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1. Early Settlement Area Map

Before Europeans arrived, the land along the Detroit River was referred to as Wawiiatanong by the Indigenous populations. The area surrounding it is the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy—Ojibwe/Chippewa, Potawotami, and Odawa (Ottawa). Many other Indigenous groups have called this area home such as, the Huron (Wyandot), and the Attawandaron (Neutral). Click for more information on the History of Sandwich.

2. Assumption Park

East of Huron Church Road, between Riverside Drive West and University Avenue West
Individually Designated since 1991

Cadillac founded Detroit in 1701 for the purposes of fur trade and invited several First Nation tribes to come and make their abodes near Fort Ponchartrain du Detroit. Among these tribes was the remnant of the Hurons and the Wyandottes whose ancestors have been Christianised by the Jesuits in Huronia. The Mission of Our Lady of the Assumption Among the Hurons was established by the Roman Catholic Church at Detroit in 1728. The church then moved to Bois Blanc (“Bob-Lo”) Island (1742) and later “la Pointe de Montréal du Détroit,” to the present day site in 1748. The mission became the Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption in 1767. If you look towards the riverfront, you will see Assumption park, which marks the location of the church, rectory and graveyard built by the Jesuits in 1748.
3. Assumption Church

350 Huron Church Road at University Avenue West
Individually Designated since 1978

The present-day church is the fourth building to serve the parish, built on land donated by the Huron nation, and opened its bronzed doors in 1845 to serve both First Nations Peoples and the growing population of European settlers. Designed by Detroit architect Robert Thomas Elliot, the church was built in the Gothic Revival style. Noteworthy architectural features include buttresses, turrets and a spire. The interior boasts a beautiful pulpit and wooden sculpture, both hand-carved by Huron artisans. Brilliant stained glass windows, carved angels on the ceiling and other richly ornate details are evident throughout. The Rosary Chapel, attached to the west side, was built in 1907. Assumption remains Ontario’s oldest Roman Catholic parish.

4. Assumption College

400 Huron Church Road
Listed on the Municipal Heritage Register

Assumption College was the early predecessor of the University of Windsor. Established by Jesuit missionaries in 1857 as a high school for boys and a college for young men, this Gothic Revival heritage building compliments the architectural features seen in Our Lady of Assumption Church. The original building, located to the south, served as barracks during the threat of Fenian Raids in 1866. This part was demolished in 1965. The current buildings are from 1884 and 1908. Responsibility for the school passed from the Jesuits to the Basilian Fathers in 1870. Women were admitted as students beginning in 1950. The College became Assumption University in 1953. It is the oldest institution of higher education west of Toronto and was first secondary school for boys in Southern Ontario.
5. Dillon Hall

University of Windsor Main Campus
Listed on the Municipal Heritage Register
Directions: Turn left from Assumption College and walk through the parking lot. Dillon Hall will be the second building to your left.

Built as Assumption High School in 1928, it was also used for college classes as Assumption College’s Arts Building. This and nearby buildings became the original campus of the University of Windsor in 1963. The building is now referred to as Dillon Hall, after Rev. Daniel Dillon, C.S.B., president of Assumption from 1922-28. This Gothic Revival style structure was designed by architect Albert Lothian. Today it is a University of Windsor lecture hall.

6. Assumption Cemetery

Wyandotte Street West at Huron Church Road
Listed on the Municipal Heritage Register

This graveyard is the final resting place for many of the original European settlers, including the Baby, McKee and Robinet families, who were instrumental in shaping the development of Sandwich. The cemetery includes a plot for the Basilian Fathers who served in Assumption Church and College. A statue of Jesus on the cross - entitled Calvary - was erected at the centre of the cemetery in 1909. The burial ground was originally located on the shore of the Detroit River in what is now Assumption Park, and was later moved to its present site in 1859 by Bishop Pinsonneault.
7. Ambassador Bridge

Listed on the Municipal Heritage Register

Directions: Cross the intersection at Wyandotte to the west side of Huron Church Road

The Ambassador Bridge opened in 1929, a vital trade link between Canada and the United States. The engineering marvel was made possible by the use of cantilever trusses as the main pillars. Suspension cables, high over the Detroit River, supported the centre span. The 2,286-metre (7,500-foot) long span was designed in a tasteful mix of Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles with a liberal application of Gothic cues. It is currently the busiest trade-related North American border crossing.

8. Sandwich Heritage Conservation District

Directions: Continue north on Huron Church Road then turn left onto Donnelly Street

The Sandwich HCD was created to help preserve, protect and enhance the heritage attributes of Sandwich, to provide a touchstone to the past, and offer stability for the present as well as create opportunities for the future. This point is the southeastern boundary of the Sandwich HCD. The rest of the HCD Boundary is depicted on the Map in the red dotted outline. The HCD Plan came to effect on October 19, 2012. Click for more information on the Sandwich Heritage Conservation District Plan.
9. Residential Neighbourhood in Sandwich HCD

Peter Street and Rosedale Avenue

Directions: Continue on Donnelly then turn right onto Rosedale Avenue

This residential area of Rosedale Avenue, Peter Street, Alexander Avenue and Indian Road is the largest concentration of well-preserved 1920s era housing in all of Sandwich, when the Town achieved the height of its existence as a separate municipality. Many of the buildings exhibit Tudor influences in their roof forms, timber detailing, brick exteriors, and window and door style and placement. Also within this area are numerous four-square houses, with both frame and brick exteriors; these are two and a half storeys, with broad porches, double-hung windows and dormers.

10. McKee House - Casa Grande

3020 Sandwich Street

Designated as part of the Sandwich HCD

William Johnson McKee built this mansion for his wife, Mary Baby. The home dates from 1907. It features lead glass windows, twin gables, decorative brackets and and the half-timbering characteristic of the Tudor Revival style. A successful lumber merchant, McKee also had an active political career and served the riding of Essex North from 1894 to 1902 as a Liberal Member of Provincial Parliament at Queen’s Park in Toronto. William and Mary died a week apart in 1929. Because they had no heirs, Casa Grande was inherited by The Sisters of St. Joseph - an order of nurses - who converted the stately residence into a nunnery. William was a direct descendent of Col. Alexander McKee, an Indian agent at Pittsburgh prior to the American Revolution.
This modest Ontario Cottage, with its sharply pitched nun’s coif gable, dates from 1856. It was the home of Captain Pierre Marentette. As the town’s blacksmith, he was in charge of shackling prisoners at the county jail. A military man, he served in the Battle of Windsor in 1838 and shot the rebel flag bearer, for which he was offered a $25 gold reward by James Dougall. Marentette reportedly declined, saying “I am not fighting for money, I am fighting for my country.” Marentette was elected to the first Sandwich Town Council in 1858.

As early as 1640, Jesuit missionaries, French explorers such as Etienne Brulé, and voyageurs from Montreal were settling around the Detroit river. In 1701, Lord Cadillac and his soldiers planted the fleur-de-lis north of the river, declared the territory for France and built Fort Pontchartrain du Détroit (Detroit). The Windsor area is the oldest site of continuous development in Ontario. The area known as Petite Côte (present day LaSalle), was divided into narrow, undeveloped farms granted to 27 or 28 French families in 1749. Additional lots were laid out in 1751 to present-day Windsor, including the Huron Mission at la Pointe de Montréal (where the Ambassador Bridge now stands). France governed the settlements on both sides of the water until The Seven Years War when Britain defeated France in 1763. When British troops captured Fort Detroit in 1760, about 300 French settlers were living on the south side of the river.
Built circa 1806, this Georgian building was first owned by James McGregor and served as a storehouse for the Hudson Bay fur company. Commandeered by both sides in the War of 1812, prisoners of war were held in the basement, chained to hand-hewn oak ceiling beams. The house is one of only two buildings not burnt to the ground when General Harrison ordered his soldiers to torch Sandwich as they retreated in 1813, making it one of the oldest remaining homes in the area. It served as officers’ quarters during the Rebellion of 1837-38. The fireplace design is French-Canadian architecture and is unique in this area. Each chimney works independently to heat a separate half of the house. John Cowan, who purchased the house in the 1830s, published the town’s first newspaper here, the Canadian Emigrant and Western District Advertiser.

13. McGregor - Cowan House

3115 Sandwich Street
Individually Designated since 1977, and part of the Sandwich HCD

The first Jewish resident of Sandwich Town was fur trader Moses David, who died in 1814. His faith required him to be buried with other Jews. Since there were none, he was buried alone, originally across from the Dominion House Tavern. His gravesite was lost, but when rediscovered in the 1970s his remains were carefully interred in the Shaar Hashomayim Cemetery.

14. Mural: Moses David

3140 Sandwich St.
Located on the north side of the Dominion House Tavern building.
This gracious Georgian Vernacular style landmark first opened its doors for hungry and thirsty folks in 1883. It was a popular stop on the road from Amherstburg to Windsor and points beyond. The original tavern was located across the street and destroyed by fire in 1883, after which the tavern was rebuilt on its present site. The building has undergone several exterior alterations over the years, and lost its graceful veranda in 1945 when the building was raised off its foundation to permit the excavation of a basement. It is the oldest remaining tavern in Essex County and has been owned by a host of prominent area residents including Daniel Marentette, Eugene Breault, John McCarthy, William Boyer and Sidney Walman.

15. Dominion House Tavern
3140 Sandwich Street
Individually Designated since 1993, and part of the Sandwich HCD

This vernacular Georgian Revival cottage features triple brick walls and may be considerably older than its estimated construction date of 1890. The narrow floor plan is executed in the “African shotgun” style. Connected by a straight hallway, the front and back doors are aligned - a shotgun pellet could be fired through one door and straight out the other. Solomon Wigle was a politician and a land speculator from a prominent local family, who likely built the dwelling to be an income property. The cottage is representative of Sandwich’s early streetscape.

16. Solomon Wigle House
3164 Sandwich Street
Individually Designated since 1993, and part of the Sandwich HCD
Sandwich began with the Mission of Our Lady of the Assumption Among the Hurons. Years after the American Revolution, the Jay Treaty gave Detroit to the United States in 1796. British authority and Loyalists moved south of the river and Sandwich became the Legislative Seat of Government of the Western District of Upper Canada (Ontario). Peter Russell bought 1078 acres of land from the Hurons for £300. The Town of Sandwich was laid in a three-street grid parallel to the Detroit River. Each one-acre lot provided sufficient space for a home, outbuildings, garden, horses and livestock. Russell named the main streets after himself and his English homestead, Bedford (now Sandwich St.). Four corner lots of Brock and Bedford were set aside for the courthouse and jail, St. John’s Anglican Church, a school and a public meeting house. These institutions constituted the Four Corners of Freedom, rights guaranteed by the Crown to every Canadian.

17. James McKee House
3165 Sandwich Street
Designated as part of the Sandwich HCD

James McKee built this Georgian brick home in 1875. A saddle maker by trade, his shop faced the street and the McKee family lived in the back of the house. McKee came from a family of politicians including his grandfather, Col. Alex McKee and his nephew William McKee. He served as Reeve (Mayor) of Sandwich for over twenty years. The original structure has been obscured by the addition of a modern storefront.

18. Mural: The Founding of Sandwich
3190 Sandwich St.
Located on the north side of the building
In the early 1800s, the farmland along the Detroit River was dotted with many wind-powered gristmills. Although built in 1992, this replica is true to the original plans that James Baby used at this location in 1796. When General Hull captured Sandwich in 1812, he ordered the miller Hypolite Lassaline to grind grain exclusively for the United States Army. This proved quite profitable for Lassaline. It is believed that eighteen of these mills existed in Windsor.

19. Freemason’s Monument
Corner of Mill and Sandwich Streets
South side of 3190 Sandwich St

Located in the flowerbeds, this pink granite monument commemorates the 1850 founding of the Rose Lodge No. 30 in Sandwich. The lodge became inactive in 1858.

20. The Windmill
Corner of Russell and Mill Streets
Built in 1798 for fur-trader Alexander Duff for his residence and business, this is the oldest building in Sandwich. Duff sold the property to James Baby in 1807. During the War of 1812, the house was requisitioned as military headquarters by both sides. The house is one of two not burned to the ground during Harrison’s final retreat. Baby was a colonel in the war, served on the Executive and Legislative Councils of Upper Canada (Ontario), and was Inspector General at York (Toronto). His son Charles, Mayor of Sandwich, held the property until 1871. Subsequent owners include the van Cleve family and Dr. William Beasley. Today, the house is held in trust by the Ontario Heritage Foundation. 1995 restorations returned the house to its Georgian appearance post War of 1812. Archaeologists have discovered more than 75,000 historical artefacts on the site.

22. Perry-Breault House
245 Mill Street
Individually Designated since 1999, and part of the Sandwich HCD

This Queen Anne style cottage was built c.1895 as a summer residence for the Perry family, who owned the Duff-Baby Mansion at the time. In 1907, it was purchased by Eugene Breault, a hotelier, who served Sandwich as mayor and as a police magistrate among other positions. He owned the Dominion House Tavern (1902-06) and the E. Breault Coal and Wood Co. (1907-1921), before going into the insurance business. The decorative gingerbread work seen in the gable, the columned veranda and the bay window are all hallmarks of the Queen Anne style.
23. Jules Robinet Winery
3204 Sandwich St.
Individually Designated since 1988, and part of the Sandwich HCD

The Robinet family were winemakers in France for centuries when Pierre and his son Jules moved to Sandwich in 1880. They partnered with Ernest Giradot, establishing The Giradot Wine Company Limited in 1893. Their vast Concordia Vineyards stretched beyond Mill and Felix Streets. This building originally known as the St. Antoine Block (built 1895), included a spacious cellar with a 22,300-litre wine vat. Jules, an entrepreneur, used bricks from his own brickwork still visible on the first floor facade. The first floor housed a grocery store, and second and third floor were posh apartments. Robinet sold his winery in 1935. The building retains most of its architectural details, except the triangular pediment bearing the name St. Antoine de Padua. Despite alterations, the building remains a good example of typical 19th century commercial buildings.

24. Mural: Simon Girty
South side of 3195 Sandwich St. Building

This mural is a tribute to Simon Girty, a frontier legend and agent with the British Indian Department, whose fame or infamy depended on whether one was British or American. Raised by natives, he was a gifted linguist and a trained interpreter fluent in eleven native languages. A Loyalist, Girty joined the British Indian Department in Detroit during the American Revolution. Due to his knowledge and influence with the Natives, he was painted as a renegade by the Americans. For years, Girty worked with Natives as an interpreter, negotiator and advisor on behalf of the British military. He is also credited with saving the lives of many American prisoners captured by the natives. When the British lost control of Detroit in 1796, Girty settled near Amherstburg, Ontario, on land given him by the British government for his loyalty. Even then a $1,000 American bounty remained on his head. He resided there until his death.
During the Rebellion of 1837-8, a group of both Americans and Canadians calling themselves “Patriots” lead a militia campaign with the aim of extending American-style government to Southern Ontario. This mural depicts the Battle of Windsor, in which a group of about 140 Americans and Canadians invaded from Detroit and captured Windsor. They were defeated by a force of 130 militiamen, Commanded by Colonel John Prince of Sandwich. Following the battle, five prisoners were executed by order of Colonel Prince, which caused violent controversy in both Canada and the United States. The Colonel was eventually acquitted of the charges.

26. Mural: The Battle of Windsor

South side of building at 3199 Sandwich St
27. Sandwich Post Office

3201 Sandwich Street
Individually Designated since 1988, and part of the Sandwich HCD

In the 19th Century, post office buildings were powerful symbols of the Dominion Government, and played a vital role in the community and operations of a district town. The Sandwich post office operated first from William Hands’s home through a sentry box, and later at John Spiers’ general store. Designed by David Ewart (chief architect of the Federal Department of Public Works), this 1905 building plan was executed many times across Canada. Aside from the first floor post office, the second storey served as offices for Inland Revenue and Customs, while the third was the Postmaster’s home. The bricks on the building reportedly came from Jules Robinet’s brickyard and the Victorian fountain is a replica of one donated in 1909 by former resident William Leech. The post office was closed in 2013 and was remodelled as a cafe in 2016.

28. Langlois House

351 Mill Street
Individually Designated since 1998, and part of the Sandwich HCD

This 1840 single family home is named after the Langlois family, who lived in the house for over seventy years. Arthur Langlois, the local fire chief, rang the bell in the tower of the Fire Hall next door to alert the volunteer fire brigade. His daughter Catherine had a dressmaking shop on the premises for 20 years. Some alterations have been made, but the “fish-scale” shingles are one of several original features on this Queen Anne style clapboard house.
George W. Mason was a wealthy Quaker merchant born in Indiana, who immigrated to Sandwich during the American Civil War in the 1860s. The successful businessman was elected Mayor of Sandwich in 1892. His sons Willis and Clarence both served as Mayors as well, in 1888-9 and 1903-6 respectively. Willis, elected at the age of 26, was known as the “Kid Mayor” of Sandwich. Built around 1878, the home is distinguished by its ornately detailed facade, an excellent example of Victorian Italianate style. It remains largely unchanged since its construction in c.1879, and retains original cast iron fencing along Peter and Mill Streets. In 1895, the home was purchased by merchant Francis Girardot. Francis belonged to a prominent Sandwich family and was the son of Theodale Girardot, an educator and mayor of Sandwich from 1873-77.
31. Mural: A Healthy Community
South side of building at 3235 Sandwich Street

This mural depicts the stories behind sickness and healthcare in the early Sandwich community.

32. Mural: Black Historical Figures & Events
South side of building at 3242 Sandwich Street

This mural depicts historical leaders in the African-Canadian community and their accomplishments, many of them from the Windsor area. One prominent figure is Mary Shadd, who was born to free parents in Delaware and settled in Windsor, where she opened an integrated school. She later went on to become the first black woman in North America to publish a newspaper - the Provincial Freeman. The mural also includes Henry Bibb, who came to Sandwich as a refugee of slavery. He and his wife Mary are honoured by a historical plaque beside Mackenzie Hall. The couple were active members of Sandwich’s African Canadian community, where they established an abolitionist newspaper, the Voice of the Fugitive. They fought discrimination by establishing their own schools for black children and adults.
33. Sandwich Town Hall

3255 Sandwich Street

Designated as part of the Sandwich HCD

Designed in 1911 by the highly regarded architectural firm C. Howard Crane and James Pennington, this red brick, two-storey building also housed the constabulary and the public library. The Georgian Style Town Hall represents a typical government building of the period. Notable architectural features include a portico with columns; a front door with sidelights and a glass transom; and ornamental brickwork above the windows. Interior reminders of the building’s past include thick treasury walls and a jail cell that now serves as a storage closet.

34. Mural: Queen Victoria’s 35th Birthday

Mackenzie Hall Park, towards rear east end

This trio of murals depicts the 1855 laying of the courthouse cornerstone, a reception held on the Queen’s Birthday, and the beginnings of construction. A depiction of the third courthouse is seen in the background.
The Essex County Court House located here from 1796-1963. In 1796, the British government moved to Sandwich from Detroit and reserved this lot as one of four for civic and government uses. The first and second courthouse burned in 1797 and the War of 1812 respectively. The third was constructed in 1820. This 1855 Tuscan Renaissance Revival and mid-Victorian Classical Revival building was the fourth courthouse, designed by prominent Detroit architect Albert H. Jordan, and constructed by Mackenzie Builders. Alexander Mackenzie, head of the firm, later became Canada’s second Prime Minister. In 1963, the courts moved and the building became Essex County Council’s headquarters until it was abandoned in 1974. The City of Windsor acquired the property in 1982 and reopened it as a community cultural centre in 1985.

Detroit architect William Gordon Lloyd, internationally renowned for his churches, designed the original three bay portion of the former Essex County Registry Office in 1879. An addition in the 1920s, designed by Sheppard & Masson, tripled its size. The one-storey building’s smooth dressed stone, recessed panels and arcading are typical of the Romanesque Revival style. The building was originally part of a complex consisting of the Courthouse, Gaol and Treasurer’s Office, and the blind circular pediments contained the words “County Registry Office.” Its design is unique, as it was not built according to Ontario Government plans, as was standard at the time. This building was last used as an office for the neighbouring Windsor/Essex County Jail.
37. Essex County Jail
378 Brock Street
Designated as part of the Sandwich HCD

Traditionally, jails were housed within the town’s courthouse. The first jail in the area was housed in an old storehouse on the Mackenzie Hall site in 1797. That year, the building was destroyed by a fire and a ship on the river served as a temporary jail. The second courthouse was burned by American troops during the War of 1812. A third jail and courthouse were completed in 1820, and a fourth during the construction of Mackenzie Hall. Through the 19th century, murderers, horse and sheep thieves were hung in public. The last public hanging in Canada took place in 1902 in what is now the Mackenzie Hall parking lot. The present building was built in 1925. Designed by Nichols, Sheppard & Masson architects, it includes massive 20-foot cement walls. The jail was closed by the provincial government in 2014.

38. St. John’s Anglican Church
3305 Sandwich Street
Individually Designated since 2004, and part of the Sandwich HCD

This church is the third on site since 1806, one of the four corner lots from Sandwich and Brock streets reserved for church and government. The church was built to serve the needs of the many non-Catholic Loyalists settling in Sandwich following the American Revolution. Richard Pollard, the first Anglican minister of Sandwich, held meetings in the courthouse before the church was built. American General William Henry Harrison used the church as a horse stable during the occupation of Sandwich Town, and then burnt it to the ground as he and his troops retreated to Detroit in 1813. In 1819, General Harrison made amends by sending materials to assist in building a new church. Additions and a tower were made to the building in 1843 and 1852 in Norman architectural Style. In 1871, the rear portion of the church was rebuilt in the Gothic Revival style.
39. St John’s Cemetery

3305 Sandwich Street

Individually Designated since 2004, and part of the Sandwich HCD

Like Assumption Cemetery, the headstones in this graveyard are a literal “Who’s Who” in Sandwich history. It is one of the oldest graveyards in the area. Visible tombstones date back to 1793 century, but burials likely took place for years before. They bear the names of prominent pioneers, escaped slaves from the United States, and veterans of the War of 1812; the Askin, Forester, Laughton, Hands, Spiers and Mason families, all influential in shaping Sandwich town, are present. Two very prominent gravesites are those of Reverend Pollard, who founded St. John’s Parish and Dr. John James Hume, who was brutally murdered by the invading Americans in the Battle of Windsor (Rebellion of 1837-8). Executed criminals were once interred in a Potter’s field adjacent to the original cemetery.

40. General Brock School

3312 Sandwich Street

Designated as part of the Sandwich HCD

This property was one of four established as a government reserve when the Town of Sandwich was founded in 1796, and has been used as a school since 1808. As the Western District Grammar School, it served as a barracks during the War of 1812 and again during the Upper Canada Rebellion. In 1868, the old stone building was demolished and a new one built on its foundation. In 1915, a third new school was named after Major General Sir Isaac Brock, a British military hero of the War of 1812. A major archaeological dig was undertaken on the property in 1998 prior to the construction of the existing 1999 school building.
41. J.H. Bishop Fur Company
3330 Sandwich Street
Designated as part of the Sandwich HCD

This modest two-storey, red brick building dates from the 1890s. It was the Canadian office for the J.H. Bishop Fur Company, an American furrier based in Wyandotte, Michigan. The company was known for its high quality fur coats. World War One forced the company to shut its doors forever. This building was part of a building complex that included warehouses on Russell Street. Although its appearance has been significantly altered, the cornice and flat-arched windows along the side of the building can still be seen.

42. Bedford United Church
3340 Sandwich Street
Individually Designated since 2007

Erected in 1906, this red brick Gothic Revival church was the second Methodist church built in Sandwich. The design includes rusticated masonry and a Romanesque tower. The first church - on Mill Street - was sold to the Town of Sandwich and used for several years as a council chamber and fire hall. During the years that Ontario was a dry province, the Reverend Leslie Spracklin pastored the church. Deputized to enforce alcohol abstinence laws, he shot and killed Beverly “Babe” Trumble, the owner of a well known blind pig nearby. In the spring of 1920 Spracklin was acquitted of the murder in a sensational trial.
Built in 1918 by Jules Robinet for labourers in his brickyard, located directly behind the row houses. 3417 to 3423 Peter Street has been altered more significantly than 3381-89 Peter Street, however both are still excellent examples of basic, functional working class housing.

44. Baby-LaJeunesse House
3402 Sandwich Street
Individually Designated since 1993

Built on land granted to Baptiste Baby by the Crown in 1801, this modest brick home dates from 1855. It was designed in the Georgian Vernacular style and is representative of the town’s early streetscape. It is the alleged birthplace of Sandwich’s first mayor, Edward Boismier, and was owned by the family of noted historian Father Ernest Joseph Lajeunesse from 1905 to 1943. He is best remembered for his 1960 book, The Windsor border region: Canada’s southernmost frontier; a collection of documents.
A Loyalist from Detroit, Reverend Richard Pollard’s Georgian Vernacular two-storey brick house was built in 1850. It is only one room deep and has 33-centimetre (10-inch) thick walls. This home features a rare timber sill foundation laid directly on bare earth. Reverend Pollard was instrumental in establishing Anglican churches on both sides of the Detroit River, including St. John’s Church in Sandwich, the mother church of the Diocese of Michigan. He held services in the log-cabin courthouse for years before becoming ordained, to serve Loyalist and families throughout the whole Western District. He was chaplain to the forces at Fort Malden (now Amherstburg), and served as Sheriff of Essex and Kent; Registrar of Essex and Kent; Registrar of Surrogate Court; Sheriff of the Western District; and Judge of Surrogate Court.

Homer Watkins was a prominent member of Sandwich’s African-Canadian community, a Senior Deacon at the Sandwich First Baptist Church and a direct descendant of the first slave to use Wisconsin’s Underground Railroad to get to Sandwich. He built this clapboard house in 1917. The neighbourhood has been home to four generations of Watkinises. In honour of family’s contributions to the community and church, Lot Street was renamed Watkins Street in 1963.
47. Sandwich First Baptist Church

3652 Peter Street

Individually Designated since 1995, National Historic Site since 1999

This National Historic Site houses the oldest African-Canadian congregation in Windsor. Sandwich was the destination for many freed or fugitive slaves from America, who reached Canada through the Underground Railroad. The original church building was a log structure built in the 1820s by former slaves from the American South. The present building was constructed in 1851 with a mixture of purchased and hand-made bricks made by parishioners using Detroit River clay and homemade kilns. Sometimes bounty hunters would appear at the church, hoping to seize fugitive slaves. The minister faced the front door at all times during services, and when a bounty hunter walked in, the minister would start singing a predetermined hymn. This was code for wanted fugitives to scramble down trap doors at the side of the sanctuary floors to safety.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks and credit to organizations, individuals and staff for the rich resources that made this walking tour possible:

Google Streetview
James C. Mays
Museum Windsor
Neal, Frederick. *The Township of Sandwich, Past and Present*. Record Printing Co., Ltd: Windsor, Ont., 1909. Reprinted 1979 by the Essex County Historical Association and the Windsor Public Library Board

Windsor Public Library