Landscape, Lake and Ways of Life in Saugeen Shores: Historical Context Overview Report

Prepared for Saugeen Shores

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1.0 Executive Summary

Saugeen Shores is a municipality defined by its natural landscape, oriented at the mouth of the Saugeen River as it opens to Lake Huron. The landscape of the municipality includes an extensive shoreline, sandy beaches, clean water, ancient shoreline bluffs, ecologically diverse wetlands, woodlands, valley lands, and a fertile agricultural interior. Over the millennia, these landscape qualities have directly influenced the use of the area by Indigenous peoples who were joined over the past 300 years by explorers, traders, missionaries, and eventually, permanent settler populations. The landscape qualities that once drew early settlers to fish and trade along the shores of Lake Huron today draw tourists to experience the beautiful water, beaches, and natural ecology inherent to the area. Past and current ways of life in Saugeen Shores have been dependent on and shaped by deep and direct connections with the larger landscape, including Lake Huron and the Saugeen River.

Today, the community recognizes some of the places, buildings, structures and stories in the community that are associated with ways of life tied to the landscape and water. The long use of the area by Indigenous peoples and settler populations is a reminder that there are layers of cultural meaning embedded in places, and that there are many stories of these places that could be further recognized.

Cultural heritage provides the context, stories, traditions, built and natural landscapes that tie us to our past. Saugeen Shores has taken steps to identify, evaluate, and protect local cultural heritage resources with the support of Town committees, community groups and individuals through various means. Measures include a local heritage plaque program, development of heritage tours, and heritage property listing and designation. These initiatives provide a foundation for cultural heritage conservation in Saugeen Shores and can be supplemented with further initiatives to enhance on-going heritage conservation measures in the community. The Town has commissioned a Cultural Heritage Master Plan with actionable items to better coordinate cultural heritage conservation and enhancement considerations in Saugeen Shores.

2.0 Purpose

The Town of Saugeen Shores is preparing the Cultural Heritage Master Plan (CHMP) to provide a foundation and preliminary framework for strengthening municipal conservation actions moving forward. To inform the preparation of the CHMP, this report outlines the current legislative framework for cultural heritage conservation, existing identified cultural heritage resources and provides a historical context overview for Saugeen Shores. The historical context overview outlines the larger historical, economic, social, and cultural processes that have influenced growth and change in Saugeen Shores. An understanding

of the processes that shaped Saugeen Shores informs the heritage significance of existing and potential cultural heritage resources[1] in the community.

3.0 Methodology

The legislative context review in Section 5.0 of this report is informed by County policy direction as well as the preliminary findings and recommendations in the Bruce County Cultural Action Plan (Bruce County CAP). The Bruce County CAP outlines recommended policy direction at the County level. Consideration of the preliminary recommendations in the CAP functions as an early exercise in conformity review for potential future policy direction in the Saugeen Shores Official Plan.

The research for the Historical Context Overview in Section 7.0 is informed by historic maps, surveys, information, and research prepared by local historians, committees and community groups. The information and understanding of current context in the community is further informed through engagement with Indigenous communities, individuals, and community groups who graciously donated their time, stories, research, and expertise.[2]

Online community engagement (public survey) was undertaken from March-April 2024. Virtual meetings and in-community Indigenous and public engagement was undertaken in April and May 2024. The results of that engagement have not been fully incorporated into this report as the primary purpose of this report is to outline the existing legislative framework, cultural heritage resources and key historic themes in the community. The results of the engagement will be included within and inform the CHMP.

4.0 The Cultural Heritage Master Plan (CHMP)

Cultural heritage resources have been celebrated and commemorated through different programs within the community such as the Saugeen Shores Heritage Property Plaque Program organized by the Municipal Heritage Committee, walking, driving and seasonal marine tours by the Marine Heritage Society, cultural events and through adaptive reuse of older buildings. It is recognized that more can be done to strategically communicate and commemorate the Town's rich and diverse cultural heritage through on-going

[1] Provincial legislation generally defines Cultural Heritage Resources as: "built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest for the important contribution they make to our understanding of the history of a place, an event, or a people. While some cultural heritage resources may already be identified and inventoried by official sources, the significance of others can only be determined after evaluation" (Greenbelt Plan, 2017). Cultural heritage resources can include intangible cultural heritage such as ceremonies, tradition and stories.

[2] The authors are particularly grateful that Robin Hilborn shared his research and writings on the community of Southampton and that the Southampton Cultural Heritage Conservancy assisted in facilitating this introduction.

identification, evaluation, and conservation. To this end, the Town outlined the following objectives for the preparation of a CHMP:

i. Facilitate the creation of a CHMP that coordinates cultural heritage conservation and enhancement considerations in Saugeen Shores;
ii. Provide a high-level review of the cultural heritage value and significance of existing protected heritage properties;
iii. Develop tools to evaluate and identify properties and Cultural Heritage Landscapes for heritage value according to the Provincial criteria for heritage designation as prescribed under the Ontario Heritage Act; and
iv. Identify actions that are the responsibility of the Town under the Ontario Heritage Act and/or Planning Act.

Engagement with Indigenous communities, residents, and community groups is critical to preparing a Master Plan with relevant, realistic and meaningful direction for cultural heritage in Saugeen Shores.

5.0 Planning for Heritage Conservation in a Shifting Regulatory Framework

Over the last several years, Ontario has witnessed significant changes to several key pieces of legislation that guide cultural heritage planning. The volatile legislative environment has made it difficult for municipalities to prepare and implement effective policies for the conservation of cultural heritage resources. As part of the overall CHMP, the existing policy framework at the Provincial, County and Town levels will be outlined to inform recommendations for updates to Town policy and processes.

The following section provides an overview of the primary existing policy framework for cultural heritage at the time of the preparation of this report, recognizing that legislation may continue to change.

5.1 Provincial Policy Direction

Understanding the Provincial policy basis for heritage conservation reinforces the importance of creating a meaningful policy framework for heritage conservation in a local context. Processes and policies within Provincial legislation pertaining to cultural heritage resources have changed over the last several years and are anticipated to change further through a new proposed *Provincial Planning Statement (2024)*. The following is an overview of current Provincial policy direction regarding the conservation of cultural heritage resources as it relates to the objectives of this CHMP.

The *Planning Act* directs that conservation of significant architectural, cultural, historical, archaeological features is a matter of provincial interest and that Council shall consider heritage conservation in their planning decisions.

The value of cultural heritage to communities is articulated in many pieces of provincial legislation and related policy documents including the *Provincial Policy Statement (2020)*, where heritage is understood to contribute to economic, environmental, and social benefits by encouraging a sense of place and defining community character. Significant built heritage resources[3], cultural heritage landscapes[4] and archaeological resources[5] are to be conserved.

The *Ontario Heritage Act* provides the provincial legislative framework for regulating, including listing and designating, properties of cultural heritage value or interest. The *Ontario Heritage Act* regulations provide the prescribed criteria for designation in Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended by Ontario Regulation 569/22.

There are other pieces of provincial and federal legislation that apply to the management of cultural heritage resources. Other legislation applicable to the objectives of the CHMP will be outlined in more detail within the Master Plan.

5.2 Bruce County Policy Direction

The Bruce County Official Plan provides broad direction for cultural heritage, which could benefit from updated terminology. Objectives in section 4.10.1 state:

> *4.10.1 Objectives*
>
> *.1 Encourage the conservation of land, buildings and sites of historic, architectural and archaeological value.*

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[3] ***Built heritage resource**: means a building, structure, monument, installation or any manufactured or constructed part or remnant that contributes to a property's cultural heritage value or interest as identified by a community, including an Indigenous community. Built heritage resources are located on property that may be designated under Parts IV or V of the Ontario Heritage Act, or that may be included on local, provincial, federal and/or international registers. (PPS 2020)*

[4] ***Cultural heritage landscape**: means a defined geographical area that may have been modified by human activity and is identified as having cultural heritage value or interest by a community, including an Indigenous community. The area may include features such as buildings, structures, spaces, views, archaeological sites or natural elements that are valued together for their interrelationship, meaning or association. Cultural heritage landscapes may be properties that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest under the Ontario Heritage Act, or have been included on federal and/or international registers, and/or protected through official plan, zoning by-law, or other land use planning mechanisms. (PPS 2020)*

[5] ***Archaeological resources**: includes artifacts, archaeological sites, marine archaeological sites, as defined under the Ontario Heritage Act. The identification and evaluation of such resources are based upon archaeological fieldwork undertaken in accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act. (PPS 2020)*

.2 County Council encourages the identification, acquisition, restoration and conservation of the historical, cultural, architectural and archaeological assets of the County.

.3 In accordance with the Ontario Heritage Act, the County encourages Local Councils to support the creation of Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committees to inventory and designate buildings, sites and districts of historical, cultural or architectural merit.

5.3 Bruce County Guidance Documents

Recently, Bruce County has taken steps to manage its cultural assets more comprehensively (in the County's case, the broad array of cultural assets is related to arts, culture and heritage) through the preparation and 2021 adoption of the Bruce County Cultural Action Plan (CAP). Preparation of the CAP included engagement with the community including engagement with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON) and Historic Saugeen Métis (HSM), the mapping and inventorying of cultural assets, the identification of core value and cultural themes, strategic directions and recommended actions. Inventorying included the identification and documentation of tangible and intangible cultural assets as outlined in the "Bruce County Cultural Assets Map and Inventory," but did not result in specific recommendations for protection of individual assets in lower tier municipalities. The Bruce County CAP recommended the following relevant actions that can inform recommendations within the CHMP:

Strategic Direction 2.2 - Create and maintain County-level inventories of cultural places [in connection with local municipalities]

- *Publish and maintain an interactive Culture Map based on CAP cultural asset mapping; include basic information and links to source platforms (Municipalities) and/or data-sharing with those platforms where applicable (e.g., Kincardine Heritage)*
- *Connect the Culture Map with the event calendar by coordinating with the municipalities on a common spatial coordinate format. (Explore the Bruce)*
- *Incorporate and maintain listed and designated heritage structures into the County's GIS planning platform*
- *Partner with SON and HSM to facilitate Indigenous cultural mapping and to identify Indigenous place names*

Strategic Direction 3.3 - Facilitate communication between local groups and businesses within and across municipalities - Adopt official plan policies that encourage the lower-tier municipalities to develop their own official plan policies specific to Municipal Cultural Planning.

- *Coordinate with municipalities, parks, and conservation authorities on improving heritage-related trail systems and water access (e.g., historic*

portage routes), including through integrated cultural interpretation programming (such as wayfinding and heritage signage)

Strategic Direction 4.2 - Foster municipal initiatives and policies that are mutually reinforcing

- *Conduct a gap analysis of municipal cultural incentive programs such as façade improvement programs, film and digital production incentives, and other cultural sector grants; coordinate with municipalities on the development of new programs*
- *Form exploratory committee to assess the need/possibility for a unified municipal heritage assessment procedure*
- *Form an exploratory committee to investigate the possibility of applying of cultural heritage landscape (CHL) designations within Bruce County*
- *Jointly develop a common heritage conservation district (HCD) implementation procedure referencing the Kincardine example and existing documents like the Southampton Downtown Design Guidelines; work with municipalities to identify and prioritize prospective HCDs*

Strategic Direction in the Bruce County CAP can support the objectives of the CHMP, for instance, Strategic Direction 4.2 in the CAP recommends investigating the use of cultural heritage landscapes within Bruce County. One objective of the CHMP is to develop an evaluation template for cultural heritage landscapes. Saugeen Shores can take a leadership role in Bruce County through the early development and evaluation of cultural heritage landscapes and provide input to other municipalities on process, experiences and challenges. Other synergies between direction in the CAP and CHMP will be further explored as recommendations for the CHMP progress.

5.3 Town of Saugeen Shores Official Plan

The Town's Official Plan outlines goals and objectives for heritage conservation in Section 1 that encourage identification, conservation, and enhancement. Objectives for cultural heritage resources are to conserve historic buildings and landscapes; leverage cultural heritage resources for economic development and tourism; ensure that new development respects community character; and prevent inappropriate use or alteration of cultural heritage resources as outlined below:

1.2.5.1 Goal

It is the goal of this Plan to identify, conserve and enhance the Town's cultural heritage resources whenever practical and to encourage all new development and redevelopment to respect important cultural heritage features.

1.2.5.2 Objectives

> *a) To maintain, restore and enhance the cultural heritage resources of the Town such as its historical landscapes, sites and buildings and unique cultural, architectural, archeological and historic resources.*
>
> *b) To use cultural heritage resources to attract additional economic development, increase tourism opportunities and enhance the character of the Town by providing public access to cultural heritage features.*
>
> *c) To provide opportunities for the display of art and cultural elements in public area of the community.*
>
> *d) To ensure that new development and redevelopment preserves and reflects cultural elements that defines the character of the community which may include natural features such as trees and hedgerows or built features.*
>
> *e) To prevent the demolition, destruction, inappropriate alteration or use of cultural heritage resources.*

Section 2 of the Town's Official Plan provides policies for cultural heritage resources. It is a goal of the Official Plan to identify and to conserve built heritage resources, heritage properties, heritage attributes, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources (Policy 2.4.1.1). The Official Plan also outlines the tools that Council may use to conserve cultural heritage resources including compiling Cultural Heritage Inventories, designating properties and Heritage Conservation Districts under the *Ontario Heritage Act,* as well as using tools under the *Planning Act* and *Municipal Act*.

The Town's Official Plan policies would benefit from more specific direction for cultural heritage to manage growth and change and continue to foster community character and sense of place for its communities. A more thorough overview of tools for conservation will be outlined in the CHMP.

6.0 Identified Cultural Heritage Resources

As previously outlined, the Town of Saugeen Shores has already undertaken steps to identify, evaluate, and protect cultural heritage resources within the community. The actions undertaken to date provide a basis for on-going conservation of cultural heritage resources. For instance, the plaque program identifies the names of early/original property owners, their occupations and dates of building construction as informed by research undertaken in the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre and Registry Office. The plaques are a subtle but effective way to commemorate historical associations with prominent people and industries in the Town.

The Town has also undertaken steps to protect heritage properties under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Saugeen Shores Council has adopted numerous properties to the Town's Municipal Heritage Register under Section 27 (Part IV) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, with evaluation and background research prepared by the Municipal Heritage Committee and

the Southampton Conservancy. The Municipal Heritage Register offers limited interim protection from demolition and identifies properties that may warrant future designation.

It is an objective of the CHMP to undertake a high-level review of the significance of designated (protected) heritage properties. The Town has formally designated more than a dozen properties under Section 29 (Part IV) of the *Ontario Heritage Act,* which affords greater protection for cultural heritage resources. The following properties have in-effect designating by-laws:

Address	Title	Location	Description	By-law #
55 Victoria Street North	Public School	Southampton	The former Southampton Public School was built in 1878. Now part of Bruce County Museum.	1648
33 Victoria Street North	Amabel Township School	Southampton	One-storey log structure former school relocated to Bruce County Museum property.	3074
20 Albert Street South	Art School	Southampton	Built in 1888 by James Howe as a private library.	1671
201 High Street	Town Hall	Southampton	Built in 1910-1911 as the Town Hall.	1670 85-2011
708 Goderich Street	Port Elgin Library	Port Elgin	Carnegie Library built 1908.	3-90
317 High Street	Shady Lane Cottages	Southampton	Dwelling built in the 1860s. Former home of Wiliam Busby who also owned the Busby House hotel.	3021
221 Clarendon Street	The 3 Sisters	Southampton	Circa 1853 dwelling of James Cathay, Missionary and School Master of the "Indian Village."	3038
97 Huron Street South	The Bowden House	Southampton	Dwelling built in 1870s by the family that owned the Forsyth Shirt Company.	3072

22 Victoria Street North	Tew Property	Southampton	Early cottage that survived the Great Fire of 1886.	4008
PL 817, Lt 51-74, Blk A	Nodwell Park	Port Elgin	Nodwell Park is an archaeological site that represents an early 14th century Indigenous settlement	32-93
18 Huron Street North	Captain Spence House	Southampton	1850s Regency style cottage constructed by Captain John Spence, early settler.	98-20
56 Front Street South	Aunt Annie's Place	Southampton	Dwelling of Annie Longe from circa 1840s.	2088
268 Spence Street	Belcher Home	Southampton	Dwelling built circa 1874. Former home of Alexander Belcher, Southampton's first mayor from 1905-1908.	4014
30 Grosvenor Street		Southampton	Queen Anne dwelling built in 1892 by Henry Harmer Jr, for whom Harmer Street was named.	109-2023
47 Albert Street North	St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church	Southampton	Gothic revival church built in 1862, associated with early settlement and founding of Southampton.	64-2023

Many of these properties are identified as containing cultural heritage value or interest (heritage significance) under the *Ontario Heritage Act* for their associations with people, historic themes and activities in Saugeen Shores. Moving forward additional consideration could be given to broader design and physical values and contextual values across communities.

7.0 Historical Context Overview

The following section provides a thematic overview of the historical factors and processes that have shaped growth and changes in the area particularly as they relate to designated heritage properties to evaluate, at a high-level, cultural heritage value and significance.

Moving forward, Saugeen Shores could more thoroughly document the larger themes and activities that are significant to the community to better understand and frame the significance of cultural heritage resources. This exercise would also provide an opportunity to focus the Town's efforts and goals for identifying, evaluating, and protecting cultural heritage resources.

It is acknowledged that Saugeen Shores is a community that is comprised of three formerly separate communities, the Township of Saugeen, and the Towns of Port Elgin and Southampton, which amalgamated in 1998 through Provincial mandate. The historic processes that created these former communities are unique and different, which assists in understanding some of the differences between these communities today. However, there are historic themes and processes that connect these places, and which contributed to growth and change within and across these communities. Themes that contribute to a sense of shared heritage include the:

- physical shaping of the landscape stretching back thousands of years to glacial periods, which resulted in fertile agricultural lands, abundant natural resources, beaches and sand dunes that have long attracted people to the area;
- cultural values associated with natural landscapes often of ecological significance and diversity;
- connections to water, including Lake Huron and the Saugeen River, as natural features that functionally provided a source of food, a primary means of transportation to the area and served as drivers of early industries; and
- connections to early industries including fishing, trade, shipping, furniture making and tourism which were bolstered by the arrival of the railway.

7.1 Connections to Landscape

The landscape of the area, including Lake Huron, remains an integral component of the identity of Saugeen Shores. Colossal prehistoric natural processes including glacial movement and melt shaped the landforms in the area, releasing immense amounts of water creating ancient lakes whose erosion deposited till and formed bluffs in the area. For thousands of years, post-glacial lake levels rose and fell, and ancient Indigenous communities followed the shifting coastlines, archaeological sites marking their presence across Saugeen Shores. These processes contributed to the ecologically diverse wetlands, woodlands and valley lands, the beaches, ancient bluffs, gravel deposits and fertile soils that define the area today. The waters of Lake Huron, its shoreline and its connection with the Saugeen River provided opportunities for fishing and travel, serving as a primary means of travel to and from the area historically. Inhabitants of the area also relied on the bounty of Lake Huron for their industry and food.

The landscape of the area that is now Saugeen Shores, with its bounteous natural resources drew early settlers to the area. Prior to the surveying of the lands in the 1850s,

the natural landscape was a primary determinant of early patterns of inhabitation in the area.

Agriculture in Saugeen Shores dates back over 2,000 years to the first Indigenous cultivation in the area and the intensification that took place over hundreds of years. It was during the era that large, semi-permanent villages reliant on extensive cultivation of corn, beans and squash began appearing, drawn to the rich soils of the Huron Fringe. Late Woodland Period villages have been found around Port Elgin including the 14th century Nodwell Site.

- Nodwell Park (Port Elgin) is an archaeological site that represents an early 14th century Indigenous settlement (located in modern day Port Elgin). The settlement is believed to have included at least 11 long-houses in proximity to one another surrounded by a double palisade. The Indigenous community used the fertile soil for agriculture around this settlement.

When European explorers and missionaries encountered Bruce County in the early-to-mid-17th century, the Indigenous inhabitants were described as the *Cheveux relevés* by the French or the *Ondatauauat* or *Andatahouat* by the Huron-Wendat. As Europeans interacted more with the region, this Indigenous group would become more commonly known as the Odawa (Ottawa). Ojibway speakers, the Odawa traded and wintered among their Tionontati (Petun) neighbours in the Blue Mountains to the east. During the Beaver Wars of the mid-17th century, the Odawa withdrew from the Saugeen Peninsula to the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. The conclusion of the Beaver Wars saw communities of the Anishinaabe Three Fires Confederacy take up residency in the area, including the Sauking or Saugeen Ojibway near the mouth of the Saugeen River. Saugeen Village, as it would become known, would be an important landmark on many early maps of Lake Huron, and it remains the home of Saugeen First Nation. From Saugeen Village, the Saugeen hunted, fished and gathered medicines throughout much of the interior and coasts of what is now Bruce County. A substantial Indigenous trail connected the Saugeen with the Chippewa village at Owen Sound together representing the collective Saugeen Ojibway Nation. A series of small fur trading posts were established near Saugeen Village including a Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) post. Traders included several Métis and former Northwest Company voyageurs. The area was abundant in animals (fur trading), fish, hardwood forests and maple syrup.

As treaties were signed in the 19th century, the Owen Sound community moved to Neyaashiinigmiing and became the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. Saugeen Village became the Saugeen Reserve No. 29 on the north side of the Saugeen River alongside Chief's Point Reserve No. 28 further north along the lakeshore. Together the Saugeen and Chippewa communities are known today as Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON). SON continues to steward their extensive treaty and traditional territories including in Saugeen Shores.

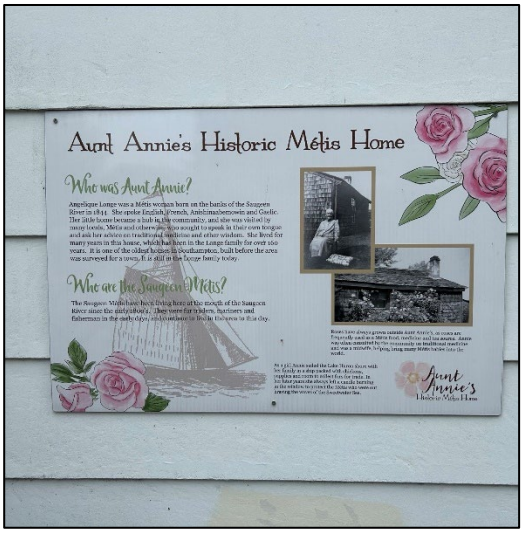
Across the Saugeen River, following the closure of the HBC post, several HBC retirees and their families arrived, joining independent traders Gonneville, Sayer, and others who had remained at Saugeen. These families would form part of the nucleus of what would become known as the Historic Saugeen Métis (HSM) settlement.[6] When the treaties opened up Southampton to systematic settlement, new settlers took up lakefront lots next to those already inhabited by these early former fur traders and their families. HSM continues to maintain the history and built heritage of the former fur traders and their families including Aunt Annie's Place, which was retained in-situ despite being within the road allowance, interrupting the early survey's intended grid pattern of development. Cultural heritage resources connected with this early period include:

- Aunt Annies Place located at located at **56 Front Street** (Southampton), the former residence of Angelique Longe, a Métis woman born in the area in 1844. Annie's parents were involved in the fur trade, and Annie was fluent in English, French, Gaelic and Ojibway. The descendants of the Longe family still own the cottage today (Figure 2). The dwelling is understood to have been built using a unique Métis building technique.
- The Three Sisters located at **221 Clarendon Street** was the home of James Cathay, Missionary and School Master to the Indigenous, built in 1854 (see Figure 1). The dwelling has a unique saltbox roof design.
- **15 Huron North** (Southampton) built in 1912 by Métis fisherman Peter Longe, brother to Aunt Annie Longe. Census information from 1901 census indicates that Peter was a French-speaking sailor (who also spoke English). By 1917 Peter Longe was one of five fishermen still using sailboats in Southampton.
- Pioneer Park (Southampton) located near the mouth of the Saugeen River contains monuments dedicated to the Saugeen Métis Mariners who sailed Lake Huron from the early 1800s. This park also recognizes other stories connected to the area, including the loss of lives on Lake Huron.

[6] Families included the Andres, Belhumeur (Bellmore), Beausoleil (Bosley), Cameron, Cazelet (Cosley), de Lamorandiere, Deschamps, Duchesne, Gonneville (Granville), Lange (Longe), Martin, Normandin, Sayer, and Tranchemontagne, and other families.

Figure 1 - 221 Clarendon Street, known as The Three Sisters (DH 2024)

Figure 2 - 56 Front Street, Aunt Annie's Place (DH 2024)



7.2 Lake Huron

Lake Huron has played an integral part in the historic growth and development of the area. The area has a long marine history dating back to the early 19th century and included the oldest port on the Bruce coast. The community retains strong connections with the Lake today, but with a greater focus on tourism and recreational uses.

Early settlers in the area arrived either by foot from Owen Sound, by sailboat, steamer or schooner on Lake Huron or by canoe or raft down the Saugeen River. They came to the area in the mid-19th century lured by the prospects of the fishing industry and by the

promise of land to call their own. Fishing and sailing were the most important industries in the area at that time and early settlers such as Captain John Spence and Bartholomew Higgins established fishing enterprises and Capt. Spence also traded along Lake Huron's ports.

As the oldest port in Bruce County, Southampton became an important part of the settlement in its early years, being the main source of supplies brought from Goderich on sailing vessels. By the 1850s the area even boasted a port of entry for customs. However, the port was in proximity to jagged shoals that claimed numerous sailing vessels. Local shipwrecks, some of which are commemorated through historic plaques, serve as a reminder of the dangers of early shipping enterprises, and still draw tourists of marine history. As a result of the dangers of the shoals, construction of the Chantry Island Lighthouse began in 1855 and the first light was lit on April 1, 1859. Chantry Island remains visible from the Southampton waterfront (**Figure 3**).

- Chantry Island is located in Lake Huron, about 1 kilometre from Southampton. The Island largely remains in a natural state in recognition of its unique ecological role as an area for many colonies of nesting birds, however, the island contains several built heritage resources including the Imperial Lighthouse (completed in 1859), the Keeper's quarters and a boat house. Island tours are organized by the local Marine Heritage Society (a not-for-profit group).

Figure 3 - Southampton Waterfront Sunset, Chantry Island visible in background at left (DH 2024)

The community has commemorated lives lost on the lake through plaques and recognition of dwellings associated with families sustained by the fishing industry. Marine history and ties to the fishing industry still forms part of the community's collective memory. The following cultural heritage resources are associated with the marine history and fishing industry in the area:

- Captain John Spence House. Captain Spence is a significant individual to the community and constructed a log house in the 1850s that still stands at **18 Huron Street North** (Southampton). The log house is an early example of a vernacular log dwelling in the area.
- **6 Huron Street North** (Southamnpton) contains an 1860s dwelling known as Glen Huron, once owned by the manager of the Dominion Fish Company.
- **44 Huron Street North** (Southampton) owned by the Varey family, a local fishing family. In 1917, John Varey was one of five fishermen using a sailboat out of Southampton Harbour. The Varey family was one of many who lost family members in marine accidents.
- **57 Huron Street North** (Southampton) built around 1885 and owned by several families associated with the marine history of the area.

In Port Elgin, the construction of the first pier in 1857 was crucial in helping increase tourism with summer connections to Goderich and Southampton daily. In the late 1800s Gobles Grove was created as a scenic area, with beach views and a swing.

In addition to Lake Huron, the Saugeen River was also a primary means of early transportation within the area for both Indigenous communities and later settler groups. Many ancient and contemporary settlements grew along and depended on the Saugeen River. The river flows northwest through the Saugeen Valley before draining into Lake Huron. In the 1850s the river supported several industries. A steam sawmill was located on the creek where Fairy Lake (Little Lake) drains into the river, later a distillery and then brewery were located on the same site, a planing mill on the shoreline, and a saw and grist mill at the rapids. At the opening of the Saugeen River were warehouses, and wharfs.

The intermittent flooding of the Saugeen River deposits silt, creating a lush valley floor. The river was teeming with fish for sustenance, and its waters powered early mills and industries, and for this reason the river has held great value to the community historically. The Saugeen River directly influenced the early naming of the area as Saugeen, an Ojibway word meaning "mouth of the river." Ne?bwaakah giizwed ziibi (River Mouth Speaks), a significant Indigenous site on the north side of the mouth of the Saugeen highlights the significance of the river beginning in ancient times. The Saugeen River flows through the ancient high bluffs as it winds through the existing countryside. Today, Saugeen Bluffs Conservation Area is located within a 100-hectare sugar maple forest and provides access to the high sand bluffs that were created through the ancient glacial processes. The Conservation Area is a managed forest and provides a range of outdoor experiences and hosts cultural events, such as the Saugeen Bluffs Maple Syrup Festival, ongoing since 1969.

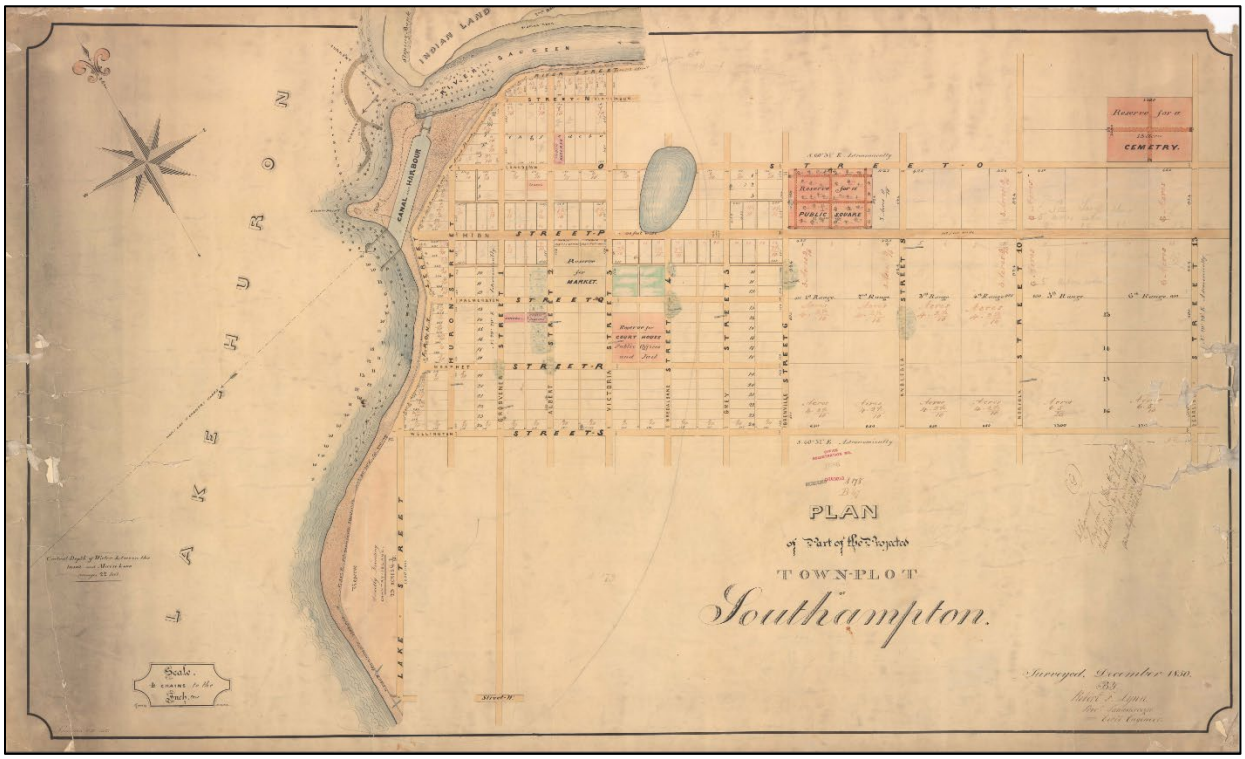
Figure 4 - View of Saugeen River (DH 2024)

The Saugeen River (**Figure 4**) continues to hold value to the community as a defining natural feature of the area and facilitates recreational activities including canoeing, kayaking and fishing.

7.3 Lots and Railway Lines

The area changed most substantially after the 1850s when town and farm lots were formally surveyed. The survey identified Public Reserve lands, designated areas for schools and cemeteries and key institutional uses. In this era, development was primarily influenced by government surveys rather than in response to natural landscape features (see **Figure 5**).

Figure 5 - Plan of part of the projected town plot of Southampton, December 1850 by Robert Lynn (Courtesy of Bruce County Museum & Cultural Centre)



Beginning in the 1850s, recognizing the need to formally settle lands in the area, the Crown's Land Department commissioned surveys of the area for the creation of farm lots and town lots on a linear grid pattern. At this time the Township of Saugeen was renamed Southampton, perhaps in anticipation of its potential growth into a port town like England's own Southampton. By the late 1850s there were over 100 houses in Southampton, as well as the Crown Land Office (Huron Street), the Bank of Upper Canada, Crown Timber agent's office, and three hotels. Properties associated with the early survey of the area include:

- **71 Huron Street North**, (Southampton) built ca 1851 by Alexander McNabb (1809-1882) the first Crown Lands agent of Bruce County. This is one of the earliest dwellings in the area (Figure 6).
- **22 Victoria Street North** (Southampton) was built in 1865 by Catherine McNabb, daughter of Alexander

Figure 6 - McNabb House as viewed from the wharf (DH 2024)

McNabb, and local meteorologist.

- **705 Goderich Street** (Port Elgin) contains the Wismer House built in 1856 by Henry Hilker the first reeve of Port Elgin in 1856.

Port Elgin was named for James Bruce, the Eighth Earl of Elgin and Kincardine. By 1867, Port Elgin was recognized for its agricultural lands, shipping harbour with warehouses and the many institutional uses and services (multiple churches, schools, and a large town hall).

Another key aspect that played a part in the area's prosperity was the Wellington, Grey and Bruce Railway Line to Southampton, which opened in the 1870s (see commemorative plaque in **Figure 7**). The railway transported various farm goods, local industry products, fish and timber. It also provided a boost to tourism in the area as a more convenient method of travel for residents and cottagers eager to visit resort towns. William Knowles bought a tract of land on the lakefront land bounded by Morpeth, Huron and Chantry View (the "Knowles Block") and in 1888 opened the Park Hotel at the foot of Morpeth Street. Port Elgin became a tourist destination in the 1880s, with passenger boats primarily from America visiting this area. The number of dwellings and buildings and growth of industries and institutions bears witness to the impact of the train service on Southampton and Port Elgin. This growth was not without interruption. Southampton suffered the Great Fire of 1886 when a building caught fire in the early morning. The high winds fed the flames, which destroyed 50 buildings on the north side of High Street and threatened buildings along Grosvenor Street. Cultural heritage resources associated with the period of growth after the arrival of the railway include:

Figure 7 - Saugeen Shores Commemorative Plaque for the Old Train Station in Southampton (DH 2024)

- **97 Huron Street South** (Southampton) the Bowden House, was built in the 1870s by James Conaway. However, the dwelling was extensively renovated from its original form in the 1920s by the family that owned the Forsyth Shirt Company.
- The Old Public School opened in 1878 and is now part of the Bruce County Museum and Culture Centre at **33 Victoria Street North** (Southampton).
- The Art School at **20 Albert Street South** (Southampton) was built in 1888 by James Howe as a private library and became a public library in 1896. Howe

donated the building to the Town on the condition that it be used for cultural purposes. The Southampton Art School opened in 1958 with the purpose of developing and maintaining a center for the arts in the region. The school still attracts artists to the community today.

- **676 Goderich Street** (Port Elgin) is the Hilker Block, an 1889 commercial building associated with one of the earliest commercial enterprises in Port Elgin (Hilker and Company and before that Ruby and Hilker) with unique architectural detailing and materials for the area.
- **683 Goderich Street** (Port Elgin), built in 1890, formerly The American Hotel one of Port Elgin's finest hotels built by Henry Hilker.
- The Port Elgin Carnegie Library at **708 Goderich Street** was constructed in 1908 in the Neo-Classical style and was historically the centre of community activities.
- Southampton Town Hall at **201 High Street** was constructed between 1910-1911 and served also to house the police station and fire hall.
- The Saugeen Rail Trail was opened in 2006, following the former Wellington, Grey and Bruce Railway corridor and now serves as an all-season active transportation route between Southampton and Port Elgin.

Tourism remains an important economic contributor to the local economy of Saugeen Shores. The on-going conservation and protection of cultural heritage resources can support and sustain economic growth.

8.0 Next Steps in the CHMP

The historical context overview outlines the larger historical, economic, social, and cultural processes that have influenced growth and change in Saugeen Shores to understand the significance of existing cultural heritage resources and of those yet to be identified and evaluated. The information contained within this report along with input through community engagement will inform the development of the CHMP. The CHMP will provide a preliminary framework for enhancing municipal conservation actions based on an understanding of the current policy framework for cultural heritage conservation in Saugeen Shores and an understanding of existing cultural heritage resources and protection measures.

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