



*Town of South Bruce Peninsula Heritage Committee*

*Opening Doors to the Past*

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Designed by Lauren White for SBP Heritage



# *Warton Heritage Walking Tour*



**Warton High School Lantern-  
Octagonal Tower & Weather Vane**

## *A Bit about Wiarthon...*

The Town of Wiarthon was named after Wiarthon Place, near Maidstone Kent, England; birthplace of Sir Edmund Walker Head, who was Governor General of Canada in 1857, when the original land survey was done. Gould Street developed as the main street; a hotel built and operated by B.B. Miller located at the SE corner of Gould and Division in 1866 was followed by other businesses. The NE corner of Gould and Division was Dinsmore's Store, SW corner was Doupes Hardware, Gould between George and William was Greenlees General Store and on the SW corner of Gould and George was Paterson's Drug Store to name a few.

The first wharf was built in 1868. Mills started up and commerce began to boom with business relocating down to Berford Street leaving Gould Street to become strictly residential. The first train arrived in town November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1881, opening a much larger market for industry and tourism. The resulting growth allowed for the incorporation of this village with a population 400+ in 1880, to a town in 1894 population 2000+. By 1891 telephone service was established in Wiarthon, just 13 years after the first exchange in the British Empire was opened.



The Wiarthon Gates, exiting, circa 1942.

## *Let's tour through history...*

**Blewater Park** on Colpoy's Bay was founded by the Wiarthon Women's Institute in 1921. In those days, the park had cabins, bathhouses and a bandshell. Originally these lands were the marshalling yards for lumber companies, boat builders, a grain elevator and the railway, that moved these goods to the rest of Southwestern Ontario. Today this is the heart of Wiarthon with a pool, tennis courts, ball diamond, picnic area, playground, campground, dock, marina and boat launch.

\* **The Wiarthon Train Station** was closed in 1960 and moved from the site of the current Fire Station to the park in 1971. The station, built in 1904 and used by CNR, is a combination of "Chateau" and "Stick" styles, built entirely of wood with Queen Anne towers on the bay side and magnificent coffered tongue and groove ceilings in the interior.

**507 Mary St.** - This substantial Victorian dwelling of local red and buff brick with variegated quoins and lintels was built but not finished. John Limpert an employee of The Wiarthon Furniture Factory bought and finished the house. The double hung windows have been replaced, but note the front French doors and transom. The high cut limestone foundation under the main part of the house would have been hidden by a verandah. Note the deep eaves supported by well formed brackets. The chimneys have been removed.

**Frank St. – Frank St. Baptist Church** – The Wiarthon Baptist Church was organized in 1881, the following summer the first building for worship was erected and dedicated. By 1900, the growing membership decided to construct a larger more modern building on the same site. The old building was moved to the rear of the new structure, dismantled and as much as possible used in the basement of the new building. The almost ground level basement of cut stone has 11 ft. ceilings, the superstructure is of brick, built to seat 400 with gallery seating for 150. The new building was opened Oct. 17, 1901 crowded to capacity with 550 in attendance for the morning service and 608 at the evening service.

**501 Frank St.** – The original parcel of land under this building was purchased in 1883 by Catherine Campbell (per Sir Alexander Campbell, one of the Fathers of Confederation; while Minister of Justice/Attorney General of Canada). The lot was then sold again before Thomas and Agnes Hurst bought it and built a five room wooden home and carriage house. Hurst was a wealthy lumber merchant and carriage maker, who partnered with many new businesses in the area. In 1901 he was listed in the top 5 income earners of North Bruce County. The property was resold to David and Caroline Wright who acquired an additional 50ft. of land and built the present Edwardian, "Georgian Revival" home in 1903 most likely incorporating the original five room wooden building into it as indicated by the roof lines and attic space. Built of Scottish faced brick with wide deep verandah and hipped dormer at front center, the elegant interior features a massive oak staircase and original fireplace with overmantel. The radiators, original to the house have bleeder valves on each segment of rad ( a rare and unusual feature.)

**448 Frank St.** – This Queen Anne Composite vernacular cottage circa 1885-95 was occupied for many years by the Ramsay family. Mr. Ramsay, always impeccably dressed, worked as a tailor for James Symon and Sons store. This house features a most interesting roof line including a pyramidal tower cap with finial. Note the fish scale shingle covering the upper half storey walls and squared tower. The carport and covered porch balance the structure, but have lost their upper and lower railings. A most decorative building!

**737 Frank St.** – "Glenmount" – This grand Romanesque Villa was built circa 1903 by John and "Lil" Jones, owners of the Arlington Hotel. Built from concrete blocks cast on site from aggregate found there, this home features Queen Anne gable ends and a splendid second storey porch above the east bay window. The windows of the 46 foot tower illuminate the interior staircase through a series of ellipses. The centre of the building is supported by five grand arches.

**533 Brown St.** – This was the family home of James Flett for many years. James came to Wiarton from Walkerton in 1881. He was a carriage maker, blacksmith and agricultural implement dealer. This otherwise unremarkable modest dwelling features a spectacular Victorian gingerbread spindle and spool porch and a pierced work soffit above the bay window.

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**517 Brown St.** – The Woolen Mill (carding and knitting). This large industrial building was built in 1903 to replace a smaller building on the site dating from 1879. This three storey limestone building features finely cut stone lintels and sills, enormous flush quoins at the corners and windows that are textbook examples of double hung 12 over 12 wooden industrial. This is the last mill in Wiarton being used for industrial purposes. It presently houses Barfoot's Machine Shop.

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**441 Brown St.** – St. Peter's Lutheran Church – The official organization of St. Peter's took place in 1889, the congregation secured their first building in 1892 by purchasing the Congregational Church on William St. In the same year two lots were purchased on Brown St. for a future parsonage and church building. In April of 1918 the church burned down and the lot on William was sold. August 8, 1923 the corner stone was laid for the new church on Brown St. This Romanesque Revival Chapel was built on rusticated limestone blocks taken from the quarries on the Oliphant Rd. It features shallow stepped buttresses at the sides and on the wind porch façade. Note the three gothic lancet windows in the front gable end. Woodworking skills of the early members are evident in the detailed interior.

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**430-440 Brown St.** - These three attractive, almost identical Aesthetic style red faced brick homes were built and occupied by furniture craftsman at one of the local factories. #436 features lattice work in top dormer, fancy work in the gable ends and front porch; all Anglo-Japanese Eastlake elements. Note saw tooth lintel edging on triple window and the star window.

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**418 Brown St.** – This handsome buff brick worker's cottage circa 1880-95 features an ample hipped roof, prominent quoins at corners and a center porch with Doric columns.

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**403 Brown St.** – The Christian Hill House 1904. Christian Hill founded The Hill Chair C. in 1896. This company was so successful that by 1898 the factory was expanded to keep up to the production of 100,000 chairs per year, of elm, beech and oak, providing 50 workers year round employment. This buff brick Queen Anne features two storey bays with fan shaped spandrels set under deep gable ends. The front center gable is set with demi-lune stained glass panel at main floor with two coloured glass edged transoms at 45 degree side windows. Circular porthole window is set at the first floor landing of the stairs. The inside trim shows the skill of the builders. Considerable changes were made when Percy George purchased the house in 1958 and converted it to The George Funeral Home; although there have been several owners since, this immaculate home still operates as such today.

\* **776 Bayview** – This home along with a saw mill were built by Charles Cooper Jones around 1870, Charles sold the home to his brother Arthur Jones and moved up the Niagara escarpment. Between 1929 and 1979 a boarding house called The Anchor Inn operated here, run by Myrtle Langford, attracting summer visitors from as far away as New York City, Detroit and Montreal. This stone house, faced in mortar incised to resemble Ashlar still retains many of its original features.

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**699 Berford St.** – This four storey structure built of local limestone was erected in 1902 by Charles Reckin, a German immigrant involved in several business enterprises. "Wiarion's New Mill", built to replace a previous grist mill to the east that burned down in 1900, was said to be one of the finest and best equipped grist and flour roller mills in the province. This building was used up to 1985 as a feed mill at which time it was converted to other commercial uses.

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\* **659 Berford St.** – The "Arlington Hotel" was built by H. Charlton in 1888 and was the largest of seven hotels located in Wiarton. It originally featured a two storey Greek Revival porch, the pillars of which came to the outer edge of the sidewalk.

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\* **624 Berford St.** – The "Pacific Hotel" built in 1882. It is the last remaining of Wiarton's hotels and always featured businesses in its street façade. The previous to present owner restored its upper Victorian porch in 1985.

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**619 Berford St (621)** – Built by James Paterson, pharmacist, in 1890 with offices on the main floor and basement, with apartments above. This building housed the Union Bank from 1892 – 1924; then the Royal Bank until it moved to its present location in 1942.

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**The Cenotaph Memorial** beside the Royal Bank was established in the 1920's in recognition and honor of those who served in the armed forces. It is maintained by the Wiarton branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

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**577 Berford St.** – The Royal Bank Building. This outstanding structure has been the home of the Royal Bank since 1942, but was originally constructed by the Bank of Commerce in 1902. This building has a high foundation of local rough finished cut limestone, a generous entablature supported by four finely finished limestone pilasters capped with Corinthian capitals. The high deep tympanum above the door is supported by two full and two half squared columns. Note the dentil moldings all around and the acanthus leaf cornice.

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\* **Wiarion's downtown** shopping area buildings reflect the Victorian era when many of the stores were built. Notice the decorative brickwork and the use of local limestone. The arched alleyway was used by horse-carts on delivery.

\* **528 Berford St.** – St. John’s United Church was built by the Methodist Church in 1889 and became the United Church in 1925. Three windows serve as memorials to Dr. R.M. Fisher, J.P. Newman, A.G. Seaman also a footstone at the door with B. Wilson’s name on it, all members of the Trustee Board responsible for the construction of the building. Note: a water pump supplied power to operate the bellows of the pipe organ so it would not have to be pumped by hand. When low water pressure was a problem – boy power was used! The pump was replaced in 1928 by electricity. Also note the decorative curbing on top of the gable of the Berford St. façade.

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**543 Berford St.** – The Warton Post Office (N0H 2T0). The first post office was established in 1869 and occupied several locations before being permanently located at this site. This handsome limestone Beaux-Arts building was constructed in 1926-27 by J.S. Cook and was officially opened by Feb. 3, 1927 by Hon. James Malcolm, Minister of Trade and Commerce.

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**499 Berford St.** – “Greystones” built by Vic Gilpin in 1929. This is an outstanding example of a vernacular one and one half storey limestone building featuring wide shallow dormers, a port-corchere and interior features such as fieldstone fireplace, built-in cabinets and shelves typical of the “Craftsman” era.

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**495 Berford St.** – The Community of Christ Church, formerly Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, was originally located at a mission in Sauble Falls in the late 1890’s. In 1924 the present church building on Berford St. was obtained from the Church of Christ’s Disciples.

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**424 Berford St.** – This home is another wonderful example of local limestone construction. This house is built on the site of the Congregationalist Church. Built into the side of the hill, it features a full basement and garage on the lower level. The main floor includes deep set diamond leaded glass windows, a good example of an Arts and Crafts style bungalow.

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**398 Berford St.** – “The Captain’s House” circa 1887-90. This was the home of Captain J.V. Crawford, his wife and their six children. J.V. Crawford and his brother John T. were the owners of the Crawford Tug Company of Warton, a small freight and passenger line serving Georgian Bay and the North Shore. On Nov. 22, 1906, Capt. J.V. Crawford (51 years old and highly experienced), master of the 125 ft. steamer J.H. Jones, on the final run of the season to Lion’s Head and Manitoulin with 29 people aboard was last seen by the Cape Croker light keeper before disappearing into the rough and stormy evening. The Jones has never been found. This typical late 19<sup>th</sup> century orange brick Ontario cottage, now clad in vinyl siding, originally had two small verandahs flanking the front hall extending up into a deep centre dormer with crosstrees in gable ends. Floors on the main storey are of maple featuring parquetry edges. Note the summer kitchen.

**480 Gould St.** – This early circa 1865 variegated orange and yellow brick square Georgian with pronounced quoins at corners features a brick wind porch with hipped roof on the south façade. A two storey verandah set into ell has been sheathed in cedar shingle, windows and door built in at both levels at a later date (possibly to create a sleeping porch; as it faces south).

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**551 Gould St.** – This Victorian wooden cottage circa 1870-1878 is an example of double tongue and groove, balloon construction and features a wind porch with original windows of patterned glass edged with coloured glass. Note the ornamental window caps – a double scroll and volute with crest.

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**553 Gould St.** – St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church. Services were held in 1875-76 in a nearby school, the first church building at 590 Gould was dedicated August 10, 1879. The present cruciform red brick building with buttresses was built in 1891, with pews to seat 430, at a cost of \$6,265.00. A pipe organ was installed in 1906 at a cost of \$1,500.00, half of which was paid for by the Carnegie Foundation. A fine stained glass window in the east transept behind the organ depicts a busy beehive, other windows are filled with “stock” stained glass anticipating Art Nouveau Style. The church hall with high ceiling is set into the ample rusticated limestone foundation. The interior is set east-west making the sanctuary wider than deep, with the organ set at the center of the east transept, behind the Altar area.

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**554 Gould St.** – St. Thomas Catholic Church was built in 1874 by the Methodists. The Salvation Army used it for some time before it became the Catholic Mission. The small original building is the west end of the renovated building.

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\* **239 William St.** – The former Warton and District High School designated under the Ontario Heritage Act and approved by the Town of South Bruce Peninsula March 27, 2006 is a unique and outstanding example of stone-built public architecture. In mid-Victorian Canada West/ Ontario, great importance was placed on educating the children of immigrant settlers. The design and execution of this building with its triple windows and Romanesque features indicates education as one of the pillars of Empire. These public buildings were intended to show the permanence of the newly created Society. This building evolved from a one room wooden school house on the main street of Warton in 1869, to a two room stone school 1877 at this site. The structure you see (minus some modern additions) was completed in 1891. Note the spectacular lantern dome atop the roof capped with a locally made iron weather vane.

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**411 George St.** – This one and one half storey buff brick circa 1885-95 Queen Anne Composite house with exceptional Aesthetic Movement features; a demi-lune bay on east side set into well defined gable end with window, fretwork panels, brackets and pendant. The front door and window have been altered but still show an interesting use of curved transom and sidelights to create the “Eastern Aesthetic Reveal” of the building.

\* **285 Mary St. (corner of Gould St.)** – “Fairbairn” was built by James Paterson, pharmacist, in 1886 (date marker in the chimney) for his wife Jessie Fairbairn and their children. James came to the area in 1861 at the age of 12 with his father James Gilmore Paterson Sr. a trained chemist and druggist and his mother Margaret a trained midwife whose services were vital in those early days. James took over his father’s business in 1882 and ran it until his death in 1937. His son James F. Paterson then took control of the store until he retired at which time his daughter, Mrs. Ruth Lodge and her husband H.H. Lodge, ran the pharmacy. When the store closed, it had been in the family for four generations and had been in operation for more than 100 years. Three generations of owners of the store, after the founder, graduated from the Ontario College of Pharmacy in Toronto. This two and one half storey (with finished attic) house is of local buff brick with red brick belter courses. It features a three sided verandah with two glazed wind porches. The paired and tripled posts and railings and edging boards reflect the transition from Victorian ornamentation to the more stylized Anglo-Japanese Aesthetic. The interior features grained woodwork and three splendid mantels of cherry and walnut manufactured in the local mills and a library with built in bookcases. Intricate decorative plaster ceiling medallions are still intact in the principal main floor rooms.

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**266 Mary St.** – This red brick house was the boyhood home of William Wilfred Campbell (1861-1918), the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Canadian poet and novelist. Born in Kitchener, Ont., William came to Warton in 1870 where his father, Rev. Thos. S. Campbell, was the first rector of Trinity Anglican Church. William attended school in Warton and went on to teach at Purple Valley and No. 4 Keppel. He married a teacher at the Warton Public School. After leaving the area he was ordained a minister in 1886. His first book of poems was published in 1889 and by 1892 he was working in Ottawa for the civil service in the Records Branch of the Department of the State. A memorial cairn was erected at the north end of Berford St. in 1937 by the Warton Women’s Institute. When the road was reconstructed in the 1960’s the cairn was rebuilt in Bluewater Park .

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**491 Gould St.** – Trinity Anglican Church. The original church sat at the NE corner of Gould and Mary in 1867. The present, cut rusticated limestone, structure on the corner of Frank and Gould was built in 1891 in the Romanesque Revival style. The basement windows are a truncated pointed gothic window originally split into a triforium by two window splines. Note the paired celtic gothic window facing Gould St. in the main storey of the tower. The (east) Altar end of the church features a fine PreRaphaelite stained glass window. The dedicatory window in the south transept is of local (perhaps Southampton) manufacture as is the north transept window. The ceiling vaulting is of bolted bridge and hammer beam construction and is of grained local hemlock & pine. There is an interesting wall safe in the bottom level of the tower that predates the church. The rectory to the north was built in 1916 of cut rusticated limestone and is three stories high on the east side, two stories on the west side and has a number of Aesthetic movement features in its interiors such as stepped, legged staircase and parlour fireplace with built in cupboards. The roof line displays flattened English Cottage gables and a low shallow dormer on the west façade. The house is completed by a stone porch with broad upper deck facing the bay.

**376 Berford St.** – The James Symon House. The Symon family owned and operated a dry goods store on Berford St. The original portion of this house was a wooden two storey structure built about 1870 and as business prospered a much larger red brick Victorian front was added to the wooden house, the kitchen and back bedroom now occupy the oldest portion. This house features two storey bays on the south side and northeast corner supported by fan shaped brackets on 45 degree walls. Note the buff brick window caps, the verandah originally ran across the entire east façade.

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**346 Berford St.** – This Queen Anne Composite style home was built around 1900. It was occupied by the Davis Family from 1920 to the late 1960’s. Captain John Fredrick Davis was a Master with Canada Steamship Line, he piloted the first British ship through the St. Lawrence Seaway to the head of the Great Lakes in 1959. This two and one half storey house is set on a hewn limestone foundation. It is built of red faced brick and features a wide two storey high front bay surmounted by winged eaves brackets and dentilled eaves supporting a deep gable end with paired Queen Anne windows. In the main storey of the bay are three stained glass transoms. There is a square stained glass window set into the wall at the foot of the stairs.

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**321 Berford St.** – This brick home was built at the turn of the century by Mr. John Macauley, manager (1891-1935) and then sole owner of the Dominion Fish House, which was located on the site of the present day Warton Water Treatment Plant. This two and one half storey, imported (from Toronto) red faced brick house features “Old English” treatment on front gable end, broad oak staircase and oak trim throughout. A double drawing room with square grand piano and “office” or sitting room to right of front hall. Note the front porch with deep tympanum and polygonal turret in corner.

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**Berford St. at Elm SE corner** – This house was built by James Gilmore Paterson, originally from Paisley Scotland, in 1882 on land he acquired in 1876. This home was then sold to G.W. Ames, Warton’s first banker, and his wife Mary in 1883 for the sum of \$1500.00. In 1944 the house passed to his daughter Mable Grace, wife of Dr. A.H. Hough, who ran a bed and breakfast for many years. Their son George retired from New York with his wife to “The White House”. It is a vernacular house built mainly of buff brick with a major clapboard addition at rear with a further garage addition at the back. The entire house was covered in clapboard then later clad in aluminum siding.

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\* **394 Gould St.** – “Hillcrest” was built in 1885 by Andrew Charles Kyle a hardware and furnishings merchant. It has been long rumored (but not confirmed) that Kyle gave the house to Gideon Kastner to settle a gambling debt. Kastner, originally a saw mill owner in the area, was instrumental in the construction of wharves and breakwaters throughout Georgian Bay. He managed the Warton Furniture Factory for many years and served in local and county government. This late Victorian house with tall chimneys, two storey corner bay and dormer retains most of its original form with the exception of the verandah lost in the 1960’s but replaced in the 1970’s by the present owner. Built of buff brick and local limestone, this house features its own library.



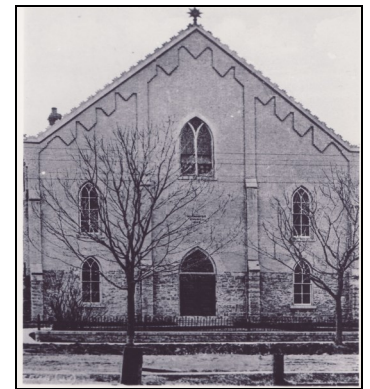
“Fairbairn” House, circa 1886



The Anchor Inn



The Arlington Hotel, circa 1930



St. John’s United Church



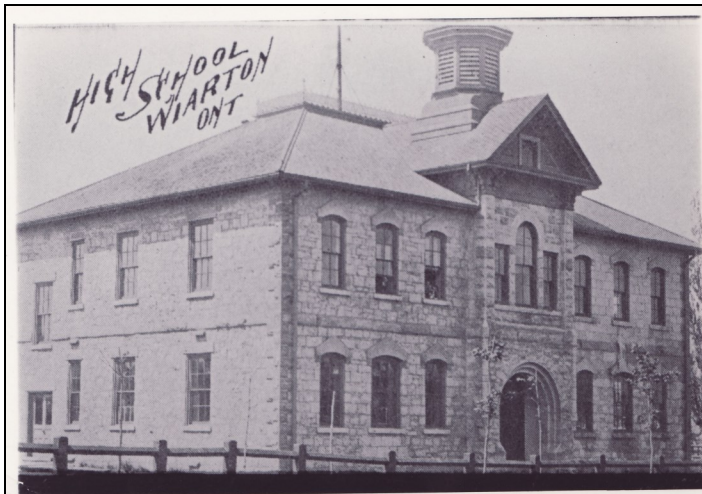
The Pacific Hotel, circa 1885



Early view of Berford St. looking north



The Wiarnton Train Station



The former Wiarnton High School, circa 1912



The “James Symon” House



“Hillcrest”