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Dear Ms. Schappert:

**Re: Bronte Harbour – Cultural Heritage Landscape Strategy Implementation – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

Under a contract initiated in April 2019, Archaeological Research Associates Ltd. (ARA) and Dillon Consulting Limited (Dillon) were retained by the Town of Oakville to complete tasks related to the Bronte Harbour – Cultural Heritage Landscape Strategy Implementation.

In the Town of Oakville, a study was completed entitled *Cultural Heritage Landscapes Strategy* (2014). In 2016, the Town completed an inventory of Cultural Heritage Landscapes that included 63 properties (Phase I). The inventory listed eight high priority properties that subsequently had Research and Assessment reports undertaken (Phase II). Bronte Harbour and Bronte Bluffs were included in the inventory as two entries and examined as one CHL in the Phase II *Cultural Heritage Landscape Strategy Implementation – Phase II Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report, Bronte Harbour and Bronte Bluffs, Oakville, Ontario* by Letourneau Heritage Consulting Inc. in 2018. The draft Heritage Assessment report was endorsed by Council on October 1, 2018. This study undertaken by ARA and Dillon builds on the findings of the Phase II report by Letourneau Heritage Consulting Inc. to formalize the Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (CHVI) including the list of heritage attributes for the Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape.

Two of the properties within the Cultural Heritage Landscape boundaries are designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The Charles Sovereign House at 7 West River Street is designated under By-law 1990-50 and the Oakville Harbours Building (former Bronte Marina Building) at 2508 Lakeshore Road West is designated under By-law 2014-124. On August 30, 2019 the Town of Oakville provided direction that the intent is to include those buildings within the CHL by-law and that the old by-laws will be repealed.

## 1.0 PERSONNEL

The Statement of CHVI scope of work was undertaken by the following staff at ARA and Dillon:

### **Archaeological Research Associates Ltd.**

**Senior Review:** P.J. Racher, M.A., CAHP

**Project Director:** K. Jonas Galvin, M.A., RPP, MCIP, CAHP

**Project Coordinator:** L. Benjamin, M.A.E.S., RPP, MCIP, CAHP

**Field Review:** L. Benjamin and K. Jonas Galvin

**Historical Research:** S. Clarke. B.A.

**Photography:** L. Benjamin

**Cartographer:** K. Brightwell (GIS)

**Technical Writers:** L. Benjamin, K. Jonas Galvin, J. McDermid, B.A. and P. Young, M.A., CAHP

### **Dillon Consulting Limited**

**Landscape Planner:** M. Braunstein, B.E.S, M.L.A.

**Senior Review:** C. Marshall, B.L.A.,RPP, MCIP

**Field Review:** M. Braunstein

## 2.0 METHOD

### 2.1 Field Survey

A field survey was undertaken on April 8, 2019 by K. Jonas Galvin and L. Benjamin of ARA and M. Braunstein of Dillon. The consultant team was accompanied by Susan Schappert (Heritage Planner, Town of Oakville) and Chris Mark (Director of Parks and Open Space, Town of Oakville). The field survey component of this assessment involved a review of previously-identified heritage attributes outlined in *Cultural Heritage Landscape Strategy Implementation – Phase II Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report, Bronte Harbour and Bronte Bluffs, Oakville, Ontario* by Letourneau Heritage Consulting Inc. The site visit also helped the consultant team to confirm the location of each previously-identified heritage attribute and allowed an opportunity to examine views. A subsequent site visit was undertaken on August 26, 2019 by K. Jonas Galvin. The consultant team was accompanied by Susan Schappert. The site visit allowed an opportunity to review the heritage attributes as expressed in a draft Statement of Significance produced in May 2019. Members of Dillon’s team conducted a second site visit on September 17 and 20, 2019.

### 2.2 Examination of Views

*Cultural Heritage Landscape Strategy Implementation – Phase II Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report, Bronte Harbour and Bronte Bluffs, Oakville, Ontario* noted that a “formal visual analysis of the Study Area may be warranted to fully explore how view[s] of, from and within the Study Area relate to its cultural heritage value. In particular, view[s] towards the Harbour from the Lake may warrant additional consideration” (2018:89). As such, ARA and Dillon’s examination included developing a list of significant views. Given that the examination was limited to one season (early spring), there were constraints to the views observed during the site visit. Specifically, the trees were without leaves and boats were being stored in the parking areas. A subsequent site visit in August 2019 allowed for a revision of some of the views. There may also be additional views from the water (Lake Ontario/Outer Harbour) to the heritage attributes; however, the team did not examine views from a watercraft to the shore.

## **2.3 Engagement**

The consultant team met with the Supervisor of Harbours at the Oakville Harbours Building on August 26, 2019 to review the property. The team also met with representatives of the Bronte Historical Society at the Sovereign House to provide information regarding the Cultural Heritage Landscape Conservation Plan as well as gain insight into the potential heritage attributes to be included in the Statement of Significance.

A draft of the Statement of Significance was provided to the Department of Consultation and Accommodation (DOCA) of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN) via email on August 26, 2019. It was subsequently forwarded to the Traditional Knowledge and Land Use Coordinator who provided comments on September 5, 2019. The comments received were incorporated into a revised Statement of Significance.

The Bronte Horticultural Society was contacted via email on August 28, 2019. A response received the same day provided information about their plantings around Sovereign House. A phone call was held on October 25, 2019 which provided further details about the types of plants. This information was used to inform the Statement of Significance.

A Public Open House in conjunction with the Oakville Harbours Master Plan was held on November 13, 2019 at the . Queen Elizabeth Park Community Centre (2302 Bridge Road). The meeting's format consisted of a brief presentation at 6:30 pm with the remainder of time devoted to an Open House to review visual materials and discuss the development of the CHL with Town staff and project team members. As the CHL encompasses Bronte Harbour, draft recommendations of the Harbours masterplan were also be available for review. The materials presented included the draft value statements. 20 people attended the Public Open House. One written comment was received from Oakville Green Conservation Association.

## **3.0 ANALYSIS**

### **3.1 19<sup>th</sup> Century Harbours**

A sample of 19<sup>th</sup> century harbours in Ontario were examined to determine the typical characteristics of this landscape-type (see Table 1). A high-level review was conducted on a sample of harbours for comparison. The materials were extracted from various planning exercises (i.e., landscape studies, heritage conservation district designations, master plans), which included an examination of the harbours' cultural heritage value or interest. As a result of the variation in report-types consulted, the consistency of detail also varies. Additional research related to each sample harbour is beyond the scope of this project. Despite the limitation, this high-level comparative exercise is sufficient to determine typical characteristics of 19<sup>th</sup> century harbours in Ontario.

All the harbours examined are organically evolved landscapes. All harbours examined involved man-made interventions to river mouths to create a landscape to support industrial uses. The key features of "artificial harbours are breakwaters, concrete walls (sea walls), and other forms of barriers designed to protect the harbour from storms and reduce the tidal range" (Shipping and Freight Resource 2018).

All the landscapes appear to retain buildings that represent their various historic industrial and commercial uses. To some degree most harbours now support recreational uses (only Goderich Harbour retains its industrial use in addition to recreational use). The majority of the harbours

were developed by companies such as the Bronte Harbour Company that were given the ability to collect tolls for goods passing through the port (Letourneau 2018:55).

Features that are distinctive are the types of historic industrial/commercial uses and the current dominant uses. There appear to only be a few harbours that incorporate commemoration as a key feature (Goderich, Oakville and Bronte Creek Harbours), and only some have beaches (Bronte Creek, Goderich and Port Stanley harbours) or include trails (Bronte Creek, Oakville and harbours). This high-level review provides sufficient detail to determine that Bronte Harbour shares many of the characteristics with the harbours that were examined, and therefore can be considered “representative”.

Table 1: Characteristics of 19<sup>th</sup> Century Harbours in Ontario

Harbour Name	Study Outlining Key Features, CHVI and Heritage Attributes	Year	Indigenous Significance Noted (Yes/No)	Company or Individual Responsible for Harbour Construction (Name)	River Mouth Modified by Humans for Industrial Uses (River Name)	Remnants of earlier Harbour infrastructure Remain (Yes/No)	Structures Related to industrial Uses Remain (Yes/No)	Industrial Uses (Industries listed in Study)	Pathways and Trails Throughout the Landscape (Yes/No)	Historic Recreational/Cottage Use (Yes/No)	Beaches Related to Recreational Use (Yes/No)	Place of Commemoration (Noted in study)	Close Relationship to Rail Line (i.e., rail line into harbour)	Evolved Landscape or Designed Landscape	Dominant Current Uses
Bronte Creek Harbour		1856	Yes	Company – Bronte Harbour Company	River – Bronte Creek (Twelve Mile Creek)	Yes	Yes	Stone hooking, grist mill and shipping for grain, boat building, fishing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Evolved	Recreational boating
Oakville Harbour	Town of Oakville Inventory Reports: 5 Walker Street, Oakville Harbour and Shipyard Park; 8 Navy St & 110-114 King Street, Erchless Estate; 144 Front Street, Lakeside Park; and 10-22 Walker Street, Tannery Park	Circa 1833	Yes	Individual - William Chisholm	River – 16 Mile Creek	Yes	Yes	Shipping and Shipbuilding	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Evolved	Recreational/ Recreation al boating
Goderich Harbour	Goderich Harbour Cultural Heritage Landscape Study (HRC 2010)	First Piers constructed between 1830 and 1850	Yes	Company – Canada Company	River	Yes	Yes	Salt Mining, Shipping, Grain storage and shipping, flour and lumber mills, fishing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Evolved	Industrial/ Shipping, Recreational uses
Port Stanley	Village of Port Stanley Heritage Conservation District Study (MHBC 2013)	1822	No	Was not included in HCD study	Kettle Creek	Yes	Yes	Shipping for grain, include saw mills and grist mills, storage warehouses and passenger steamboats, commercial fishing	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Evolved	Recreational boating
Picton Harbour	Picton Heritage Conservation District Study (ERA 2012)	Circa 1816	Yes	Was not included in HCD study	Natural harbour - extent of modification not described	Was not included in HCD study	Limited remains	Passenger steamships, commercial shipping, warehouses, brewery	No pedestrian access	No	No	Was not included in HCD study	Was not included in HCD study	Evolved	Recreational boating
Port Credit Harbour		Circa 1834	Yes	Company - Credit Harbour Company	River – Credit River			Stone hooking, commercial fishing, freight terminal		no				Evolved	Recreational boating

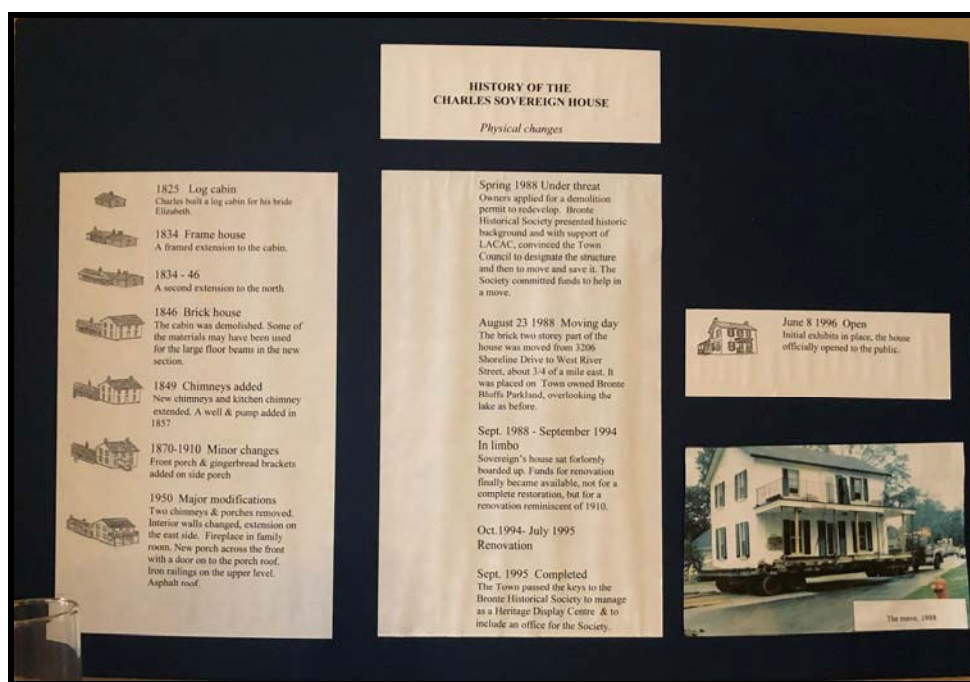
### 3.2 Charles Sovereign House

The Charles Sovereign House is designated by By-law 1990-50. As the by-law was completed in 1995, prior to the 2005 *Ontario Heritage Act* amendment, the content of the by-law, including an examination of the cultural heritage value or interest of the building along with heritage attributes was completed as part of this project.

According to information provided by the Bronte Historical Society (see Image 1). The original portion of the building was constructed as a log cabin c. 1825, however it was later demolished as the building was expanded (as noted in Image 1). The rear wing of the current building may date to 1834, and the Georgian portion of the building likely dates to 1846. The chimneys were added in 1849 and in 1870-1910 and 1950 significant changes were made to the building, such as the building and removal of a front porch, interior walls changed and an asphalt roof added. An interior site visit revealed that the wood floors and staircase are likely original, but the remainder of the interior has been altered. Wood doors and window and door surrounds appear to date from the 1950 renovations. In 1988, the Town of Oakville moved the historic Sovereign House to the Bronte Bluffs, a new park space they had purchased in 1976. The house is now used by the Bronte Historical Society and its garden, maintained by the Bronte Horticultural Society since 1995, is a favourite place for gatherings. The site visits revealed that the façade has a new portico and new two-over-two windows as well as a cedar shingle roof, all of which appear to have been added since the building was moved and are sympathetic to the building style. The house now has a stucco exterior and white shutters.

When examined against the typical characteristics of the Georgian Style as outlined by Mark Fram in *Well-Preserved: The Ontario Heritage Manual of Principles and Practice for Architectural Conservation* (1988), the building meets more than half of the characteristics of the style and therefore can be considered representative (see Table 2).

The house is historically tied to early pioneer Philip Sovereign who arrived in 1814 from Sussex County, New York. He established a farm on a large property that extended along the lakefront west of the reserve lands and is considered a “founding father of Bronte Village.” Local boat builder Dalt McDonald (1878-1975) also resided in the house. McDonald was responsible for building local fishing boats around the turn of the century. From 1911-1914 the home became the inspiration and residence of Mazo de la Roche, the internationally renowned author of the *Jalna* series. The ‘cottage’ style gardens that surround the Sovereign House are said to be reminiscent of the 1911-1915 period when Canadian writer Mazo de la Roche called it home (Historic Places Day 2019).



**Image 1: Timeline of Changes to Charles Sovereign House**

**Table 2: Characteristics of Georgian Architecture**

Characteristic (adapted from Fram 1988)	Sovereign House Characteristics
Box-like	Yes
Symmetrical façade	Yes
Two-storeys	Yes
Centre-hall plan	No – Interior has been modified
Five-bay façade, residences often had three-bay facades	Yes – Three-bay façade
Gable roof – often with matching chimneys	Yes
Simple cornices with return eaves, sometimes with dentils	Yes – Simple cornices, but no return eaves or dentils
Small-paned (typically 12 over 12) double hung windows	No – Windows are replacement
Flat top or shallow arched fanlights at central entrance door	No

#### 4.0 EXAMINATION OF DRAFT STATEMENT

*Cultural Heritage Landscape Strategy Implementation – Phase II Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report, Bronte Harbour and Bronte Bluffs, Oakville, Ontario* by Letourneau Heritage Consulting Inc. provided an evaluation of the landscape against Ontario Regulation 9/06 as specified by the Town in the *Cultural Heritage Landscape Strategy*. It included a Summary of Cultural Heritage Value and a list of key features. These have been examined and refined to produce a formal Statement of CHVI and a list of heritage attributes. No additional engagement was undertaken. A rationale for the key changes is outlined below.

#### 4.1 Provincial and Federal Lands

The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape includes properties owned by the province and federal government (see Map 1). Provincially and federally owned lands cannot be designated under Part IV or Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. If these lands change ownership in the future, they may be included in a designation. The statement outlined in Section 5.0 recognizes the lands that can currently be designated. As such, it does not include the following heritage attributes located in the larger Cultural Heritage Landscape:

- Sandy beach along the south of the Harbour;
- Bronte cenotaph;
- Fisherman's Wharf and breakwater as well as associated navigational aids including the lighthouse;
- Fisherman's Memorial; and
- Scattered remnant Harbour infrastructure from previous iterations of Harbour design including historic foghorn.

Views from the federal and provincial lands were not examined but may also be heritage attributes.





**Map 1: Map of the Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape and Area To Be Designated**

## 4.2 Refining Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes were refined for clarity to address *what* about the heritage attributes is of cultural heritage value or interest and/or *where* the attributes are located. Boat slips were removed as a heritage attribute. Although they are consistent with the theme of an organically evolved harbour and its recreational activities, they are movable objects and therefore, they can not be designated. An examination of the relationship between the heritage attributes and the cultural heritage value or interest outlined in Table 3 assisted with the refinement of the list of heritage attributes. Map 2 to Map 4 illustrate the relationship of each property parcel within the landscape to the identified cultural heritage value or interest and heritage attributes.

**Table 3: Relationship of Heritage Attributes to Cultural Heritage Values**

Cultural Heritage Value or Interest	Heritage Attribute
<p>The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape has physical/design value as a representative example of an organically evolved harbour landscape dating from the mid-19th century. The current harbour reflects an evolution from continuous improvements and additions over time to the natural landscape of Bronte Creek and Bronte Bluffs to accommodate commercial/industrial uses and recreational activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oakville Harbours Building contribution to the landscape through its two-storey massing, orientation of the building and its 20' x 24' doors on the north and south gable ends that open to the inner harbour.</li> <li>• Sovereign House's contribution to the landscape, particularly its situation on the Bronte Bluffs and its associated gardens.</li> <li>• Steep and rocky treed slope of the elevated Bluffs, the low-lying Harbour area, and man-made single channel created from Bronte Creek through to Lake Ontario.</li> <li>• Views to/from heritage attributes that demonstrate the organically evolved harbour landscape including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View 1 – View from the Bluffs at the break in vegetation to the lake and to the lighthouse looking northeast</li> <li>• View 2 – View of the Sovereign House from the trails on the Bluffs looking west from the end of Seneca Drive</li> <li>• View 3 - View of the Sovereign House from Seneca Drive looking east;</li> <li>• View 4 – View from the Bronte Beach Park side of the channel and Oakville Harbours Building looking north and to the end of the channel looking southwest.</li> <li>• View 5 - View from the end of the channel at West River Street to the Oakville Harbours Building</li> <li>• View 6 – View from Berta Point to the Oakville Harbours Building and channel looking northeast</li> <li>• View 7 - View of the Bronte Cenotaph and General Chris Vokes Memorial Park looking east</li> <li>• View 8 – View from the path in front of the Oakville Harbours Building to Bronte Beach Park looking east, to Bronte Bluffs looking southeast and toward the outer harbour looking northeast</li> <li>• View 9 – View from Bronte Road to the inner</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Cultural Heritage Value or Interest	Heritage Attribute
	harbour and bluffs looking southwest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View 10 – View from Bronte Road looking south to the outer harbour.</li> <li>• View 11 – View from Fisherman’s Wharf to the inner harbour and Oakville Harbours Building looking west</li> <li>• View 12 – View from Fisherman’s Wharf to the outer harbour and lighthouse looking east</li> </ul>
The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape contains a rare, remaining example of a mid-20 <sup>th</sup> century shipbuilding shed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rectangular plan</li> <li>• Exterior shingle cladding</li> <li>• Medium pitched gable roof</li> <li>• Historic wood sash and fixed pane windows on the west and east elevations</li> <li>• Original twin-leaf swing door where each leaf is bi-fold on the north elevation</li> <li>• One-and-a-half storey addition on the west elevation of the building, excluding altered windows and entrances</li> <li>• Interior open space from ground to interior of roof, excluding exposed interior framing</li> <li>• Interior catwalk located at the same height as the second floor to the west addition.</li> </ul>
The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape also contains a representative Georgian Style building – the Sovereign House.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two-storey massing and rear elevation one-and-a-half storey wing</li> <li>• Symmetrical three-bay façade with a central entrance flanked by windows as well as the symmetrical two-bay side elevations</li> <li>• Side gable roof with a chimney at both gable ends</li> <li>• Sovereign House’s key interior attributes include its:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interior wood floors</li> <li>• Interior wood staircase</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape has historical/associative value due to its direct associations with the Indigenous land-use of the area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steep and rocky treed slope of the elevated Bluffs and the low-lying Harbour area.</li> </ul>
The Bronte Harbour and Cultural Heritage Landscape is associated with key figures, companies and organizations related to the development of the harbour and the local history of Bronte village.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oakville Harbours Building contribution to the landscape through its two-storey massing, orientation of the building and its 20’ x 24’ doors on the north and south gable ends that open to the inner harbour.</li> <li>• Sovereign House’s contribution to the landscape particularly its situation on the Bronte Bluffs and its associated gardens.</li> </ul>
Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape is historically and functionally linked to its surroundings .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steep and rocky treed slope of the elevated Bluffs, the low-lying Harbour area, and man-made single channel created from Bronte Creek through to Lake Ontario.</li> </ul>
Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape continues to be integral to the village of Bronte village as a community landmark.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open spaces at the top of the Bluffs and within Berta Point as well as the tree canopies.</li> <li>• System of foot paths and trails that connect the landscape and provide views to the inner</li> </ul>

Cultural Heritage Value or Interest	Heritage Attribute
	<p>harbour, outer harbour and the lake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views to/from heritage attributes that demonstrate the organically evolved harbour landscape including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• View 1 – View from the Bluffs at the break in vegetation to the lake and to the lighthouse looking northeast</li> <li>• View 2 – View of the Sovereign House from the trails on the Bluffs looking west from the end of Seneca Drive</li> <li>• View 3 - View of the Sovereign House from Seneca Drive looking east</li> <li>• View 4 – View from the Bronte Beach Park side of the channel and Oakville Harbours Building looking north and to the end of the channel looking southwest.</li> <li>• View 5 - View from the end of the channel at West River Street to the Oakville Harbours Building</li> <li>• View 6 – View from Berta Point to the Oakville Harbours Building and channel looking northeast</li> <li>• View 7 - View of the Bronte Cenotaph and General Chris Vokes Memorial Park looking east</li> <li>• View 8 – View from the path in front of the Oakville Harbours Building to Bronte Beach Park looking east, to Bronte Bluffs looking southeast and toward the outer harbour looking northeast</li> <li>• View 9 - View from Bronte Road to the inner harbour and bluffs looking southwest.</li> <li>• View 10 – View from Bronte Road looking south to the outer harbour.</li> <li>• View 11 – View from Fisherman’s Wharf to the inner harbour and Oakville Harbours Building looking west</li> <li>• View 12 – View from Fisherman’s Wharf to the outer harbour and lighthouse looking east</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 5.0 STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape is an organically evolved harbour landscape that was initially the natural mouth of the Twelve Mile Creek (Bronte Creek) at Lake Ontario. The landscape began its long evolution as a purpose-built harbour in 1856. The cultural heritage landscape is an approximately 21.26 acre (8.6 hectare) area comprising the Inner Harbour, Bronte Bluffs and Berta Point.

### 5.1 Description

## 5.2 Statement of Cultural Heritage Value of Interest

### *Design or Physical Value*

**The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape has physical/design value as a representative example of an organically evolved harbour landscape dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The current harbour reflects an evolution from continuous improvements and additions over time to the natural landscape of Bronte Creek and Bronte Bluffs to accommodate commercial/industrial uses and recreational activities.** Typical of organically evolved harbour landscapes, the Harbour retains features related to its past industries (i.e., Oakville Harbours Building), as well as design features that reflect its recreational use (i.e., treed slope of the Bluffs with trails and recreational boating infrastructure). Bronte Creek was dredged and the channel was widened by removing part of the wetlands. The two-headed creek mouth was changed to a single opening into Lake Ontario. Two piers were added and a lighthouse was built on the east side. The Bronte Harbour Company, established in 1846, completed the harbour in 1856.

A unique stone hooking fleet of ships developed at Bronte Harbour. At its peak in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were over 40 schooners working the waters in Bronte Harbour. The practice of stone hooking began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and developed into an important industry in Ontario by the mid- to late-19<sup>th</sup> century. It involved gathering stone slabs from the lake bed using long rakes with hooks. Stone hookers from Bronte Village (as well as Port Credit, Oakville and Frenchman's Bay) supplied stone, sand and gravel for buildings in Ontario before the establishment of inland quarries and sand pits.

Within Bronte Harbour, a grist mill and harbour warehouses were built to support the fleets of grain-laden schooners. As demand for wheat and flour in England and Western New York State increased in the 1850s, the County of Halton became a major wheat producing area in Ontario. By 1858, there was a decline in shipping. In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, fishing shanties began to appear along the east side of Bronte Creek within the Inner and Outer Bronte Harbour. For many decades to follow, fishing was an important local industry supporting both area fishermen and local ship builders.

**The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape contains a rare, remaining example of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century shipbuilding shed.** Bronte Harbour was a shipbuilding centre. Melancthon Simpson was a builder of iron-hulled vessels, which were in high demand during the 1850s. Bronte was the ideal location to centralize ship-building, taking advantage of local tradesmen, the lumber trade, and local sawmills. At least four schooners were built by Melancthon Simpson in the Bronte Harbour area between 1852 and 1854. Around 1945, the Northern Shipbuilding and Repair Company owned by John A. McCleary built the Bronte Marine Building (present-day Oakville Harbours Building). For the first few years of its existence, the building was used to help construct and repair boats that were connected with the war effort, possibly for use by the Coast Guard. Between 1945 and 1954, 29 boats were constructed inside this large, two-storey shed. Most of the crafts were all-welded steel tugboat style vessels that served various purposes from logging to fishing and tanking. This type of building is rare and unique in Oakville and Bronte, as few surviving industrial buildings associated with the historic ship-building industry remain in each area. In 1955, it was purchased by Harry Greb who established the Metro Marine business in the building, which served the recreational boating market.

The use of Bronte Harbour shifted to recreation with the decline of the fishing and shipbuilding industries in the 1950s. In the 1930s, the harbour was dredged, creating a beach along the

shore of Lake Ontario (currently Federally-owned land). Bronte Beach Park became a summer recreation destination for its beach, open spaces with shade trees and activities. Following the establishment of the beach, a change on the subject landscape occurred, resulting in the construction of small cottages on Bronte Bluffs and the Berta family property (present day Berta Point). By 1960, boat slips for recreational uses lined the north section of Bronte Harbour.

**The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape also contains a representative Georgian style building, the Sovereign House.** The Sovereign House was constructed for Charles Sovereign. The rear wing may date to 1834, and the Georgian portion on the building likely dates to 1846. Typical of the Georgian style is its symmetrical three-bay façade with a central entrance flanked by windows as well as the symmetrical two-bay side elevations. The side gable roof has a chimney at both gable ends and the rear elevation features a one-and-a-half storey wing with a gable roof. The interior wood floors and staircase appear to be original.

### ***Historical or Associative Value***

**The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape has historical/associative value due to its direct association with the Indigenous land-use of the area.** The Bronte Bluffs and Harbour has been identified as an area of importance to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation (MCFN). The property was a prime location used for the Mississauga people to harvest food resources . The Mississaugas also located their villages on the flats of the Creek. Further, MNCF representatives stated that “reverence of water as a spiritual being that must be accorded respect and dignity. Water is also vital to the survival of the MCFN and all other forms of life.”

**The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape is associated with key figures, companies and organizations related to the development of the harbour and the local history of Bronte Village.** In addition to Melancthon Simpson, the Northern Shipbuilding and Repair Company owned by John A. McCleary, and Metro Marine established by Harry Greb, Joyce family members were early owners of properties on the bluffs and contributed to its recreational development. In particular, Thomas “Tom” Joyce, a fisherman, purchased all of the lots between West River Street and the eastern point of the Bluffs by 1893. The Joyce family continued to own the area and develop it as a cottaging destination. Alvin Bumby, a grandson of Thomas Joyce, ran the popular summer holiday destination “Lake Point Camp” from the 1930s through to 1950s. At one point there were 40 tent-sites located on the bluffs and the beach.

The land on the bluffs was purchased by the Town of Oakville in 1976 for use as a park, continuing the area’s recreational use. In 1988, the Town of Oakville moved the historic Sovereign House to the property. The house is historically tied to early pioneer Philip Sovereign who arrived in 1814 from Sussex County, New York. He established a farm on a large property that extended along the lakefront west of the reserve lands and is considered a “founding father of Bronte Village.”. Local boat builder Dalt McDonald (1878-1975) also resided in the house. McDonald was responsible for building local fishing boats around the turn of the century. From 1911-1914 the home became the inspiration and residence of Mazo de la Roche, the internationally renowned author of the *Jalna* series. The house is now used by the Bronte Historical Society and its garden, maintained by the Bronte Horticultural Society since 1995, are a favourite place for gatherings.

Lemuel “Lem” Dorland is another local figure historically linked to the harbour. He was a stone hooker who owned a steamboat called *Chub*. He constructed the harbour’s replacement piers in 1890 and owned property within the harbour (present day Berta Point). The Collins’ were

another family integral to maintaining the recreational uses of the harbour. They operated the “Riverside Snack Shop” on present-day Berta Point, and prior to 1931 they built an open-air pavilion on land leased from the Federal government. The Collins’ also rented space on their property to tourists with recreational trailers. The current recreational activities are supported by local organizations including the Bronte Harbour Yacht Club founded in 1960. In addition to formal membership, this club also provides seasonal sailing lessons within Bronte Harbour.

### ***Contextual Value***

**The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape is historically and functionally linked to its surroundings.** The harbour’s situation at the mouth of Bronte Creek (Twelve Mile Creek) where it meets Lake Ontario is functionally linked to its development. In turn, the development of the harbour in 1856 spurred growth within Bronte Village as it was the site of many businesses that contributed to its early economy. The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs is also valued by the community for its ecological functions and habitat it provides for plant life, bird and animals.

**The Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape continues to be integral to the village of Bronte as a community landmark.** Evidence of the Harbour’s recognition as a landmark can be seen in the presence of commemorative structures in the Harbour including memorial plaques on benches, trees and gardens and the Harbour’s continuous use as a site of festivals and celebrations. In addition, the Oakville Harbours Building is a highly visible landmark within the landscape. Its white shingles make it visually distinct from the surroundings and it is clearly visible from the nearby shorelines and two principal thoroughfares in Bronte Village: Lakeshore Road and Bronte Road.

### **5.3 Heritage Attributes**

Key attributes of the organically evolved cultural heritage landscape include:

- Oakville Harbours Building’s contribution to the landscape through its two-storey massing, orientation of the building and its 20’ x 24’ doors on the north and south gable ends that open to the harbour
- Sovereign House’s contribution to the landscape, particularly its situation on the Bronte Bluffs and its associated gardens
- Steep and rocky treed slope of the elevated Bluffs, the low-lying Harbour area, and man-made single channel created from Bronte Creek through to Lake Ontario
- Open spaces and treed canopies at the top of the Bluffs and within Berta Point
- System of foot paths and trails that connect the landscape and provide views to the inner harbour, outer harbour and the lake
- Views to/from heritage attributes including:
  - View 1 – View from the Bluffs at the break in vegetation to the lake and to the lighthouse looking northeast
  - View 2 – View of the Sovereign House from the trails on the Bluffs looking west from the end of Seneca Drive
  - View 3 - View of the Sovereign House from Seneca Drive looking east;
  - View 4 – View from the Bronte Beach Park side of the channel to the Oakville Harbours Building looking north and to the end of the channel looking southwest.
  - View 5 - View from the end of the channel at West River Street to the Oakville Harbours Building
  - View 6 – View from Berta Point to the Oakville Harbours Building and channel looking northeast

- View 7 - View of the Bronte Cenotaph and General Chris Vokes Memorial Park looking east
- View 8 – View from the path in front of the Oakville Harbours Building to Bronte Beach Park looking east, to Bronte Bluffs looking southeast and toward the outer harbour looking northeast
- View 9 – View from Bronte Road to the inner harbour and bluffs looking southwest.
- View 10 – View from Bronte Road looking south to the outer harbour.
- View 11 – View from Fisherman’s Wharf to the inner harbour and Oakville Harbours Building looking west
- View 12 – View from Fisherman’s Wharf to the outer harbour and lighthouse looking east

*Oakville Harbours Building’s* key exterior attributes include its:

- Rectangular plan and one-and-a-half storey addition on the west elevation of the building, excluding altered windows and entrances
- Exterior shingle cladding
- Medium pitched gable roof
- Historic wood sash and fixed pane windows on the west and east elevations
- Original twin-leaf swing door, where each leaf is bi-fold on the north elevation

*Oakville Harbours Building’s* key interior attributes including its:

- Interior open space from ground to interior of roof, excluding exposed interior framing
- Interior catwalk located at the same height as the second floor to the west addition

*Sovereign House’s* key exterior attributes include its:

- Two-storey construction and rear elevation one-and-a-half storey wing
- Symmetrical three-bay façade with a central entrance flanked by windows as well as the symmetrical two-bay side elevations
- Side gable roof with a chimney at both gable ends

*Sovereign House’s* key interior attributes including its:

- Interior wood floors
- Interior wood staircase

## **6.0 MAP OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES**

The following maps display the CHL boundary and heritage attributes as outlined in Section 5.0 above.





**Map 2: Map of Heritage Attributes (Trails, Buildings, Component Parts) within the Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape**



**Map 3: Map of Heritage Attributes (Tree Canopies and Open Spaces) within the Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape**



**Map 4: Map of Heritage Attributes (Views) within the Bronte Harbour and Bluffs Cultural Heritage Landscape**

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