

BARRETT BARN



Heritage Halton Hills Designation Report 2019

By John Mark Rowe

Location

The Barrett Barn is located at 98 Confederation Street, Glen Williams, Ontario, in the Town of Halton Hills, PIN#25012-0063. The property includes the original frame house. They are registered as part of Esquesing Township Lot 21, Con. 9.

Historical Background

Although Esquesing Township was opened for settlement in 1819, Lot 21 in Concession 9 was vacant, being transferred by the Crown to the Canada Company in 1829. Neighbouring miller Benajah Williams purchased the 200 acres in 1833. One reason for purchasing the 200 acres was to open a road between Trafalgar Road, 8th Line and 9th Line to allow access to Charles Kennedy's sawmill at Wildwood and to the Williams saw and flour mill in Williamsburg (Glen Williams). Consequently, he divided the lot from east to west. The northerly 110 acres went to his son Jacob, then in 1875 to James Bradley and in 1883, the easterly 55 acres were sold to Daniel and William Reid.

A pump manufactory had been built on the property at 100 Confederation, owned by James Bradley and must have been leased. Robert Brown had a pump business at 504 Main Street (see Williams-Holt Building Designation Report, 2011) as did the Glen Williams family of Ackerts who moved their business to Ballinafad. A house was built about 1875 adjoining (98 Confederation). Daniel and William Reid were



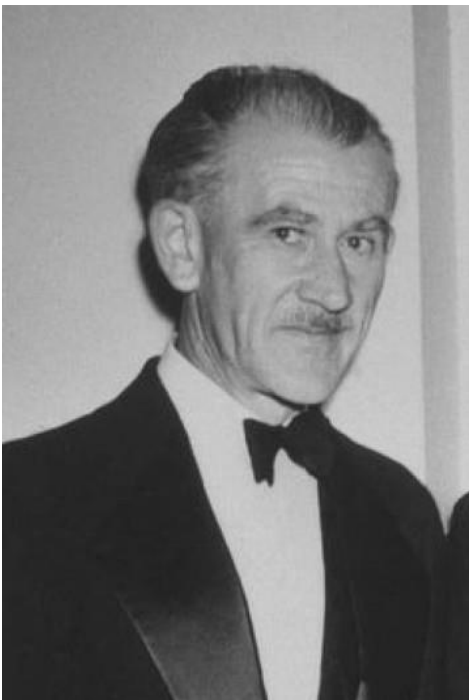
98 Confederation Street
Photo by Anne Fisher

young men who probably took over the pump factory, securing orders to supply the Waterous Engine Works Co., based in Brantford, Ontario since 1864. They built steam portable engines. The Reid brothers agreed to a lien on their newly acquired 55 acres five months after the purchase.



100 Confederation Street
Photo by J. Mark Rowe

Having discharged the lien, the brothers sold a ½ acre parcel to Joseph Marchment in 1889 who built a frame house there (86 Confederation - demolished 2016). After both Daniel and William married, they dissolved their partnership,

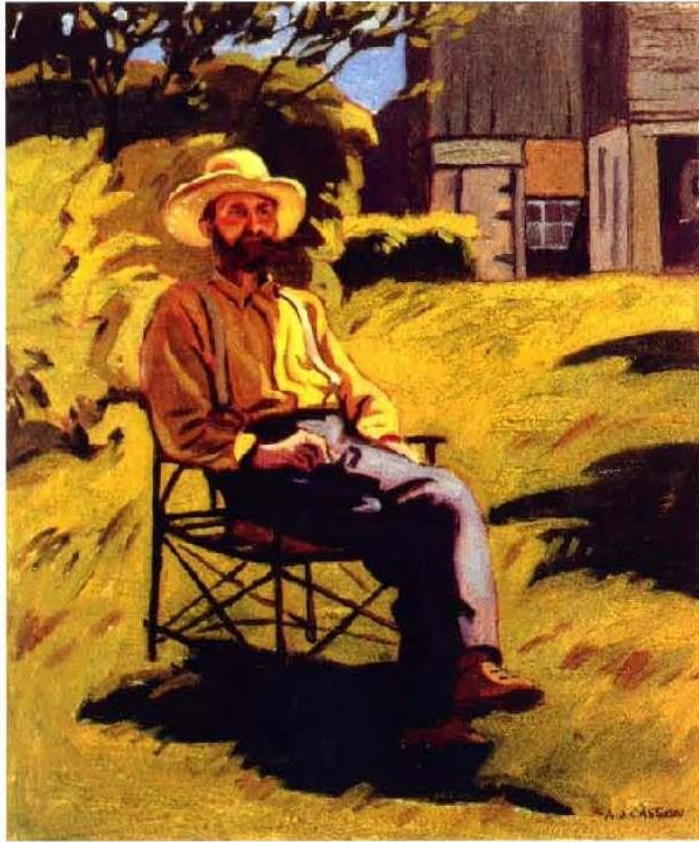


A. J. Casson 1898-1982

transferring the remaining 54½ acres to Daniel and Janet (Binnie) Reid. The Reid's farmed the land while continuing to sever off half-acre lots. In 1919, the former pump factory was sold to Lucy and Percy Wagstaffe (100 Confederation). They acquired the remainder of the farm in 1925 after the death of Daniel Reid. It was probably the 1919 sale that prompted Daniel Reid to build the barn behind the house at 98 Confederation.

Daniel Reid sold his modest home and barn in 1921 to Harry Barrett. Barrett, born in Staffordshire, England moved to Glen Williams and married the widow of James Alexander, Annie. He got to know a visiting artist named Alfred Casson.

Alfred Joseph Casson, OC (1898-1992) was the youngest member of the Group of Seven. A.J. Casson got his first job in 1919 at a Toronto commercial art firm as Franklin Carmichael's apprentice. Carmichael had the greatest influence on Casson as an artist, taking him sketching and camping, and introducing him to members of the Group of Seven, including Lawren Harris and J.E.H. MacDonald. Along with Carmichael and F.H. Brigden, Casson revived and championed the watercolour medium.



In 1926 Casson was invited to join the Group. He also bought his first car and began exploring villages near Toronto. He often stayed in Glen Williams, using it as a base for his explorations. The painting, "old Man in a Rocker" has been dated to about 1930 and features Harry Barrett himself in front of the barn.

Casson painted several landscapes of Glen Williams, Norval and surrounding areas over the years he stayed here. Glen Williams paintings include a view of Forester and Main Streets, Main and Joseph Streets, Fallbrook Trail and the Miller barn on 8th Line.

When Harry became ill, his wife nursed him until his death in 1938. Annie Barrett stayed here until 1948, when she moved to Thornhill, where she died in 1958.

Annie Barrett sold the 9th Line property to Waldo Diggins. He sold it in 1961 to Roy and Dorothy Shields, who transferred it in 1968 to Michael and Joanne Byrne. David and Dale Cox purchased the property, now known as 98 Confederation Street on 13 September 1978.



ABOVE: Dave Cox stands in front of the Barrett Barn at 98 Confederation.

RIGHT: “Old Man Off His Rocker”, an adaptation of the original painting by Dave Cox, featuring Dave Cox and his car in 1988.

Photos by J. Mark Rowe



Site Analysis

The house was constructed c.1875 but has been greatly altered. There is little of the original house remaining.



The barn was built c. 1919. The lower level is of poured concrete. The front half was designed for a motor car (one is visible in the painting). On the south side is a doorway (door is missing) and a four-pane window. A wood frame upper storey with a cross gable pitched roof, sits on the concrete base. It is clad in barn board. It features a large four-pane by three-pane window on the front (east) and a four-pane window, matching the lower storey window on the south side.



The back half, of similar proportion is at right angles to the garage wing. It features a side door and front window (covered in metal cladding at present) and two banks of three by two pane windows. The upper floor is supported by round logs with the bark intact (see photo above). The two original areas are open to the front half. A concrete block addition, containing stalls for cows, was added at a later date and the upper roof line was altered to create a lean-to effect. These facts illustrate that the barn is not of sufficient design or physical value to designate without further reasons. The inclusion of the barn in the A.J.

Casson painting is the principal reason the barn should be designated. Since only the front of the barn is visible in the painting, that facade should be emphasized in the designation.



Upper window on south side of front wing.

Photo by J. Mark

The original barn features on the section oriented east-west are still visible and

restoration is to be encouraged. The two side window openings (upper and lower) and the side door opening are also visible in the painting. However, since no detail of the side windows, side door and garage door are visible, replacement units need only be sympathetic to the front window and the door hidden beneath the metal sheathing.

The section with the north-south orientation has been sheathed in metal siding. Examination from the inside reveals the original door, as shown in the painting, is still extant, as is the window opening. The chest height bank of windows appears to have original windows and should be included in the designation. This section was originally clad in barn board (see painting) and restoration is encouraged.

The more recent concrete block addition provides no value to the heritage designation of the barn. If this section is removed, the upper cross gable pitched roof line should be restored.

The barn as seen from Confederation Street (East side)
Photo by Anne Fisher





CLOCKWISE: East façade of front wing (JMR)
 The back of the barn (AF)
 The south side of the barn. The original door and window opening (visible in painting) are behind the metal sheeting. (AF)
 The north side of the barn (AF)

Photos by Anne Fisher (AF) & John Mark Rowe (JMR)



SCHEDULE OF DETERMINING CRITERIA

Description of Property

The property at 98 Confederation Street, Glen Williams has historical and associative value as it includes the barn and landscape that formed part of the painting "Old Man in a Rocker" by the Group of Seven artist A.J. Casson. This is one of a number of paintings that were made of villages in Southern Ontario by A. J. Casson.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

By Anne Fisher

The artist A. J. Casson was one of Canada's famous Group of Seven. The McMichael Canadian Art Collection Web site notes that:

"Collectively they agreed: Canada's rugged wilderness regions needed to be recorded in a distinctive painting style. This style would break from European tradition and reflect an increasingly nationalistic sentiment."

"Today, these men are among Canada's most famous artists. For many, their works have come to symbolize what is the distinctly Canadian identity."

A. J. Casson is one of Canada's most prominent and most loved Canadian landscape painters. He is best known for his depictions of landscapes, forests and farms of southern Ontario. This included a number of paintings of Glen Williams and Norval. He stayed in the area for a period in the 1930's when the paintings were completed. The property at 98 Confederation Street, Glen Williams is of historic and associative value as it has a direct association with an artist of national significance. The barn and landscape depicted in the "Old Man in a Rocker" by A. J. Casson are still largely intact. The work by A. J. Casson in Glen Williams and Norval reflects the traditional rural character of these village communities. These characteristics are still treasured by many of the current residents of these communities.

Description of Heritage Attributes

- The setback, placement and orientation of the Barrett Barn is at the end of a driveway on the south-western side of Confederation Street in the village of Glen Williams. A hill rises on the north-west side and continues downward on the south-east side. The garage door opening faces Confederation Street. The second story of the building is level with the lawn on the top of the hill.
- The scale, form and massing of the two-storey form barn with cross gable pitched roof, one running east-west on the front section, and a second running north-south on the rear section of an L-shaped building

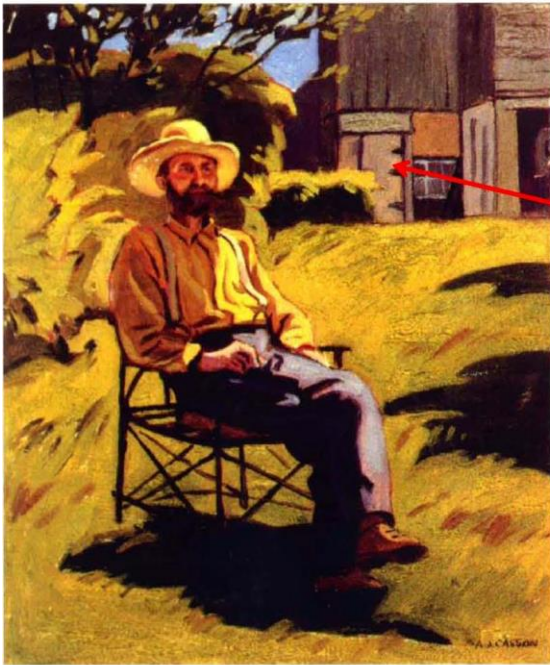
EASTERLY (FRONT) SECTION:

- Front gabled wing with wide barn/garage door opening at the first storey, with four/three fixed pane window on the second storey, all facing Confederation Street
- Southerly side door opening with one ground floor window and a second-floor window in line with the first-floor door opening
- Barn board cladding on the principal (easterly) and southerly side elevations

WESTERLY (REAR) SECTION:

- Original wooden door opening facing Confederation Street (currently covered in metal siding)
- Original window opening facing Confederation Street (currently covered in metal siding)
- On the southerly elevation, paired rectangular window openings with fixed pane wood windows with 3/2 divided panes

NOTE: The c.1875 residential building within the property at 98 Confederation Street has been significantly altered and is not identified as a heritage attribute.



Original door still remains under metal siding

Documentation

"98 Confederation Street, Glen Williams Designation," Anne Fisher, Powerpoint Presentation for Heritage Halton Hills Meeting, 18 April 2018.

Esquesing Assessment Rolls 1884, Esquesing Town Clerk, Halton Hills Public Library

Census Records for Esquesing Township, Dominion of Canada, Library and Archives Canada, <https://www.onland.ca/ui/20/books/search> 2019

Glen Williams: An Oasis in the Credit Valley, John Mark Benbow Rowe, Esquesing Historical Society: 2014

ONLAND, Ontario Land Registry Access, <https://www.onland.ca/ui/20/books/search> 2019

"Waterous Engine Works Co. Ltd," *Wikipedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/> 2019

"Williams-Holt House Designation Report," John Mark Rowe, Glen Williams: 2011; Halton Hills rpt-PDS-2011-0095 (Designation of Williams-Holt Property, 504 Main Street).

Current Owners

The Barrett Barn and the house at 98 Confederation Street is the property of David and Dale Cox.

RECOMMENDATION

It is the recommendation of the author of this report to Heritage Halton Hills to consider designation of the barn only, under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

