



The Windsor heritage Committee (WHC) is a volunteer committee of City Council, with membership from a broad cross-section of the community – architects, educators, historians and individuals with an interest in the City’s cultural heritage. The Windsor Heritage Committee identifies and researches heritage sites in Windsor, and advises Council concerning the designation of properties under the Ontario Heritage Act.

Designation offers protection from alterations and demolition as allowed for in the Act.

The Committee makes recommendations to Council regarding the disbursement of loans and grants from the Community Heritage Fund and other sources for the restoration of heritage properties. It also organizes heritage workshops, Heritage Awards and historical plaques, presentations, and printed matter.

Information may be obtained from the Committee coordinator, Office of the Clerk, 2nd Floor, City Hall, Windsor, N9A 6S1, (255-6435).



Sandwich Walking Tour

HISTORIC SANDWICH

Ottawas, Potawotamis, Wyandots and Chippewas - the so-called Neutral Nations, inhabited the former Town of Sandwich and neighbouring LaSalle to the south for hundreds of years. As early as 1640 Jesuit missionaries were on the Detroit Frontier, as were such French traders as Etienne Brule and the hardy voyageurs from Montreal.

Historians tell us that the Jesuit Mission of the Hurons was established on the south shore of the Detroit River in 1728, and the Neutrals supported it. The area known as Petite Cote (present day LaSalle), below la Pointe de Montreal where the Ambassador Bridge now stands was comprised of narrow undeveloped farms granted to 27 or 28 French families (the first being to Louis Gervais) in 1749. The parish of l'Assomption developed on the Cote's upper end and, after 1760 when the British took Fort Ponchartrain du Detroit, was renamed Sandwich, after its English namesake. Detroit's independence from British rule in 1796 led to the migration of Loyalists to the south shore. The Hon. Peter Russell, president of the Executive Council, purchased a town site from the Hurons for provisions worth £300, had the main streets laid out in a grid pattern (and named them after himself and his English homestead – Bedford), and held a draw for the lots.

A grand landmark of the end of the 18th century still stands on Russell and Mill Streets - the Duff-Baby Mansion (1798) - whose Frontier Georgian architectural style has only recently been revealed through its exterior restoration. Nearby, the McGregor-Cowan House also survived the American invasion of the War of 18 12 and displays both British and French design elements.

The War brought numerous prominent military leaders to Sandwich, including Generals Brock (British), Proctor and Harrison (American) and the great Indian leader Tecumseh.

The 19th century was a period of urban development. Merchants, tradesmen and, inevitably, practitioners of the law became established. St. John's Anglican Church was rebuilt following General Harrison's withdrawal from Sandwich, and Assumption's third church above the town site was built and expanded. The hub of the town was the corner of Sandwich and Brock Streets (then called Bedford and Huron) where the fourth courthouse (now Mackenzie Hall) dominated life and provided justice and government for all of Essex County. However, the arrival of the Great Western Railroad at a point several miles upstream at Windsor in 1854 thrust Sandwich into an economic decline.

Sandwich was granted town status in 1858.

During the 1870s and 80"s the Sandwich Mineral Springs drew thousands from Detroit and beyond to enjoy the purported cure-all - sulphur water. Of the many hotels which were built, only the Chappell House survives, now disguised as the Rum Runners Tavern.

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The next decades saw few major buildings erected - the Post Office at Mill Street (1905) and the fire hall (1921) – partially destroyed by fire in the 1940's.

In the midst of the Great Depression (1935) the Border Cities were amalgamated and Sandwich, Walkerville, East Windsor and Windsor were united under the name Windsor.

Today, no trace of the legendary mission pear trees remains. These giant trees reached heights of 18 to 24 metres (60 to 80 feet) with an average circumference of 2 metres (6 feet) and a harvest yield of 30 to 50 sweet and juicy bushels. While none of those natural landmarks survive, other landmarks of human handiwork can still tell the story of our historic region. A tour of the former Town of Sandwich should prove both enlightening and entertaining; just follow the map.

1. CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION (1845-1874) 350 Huron Church Road at University Avenue West



A Jesuit mission was established at Detroit in 1728. It was first referred to as “the Mission of Our Lady of the Assumption Among the Hurons of Detroit” in 1741. Inter-tribal unrest caused it to be moved to Bois Blancs Island (Bob-Lo) in 1742 only to have it destroyed by fire in 1747. A new site was chosen on the south shore of the Detroit River at "la pointe de Montréal du Detroit" (now the site of the Ambassador Bridge pylons). By 1749 a new church was built by the Jesuit missionary, Father Pierre Potier, thus making Assumption the oldest continuous parish in present-day Ontario. After the British occupation of Detroit in 1760, French families continued to develop farms in present day LaSalle and Ojibway. A new church opened in 1787, built of timbers (a painting of it survives). By 1826 the population had increased sufficiently to

warrant a new church, and the cornerstone of the present Assumption Church was laid on July 7, 1842. The sanctuary and spire were added in 1874. Between 1859 and 1869, Assumption served as the Cathedral of the See of Sandwich under Bishop Pinsonnault.

Designated in 1978 under the Ontario Heritage Act

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2. ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY (1857-1875-1884) 400 Huron Church Road

In 1786, two religious sisters were sent from Quebec to start a school for girls in the parish, under the direction of Fr. F. X. Dufaux, a Sulpician priest from Montreal. The Jesuits opened Assumption College for young men in 1857 at the south end of the present Assumption University building. It is the oldest institution of higher learning west of Toronto and the first secondary school for boys in Southern Ontario. During the threat of Fenian raids in 1866,



the old building served as a barracks but, historical value aside, it was demolished in 1965. Architect S. M. Goddard designed the old south wing in 1875, also destroyed (1984). The remaining building, constructed in 1875, includes a chapel (1907) at the north end and is owned by the Basilian Fathers.

3. DILLON HALL (1928) University of Windsor Campus

The priests of the Congregation of St. Basil took charge of Assumption Parish and College in 1870. This Gothic Revival structure, first named Assumption College, was designed by architect Albert Lothian. Now referred to as Dillon Hall, after Rev. Daniel Dillon, C.S.B., president of Assumption, 1922-28, it is owned by the University of Windsor.



4. ASSUMPTION CEMETERY (1860) Wyandotte St. West at Huron Church Rd.

This graveyard has been moved several times from its original site near the first church on the riverbank (Patricia Street). In 1860, Bishop Pinonnault moved it to its present location. The gravestones of this cemetery record the names of many of the



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original settlers of the area. An iron “Calvary” (1909) rises above the stone markers.

5. WILLIAM J. McKEE HOUSE (1907) 3020 Sandwich Street

Originally known as Casa Grande, the house was built for William Johnson McKee and his wife, Mary Baby. Great grandfather Alexander McKee was an Indian agent at Pittsburgh and Justice of the Court of Common Pleas at Detroit in the late 1700’s. William, a lumber merchant, was an investor in the horsedrawn streetcar line between Sandwich and Windsor, and was active in politics. William and Mary died within a week of each other and,



lacking heirs, the house was left to the Sisters of St. Joseph for a convent. Later, as Charity House and as Brentwood, it provided shelter for counselees. The stately Tudor Revival house has twin gables, leaded glass windows, half-timbering and carved animal faces on the beam-ends. In spite of its recent decline as a rooming house, it has managed to retain its elegant air.

6. CAPTAIN PIERRE MARENTETTE HOUSE (c. 1856) 3066 Sandwich Street



Pierre Marentette was an active member of the Sandwich community. In 1858, he was a member of the first town council and, as a blacksmith, was responsible for the shackling of the prisoners of the County Gaol. Marentette served in the Battle of Windsor, fought in 1838, and reportedly shot the Rebel flag-bearer. He was appointed Captain when stationed in Amherstburg in 1848. Some of his seven sons were active as merchants in Sandwich. The modest English Cottage style house has retained its “nun's coif” gable.

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7. MCGREGOR-COWAN HOUSE (c. 1806-09) 3118 Sandwich Street



This white clapboard house with black shutters retains much of its original building style. It was used as officers' quarters during the Rebellion of 1837-38 and shackles were still attached to the basement walls when the present owners moved in. Local historians place the publishing of John Cowan's newspaper *The Canadian Emigrant and Western District Advertiser* in this building (1832). The house has the symmetry of the Georgian style. The most unusual feature is the French-Canadian heating arrangement with chimneys on alternate sides of the roof's ridge. The property has housed an antiques business in recent years.

9. DOMINION HOUSE TAVERN (c. 1880) 3140 Sandwich Street

A popular wayside inn since the 1880s, the Dominion House Tavern is still the casual dining destination of university students, as it once was of judges and county government officials until the 1970's when the Sandwich courthouse closed. Its hosts have included Daniel Marentette, Eugene Breault, John McCarthy, William Boyer and Sidney Walman. The Georgian vernacular hostelry lost its surrounding verandah when the building was raised to permit the excavation of a basement in 1945. The adjacent Francois B. Janisse House (c.1886) at 3128 Sandwich St. was burned/demolished in 1999.

Designated in 1993 under the Ontario Heritage Act.



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10. SOLOMON WIGLE HOUSE (c. 1890) 3164 Sandwich Street

The vernacular Georgian cottage, owned by the Hanaka family, could be considerably older than the estimated date of 1890. Wigle was a land speculator who likely built the cottage as a rental income property. The house is reminiscent of the early streetscape.

Designated in 1993 under the Ontario Heritage Act.



11. JAMES McKEE HOUSE (1875) 3165 Sandwich Street

The McKee clan was well represented in Sandwich. James, the uncle of William Johnson, built his red brick residence across from the Dominion House Tavern in 1875, but the Sandwich Reeve (1863, 1869-75) and Warden of Essex (1877) wouldn't know his home today, with its creamy paint and added store front. He was the grandson of Col. Alexander McKee, and his nephew's grand house (#5) is a testament to the family's mercantile know-how.



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12. JOHN SPIERS' GENERAL STORE

(c. 1880)

3199 Sandwich Street at Mill Street

Spiers' store did double duty as the Sandwich post office under his direction from 1885 to 1907 when the fine new facility across Mill Street was opened. Early researchers found evidence that the top floor was used by the J. H. Bishop Fur Company until its building to the west on Sandwich Street was completed. The store's original bracketed brick cornice was removed, but the segmental arched windows can still be seen decorated with molded keystones and labels.



13. JULES ROBINET WINERY

BUILDING (1895)

3200 Sandwich Street at Mill Street

Jules Robinet, born in Rougement, France, was an entrepreneur with interests in winemaking, the manufacture of bricks and cement blocks, and real estate. Robinet et Frères winery was established in 1883, utilizing grapes from their Concordia Vineyards on Mill and Felix Streets. The dull red brick manufactured was used in the construction of this and many other Sandwich buildings. A triangular pediment, bearing the name St. Antoine de Padoue 1895, rose above the angled facade whose arched entrance welcomed shoppers to Dupuis Brothers General Store, later the Arthur Page real estate office.



Designated in 1993 under the Ontario Heritage Act.

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14. PERRY-BREAULT HOUSE (c.1895) **245 Mill Street**

Josiah Perry built the Queen Anne cottage as a summer residence in 1895-97 at the rear of the Duff-Baby Mansion. A decade later it was bought by Eugene Breault, the mayor, reeve, police magistrate and hotelier. Some of the exterior wooden ornament has been lost, but that in the interior has been well conserved

Designated in 1999 under the Ontario Heritage Act.



5. DUFF-BABY MANSION (1798) **221 Mill Street at Russell Street**

The “frontier Georgian” building known as the Duff-Baby Mansion was built in 1798 as part of a trading complex by Alexander Duff, a merchant from Detroit. However, within ten years the local fur trade had declined. Duff (of Leith, Shepherd & Duff) moved the business to Amherstburg, and sold the house (1807) to his friend, the Hon. Jacques (James) Baby (pronounced Bah-bee). Mr. Baby was descended from an influential family from Quebec City and his father,



Duperon Baby, was well known in early Detroit. Jacques’ Loyalist political career included membership on both Executive and Legislative Councils of Upper Canada (Ontario) and, ultimately, Inspector General at York (Toronto). As Colonel of the Militia, he was captured by the Americans during the War of 1812. His house was sacked by Gen. Harrison's troops. Son Charles, a solicitor and Mayor of Sandwich, held the property until his death in 1871. Subsequent owners were Harriet van Cleve (1879), whose grandson sold it in 1905, and Dr. William Beasley. Daughter Isobel sold it to the Ontario Heritage Foundation in 1979. It is held in trust for the people of Ontario.

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Of French-Canadian construction, the house is built of timber post-and-beam with brick nogging, on a stone foundation, all clad in pine clapboard with a stylish beaded edge. The fanlight above the door is one of the earliest in Ontario. A kitchen ell, burned in 1908, was reconstructed in 1995 as part of exterior restoration by the O.H.F. A drive shed has been reconstructed on the original foundation and archaeologists have found over 75,000 artifacts. Provincial offices now occupy this historic pioneer mansion.

Designated in 1977 under the Ontario Heritage Act.

16. SANDWICH POST OFFICE (1906) 3201 Sandwich Street at Mill Street



The first Sandwich Post Office (1800-1834) was located at the home of William Hands where the mail was received and delivered from a sentry box. From there the Post Office passed through several private and commercial buildings until the present building was begun in 1905. This “new” Post Office was known as the Federal Building and also served as a Customs House. It was designed by David Ewart of the Department of Public Works, who also designed the Windsor Armouries. The Sandwich Post Office was restored in 1986. A new fountain replicates the original, donated in 1909 by William Leech.

Designated in 1988 under the Ontario Heritage Act.

17. SANDWICH TOWN HALL (1912) 3255 Sandwich Street



Originally constructed to serve as the Town Hall, this red brick building housed the police station and the town library. Its low pitched roof, symmetry, and blind brick arcades suggest the Georgian style. The plans were drawn by the prominent architect C. Howard Crane with Windsor's J. C. Pennington in 1911. The building features a portico with columned entryway, and main door with side lights and

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transom. Above the first floor tripartite windows is a blind arcade of bricks laid in a chevron pattern. A dentilled cornice encircles the building as does the continuous sill under the first and second floor windows. Presently an apartment building, the original slate roof, cupola and balustrade have been removed.

18. MACKENZIE HALL (1855) **3277 Sandwich Street at Brock Street**

The former Essex County Courthouse is named for its illustrious builder, Alexander Mackenzie, an immigrant stonemason who became Canada's second Prime Minister (1873-79). It is the fourth courthouse on this site. The architect was A. H. Jordan of Detroit. With the new courthouse being built in Windsor in 1963, and the courts leaving the Sandwich building in 1975, the courthouse stood empty until it was restored in 1985. The design was inspired by the Italian Renaissance. "Dignity without columns" was the term used by Mr. Jordan to describe a facade broken with pilasters which contribute strong vertical lines. The main entrance is characterized by side lights and a fanlight. It is constructed of Anderdon limestone and Ohio sandstone. The carving above the main doorway represents the seal of the Western District of Upper Canada.



Mackenzie Hall is owned by the City of Windsor and serves as a cultural centre.

Designated in 1978 under the Ontario Heritage Act.

19. REGISTRY OFFICE (1876-77) **356 Brock Street at Sandwich Street**

The Detroit architect Gordon William Lloyd designed the building whose original three bays were augmented in the 1920's by local architects Sheppard & Masson. Recessed panels and arcing are elements from Romanesque Revival architecture. The blind circular pediments once contained the words "County Registry Office". The building is now used as an office for its newer neighbour at 378 Brock Street - the Windsor/Essex County Gaol, built in 1925.



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20. ST. JOHNS CHURCH (1819-1871) AND GRAVEYARD 3305 Sandwich Street at Brock Street

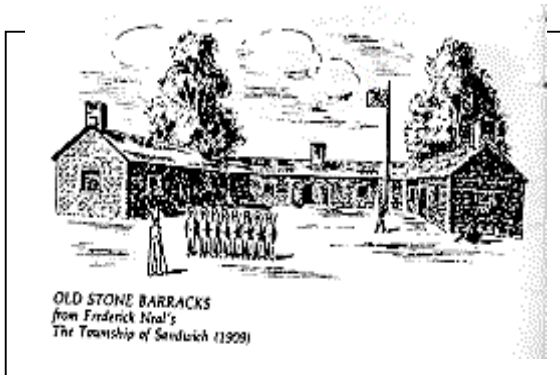


St. John's Anglican Church is the third structure on this lot, one of four lots reserved for church and government. The first Anglican minister of Sandwich, Mr. Richard Pollard, held meetings in the courthouse until the first church was built in 1806. This church burnt to the ground during the War of 1812. In 1819, a new church of brick was built added to in 1843, and a tower constructed in 1852. In 1871, the rear portion of the building was torn down and rebuilt. This explains how the main part of the church came to be built in

the Gothic style, while the tower is Norman. This combination of old and new church was officially opened in 1873.

One of the oldest graveyards in the area, St. John's contains the memorial stones of Richard Pollard, Alexander Grant and others such as Askin, Laughton, Spiers, Mason and the murdered doctor, John James Hume.

21. GENERAL BROCK SCHOOL (1999) 3312 Sandwich Street at Brock Street



This property, established as a government reserve when the Town of Sandwich was founded in 1797, has been in school use since 1808. The Western District Grammar School, called "The Stone College," served as a barracks during the War of 1812. It was again fortified in 1839-40 following the Upper Canada Rebellion. The next school building, built in 1915, was named for the British military hero of the War of 1812,

Major General Sir Isaac Brock, who captured Detroit on August 16th 1812, and was killed in action on the Niagara frontier. A major archaeological dig was undertaken on the property in 1998 prior to the construction of the existing building which houses a library, police station and day care in addition to the elementary school.

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22. J.H. BISHOP FUR COMPANY

(c. 1890)

3330 Sandwich Street

The two-storey red brick building once housed the offices of the J.H. Bishop Fur Company, and was part of a complex including warehouses on Russell Street. In spite of its new cladding, the building retains some of the architectural characteristics in its cornice and flat-arched labelled windows along the side facades.



23. BEDFORD UNITED CHURCH

(1906)

3340 Sandwich Street

Until recently known as Sandwich United Church, the building was the second home of the Methodist Congregation in the town after its move from Mill Street (Methodists amalgamated with other sects to help form the United Church of Canada in 1925). Built of red brick with rusticated masonry, its Gothic Revival style with Romanesque tower is similar to other Methodist churches of this era.



24. BABY-LAJEUNESSE HOUSE (c. 1855)

3402 Sandwich Street at Chippawa St.

The modest brick house, now known as the Bedford Scoop Ice Cream Parlour, was built on land granted to Baptiste Baby by the Crown in 1801. The family of local French historian, Rev. E. J. Lajeunesse, C.S.B., owned the house from 1905 to 1943.

Designated in 1993 under the Ontario Heritage Act.

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Note: At this point (X), the serious walker or bicyclist will want to press on to view the next three sites. Others may want to turn left on Chippawa Street and then left on Peter Street.

25. POLLARD HOUSE (c. 1850) 3474 Sandwich Street

Rev. Richard Pollard was a British Loyalist from Detroit. In 1792, he was Sheriff of Essex and Kent; 1793 - Registrar of Essex and Kent; 1794 - Registrar of Surrogate Court; 1800 - Sheriff of the Western District; 1801 - Judge of Surrogate Court, 1802 - Anglican Deacon and, in 1804 - priest, yet the only site that remains in his name is the minuscule brick house, one room in depth, on a timber sill laid directly on bare earth. The gabled roof and flat-arched windows are typical of the period.



26. WATKINS HOMESTEAD (1917) 375 Watkins Street

This was the home of the late Homer Watkins, well-known member of the town's Black community, a Senior Deacon of Sandwich Baptist Church and a member of the school board. Around the corner at 3616 Peter Street is a two storey, green clapboard house which had been in the



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Watkins family for four generations. In recognition of Homer Watkins and his family's contribution to the community and the Baptist Church, Lot Street was renamed Watkins Street in 1963.

27. SANDWICH BAPTIST CHURCH (1851) 3652 Peter Street near Prince Road

The first Baptist Church in Sandwich, constructed around 1821, was a log structure built by freed slaves. This unpretentious, single storey building was built c.1851 after the Deacons received a land grant from Queen Victoria. The original entryway was a gabled porch while the present crenellated entry was added in 1912. Sandblasting several years ago has caused the deterioration of the handmade bricks, many of which were crafted by the early settlers, former slaves from the States.



Designated in 1995 under the Ontario Heritage Act. Named a national historical site in 2000.

28. ROBINET ROW HOUSES (c.1918) 3381-89 Peter Street

These two storey rowhouses were built by Jules Robinet to accommodate the workers in his brickyard which was located to the rear of the building.



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28a. GAUTHIER HOUSE (c. 1911)
3281 Peter St.

This red brick home is a good example of the vernacular "Ontario House" with its lateral-gabled roof and steeply pitched gable on the street front. Originally owned by Jules Robinet, the house was owned for 51 years (1926-1977) by Wallace Gauthier.

Designated In 1998 under the Ontario Heritage Act.

29. MASON-GIRARDOT MANOR (c.1875)
3203 Peter Street at Mill Street

George W. Mason was a prominent merchant in Sandwich in the late 1800's, having immigrated from Indiana in the 1860's. He and his sons all held the post of Mayor of Sandwich, George in 1892, son Willis in 1888-89, and son Clarence from 1903 to 1906. Francis Girardot, son of Theodule, bought the Mason house in 1895. Francis was the owner of a tobacco store on Ouellette Avenue. The Victorian Italianate house has characteristics of the Second Empire design.



Mason-Girardot is distinguished by its detailed facade. The carved entryway is supported by square, decorated columns. The keystone motif above the frame of the windows is repeated on the hooded window on the third floor. The cornice is boxed with frieze and brackets and the roof, recently restored, is metal.

The Alan Manor Restaurant now occupies this landmark

Designated in 1978 under the Ontario Heritage Act.

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30. SANDWICH FIRE HALL (1921) AND STABLE

363 Mill Street



Before the upper floor and hose tower were destroyed by fire in the 1940's, the firehall was a handsome Classical Revival building with a wooden temple-like structure at the top of the tower. It was designed by Gilbert J.P. Jacques, a local architect, in 1921. The early stable at the rear survivor of an age when the fire engine was horse-drawn. This former firehall, now owned by the City of Windsor, is the last surviving firehall (with its stable) in the City. It is currently leased to a social agency. This was the site of the first Methodist church in Sandwich.

Designated In 1998 under the Ontario Heritage Act.

31. LANGLOIS HOUSE (c. 1888)

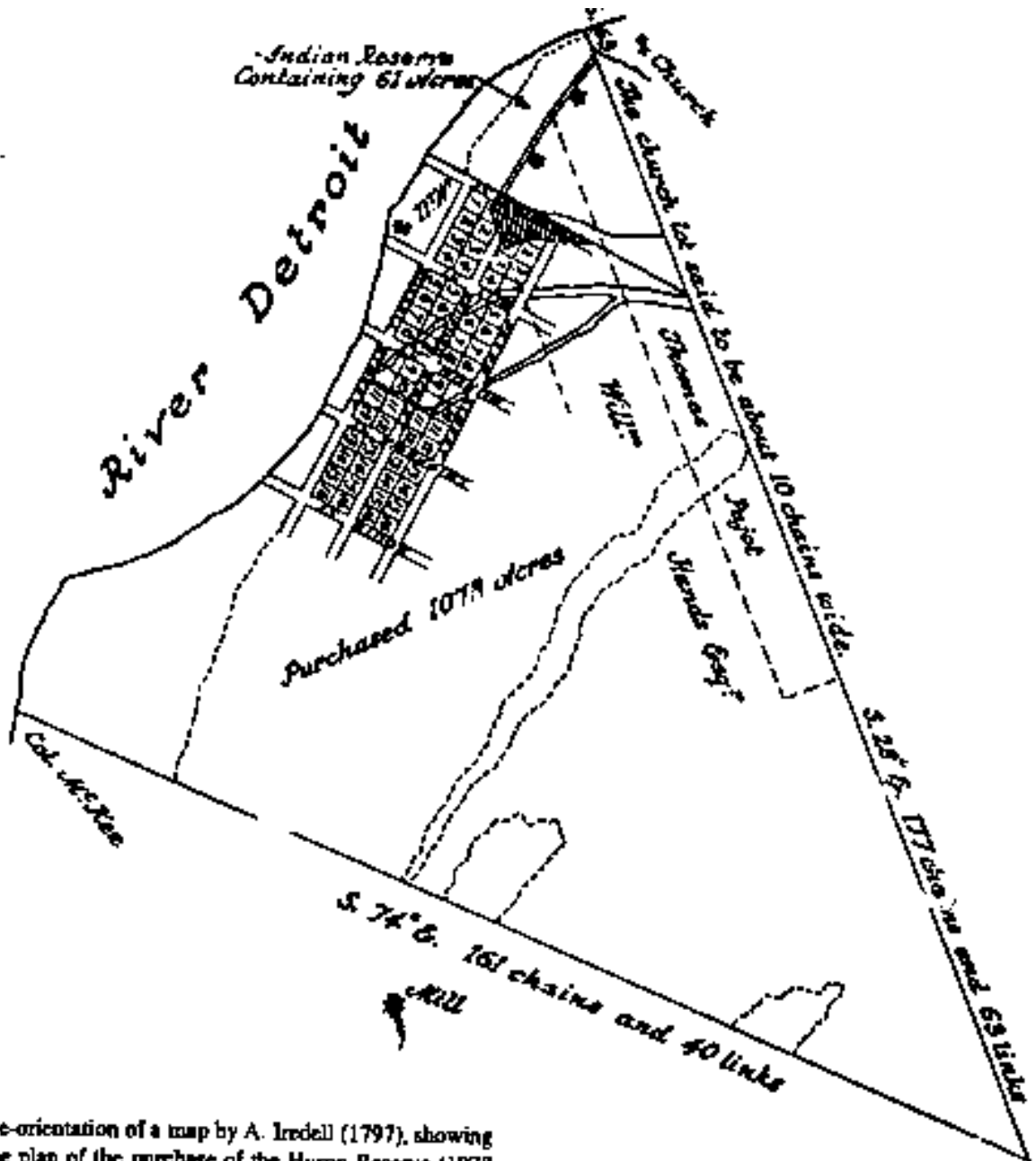
351 Mill Street



Ownership of the site has been traced to Squire Patterson in 1835, but the house appears to have been built in the 1880s by Thomas McKee or Albert Bondy. By 1904 it was owned by Albert Reaume, whose daughter Marie and her husband, Arthur Langlois made it their home. The original front windows are altered, but other features have been maintained, including the “fish-scale” shingles. The building is owned by the City of Windsor.

Designated in 1998 under the Ontario Heritage Act

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Re-orientation of a map by A. Irdell (1797), showing the plan of the purchase of the Huron Reserve (1078 acres) for the Town of Sandwich. The original map was drawn from the perspective of the river - the main access to the site.

10/99