

## **Heritage Research Report**



**2480 Old Bronte Road**

**May 2014**

## HERITAGE RESEARCH REPORT STATUS SHEET

Street Address:	2480 Old Bronte Road
Roll Number:	2401010050012010000
Short Legal Description:	PT LT 31, CON 1 TRAFALGAR, SOUTH OF DUNDAS STREET, PT 1, 20R19540 TOWN OF OAKVILLE
Heritage Type:	Residential
Heritage Status:	Listed Heritage Property
Zoning:	MU3 with site specific provision
Land Use:	Mixed Use
Research Report Completion Date:	May 9, 2014
Heritage Committee Meeting Date:	May 27, 2014
Designation Brief Completed by:	Susan Schappert Heritage Planner
Sources Consulted:	Heritage Impact Assessment for 2480 Old Bronte Road by Martindale Planning Services; Chain of Title for 2480 Old Bronte Road (includes original wills, deeds, B & S, grants and transfers); Heritage Building Investigation Report for 2488 Old Bronte Road by Tom Murison; Historic photos provided by Mrs. Jean Watson.

## **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 an early 20<sup>th</sup> century vernacular Craftman-influenced residence. The hollow terra cotta block foundation is an unusual construction material in the Oakville area.**
  - ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit  
**The property displays a 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 the development of Palermo Village.**
  - ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or  
**The subject property contributes to the understanding of the historic development of Palermo Village.**
  - iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.  
**The builder and/or architect is unknown.**
3. The property has contextual value because it,
  - i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,  
**The residence on the subject property is one of the last remaining historic residences of Palermo Village, which is the earliest settlement in present day Oakville. It defines, maintains and supports the village feel of Old Bronte Road.**
  - ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or  
**The subject residence is visually and historically linked to its surroundings as one of the few remaining historic residences on the southern section of Old Bronte Road.**
  - iii. is a landmark.  
**The property is not a landmark.**

## Design and Physical Value

Records seem to indicate that the residence on the subject property at 2480 Old Bronte Road was built circa 1908-1921 by Thomas Garner or Henry Breckon, both local farmers.

The residence is a red brick-clad, 2 storey structure with a steeply pitched gable roof with front facing wall gable. A beveled course of brick runs 4 levels of brick above the foundation. The architectural style of the building could loosely be described as vernacular Craftsman; the house has typical elements that can be found in many early 20<sup>th</sup> century Craftsman residences such as the 1- ½ storey profile with steep gable roof and dormers, wide wood soffits and fascia and a wrap-around verandah.

The most unique feature of the house is the hollow terra cotta block foundation. The foundation is composed of cement below grade and the hollow terra cotta blocks are located in the portion of the foundation that is above grade. This type of block is not commonly found in Oakville, but despite its uniqueness, the terra cotta blocks were likely made at a local manufacturer, possibly the Milton, Cooksville or Grimsby, all relatively accessible from nearby Hwy #5.



This L-shaped house has a one storey projection at the rear of the house. A wraparound verandah is located on the southeast corner of the house and has a hipped roof with wide eaves, wood columns with brick support piers.

The gable ends of the steeply pitched roof are currently clad in an asbestos cement shingle, which is not likely original to the house. The original wood soffits and fascia remain.

Windows are a mixture of historic wood sash, fixed and modern replacements; most have had aluminum storms placed on the exterior. All main floor windows have a cast lintel and sill and the basement windows have brick voussoirs.

The historic barn on the property was used for many years as a blacksmith shop by the Dickenson and Bartman families. The age of the barn itself is uncertain. The timber used on the interior of the building is certainly quite old; however, the hollow terra cotta block foundation





(the same material as the house foundation) is certainly early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are two likely scenarios to explain the construction of the barn:

1. A barn of the same footprint and gable roof system was constructed on the site pre-1860 and was lifted at the time of the construction of the subject house in the early 1920s to install the hollow terra cotta block foundation; or,
2. The barn was constructed at the same time as the house using materials (beams, cladding) salvaged from an earlier barn structure along with the new hollow terra cotta blocks.

The Heritage Building Investigation Report for 2488 Old Bronte Road completed by Tom Murison in 2008 states that this barn may date to the same construction period as the residence that used to stand next door at 2488 Old Bronte Road (it was demolished in 2008 due to poor condition). Mr. Murison's report dated the residence at 2488 Old Bronte Road as circa 1822-1830. However, his report did not include a thorough investigation of the barn on the subject property.



At some point in time, likely in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the entire barn was clad in aluminum siding, including the walls and roof. Windows were also cut into the structure at varying intervals and a 1 storey shed was added on to the north end of the barn.

## Historical and Associative Value

The property at 2480 Old Bronte Road was originally part of a larger parcel of land owned by Benjamin Smith, who is purported to have built the residence at 2488 Old Bronte Road circa 1822-1830 and may have built the barn that is now part of 2480 Old Bronte Road. Portions of the land were parceled off over the years and by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century there were three lots with three houses built on them at 2480, 2488 and 2496 Old Bronte Road.

Based on the chain of title, evidence points to construction of the house at 2480 Old Bronte Road between 1908 and 1921 during the ownership of Thomas Garner or Henry Breckon. The usage of hollow terra cotta blocks as the foundation material used for the house would support that construction date. Thomas Garner and Henry Breckon were both farmers.

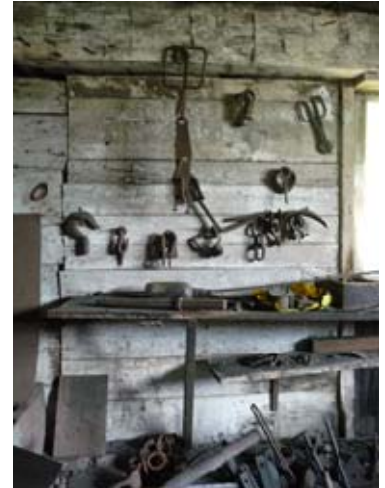
The next owner, John Lee, was a retired farmer. Owning a smaller piece of land



↑ 2488 PONDAS  
"JOHN LEE'S HOUSE" S.W. PALERMO 1969.140.4.4

that still allowed room for a small orchard, garden and barn was likely a comfortable way for a farmer to relax in his years of retirement. John Lee owned the property until his death in 1941.

Allan and Nancy Dickenson purchased the property in 1941 and it remained in their family until 2012, passing to their daughter Jean in 1978. It was during their ownership of the property that the barn began to be used as a small blacksmith shop, with a brick forge being constructed at the south end of the barn. The Bartman family continued with traditional blacksmith work until the early 1980s. Blacksmithing implements remained in the barn until the property was sold to developers in 2012.



Below is a summary of the owners of the property from 1831 to the present:

Owner(s)	Years of Ownership
Benjamin Smith	1808-1831
William Morse	1831-1854
Jacob Lawrence	1854-1875
Gerard William Lawrence	1875-1876
Walter A. Lawrence	1876-1901
Anson Buck	1901
Mary Ann and Charles Kitchen Jones	1901-1908
Thomas Garner	1908-1921
Henry Brecken	1921
John Lee	1921-1941
Allan V. and Nancy Dickenson	1941-1978
Jean Pearl Bartman	1978-2012
New Horizon	2012-present





## Contextual Value

The subject property is located in the historic village of Palermo, which was developed around the intersection of Bronte Road and Dundas Street West (Highway #5). Located south of Dundas on the west side of Old Bronte Road, the subject property originally included a small orchard and gardens along with the barn and residence.



The residence on the subject property is set slightly back from Old Bronte Road and faces east. The barn on the property is located towards the west (back end) of the lot.

There are a number of designated and listed properties in the Palermo area, including a listed property to the south of the subject property, and a designated property (the Anson Buck House) and several other listed properties to the northeast and east. While Palermo no longer has the saturation of historic properties it had at one time, the character of the area still retains its village-like feel.





