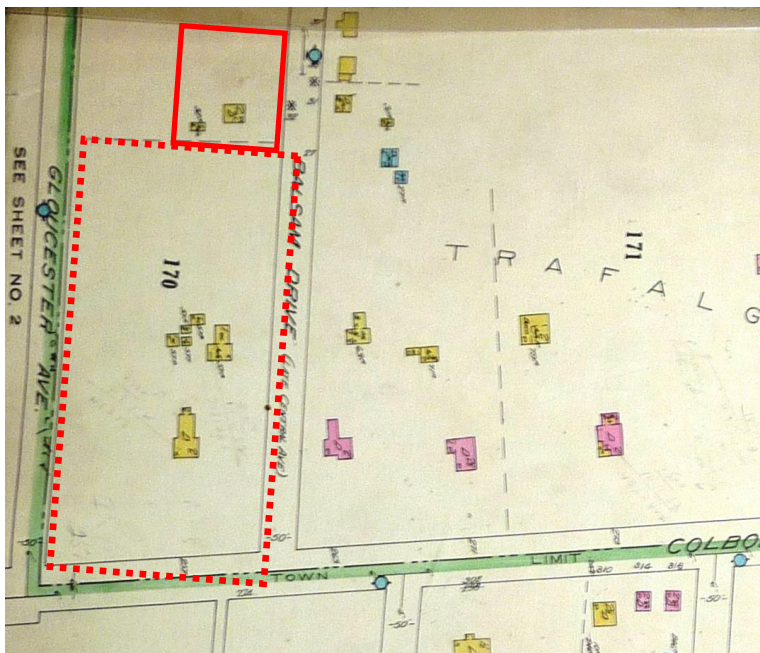


Figure 10: 148 Balsam Drive (above) remained visually and physically linked to Balsam Lawn (below) until the mid-20th century as indicated on this 1949 Fire Insurance Map. [Source: 1949 Underwriters' Bureau]

In 1984, upon the death of Dolena Steele, it was sold to Jill Burden who sold it to the current owners in 2000. Most of the modifications to the house were undertaken since 2000 by the current owners.

Contextual Value

There are two Part IV Designated properties on Balsam Drive and six properties that are Listed as having heritage potential. The two Designated properties are located at the corner of Balsam Drive and Lakeshore Road and include Balsam Lawn (104 Balsam Drive) and Clearview (109 Balsam Drive). These properties have architectural, historical and contextual significance and were built in the late 19th century.

The property at 148 Balsam Drive was Listed in 2009 due to its potential cultural heritage value for its c. 1920 Tudor Revival style. Two properties located across the street at 149 and 153 Balsam Drive were added at the same time for the same reason. Research on 148 Balsam Drive indicates that it was actually built c. 1912 and does not appear to have any links to these properties.



Figure 11: 148 Balsam Drive (left) is now visually and physically separated from Balsam Lawn (right) by three suburban lots. [source: 2015 GIS map]

The residential character of Balsam Drive is varied and reflects the piecemeal development of the area over a long period of time with most development occurring since 1945. The original physical and visual links between Balsam Lawn and 148 Balsam drive no longer exist since the properties are now separated by three lots with modern single-detached residences. The row of mature conifers along the west side of Balsam Drive is a distinctive feature of the street and is the only remaining visual and physical link with the Balsam Lawn.



Figure 12: Row of mature conifers on the west side of Balsam Drive. View looking south from 148 Balsam Drive to Lakeshore Road. [Source; M. Hobson, 2015]