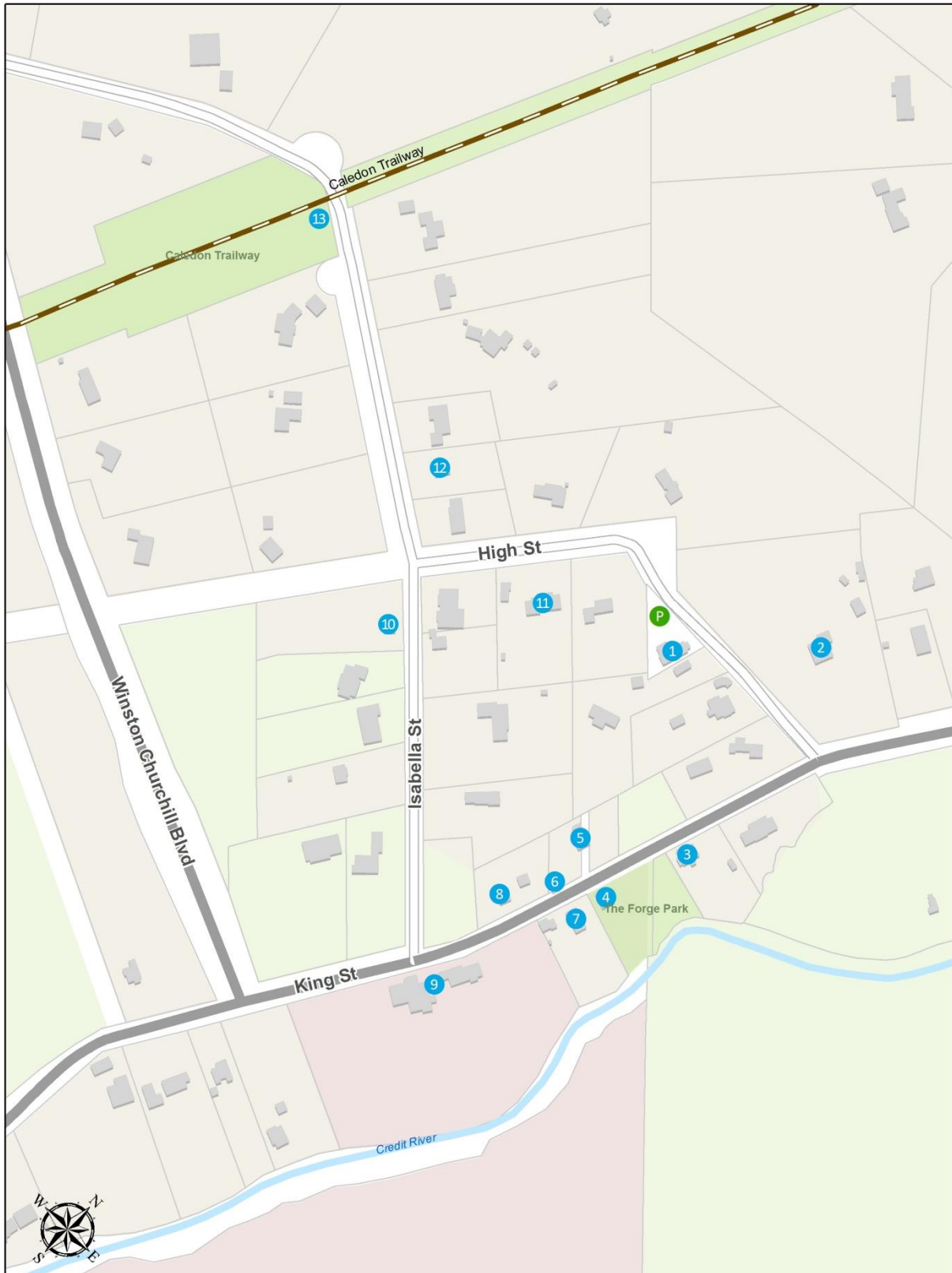


Heritage Caledon Walking Tour Series

Terra Cotta Tour



Please respect private property

A brief history...

In 1822, Joseph Kenny was awarded a Crown Grant in Chinguacousy Township of 100 acres along the Credit River on which much of Terra Cotta now sits. In 1857, Henry Tucker purchased 40 acres from Kenny to build grist and saw mills powered by a dam and mill race on the Credit River. The eighteen village lots he surveyed were the start of the hamlet first known as Tuckers Mill. Simon Plewes bought the mills shortly after in 1859 and the hamlet became known as Plewes Mills.

By the time a church, the Wesleyan Methodist Church, was built in 1862 the village had been renamed Salmonville for the annual spawning frenzy. A post office opened in 1866 and by 1874 there were 34 surveyed lots in the hamlet set on the banks of the Credit River.

This early community spread westwards and straddled the boundary of Chinguacousy and Esquesing townships. This divided the village schoolchildren, their two schoolhouses being in opposite directions. With a population of 70, by 1873 the village had acquired telegraph facilities, two sawmills and a grist mill, and in 1877 the Hamilton & Northwestern Railway arrived, stimulating local industry and farm exports.

Industry began with brickworks exploiting the local red clay, and by 1891 the post office was renamed Terra Cotta. However, in the 1930s, the brickworks became victims of the Depression and only a kiln chimney remains. Quarries, east of Terra Cotta, were established in the 1840s and the arrival of the railway broadened their market reach, allowing local sandstone to be used as far away as Ottawa in the Parliament Buildings. One original, the James Quarry, still operates as 'Credit Valley Quarries'.

In the 1940s, community enterprise expanded into recreation. The river's abundant water resources were used to develop Clancy's Ranch as a weekend resort, expanded in 1949 into Terra Cotta Playground, and purchased in 1958 by Credit Valley Conservation. In the early 1970's, a planned straightening of the river road threatened important historic buildings in the village core; thankfully, this did not happen as the Region of Peel was persuaded to preserve King Street as a scenic road.

PARKING...Visitors may park at the Terra Cotta Community Hall on the west side of High Street. Drive north from King Street on Isabelle Street and turning right onto High Street, a one-way street.

**** Designated under the Ontario Heritage Act***

1



18 High Street

*Community Hall

circa 1862

Originally constructed as a Wesleyan Methodist Church, this was the only church ever built in the community. In addition to worship, it was used for social events and public meetings. Religious use ceased in 1925 following church union and the village adopted the building as a community hall which volunteer trustees continue to manage. Recently renovated and expanded, new horizontal shiplap siding is planned for the exterior to replicate the original cladding.

2



260 King Street

Mill Owners House

Early 1860s

This large 1½ storey Victorian brick home was built for mill owner Simon Plewes possibly for his 1863 marriage to Janet Smith. With a commanding river view, it overlooked his grist and saw mills. The red bricks were likely locally made from the abundant nearby clay and are contrasted with yellow brick quoins and decorative patterning. Simon and Janet had six children before he accidentally drowned in the mill race in 1876. In the Plewes' family until 1894, the house was later owned by blacksmith William Marshall.

3



227 King Street Hotel/Inn mid 1860s
 This simple Neoclassical style building is Terra Cotta's last standing hotel, originally owned by Thomas and Ann McPherson. It was one of several inns dating to Terra Cotta's early years as a mill village. It ceased being an Inn in 1900 when blacksmith Robert Gibson converted it to residential use. It was purchased in 1908 by another blacksmith, William G. Marshall. Alterations and additions have obscured the Inn's original centre entrance.

4a



211 King Street The Forge Park Picnic Shelter
 This picnic shelter is on the site of a blacksmith shop first owned by John Leslie in the 1870s. The smithy eventually became a dwelling called 'The Forge' whose doors have been incorporated into the picnic shelter's upper storey.

4b



211 King Street Stone Tire Form and Plaque
 On display just east of the picnic shelter is a stone tire form, unearthed during road reconstruction in 2003. This circular stone was used to size iron tires for wagons and buggies made on-site in the local Carriage Works which operated on the north side of King Street. Each wheel's wooden hub and spokes were placed onto the stone so that the blacksmith could form an iron tire around the wheel.

5



206 King Street Blacksmith's House late 1870s
 This 1½ storey frame Ontario Cottage was likely built by William Wright and features a centre gable gothic window, centre entry and full front veranda. In 1881, it was sold to the first of several blacksmiths starting with James Carroll, then Robert Gibson in 1900, followed by William G. Marshall in 1908. Gibson and Marshall likely used this house for worker accommodation or for rental.

6



206 King Street Carriage Works outbuilding 1900
 This small building with its original rubble stone foundation, vertical plank walls and sign holder was built in 1900 by blacksmith Robert Gibson. It was part of a carriage works built by Gibson on this site and which included a woodworking shop and paint shop. The enterprise was sold to another blacksmith, William G. Marshall, in 1908 and flourished until motor cars impacted the need both for blacksmiths and for carriages. Marshall sold the business in 1920.

7



205 King Street Victorian Gothic Cottage late 1870s-80s
 This 1½ storey frame Ontario Cottage was likely built by Daniel Townsend. Ownership changed frequently in the earliest years until Annie Taylor and veteran Toronto policeman, Charles Taylor, retired here in 1942. In 1975 Ann and Gordon Warn purchased it. A contractor, Gordon was one of the partners who developed and operated the nearby recreational site 'Terra Cotta Playground'.

8



196 King Street William McPherson House late 1870s
 Built by William McPherson, this 1½ storey frame Ontario Cottage was originally clad with stucco. It is an excellent example of an early village house. The verandah and centre gable gothic window are obscured by massive trees, but a stone extension is visible. It was later owned in more or less 20 year intervals by Benjamin Parr, William Rimpkuis, Leslie and Jean Icam, Bernard and Beverly DeJong.

9



175 King Street Terra Cotta Inn late 1880s
 The original buildings on this site, dating from the late 1800s, included a general store, barber shop and ice cream parlour. They were purchased in 1949 by Harry and Betty Farrar who converted them to an inn. With two upper floor guest rooms, the inn became locally famous for English style dinners, especially in summer and fall. The building was restored after a 1974 fire although without the second floor, but the business later fell prey to the 1989 recession. The inn became a restaurant in 1994.

10



38 Isabella Street John Coulter House 1880s
 This frame house built by John Coulter has been altered over the years. Early ownership changed frequently until 1914 when it was purchased by James Longo who operated a cheese factory here. In 1923, Longo sold it to Charles and Kate Icam who established their first store in the front room. The Icam family was active in the local community and this house remained in their family for many years.

11



42 High Street Nathaniel Stuart Cottage circa 1867
 This 1½ storey frame Neoclassical style cottage was built by Nathaniel Stuart for his wife Elizabeth Coulter and their six children. Nathaniel was a cooper and supplied flour barrels to the village grist mill. Their youngest child, Elizabeth, married Robert William Puckering. Puckering became the postmaster and this cottage later served as the village post office. A later Puckering generation moved the cottage to its present location on the west edge of the lot to make way for the adjacent modern home.

12



49 Isabella Street Stringer House circa 1870s
 This 1½ storey Victorian Gothic house was originally a frame cottage later veneered in the red and yellow brick produced locally by Terra Cotta Pressed Brick. The projecting front bay of this home has interesting yellow brick detailing.

13



North on Isabella Street Caledon Trailway est. 1992
 This branch of the Canadian National Railway (originally the Hamilton & Northwestern Railway) was closed in 1960 and its tracks removed in 1982. Subsequently purchased by the Town of Caledon, the rail bed has become the Caledon Trailway which extends from Terra Cotta through Palgrave to Highway 9. The trailway is part of both the Trans Canada Trail and, most recently, the Greenbelt Cycling Route.

Other Points of Interest



396 King Street The Grange 400 m east of High Street
This building has evolved from John McComb's 1840s squared timber cottage. By 1851, it was owned by James McLeod who sold it and half the property to George Campbell, a farmer. In 1867 Campbell and his brother William modified it into a two-family stone dwelling. There is a memorial stone in the west wall to William and Isabella's infant son who died March 8th 1860. It was inherited by George Campbell's daughters in 1887 and later sold to Edward and Janet Little in whose hands it evolved into this elegant residence.



Caledon Trailway Mile 0 Marker
Mile 0 of the Caledon Trailway is on the western edge of the village of Terra Cotta where Brick Lane meets the trail. A kiln chimney, visible to the north of the trailway, is the last vestige of the brickworks.

A 40th Anniversary Project of Heritage Caledon in 2016

Information courtesy of Terra Cotta resident, Ted von Zuben, and the Esquesing Historical Society

Technical, mapping and heritage support from the Town of Caledon

