

111 Kenilworth Access, Hamilton
Barton and Kenilworth Reservoirs

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST AND DESCRIPTION OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The Barton and Kenilworth Reservoirs, at 111 Kenilworth Access in the east end of the City of Hamilton, are situated on a long and narrow 8-hectare terrace below the crest of the Niagara Escarpment, between the former Hamilton and Lake Erie Railway (now the Escarpment Trail) and the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway. The property includes mid-to-late 19th century elements associated with the Barton Reservoir, a component of Hamilton's first municipal waterworks, which were superseded in the mid-20th century by the Kenilworth Reservoir and associated structures.

The property that includes the Barton and Kenilworth Reservoirs is of cultural heritage value for its architectural, associative, and contextual elements, and collectively as a cultural heritage landscape. Constructed as a key element of the Hamilton Waterworks between 1856 and 1857, the Barton Reservoir is an 11-million gallon (3,785,412 litre) capacity, stadium-shaped basin lined with coursed limestone rubble and ashlar clay blocks, and supported on three sides by substantial earthworks. Associated with the basin are three (3) cast-iron pipes that empty into the basin, stone and concrete access stairs, cast-iron manhole covers for the valve shafts, and a two-stage standpipe built in ashlar limestone. East of the reservoir was the former Superintendent's Residence and public gardens, which were removed after 1970. To the west is the large and subterranean Kenilworth Reservoir, constructed in 1958, and its associated brick and poured concrete facilities. While the Kenilworth Reservoir is still in use, the Barton Reservoir is no longer operational and is covered in thick vegetation growth.

Barton Reservoir is of cultural heritage value as a component of the Hamilton Waterworks National Historic Site of Canada, the earliest surviving municipal waterworks system in Canada and one designed by Thomas Coltrin Keefer, an influential and highly respected hydraulic engineer recognized as a National Historic Person of Canada. Keefer selected the site for the reservoir and specified its construction in a combination of clay and stone. Under the leadership of Chairman of the Board of Water Commissioners, Adam Brown, the reservoir was completed as part of the larger waterworks infrastructure for an official opening by the Prince of Wales in 1860. Shortly afterward Barton Reservoir was upgraded with a stone standpipe and turbine, and a two-storey Italianate Superintendent's Residence surrounded by public gardens built nearby. Of these later features only the standpipe remains but it is of historical and physical value as a rare and well-preserved example of its type. Construction of the Kenilworth Reservoir in 1958 made the Barton Reservoir obsolete.

As a result of the waterworks system’s success and by providing water for fire suppression and disease-free consumption, Hamilton could expand exponentially into its rural countryside. The Kenilworth Reservoir is of associative value for its connection to Hamilton’s large and complex urban water supply system, and the continuous use of the property for municipal waterworks for 160 years.

Although now overgrown with vegetation, the Barton Reservoir has a high level of heritage integrity for its physical remains and the visual and historical connections it maintains with other elements of Hamilton Waterworks system, specifically the Pipeline Trail and the Hamilton Waterworks near the Lake Ontario shore. As an element of Hamilton’s first municipal waterworks, the Barton Reservoir played a critical role in the City’s 19th century expansion and development into one of Ontario’s major population and industrial centres. The efficiency of the waterworks system became a source of civic pride for Hamiltonians, as represented by the numerous public fountains including the central Gore Park, and in the beautification of Barton Reservoir as a public park.

Description of Heritage Attributes

The key attributes that support the heritage value of Barton Reservoir include its:

- Large, stadium-shaped reservoir with:
 - Lining of puddled clay, stone chippings, and coursed rubble and clay blocks;
 - Large cast iron pipes, one supported on a brick pad;
 - Stone and concreted access stairway; and,
 - Large earthen embankment.
- Two-stage standpipe with:
 - Slanted walls constructed in large ashlar rusticated stone with cyclopean (rock or quarry faced) rustication and tooled and chamfered margins chiselled margins;
 - Intact riveted iron casing with guide wires; and,
 - Access ladder and railing made using iron pipe and elbows.
- Features associated with the reservoir including the cast iron valve manhole covers, hydrant, and wide drainage ditch.
- Archaeological remains of the Superintendent’s Residence complex and Reservoir Park.
- Expansive and clear views of the City of Hamilton, the Pipeline Trail, the Hamilton Waterworks National Historic Site, and Lake Ontario.

The key attributes that support the heritage value of Kenilworth Reservoir include its:

- Brick pumphouse with metal strip art installation;
- Brick reservoir access structure with Roman relieving arches; and,
- Expansive and clear views of the City of Hamilton.