



Chedoke

Statement of Heritage Significance

Description of Historic Place

The building at One Balfour Drive, known as Chedoke, is situated on approximately four acres of land on the Niagara Escarpment overlooking the City of Hamilton. The three-storey ashlar and random rubble limestone building was designed in the Regency style and constructed between 1836-38. Subsequent additions were made in the 1850s and 1920s. Influence of the Picturesque movement is evident in Chedoke's orientation towards the natural beauty of the site. Ownership of the property was transferred to the Ontario Heritage Foundation (now the Ontario Heritage Trust) in 1979.

Heritage Value

Historic Value:

Chedoke is historically significant for its association with prominent Hamiltonians William Scott Burn, Charles Brydges, St. Clair Balfour, and as one of the last remaining 19th century country estates on the Niagara Escarpment in Hamilton. It is also significant as the site of an Iroquois settlement, from which Chedoke derives its name. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, the site was part of an extensive Iroquois territory in what is now southern Ontario and New York State. This group of First Nation people were members of the Neutral Nation, an agricultural society. As Europeans began to arrive in the area these people were forced to move away. The name Chedoke is believed to mean 'burial place' in the Iroquois language and it is possible that the estate lands were used as a burial site for local Iroquois people. Scottish immigrant, grain merchant and accountant William Scott Burn (1797-1850) purchased the Chedoke site in 1835 for £100 from Henry Beasley and was the first European to live on the property. Chedoke was built as a country home for William Scott Burn between 1836 and 1838, at a time when Hamilton was enjoying great prosperity. Due to financial difficulties following the collapse of the economic boom, William Scott Burn sold the house and the grounds, a 13-acre property, in 1842. The property was owned or rented for the next 11 years until it was sold again. In 1853 it was purchased by Great Western Railway's General Manager Charles John Brydges (1827-1889). The 1850s were important for the development of Hamilton as the city was experiencing economic growth once again, due in large part to the growth of the railways. Brydges was able to expand the house to reflect his wealth and prominence within the community before selling Chedoke to Plummer Dewar (1815-1878) and his family in 1870. After the Dewar family vacated the property in 1880, Chedoke had multiple owners including one of William Scott Burn's grandsons. In 1910 it was purchased by Ethel Balfour (1882- 1976) and St. Clair Balfour (1880-1959), who carried out extensive renovations to modernize the house. Chedoke remained in the Balfour family until St.Clair and Ethel Balfour's daughter Elizabeth Balfour Baxter, donated ownership of the property to the Ontario Heritage Foundation in 1979. She continues to occupy the house under a life tenancy agreement. Parts of the estate lands were sold off and developed between 1980-88 under the name Chedoke Park Ravine

Estates. Along with Westlawn and Bellevue, Chedoke is one of the last remaining 19th century escarpment estates in Hamilton.

Architectural Value:

Chedoke is architecturally significant for its Regency style architecture, containing classical and Italianate antecedents. Built of limestone, likely taken from the escarpment near the estate, Chedoke was originally a two-storey structure surmounted by a low hip roof, with a symmetrical five-bay façade. The house had a bell-cast front verandah, flat unadorned exterior walls, a double cornice detail and a simple floor plan with a central hall and two rooms deep on each side. The main (south) façade is built in an irregular coursed ashlar pattern, with uncoursed rubble stone on the other walls. The east wing was originally one and-a-half storeys and contained the kitchen and servants' quarters. The house had a wood shingle roof, but now has a combination of slate, (east wing), and metal covered in tar (centre wing). The house was extensively enlarged in the 1850s by Charles John Brydges, and came to include a large conservatory and vinery running across the front (south) façade, and a two-storey Italianate-inspired west wing with an octagonal belvedere. The belvedere was capped by a pressed-shingle roof, had 2/2 sash windows separated by Doric colonettes and provided unobstructed views of Hamilton and Lake Ontario. The east wing was enlarged to a height of three storeys, an alteration that is evident in the colour and texture of the ashlar limestone on the south façade. The original 1830s limestone ashlar has a slightly lighter colour and has evident eluvial erosion. Following the 1850s addition, the layout of the rooms changed, enabling the addition of a larger dining room, front parlour, kitchen pantry and servants' stairwell and access to servants' living quarters. In 1898 the windows were replaced, the verandah, vinery and conservatory were removed (the stone wall extending from the kitchen wing is a remnant) and the roof was replaced with metal. In 1910, the interior of the house was extensively renovated and new oak tongue and groove flooring and new oak stair banisters were installed, ceiling mouldings were altered, washrooms were added and the kitchen was modernized; however the 19th century baseboards, paneled doors and marble fireplaces were maintained. A central heating system of hot-water radiators was also installed around that time. The basement is only partially excavated and contains a large arched-stone coal room and a room which was formerly the well and source of the household's drinking water. In 1920 a sunroom designed by William Lyon Somerville was added to the west wing, distinguished by its pick-faced limestone ashlar walls and numerous French Doors. In the 1930s the driveway was oriented towards the rear of the house; this was the final significant alteration to the house.

Although there were once numerous outbuildings on the estate, the carriage house to the north of the house is the only outbuilding remaining on the property. It is a one-and-a-half storey random rubble structure with a cedar shingle pitched roof. On the north façade there is a small gable, making the structure resemble an Ontario farmhouse. The construction date of this structure is unknown, but it is believed to have been some time in the mid 19th century. It has a simple Georgian form with a Gothic hood moulding over the large French door. The interior was finished and had a heating stove allowing it to be used for various functions. The structure was used as a Presbyterian Chapel and as a school house by various owners of the estate and their children. Access to the second floor was gained via an exterior staircase that has since been removed. (The door remains midway up the wall on the south side). In 1913 a wooden garage was added to the rear (north) of the carriage house.

Archaeological Value:

Archaeological excavations were carried out in 1989 in selected test areas over the entire property. This was done to assess which areas merit further research. Evidence of the conservatory, vinery and verandah was found in the form of glass, nails and stone. At the extreme southern end of the estate remnants of an unidentified structure were found in the form of red tile, brick and mortar. In total 1,100 artifacts were recovered, mostly glass, china and earthenware remnants, dating from the latter part of the 19th century. Relatively few middens were discovered on the property suggesting that most of the household waste was deposited over the edge of the escarpment. Evidence of a prehistoric Iroquois settlement was discovered and included shards of vessels and tools made of chert. It is possible that these artifacts date from ca. 1280-1350 CE. It could not be determined whether there were any First Nation burial sites on the property.

Contextual Value:

Located on a secluded street at the edge of the Niagara Escarpment above Hamilton, Chedoke's architectural and historical value is enhanced by its contextual setting. Exemplifying principles of the Picturesque movement, Chedoke is built to suit its natural setting near Chedoke Falls, and amidst mature trees both on the estate grounds and along the Escarpment. The house is oriented to take advantage of its location and has commanding views of downtown Hamilton, Burlington Bay and Lake Ontario.

Character Defining Elements

Elements that contribute to the historical value of Chedoke include:

- Association with prominent Hamilton businessmen William Scott Burn, Charles John Brydges and St. Clair Balfour;
- Importance as one of the last remaining 19th century escarpment (or 'mountain') estates in Hamilton;
- Association with the Iroquois people who once occupied the site.

Exterior features that contribute to the architectural value of Chedoke include:

The residence:

- Regency style architecture with Classical and Italianate antecedents;
- Influence of the Picturesque style on Chedoke's orientation towards the site's natural beauty;
- Symmetrical five bay façade of the centre wing;
- Limestone (south) façade laid in coursed ashlar;
- Uncoursed rubble walls on the other east, west and north walls of the centre and east wing;
- Coursed ashlar of the west wing;
- Coursed pick-faced limestone ashlar of the sunroom;
 - Wide fascia on the sunroom;
 - French doors in the sunroom.
- Random rubble wall of the kitchen garden;
- Octagonal belvedere atop the west wing;
 - Hanging fascia with scalloped edges on the belvedere;
 - Pressed metal shingles atop the belvedere;
 - Doric colonettes between the 2/2 sash windows of the belvedere.
- Metal roof of the centre and west wing;
- Slate roof on the east wing;
- Limestone chimneys of coursed ashlar;
- Limestone window sills and lintels;
- Recessed front door with transom windows and sidelights.

The carriage House:

- Georgian architectural style;
- Random rubble walls;
- Cedar shingle roof;
- Small gable on the north elevation;
- 1913 wooden garage addition;
- Gothic hood molding over the second storey French door.

Interior features that contribute to the architectural value of Chedoke include:

The Residence:

- Centre-hall floor plan of the original house;
- Tongue and groove hardwood flooring;
- 1910 oak staircase banister;
- Paneled doors;
- Elaborate cast iron radiators;
- Numerous marble fireplaces;

- Ceiling plaster crown mouldings;
- 1910 bathroom fixtures;
- 1910 pantry shelving and cupboards;
- 19th century heating stove in the kitchen;
- High ceilings;
- High baseboards;
- Stone arched basement coal room;
- Former well room in the basement.

Archaeological features:

- 1,100 artifacts including:
 - Glass;
 - Nails;
 - Flagstone floors;
 - China fragments;
 - Kitchen middens;
 - Earthenware.
- Foundation of an unknown structure at the extreme south end of the estate in the form of red tile, brick and mortar;
- Prehistoric artifacts indicating that the estate was the site of an Iroquois village between ca. 1280-1350 CE, in the form of:
 - Shards of vessels;
 - Chert tools.

Characteristics that contribute to the contextual value of the Chedoke include:

- Location at the top of the Escarpment (or 'mountain') surrounded by mature trees;
- Picturesque location orientated toward the views and natural beauty of the Escarpment;
- Proximity to Chedoke Falls;
- Extensive views of downtown Hamilton, Burlington Bay and Lake Ontario.

Sources:

An Archaeological Resource Assessment of Chedoke Estate, City of Hamilton. Prepared by Archaeological Services Inc. Toronto, 1989.

Blumenson, John. *Ontario Architecture: A guide to Styles and Building Terms 1784 to the Present.* Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1990.

Conversation between Thomas Wicks (OHT) and Elizabeth Balfour Baxter (Hamilton, Ont.), resident and donator of Chedoke, June 18, 2007.

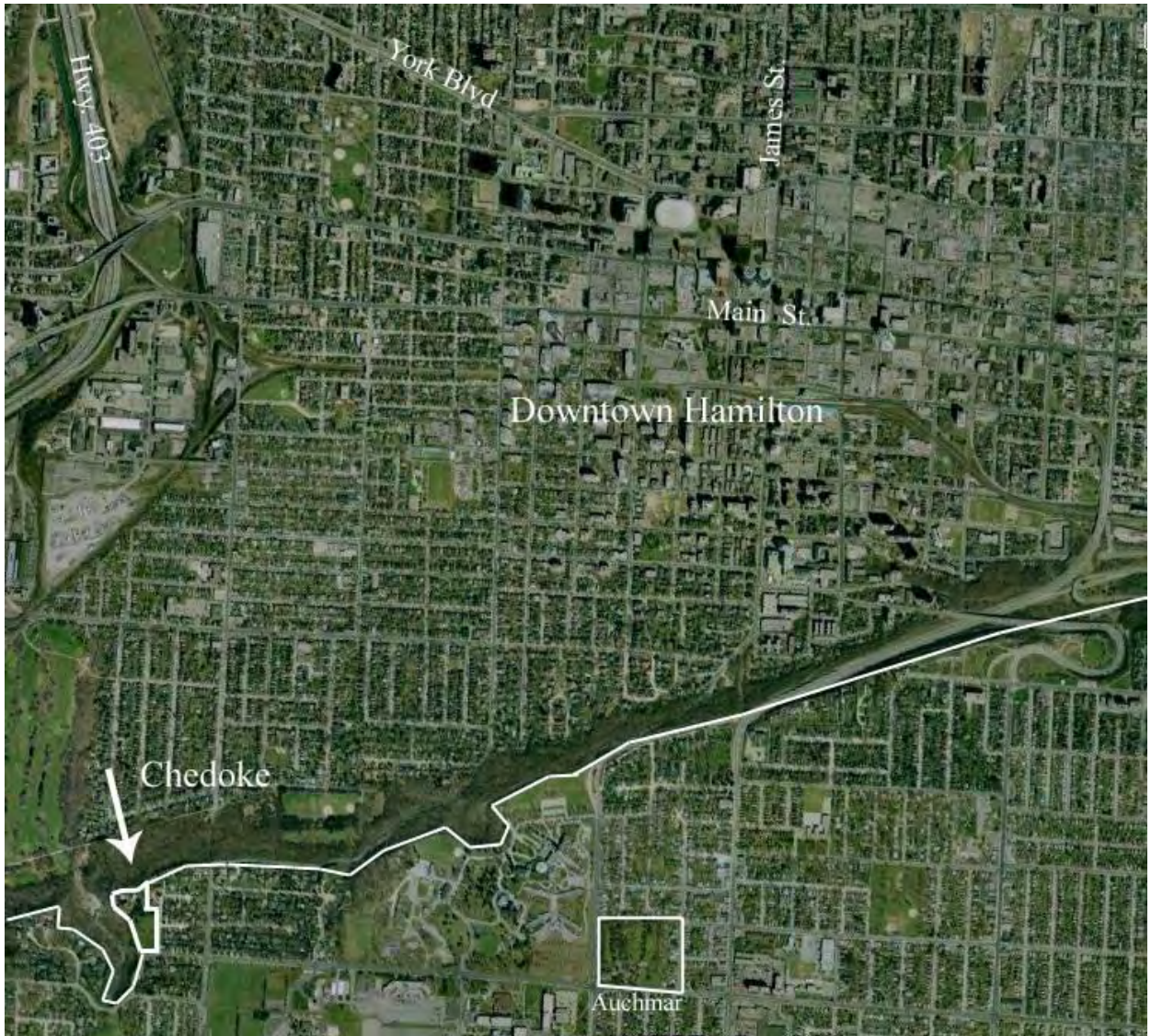
Lister, Herbert. *Hamilton: It's History, Commerce, Industries, Resources.* Hamilton: Spectator Printing Co, 1913.

Onsite assessment by OHT staff Thomas Wicks, Romas Bubelis and Brian Rogers, June 18, 2007.

Ontario Heritage Trust, Easement Files.

Research and Conditions Report 1993: Chedoke The Balfour Estate. Prepared by Jeff Simson Architect, Guelph, 1993.

Unterman McPhail Heritage Resources Consultants. David Cuming and Associates *Architectural and Historical Report Chedoke House Hamilton Ontario.* Prepared for the Ontario Heritage Foundation (Ontario Heritage Trust), 1988.



Aerial view of Chedoke in relation to downtown Hamilton



Aerial View of Chedoke, with accompanying legend



Aerial view highlighting the ridge of the Niagara Escarpment and proximity to Chedoke Falls



Front (south) axonometric view, including kitchen garden wall



East Wing (south elevation) – Line indicates 1850s addition. There is also eluvial erosion of the limestone below the line



Rear (north) axonometric view, including driveway



Belvedere atop West Wing



Carriage House



Carriage House, west elevation



View of the grounds looking south, including many mature trees



View down the escarpment



Front Hall staircase



Main floor sitting room



Main floor living room



Main floor living room



Dining room



Sunroom



Kitchen including heating stove



Pantry including 1910 cupboards



Servants' staircase



One of the bathrooms with 1910 fixtures



Basement coal room



Basement, former well