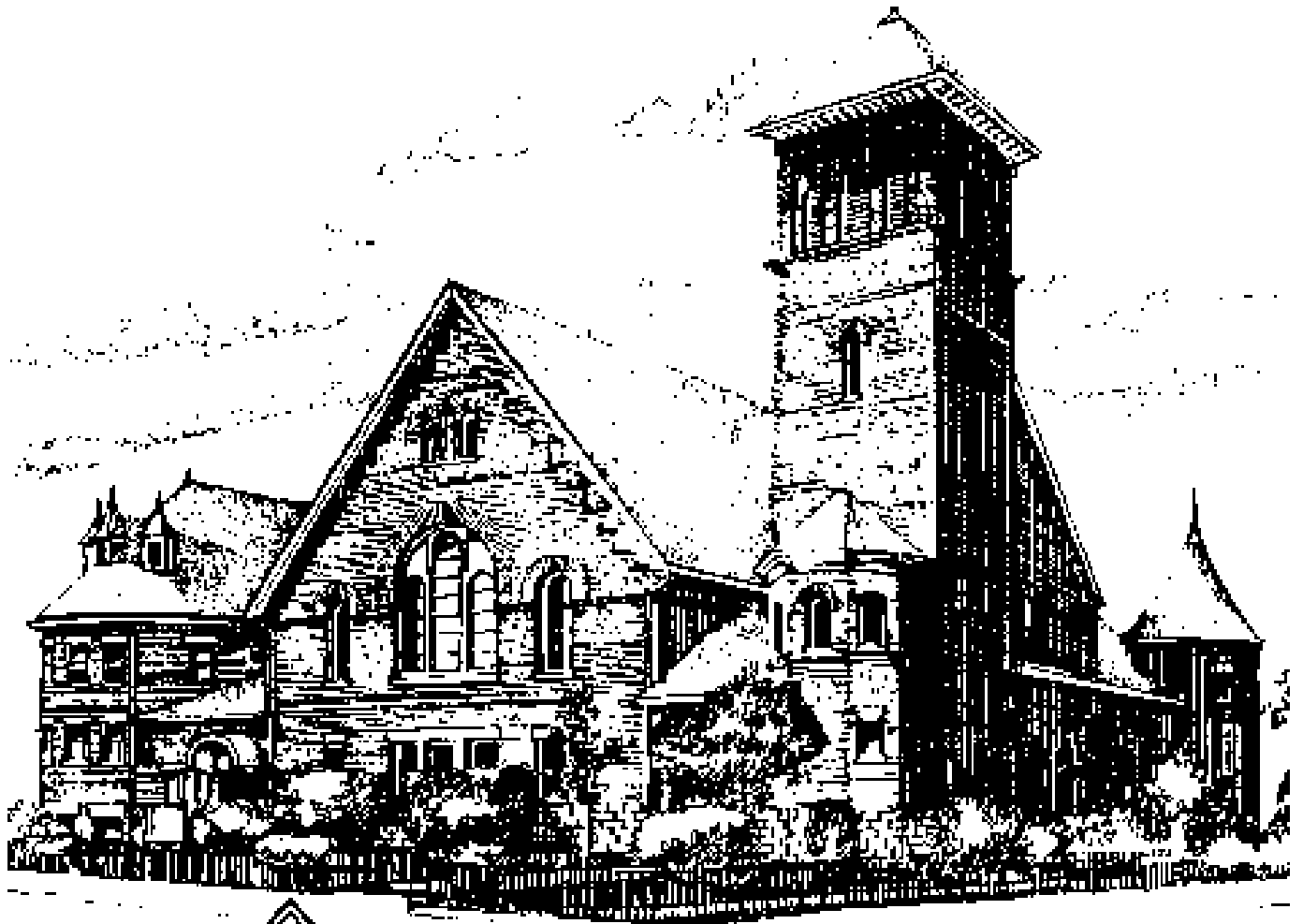


# A Walking Tour of Victoria Avenue



Windsor Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee

# Victoria Avenue

## **VICTORIA AVENUE - a residential street of harmonious scale**

James Dougall, the developer of Victoria Avenue, was born in Paisley, Scotland in 1810, and arrived in Windsor in 1830 to establish the first general store in the region. Two years later he married Susanne Baby whose grandfather, Jacques Duperon Baby, owned the large tract of farmland, which was to become the core of today's City of Windsor.

Dougall's general store - "Dougall's Emporium" - stood on Sandwich Street (now Riverside Drive West) near the present Cleary International Centre. An astute businessman, he persuaded the town planners to terminate both Victoria (named for his daughter) and Dougall Avenues at Chatham Street, thereby channeling vehicles and pedestrians north on Ferry Street to the front door of his shop. Land speculation grew in Windsor as a result of the arrival of the Great Western Railroad. Dougall was elected to the first village Council in 1854, the first town Council in 1858, and mayor (1859-1861 and again, 1867-1869). He donated land for the first school near his residence on Riverside Drive West.

From the outset, Victoria Avenue was intended to be a gracious, residential street. In fact, the Windsor Land and Building Company placed conditions on buyers of building lots, which stipulated a minimum setback of 20 feet, a house value of at least \$3,000 (considerable, for that time), and assurance that any business carried on would not be deemed a nuisance on a private residential street.

As a result, the earliest houses, built between 1890 and the Stock Market "Crash" of 1929, show diversity of design and, in spite of recent renovations, quality of material and fine workmanship. They were the valued residences of some of the most influential and respected families during this middle period in Windsor's evolution - doctors, merchants, lawyers, educators, politicians and industrialists whose ideas molded this municipality.

An old-timer, recalling the 1930s in Windsor, has said, in that decade, "real estate was worth nothing... a house on Victoria would sell for \$40,000 just before the "Crash," and afterwards ... if you had a mortgage, they either pressed you for it or took it away from you."

Many more fine architectural sites may be viewed beyond Elliott Street, as far as Tecumseh Road, where the unique Art Deco-style church of St. Clare of Assisi stands with its matching, angular, buff brick rectory. (See back cover for photograph)

Today, Victoria Avenue is beginning to enjoy a modest renaissance due in part to its proximity the City's core, and growing public appreciation for well-designed, well-built houses on a broad urban thoroughfare.

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To appreciate **Victoria Avenue**, it is best to start your stroll on the oldest block at the intersection with University Avenue.



## **345 The Sutherland-Sheppard house (1896)**

The Queen Anne Revival Style house - a restaurant since 1985 - was built for the Hon. Robert Franklin Sutherland (1859-1922), Justice of the Supreme Court of Ontario from 1909 to 1922. It was acquired in 1927 by Lt. Col. Ralph F. Sheppard, M.B.E., of the Essex Fusiliers, forerunner of the Essex Scottish Regiment, which gained fame in the raid on Dieppe in World War II.

*PARK STREET WEST CROSSES*



## **405 St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church (1896)**

Romanesque Revival massing of form and detail are represented in this monumental building, which dominates the intersection of Victoria and Park Street West near the site of the previous church, which was destroyed by fire in 1895. Between 1965 and 1975, the Women's Guild raised funds to replace the original windows with a new set of memorial stained glass panels depicting Old and New Testament scenes. The architect was Spier & Rohns, Detroit, who maintained a Windsor office in the Medbury Block between 1895 and 1904.

*WYANDOTTE STREET WEST CROSSES*

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## 627 The George Nairn house (pre 1900)

Another version of the Queen Anne Revival style was chosen by a successful grocer from Goderich, who purchased the land from James A. Straith, a founder of the Windsor Board of Trade and Commerce. The many gables, and windows with diamond-shaped panes are remnants of the early character of this substantial house.



## 664 Temple Baptist Church (1924)

Modified Gothic Revival blends with Arts and Crafts characteristics in the brick and stone urban church whose architect was Douglas C. Winter. A recent addition on the north side shows respect for the original building style in terms of scale, material and setback. The first church was built in 1886 as Bruce Avenue Baptist Church. By 1921, the congregation had outgrown it, and a new site was purchased on Victoria Avenue.



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**677 The Hon. R. F. Sutherland house (1899)**

Justice Sutherland (see #345) owned two houses of differing style before the turn of the century. The city directory of 1899 lists him as tenant. He bought the land from the Windsor Land and Building Company for \$1,050 and assumed a mortgage for \$4,500 to build this clapboard house. The multi-paned windows are a Queen Anne Revival characteristic.



**685 The Ernest Bauer house (c. 1895)**

Another version of Queen Anne Revival has undergone extensive renovation, but its dominant gable and angled two-storey bay help to identify its architectural heritage. Bauer was a member of City Council in 1892, and purchased the building lot from the Windsor Building and Land Co. The current owner has stated that, in 1902, the house was moved to this site from land owned by the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel Corporation. It is also referred to as "the Churchill house," after later owners.



**694 The Abner F. Nash house (1895)**

The cone-capped turret, cyclopean stone detail, round-headed windows and ornamental terra cotta insert show the Romanesque influence in this Queen Anne Revival landmark. Nash, who paid \$4,530 in 1895 to S. S. Benjamen for the building, was an employee of a utilities company. It served several social agencies in recent years, and has now been restored and adapted to residential use by Can-Am Urban Native Non-Profit Homes. Designated under Ontario Heritage Act (By-law 12086).

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## 706 The H. B. Taylor house (1913)

Taylor was a land speculator who bought lots for \$1,050 from the Windsor Land and Building Company in 1912. He assumed a mortgage for \$6,000 to build his primary residence. It is Neo-classical, featuring a symmetrical facade with a prominent columned entry porch sheltering the fanlight and sidelights of the paneled door. The dentiled eaves add to the character of the house, which is now a fourplex.



## 718 The David Eagle house (c. 1911)

Twin vernacular, clapboarded houses were built in 1911 for David M. Eagle and Noble A. Bartlet, barrister (#728). This twin has a more authentic appearance having been restored by 1982. Eagle was an educator, alderman, reeve and warden of Essex County and served on numerous boards and associations. By 1929 he had moved to a grander house on California Avenue in Sandwich.



## 719 The Treble-Large house (1895)

A typical Queen Anne Revival house, the site was obtained by C. A. Sullivan for \$2,400 in 1893. It seems that the house was built shortly thereafter, as Elizabeth Treble purchased the property for \$5,000 in 1895. Her daughter, Mrs. Mabel Large, and granddaughters, Mabel and Violet, held the property until 1991. Its current owner has done major restoration and landscape design, giving new life to one of the City's few remaining towered "Queens" and enhancing the picturesque quality of Victoria Avenue. It is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act (By-law 6961).



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**742 The Taylor-Grove house (c. 1895)**

Irving Taylor is credited with having built much of the housing in the City's core. Removal of insulbrick revealed fish scale shingles and wooden clapboard. The current owner is a descendant of the Grove family. The hip-roofed gable is unique on Victoria Avenue. It is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act (By-law 9622).

**759 The Col. E. S. Wigle house**

Hidden deep in the heart of a white brick nursing home on the corner of Elliott Street is the remnant of one of the finest houses in central Windsor - that of Col. E. S. Wigle. Lawyer, mayor, a diocesan lay-chancellor of the Anglican Church, Windsor Boy Scouts founder, Kingsville pioneer, and soldier, he was buried with full military honours in 1947.



**772 The Richard Beasley house (c. 1895)**

This Shingle-style house was owned by Richard Beasley, an accountant with Inland Revenue, who died within a year of moving in, leaving his widow, Margaret, as owner. The ornamental brick chimney, shingled bay and small "eyebrow" window in the roof are Queen Anne Revival features, as are the modified tower ells on the west and south facades.

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## 782 George Copeland house (1895)

The Copelands who owned this house were prominent merchants. Copeland's Bookstore was a Windsor feature for decades, founded in 1874 and expanding to four sites. It carried stationery, gifts and confections. The last store closed in 1992. George's son Lyle was a Buick dealer from 1914 to 1930 and president of the Windsor Automobile Dealers Association. The house shows its Arts & Crafts character in such features as flared gables, wooden brackets and ornamental brickwork in the south chimney.



ELLIOTT STREET WEST CROSSES

## 801 The W. C. Kennedy house (1914)

The former home of the Hon. William Costello Kennedy, P.C., M.P., now a lodging house, features a symmetrical portal with sidelights and tripartite transom, and a dentiled cornice. Kennedy was secretary-treasurer of the Walker Oil & Gas Co., president of the Windsor Gas Co. and the Windsor Chamber of Commerce. In 1921 he rose in Liberal politics to head the Department of Railways & Canals at a time when cross-Canada rail transportation was of great importance. Today, Windsor's W. C. Kennedy Collegiate (a secondary school) on Tecumseh Road stands as a memorial to this prominent personality. The Kennedy house, however, has had a less happy fate, having undergone extensive alterations to accommodate a lodging house.



## 803 The Ernest G. Henderson house (c. 1900)

The Arts & Crafts Tudor Revival house exhibits fine workmanship, proportion and detail in its windows, carved verge boards and massing of forms. The massive roofed porch shades pale amber leaded glass with beveled fleur-de-lis. Henderson was a civil engineer from Ireland who came to Canada in 1833 to assist in the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. In Windsor, he supervised the construction of the Windsor Salt Works of which he became president. (Designating By-law 6961).





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## 806 The Clarke-Bowlby house (1896) - "The Poplars"



This unique house with Romanesque characteristics was built for Alfred H. Clarke, M.P.P. He was called to the Ontario Bar in 1882 and left Ottawa for Windsor where he became King's Council in 1902. He was elected to the House of Commons in 1904, sold the house to Andrew D. Bowlby in 1912, and moved to Calgary to serve as judge of the Alberta Supreme Court, Appellate Division, from 1921 to 1942. The Bowlby family retained the property until the last daughter's death in 1988. Bowlby was a merchant, active in civic affairs, who was appointed judge of the Juvenile Court.

The large ginkgo tree in the rear yard survives from the Dougall Nursery, which occupied the site after 1850.

## 824 The Pacaud-Bowlby house (1895) - "The Woodsides"



French language newspaper publisher Gaspard Pacaud built this house where his family remained until 1921. At the age of 26 he was elected M.P.P. for North Essex and became known as Western Ontario's outstanding French-speaking political orator. The picturesque gabled cottage retained most of its wooden detail under the ownership of Margaret Bowlby, whose family owned #806 next door. A blend of Queen Anne, Shingle and Eastlake features enlivens the facade.

## 825 The Frederick Allworth house (c. 1899)



This "four-square" house with Queen Anne detailing was the 1912 residence of the president of the Windsor Truck and Storage Company. Like many of his neighbours, Allworth was a director of

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the Windsor Chamber of Commerce. The house was built by Euclid Jacques, a local contractor who was the first tenant.

## 838 The Kenning-Gow-Wickett house (1906)

James H. Kenning purchased this lot from the Windsor Land & Building Co. in 1904 for \$800. His house features a “Jacobethan” gable on the left, a six-columned wooden porch, a decorative brick chimney, and multi-paned windows. Kenning, born in Hamilton in 1835, came to Windsor in 1887 to serve as a collector of Inland Revenue and inspector of distilleries for the Dominion of Canada. He served as chairperson of the St. Andrew’s Church board of management. James Gow, the second occupant, was an owner of Windsor’s early department store - Bartlet Macdonald & Gow. Thomas and Eleanor Wickett acquired the house in 1954-55.



## 849 The Black-Taylor house (1907)

This well-detailed Edwardian house combines all the desirable features of the period - a rounded bay, flared eaves, a columned porch, and red brick with stone trim. The decorative oval window is an added bonus. James Black, an editor of The Detroit Free Press, occupied the house c. 1907-13. Alfred E. Taylor, the second owner, was manager of the Bank of Commerce.



## 850 The Wallace R. Campbell house (1912-13)

Before moving on to Walkerville in 1926, Campbell resided here and served the Ford Motor Co. as bookkeeper reporting to the founder, Gordon M. McGregor. He became first president of Ford Motor Co. of Canada (1929-1946). During WW II he chaired the War Supply Board of Canada (1939), set up a company blood donor clinic, and welcomed numerous English refugee children into his home. All of this earned him an honour - Commander of the British Empire. His wife, Gladys, also received a C.B.E. for her work with the Canadian Red Cross. The substantial Arts & Crafts house is red brick with stone trim, a Craftsman style wooden porch



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with brackets, and quasi half-timbering over the bay.



## 890 The Major Kenning house (1911)

Edward Campbell Kenning, Q.C., came to Windsor from Elora as a child in 1887, attended Osgoode Hall Law School, Toronto, and became a partner in the law firm of R. H. Sutherland (see #345 and #677), E. A. Cleary and George M. Grant. He held a commission in the Essex Fusiliers, 241<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Canadian Scottish Borderers, and saw service in WW I in England and France. This foursquare house is notable for its broad, columned porch and central oval window.



## 899 The Capt. W. J. Willoughby house (1912)

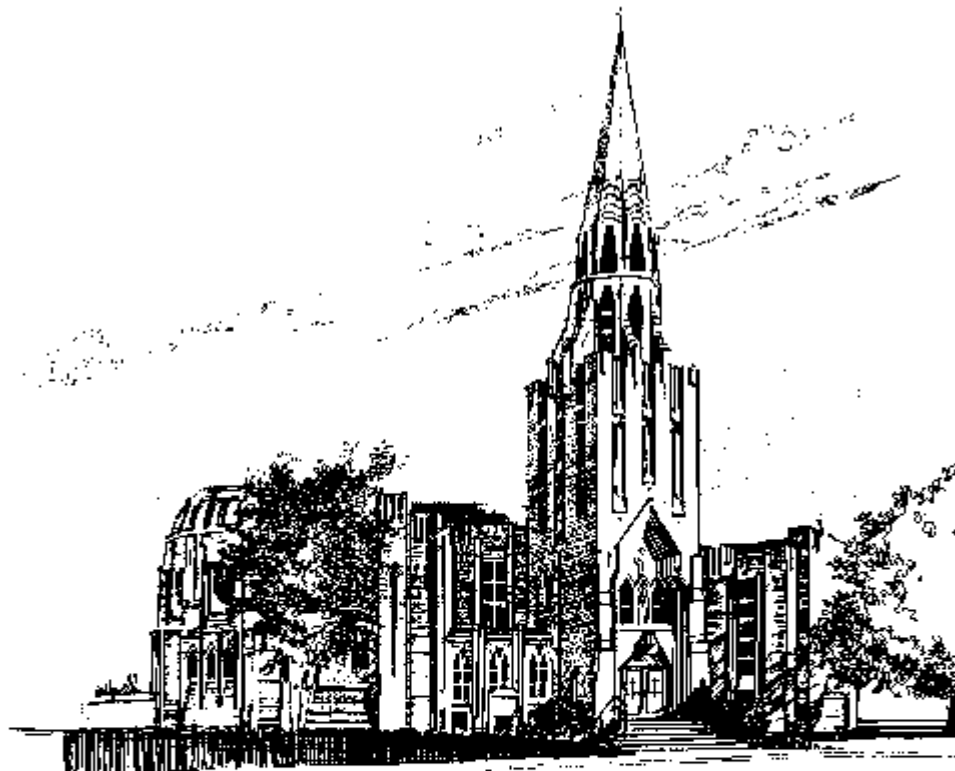
Captain Willoughby lived here in 1921-23. He sold the house to his colonel, Alex Gow, who was second-in-command of the Essex Scottish and Commander of the Tank Regiment. The Essex Scottish Regiment played a major role in the raid on Dieppe in WW II. The Arts & Crafts design features Tudoresque half-timbering, a prominent, gabled porch and an elaborate arched stair-landing window on the north side.



## 916-18 The William Donald McGregor O.B.E. house (1919)

The McGregor family played an important role in Windsor's development. William's father was an M.P. in the Laurier government (1896-1900); his brothers were Gordon, founder of Ford of Canada, and Lt. Col. Walter McGregor. William was a partner of John Duck in the Universal Motors dealership, chaired the Windsor Planning Board, Chamber of Commerce and War Finance Committee. His Colonial Revival house has weathered many owners since his death in 1962. It is designated under the Ontario Heritage Act (By-Law 89-2000).

*ERIE STREET WEST CROSSES*



## **Windsor Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee**

Windsor's Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee - known by its acronym "W.A.C.A.C." - is an advisory body to City Council on matters pertaining to heritage properties in the City of Windsor. The members are appointed by Council annually at the end of the calendar year.

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