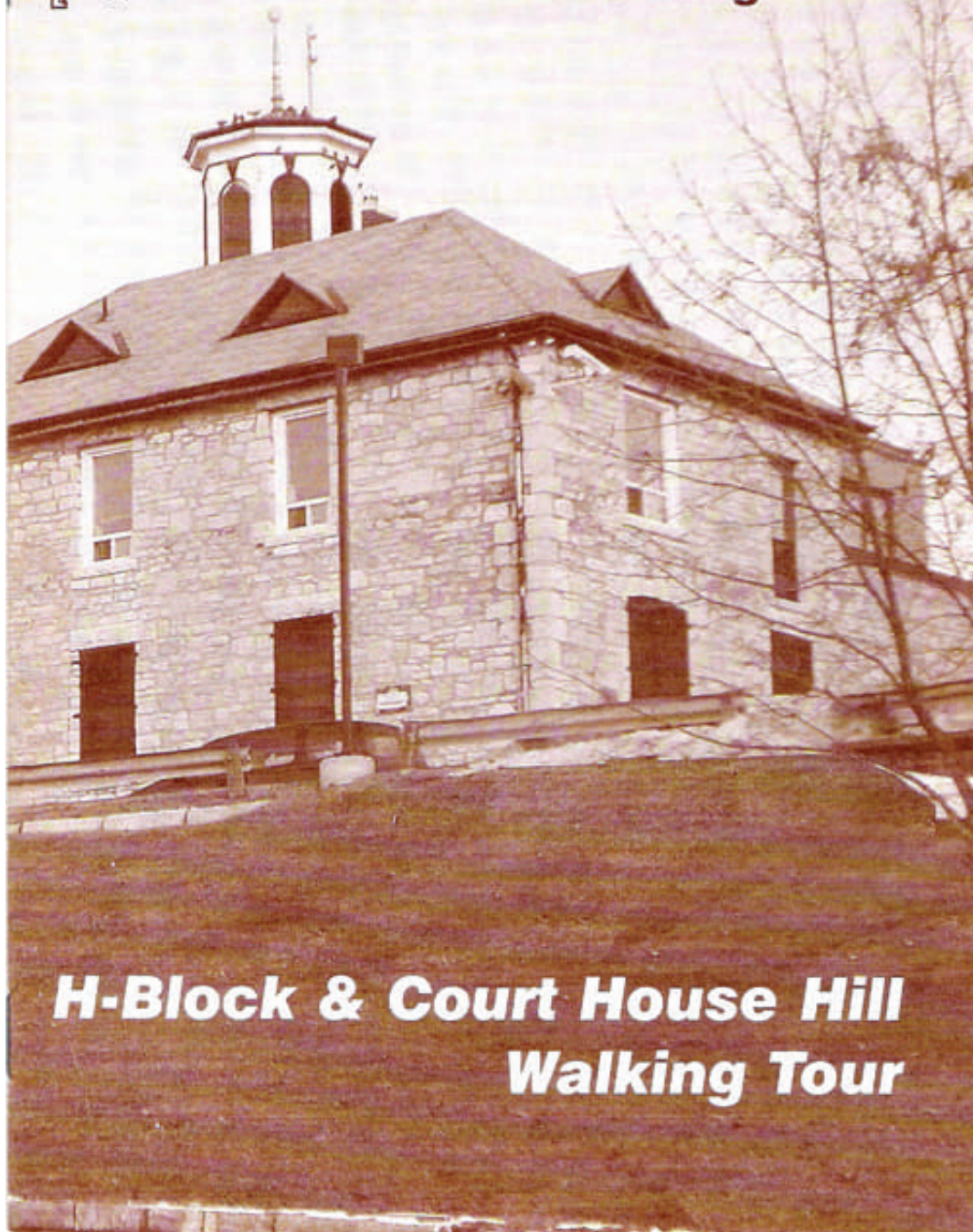




Heritage Barrie Walking Tours



H-Block & Court House Hill Walking Tour



H-Block and Court House Hill Walking Tour

The *H-Block and Court House Hill* is a self-guided tour sponsored by Heritage Barrie to highlight the heritage of the City of Barrie. It was written in 2000 for Heritage Barrie by Su Murdoch Historical Consulting, with electronic imaging, composition and digital photography by Kurt Harding Schick. Other tours available include *Downtown East*, *Downtown West*, *Allandale*, *Rodney and Blake Streets*, and *Grand Homes*. Copies can be obtained from Barrie City Hall, PO Box 400, Barrie, ON, L4M 4T5, Barrie Public Library, and can be downloaded from Tourism Barrie's website at www.tourismbarrie.com. Information and photographs on any of the buildings and sites featured in this tour or on other aspects of Barrie's architectural heritage are welcomed.

What is Heritage Barrie?

Heritage Barrie was established in 1977 by a City of Barrie bylaw as the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (LACAC) under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Its role is to advise Council in heritage conservation matters and to implement the heritage policy of the Official Plan. Members are volunteers appointed by Council, an alderman, and a liaison from the Planning and Development Department. Funds for Heritage Barrie are provided annually as part of the city operating budget.

What is a Heritage Designation?

Heritage designation is an important aspect of the mandate of Heritage Barrie. Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* allows municipal councils to pass bylaws to protect properties that have architectural and/or historical significance to the community. The designation bylaw does not prevent alteration nor does it require the owner to restore the building. Its purpose is to ensure that any proposed changes to the designated features are in keeping with, or are sympathetic to, the reasons for designation. For further information and the list of properties designated or on the Cultural Heritage Resources Inventory, contact Heritage Barrie, c/o Planning and Development, Barrie City Hall, PO Box 400, Barrie, ON, L4M 4T5.

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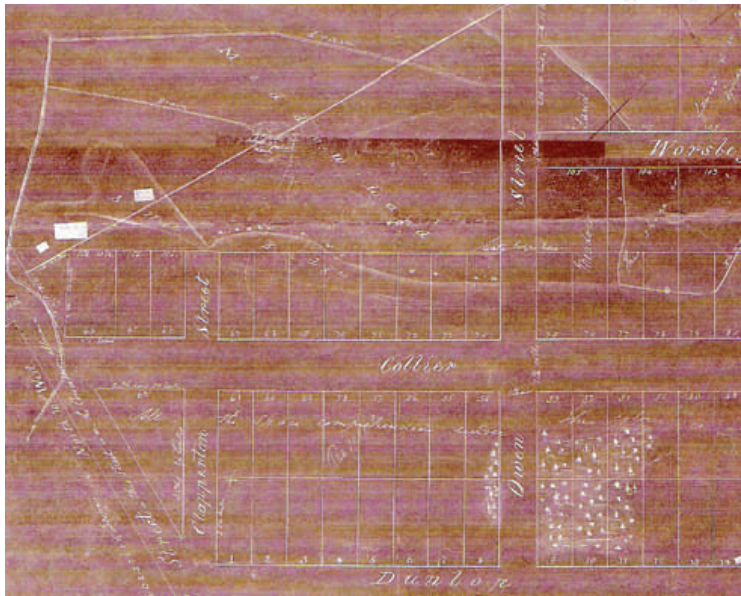
H-BLOCK & COURT HOUSE HILL TOUR MAP



H-Block and Court House Hill Walking Tour



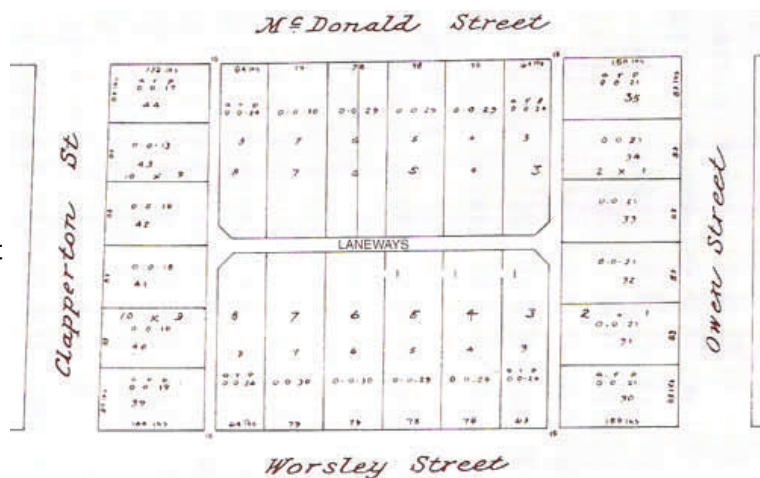
The Barrie Public Library - East part of the H-Block



Excerpt from Hawkins' 1833 Survey - The H-Block is in the centre of the "Meadow Land"

The **Barrie Public Library** building is on a block of land bounded by Worsley, Clapperton, McDonald, and Owen streets, known historically as the H-Block. On the first (1833) survey of Barrie by Deputy Surveyor William Hawkins, the area is identified as a meadow surrounding a shallow pool from which a drain ran northwest. It was north of the village boundary but near the houses (closer to Bayfield Street) owned by Barrie's first permanent settler, Alexander Walker. Walker arrived in Barrie about 1825 to work as a teamster along the nine-mile portage to Willow Creek. In the mid 1850s, the meadowland was divided into streets with numbered lots on the north and south sides.

The H-Block label originates with an owner, J. Edwards, who commissioned a survey plan of the area in 1871. Edwards redivided the block by keeping lots 3 to 8, south McDonald and north Worsley, and creating lots 39 to 44, east Clapperton, and 30 to 35, west Owen. He divided some of the lots into east and west halves, each with twenty-nine feet of frontage, and laid out a network of internal laneways in an H-pattern.



The 1871 Edwards' Plan showing the "H" pattern of the internal laneways



Example of H-Block house just before demolition

Part of the appeal of the H-Block was that each resident could have a small yard as well as share the common areas along the laneways where the out-buildings and later garages were built. Most of the dwellings on the block and around the perimeter were one or one and a half storey, frame or log structures clad with roughcast plaster or clapboard. There also were a number of wood shanties and a scattering of brick

houses. The area was popular with workers and trades-people. Many long-time residents of Barrie recall the block being covered with flower and vegetable gardens and an apple orchard.

As most residents of nineteenth century Barrie lived and worked in what is now the downtown core, the various religious denominations chose this area to erect their first church buildings. The former Baptist church (now a commercial office) at Clapperton and Worsley opened in 1878. Trinity Anglican church (the north side of which is visible looking southwest) was built in 1864 to replace a wood church that stood near Berczy and Worsley streets. The most prominent church building is **St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church** at the corner of Owen and Worsley. Built in 1883, there was initial criticism and disappointment at its plain appearance!



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church - Corner Owen and Worsley Streets



The grey stucco row house at the northeast corner of Owen and Worsley (opposite St. Andrew's) was built by local lawyer and mayor, William D. Ardagh. Ardagh must have calculated the income potential for rental housing when he had these "cottages" erected in the 1860s.

East side of Owen, north of Worsley - Stucco house built by William Ardagh on the right

Some of the dwellings along the east side of Owen Street, north of Worsley, likely date from the 1840s, but are disguised with brick cladding, new window sashes, and other renovations. Clues such as the 6x6 panes of glass in the window sash and returns on the eaves reveal their nineteenth century origin.

Looking west along the north side of McDonald brings into view the triangular park created by the meeting of Sophia Street West, Clapperton, and McDonald streets. This was the site of the J.T. Walsh Imperial Soda Water Works. From 1897 to 1936, Walsh made ginger beer, lemon sours, mineral water, and a very popular brand of unfermented wines. The **Walsh Cottages**, a group of small, recently renovated houses on the north side of McDonald, opposite the park, are believed to have been occupied by employees of the Soda Works. They were built earlier than 1897, possibly as workers' housing for a nearby lumber operation.



6x6 window panes and returned eaves



The Walsh Cottages on the north side of McDonald Street, circa 1975



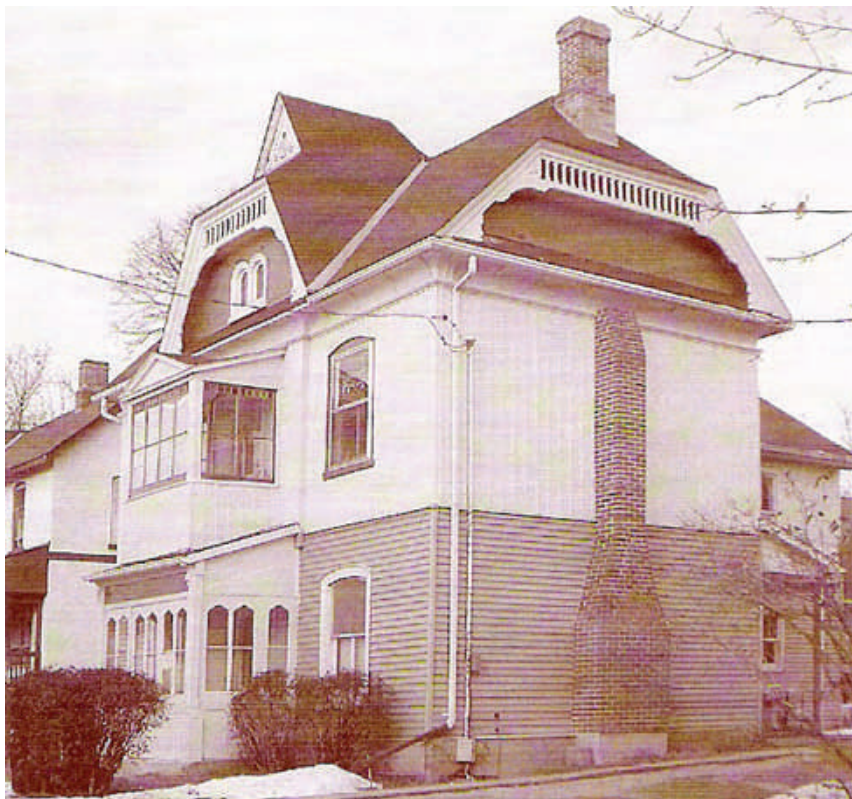
30 McDonald Street

A few doors east, at **30 McDonald**, there is a good example of the storey-and-a-half, frame dwelling with roughcast siding that dominated this neighbourhood throughout most of its history. It was built about 1875 for David Garton, whose career included lumber yard owner, pump maker, and photographer. This is a gable end house that maximizes the narrow width of the lot by placing the gable end as the street façade. It would be a very plain design if not for the fanciful two storey verandah. Similar houses in the area have been clad in brick.

Walking north on Owen Street from McDonald reveals a charming setting of more substantial houses, primarily in the Gothic Revival style of architecture. Upgrades over more than a century of use are visible, for example, on Number 82 where the wood nailing blocks are remnants of a verandah that once spanned the front. Number 83 has the form characteristic of a log or timber frame house. The original shutters that served the practical function of letting the heat of the sun in or out, survive on Number 91.



East side of Owen Street, north of McDonald



The unusual dwelling at **87 Owen** was the home of noted Barrie architect Thomas Kennedy. Examples of his designs survive throughout Barrie, Simcoe County, Toronto, and New York. Kennedy owned this lot for about a decade before 1882 when he added a second storey to the existing dwelling. Known as Lilac Villa, there is a tradition that Kennedy used this American style home to illustrate to his clients the latest architectural elements available.

The Kennedy house, 87 Owen Street

It is only a short walk along Sophia Street East to reach the unique house at the northeast corner of Sophia East and Peel – **17 Peel**. This Gothic Revival style residence was built in 1872 by architect and engineer Lieutenant Sherman G. Bird. Bird died from pneumonia shortly after completing the house, leaving his Cantonese wife, Amy Amoi, and their several children. Known as Sans Souci, this property is designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its architectural and historical significance.



Sans Souci, 17 Peel Street, circa 1999



22 Peel Street

At the southwest corner of Peel and Sophia – **22 Peel** – is a square, red brick house in a modified Georgian style. George Arthur Radenhurst was a barrister when he arrived in Barrie about 1874, and later became a police magistrate and mayor. He was a descendant of Lieutenant Radenhurst who commanded one of the boats under Lieutenant-Colonel Worsley in the capture of the American warships *Scorpion* and *Tigress* during the War of 1812.



16 Peel Street

Neighbouring on the south side at **16 Peel Street** is a more traditional Gothic Revival style house than the example at 17 Peel. The gables are adorned with almost oversized cut out wheels that form part of the decorative bargeboard. Height and decoration date this dwelling to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Hiding under the present siding may be a brick house.

Completing the corner, at the south-east is the dwelling at **13-15 Peel Street**. Set on a rise within a large lot, this is a well designed double house that incorporates wide cross gables and a low profile. It may have been built in the late 1860s as a rental property for surveyor and engineer Maurice Gaviller. Richard Lee Barwick and his wife, Margaret



13 - 15 Peel Street

(Cotter), lived in No. 13 for several years before building a house on Owen Street about 1897. Members of the Barwick family served in the British army and were stationed in St. Petersburg, Russia, where they probably met another British officer's family, the Moberlys of Barrie. Richard worked for the railway in Barrie, then retired and became an insurance agent.

Walking toward Codrington Street, several small scale and attractive houses can be seen. The example at **9 Peel Street** has a hip roof, three bay facade, Classical door-case with sidelights and a transom, and 6x6, double hung, sash windows. These features are typical of the early nineteenth century Regency or Ontario Cottage style.



9 Peel Street

At the corner of Peel and Wellington is the late Victorian period dwelling at **3 Peel Street**. This large structure presents an assortment of Gothic Revival style elements including a steeply pitched roof, several gables adorned with carved bargeboard, bands of contrasting brick, stacked bay windows, and brackets. The curved porch is one of several added to existing dwellings in the 1920s. This one surrounds what may be the original portico at the entrance door. It was Samuel McCutcheon who had this house built about 1880, but most long time Barrie residents refer to it as the Lynch house. Patrick Lynch began his career



3 Peel Street

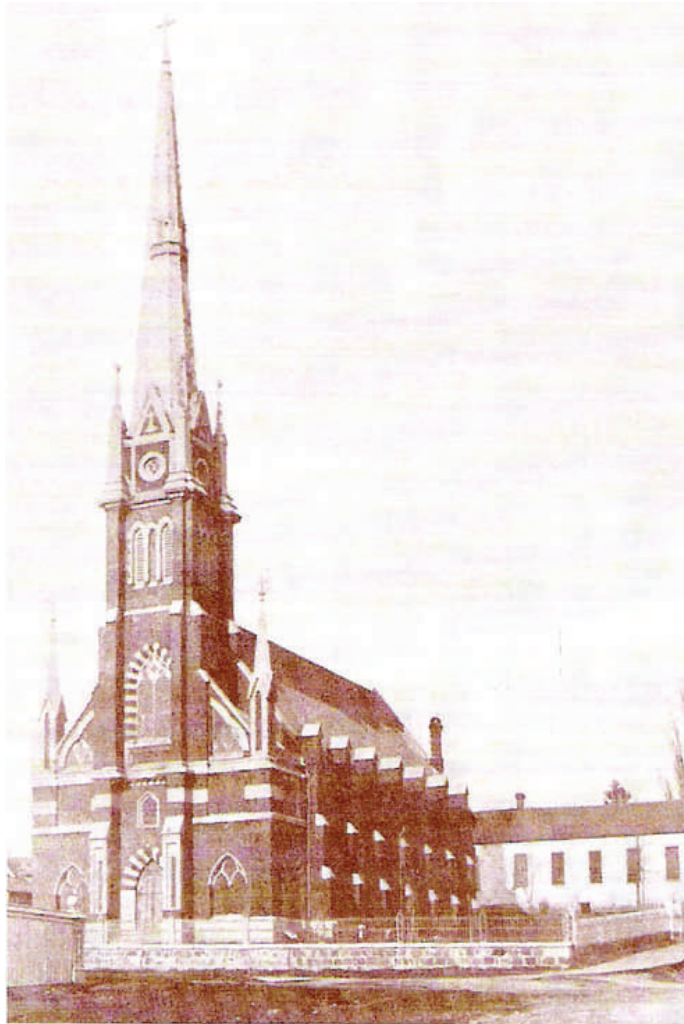
in 1879 with the Northern Railway at Allandale. He moved into 3 Peel when he became Superintendent of the North Bay division in 1913.



Court House Hill, looking north on Mulcaster, circa 1890

While climbing the hill up Codrington from Peel to Mulcaster, it is easy to imagine the obstacle Barrie's several ridges and hills presented to the early residents and travelers. The first roadways followed the shoreline but as these progressed east, then north, the hills became longer and steeper. In an early attempt to avoid some of these climbs

in the east end, Penetang Street was opened. It is directed east to link with the Penetanguishene Road (now Highway 93) which is part of the Yonge Street corridor stretching from Toronto to the naval and military establishments at Penetanguishene.



St Mary's Church - Demolished 1972

Until 1968, the parking lot of the jail and court-house was the site of **St. Mary's Roman Catholic church**. Built in 1872, the church was one of the last designs of Sherman Bird before his death.

The block from Penetang to Worsley on the east side of Mulcaster to Berczy is known as **Court House Hill**. In 1837, the magistrates of the Home District agreed to set apart Simcoe District from the Home District and make Barrie the new administrative centre. They gave authority to raise £4000 for building a **Court House and Jail** on lands already reserved for that purpose. The final cost was £9000 plus the legal fees for a series of lawsuits over contract problems.

Toronto architect Thomas Young designed the jail as a polygonal structure in keeping with the contemporary theory that this shape would make the occupants feel less confined. Barrie contractor Charles Thompson was hired to undertake the project and began the slow process of hauling limestone from the quarry at Longford on the east side of Lake Couchiching. Young's theory of the inmates not feeling confined proved correct, but possibly only because when it opened in 1841, there were several ways to escape. The hole used for passing firewood through the perimeter wall, as well as the fire escape ladder mounted on the wall, must have been hard to resist.

The jail is the only remaining institutional building in Barrie related to its origin as the County of Simcoe administrative centre. It is the focal point for the historic core and Court House Hill.



West facade of jail



Court House before 1877, demolished 1977

The courthouse was completed about 1841 but the roof was reconfigured immediately. Apparently, the judge objected to water leaking into the courtroom during every rain. It was remodelled in 1877 and again in the 1940s, then demolished in 1977 to make room for the existing courthouse and land registry office complex. The first registry office was at the northeast corner of Worsley and Mulcaster. That 1846 structure was replaced in 1875 by a Building farther east, which later served as the Women's Institute Museum before being demolished.

Facing Court House Hill is the somewhat Italianate style building at **90 Mulcaster**. In 1885, the Sisters of St. Joseph had this built as their convent. In 1946, it became the Roman Catholic Separate High School known by many as St. Joe's. In the 1990s, it was converted to law offices.



90 Mulcaster Street

On the southwest corner of Mulcaster and McDonald is a two-storey house with modern siding – **77 McDonald**. Although worn after more than a century of use, a careful look reveals its early history. The front entrance has remnants of a Classical design with sidelights and transom, and there are a few decorative brackets at the eaves. This is the 1860s house of an early Barrie merchant and politician, Andrew Miscampell.



At the corner of Worsley and Mulcaster is another early dwelling obscured by years of renovation, **68 Mulcaster**. This was a Georgian style house built about 1845 for prominent Barrie resident David Morrow. It has an early addition to the north.

68 Mulcaster Street

Before returning to the H-Block, look back at courthouse hill and then down to Kempenfelt Bay to gain a sense of the prominent location of the County buildings. Look southeast at the only remaining spire on Barrie's skyline, that of the 1864 Collier Street United church.

The large metal arch spanning Mulcaster represents the profile of the Second Empire style market building, later town hall, that sat prominently in this location at the Market Square beginning in 1856. Positioned in the centre of the road allowance, Mulcaster Street passed on the east and west sides until the building was demolished in 1985. The municipal offices then moved west to the newly built city hall and Mulcaster became an undivided roadway.

Most of the dwellings along the north side of Worsley Street date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their continued use is a testimony to the ongoing importance of Barrie's historic core and Court House Hill.



North side of Worsley Street, looking west