

## 10. SOUTH ALBION FARMSTEADS

### 10.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

This Candidate area is an *organically evolved rural landscape*, as described in the *Town of Caledon. Criteria for the Identification of Cultural Heritage Landscapes*, extending along Innis Lake Road between Castlederg Sideroad and King Street.

This area appears to represent a typical 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead landscape within the Albion Township portion of the Peel Plain.

### 10.2 INVENTORY

#### 1. Physiographic Description

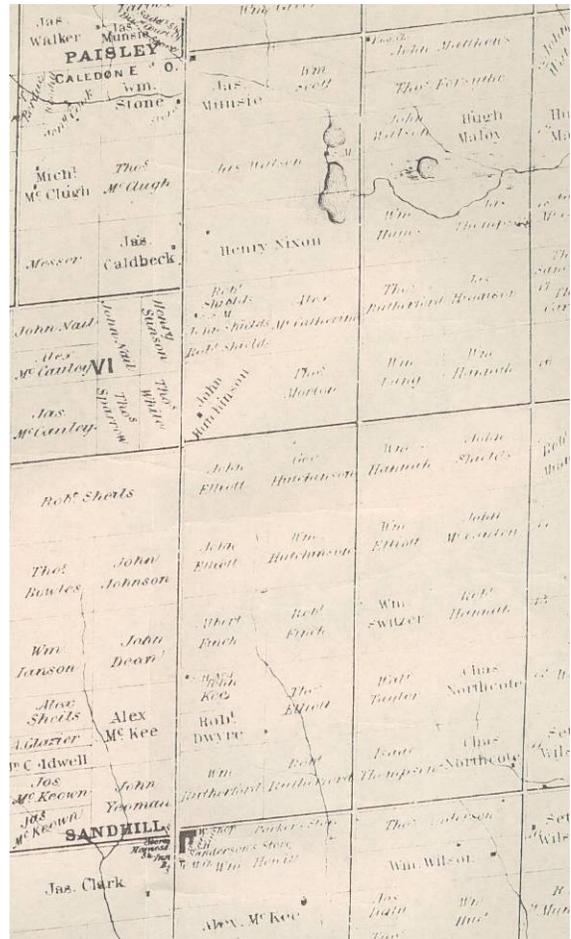
The Candidate area occupies a portion of the Peel Plain. The soils of this area are classified as Class 1, among the best in the Province for the growing of crops. The Peel Plain, an ancient lakebed, is relatively flat though sloping generally toward Lake Ontario. It is composed of till containing large amounts of shale and limestone. In many areas this profile has been modified by a veneer of clay.

This portion of the Peel Plain is drained by the west branch of the Humber River. The area once contained a rich hardwood forest of wide species diversity, but is now treeless except for small woodlots.

#### 2. Processes

##### Land Uses and Activities

Settlement began in the area shortly after the completion of the Township Survey in 1819. The rich soils of the Peel Plain were quickly recognized for their agricultural potential and greatly coveted. The Peel Plain is remarkably flat, relative to the upland character of so much of the Town, and once the land was cleared the farms of those who settled here prospered and expanded. While land clearing was a struggle, the soils were stable, much less susceptible to erosion than the sandy soils to the northeast and able to support a variety of crop types. It was initially wheat farming that brought prosperity to the farmers of the area. Wheat prices skyrocketed in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, pushed by a chain of events which began with the gold rush of 1849 and peaked in 1854-1855 when the crop failed in Europe at the same time as



South Albion Farmsteads,  
Tremaine Map 1859

the Crimean War cut off the supply of Russian wheat. It was with the wealth generated in this period that many of the area farmers built their 'second' homes, most often choosing the combination of red brick with buff brick detailing which is now considered characteristic of the architecture of the area. While some residents built new structures in brick, others bricked over existing frame and log structures.

Beginning in this same period, the signing of the Reciprocity Treaty with the U.S.A. (1854-1865) and the coming of the railway encouraged farmers to diversify, including an increase in livestock. This diversification in turn changed their outbuilding requirements. The modest English two bay hay barn was no longer adequate, in itself leading to the construction either of a second barn or the raising of the existing barn on a stone foundation with livestock at that ground storey and hay in the loft above. Thus it was in this period that the barn became the dominant feature of the Peel Plain landscape.

A hardy variety of Alfalfa known as Ontario variegated was introduced into central Canada in 1871 and became an important crop in Peel County, in part due to its promotion by C.A. Drury, the Minister of Agriculture. Although alfalfa continued (and continues) to be grown, there was a marked decline in production following 1926 when an even hardier strain was developed that could be grown on the Prairies.

This Candidate area was settled by a cohesive group of Primitive Methodists, that Methodist sect which had seceded from the Wesleyan Methodists in 1810 seeking to even more closely emulate the early Christians. Almost all the settlers shown in this area on the Tremaine Map (1859) are buried in Providence Cemetery (NE corner, Lot 13, Con. 1). This cemetery, which formally dates from 1906, appears to have existed as a less formal Methodist burying ground throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was associated with Providence Primitive Methodist Church, which was originally constructed in the nearby hamlet of Sandhill (Airport Road and King Street) as a frame church in 1837. This building was destroyed by fire in 1843. Rebuilt, it was apparently eventually demolished in 1900 and the extant United church built on the site.

Sandhill was a postal village by 1842 and was the market and service center for the immediate area, particularly before the coming of the railway. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century it had three hotels, a saddlery, tailor, doctor, shoemaker and two blacksmiths. A carding mill also was established as sheep raising was quite extensive within the area.

The Toronto Grey and Bruce Railway came through the Candidate area at Lot 13 c.1870, passing very close to the burying ground.

### Patterns of Spatial Organization

The survey of Albion Township was completed by William Chewett in 1819 and was one of the first to be undertaken using the double-front system. In this system the common unit of concession is the half-lot of 100 acres, with each half of the 200 acre lot fronting on a different concession line road. These half lots are almost square. Concessions run essentially north-south. At every five lots there was an allowance for a sideroad.

Within the study area there was little in the way of topography to force modifications on the survey grid. Homes have typically been set well back from the road on a rise.

### 3. Elements

#### Circulation Networks

The surveyed road network was established quite early in this area, particularly King Street, due in part to the early development of Bolton as a milling centre.

#### Boundary Demarcations

The typical boundary fencing currently in use is cedar post and wire, though several key properties have no extant roadside fencing. Providence Cemetery is demarcated with a modern wire fence with metal posts and newel top. However, the gate posts are original cast iron with arched decorative detailing, and the cemetery name included in the arched treatment.

#### Vegetation Related to Land Use

The area is comprised mainly of cleared agricultural land, with a few remnant woodlots remaining internal to the concession, east of Innis Lake Road and in association with the lesser tributaries. A branch of the West Humber River originates in the study area, traversing from the north to the south-east, east of Innis Lake Road. The lesser tributaries remain as drainage swales within the agricultural landscape, west of Innis Lake Road.

There are a few mature windrows, heritage tree-lined laneways and significant trees within the landscaped areas of the heritage properties. There are a limited number of hedgerows marking field and lot boundaries, and little woodland regeneration – evidence of the intensity and continuity of farming in this area. Due to road improvements there are few mature trees along Innis Lake Road, and those that remain are typically in poor condition.



Vegetation marks the former TGB Railway

A band of successional vegetation marking the alignment of the former Toronto Grey and Bruce (TGB) Railway is strongly apparent east of Innis Lake Road. It diminishes to the west of Innis Lake Road, although the rail bed is visible in air photos through some areas.

## Buildings, Structures and Objects

*Note that \* denotes designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.*

The farmsteads within this area, particularly as manifested in the houses, present the appearance of relatively early prosperity and are conservative architecturally. This may reflect the preference for simplicity in all things associated with the Methodist orientation of the community.

### **14880 Innis Lake Road (E 1/2, Lot 15, Con.)**

This property remained in the family of one of the areas original patentees, George Hutchinson, at least throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The extant brick three bay centre gabled farmhouse likely dates c.1875. It is the only residence within this grouping with Gothic Revival detailing. It has a pointed arch window in the centre gable, segmentally arched typical window openings and the quoins are picked out in an unusual pattern of buff brick. Unfortunately the front door and window have been substantially renovated. It is set well back from the road and the yard includes a number of mature trees.



14880 Innis Lake Road

### **14921 Innis Lake Road (W 1/2 Lot 15, Con. 2)**

This three bay, 1 1/2 storey gable roofed farmhouse is relatively large for the type. Despite unfortunate renovations to the windows, it has retained its original main entrance treatment including a six panel door with sidelights, transom and pilastered surround. Clad now in an early synthetic (possibly asbestos) siding and apparently of frame construction, it may actually be a log structure. It would appear to have been constructed in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the ownership of William Hanna. A raised barn with banked entry and carriage house from the same period extend behind the house, the former with a crumbling stone foundation at the northwest corner. Fields extend back to a woodlot in the centre of the concession.



14921 Innis Lake Road

**14639 Innis Lake Road  
(W ½ Lot 14, Con. 2)**

This stone house with brick detailing, set well down its drive, appears to also be of c.1865 origin (could not be easily viewed from the road). This was the property of William Elliot who possibly could be the same William Elliot with extensive holdings throughout Peel County, including a large house and store in Meadowvale and another home in Chinguacousy. A large gambrel barn is also visible on site.

**14580 Innis Lake Road  
Providence Cemetery  
(NE corner East ½ Lot 13, Con. 1)**

The current cemetery, formally defined with decorative cast iron arched entrance and gatepost, metal fence and associated brick structure dates from 1906. It is assumed that an earlier burying ground was located at this location as many of the early settlers are apparently interred here. A wide range of monuments and head stones are maintained in a park-like setting.



Providence Cemetery

**14520 Innis Lake Road  
(E 1/2 Lot 13, Con. 1)**

This 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead with its extant outbuildings and tree lined lane and fields occupies the land around the cemetery and acts as a buffer to it.

**14285 Innis Lake Road  
(W ½ Lot 12, Con. 2)**

This three bay, 1 ½ storey, gabled farmhouse clad now in aluminum siding may well be a log structure. It would appear to predate the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, though not shown on the Tremaine map. A stream extends through the back of the property. A wide range of outbuildings from various eras are arrayed across the lane from the house, including: frame gambrel barn; concrete silo; metal barn, and various sheds. The lane has been planted with young conifers. Holstein cattle were grazing in the front yard on the day visited.



14285 Innis Lake Road

**14117 Innis Lake Road**  
**(W ½ Lot 11, Con. 2)**

This property was owned throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Issac Thompson. The farmhouse is unusual in the area being five bays long, rather than the typical three bays and with more elaborate detailing than its neighbours. This includes a dentillated, moulded cornice returned at the gables; a polychromatic wall treatment of buff and painted brick accents (quoins, arches, stringcourses) on a red brick 'background'; and a main entrance with transom and sidelights. A brick kitchen 'tail', with a rare, shed-roofed stone addition, extends from the rear of the main house. A gambrel barn with banked entrance sits amid the fields across the lane from the house. The fields extend right down to the roadside on both the west and south sides. The residence appears to date c.1860.



14117 Innis Lake Road

Archaeological Sites

Though no archaeological survey has been undertaken within the Candidate CHL, a survey conducted along the main branch of the Humber River to the east and to a section of Centreville Creek revealed an abundance of First Nations' related sites. The Candidate area is essentially an extension of this environment of tributary stream valleys and wooded uplands and clearly has high potential for sites of First Nations' occupation.

4. **Site Context**

Despite the existing land severances and associated recent construction this 'block' of the former Albion Township continues to present the general appearance of a 19<sup>th</sup> century farming landscape. Indeed the character of the farmhouses, despite some unfortunate renovations, manifests the c.1860s to 1870s period. Though this farming landscape extends all around the Candidate area, it tends to be much more fragmented.



View of 14117 Innis Lake Road from King Street

The gently undulating landscape allows for long views. The view of 14117 Innis Lake Rd. from King Street allows the full farmstead to be appreciated.

## 10.3 EVALUATION

To be identified as a CHL an area must clearly embody both heritage significance and integrity. The following Significance Criteria are excerpted from the *Town of Caledon: Criteria for the Identification of Cultural Heritage Landscapes*, and are provided here for reference.

### Significance

#### Significance Criteria

*While any landscape upon which humankind has left its imprint is a cultural landscape, only those cultural landscapes that have a deep connection with the history of the jurisdiction can be identified as cultural heritage landscapes. To be considered significant from a heritage perspective it must be demonstrated through the Inventory Report that the Candidate CHL meets one or more of the following criteria:*

- A. Is associated with events that made significant contributions to the broad patterns of area history, i.e., strong association with central themes.*
- B. Is closely associated with the lives of individuals and/or families who are considered significant to the history of the area.*
- C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a particular settlement pattern or lifeway whether derived from ethnic background, imposed by the landscape, was the practice of a specific historic period or a combination of the above.*
- D. Manifests a particularly close and harmonious long-standing relationship between the natural and domestic landscape.*
- E. Has yielded or is likely to yield information important to prehistory or history.*
- F. Is strongly associated with the cultural and/or spiritual traditions of First Nations or any other ethnic and/or religious group.*

#### Integrity

*A CHL must be able to be justified as a distinct area of contiguous heritage integrity. Its key individual elements, which constitute the cultural heritage landscape and the way in which their interweaving makes a unique 'place,' must still clearly reflect the historic period and/or organic evolution from which the heritage significance derives.*

#### Conclusions

Based on the preceding examination the Albion Farmstead Candidate CHL meets *Significance Criteria C* - reflecting agricultural life on the Peel Plain throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was the economic backbone of the area. The farmsteads, together with Providence Cemetery, retain sufficient integrity that the traditional farming landscape/community is still readily perceivable.

## 10.4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This area was first settled by members of the Primitive Methodists in the 1830s and was associated with the Providence Primitive Methodist Church in Sandhill, constructed in 1837. A main feature of the area, the Providence Cemetery, is assumed to be the formalization of an earlier Primitive Methodist burying ground associated with the church as many of the early settlers are interred there.

This block of farmsteads is representative of rural life throughout the Albion Township section of the large, fertile Peel Plain. This region was an extremely important agricultural area throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, being a major producer of wheat during the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘boom’ and diversifying in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century to include a greater variety of crops and emphasis on livestock. The traditional agricultural landscape of the Plain is shrinking as severances increase and subdivisions march relentlessly northward.

The farmsteads which make up this Candidate CHL still, by in large, retain their original lot size, patchwork of fields, open spaces and woodlots, complement of widely varied barns and outbuildings, and include farmhouses which largely date pre-1870 and appear to reflect, in the main, the preference for simplicity associated with Primitive Methodism. Still, they range from three bay frame buildings with no ornamentation to a fine five bay brick dwelling and another, which incorporates some Gothic Revival features.

### Character-defining elements:

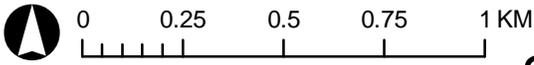
- SA-1 14921 Innis Lake Road (W ½ Lot 15, Con. 2)
- SA-2 14880 Innis Lake Road (E 1/2 Lot 15, Con. 1)
- SA-3 14639 Innis Lake Road (W ½ Lot 14, Con. 2)
- SA-4 Providence Cemetery, 14580 Innis Lake Road (NE corner East ½ Lot Con. 1)
- SA-5 14520 Innis Lake Road (E 1/2 Lot 13, Con. 1)
- SA-6 The remaining embanked indications of the TG & B Railway on Lot 13, Con. 2
- SA-7 The field pattern
- SA-8 14285 Innis Lake Road (W ½ Lot 12, Con. 2)
- SA-9 14117 Innis Lake Road (W ½ Lot 11, Con. 2)
- SA-10 The view of 14117 Innis Lake Road from King Street

**It is thus recommended that the Candidate CHL referred to as the South Albion Farmsteads, and representing the farmsteads of the Peel Plain within the former Albion Township, be identified as a CHL.**

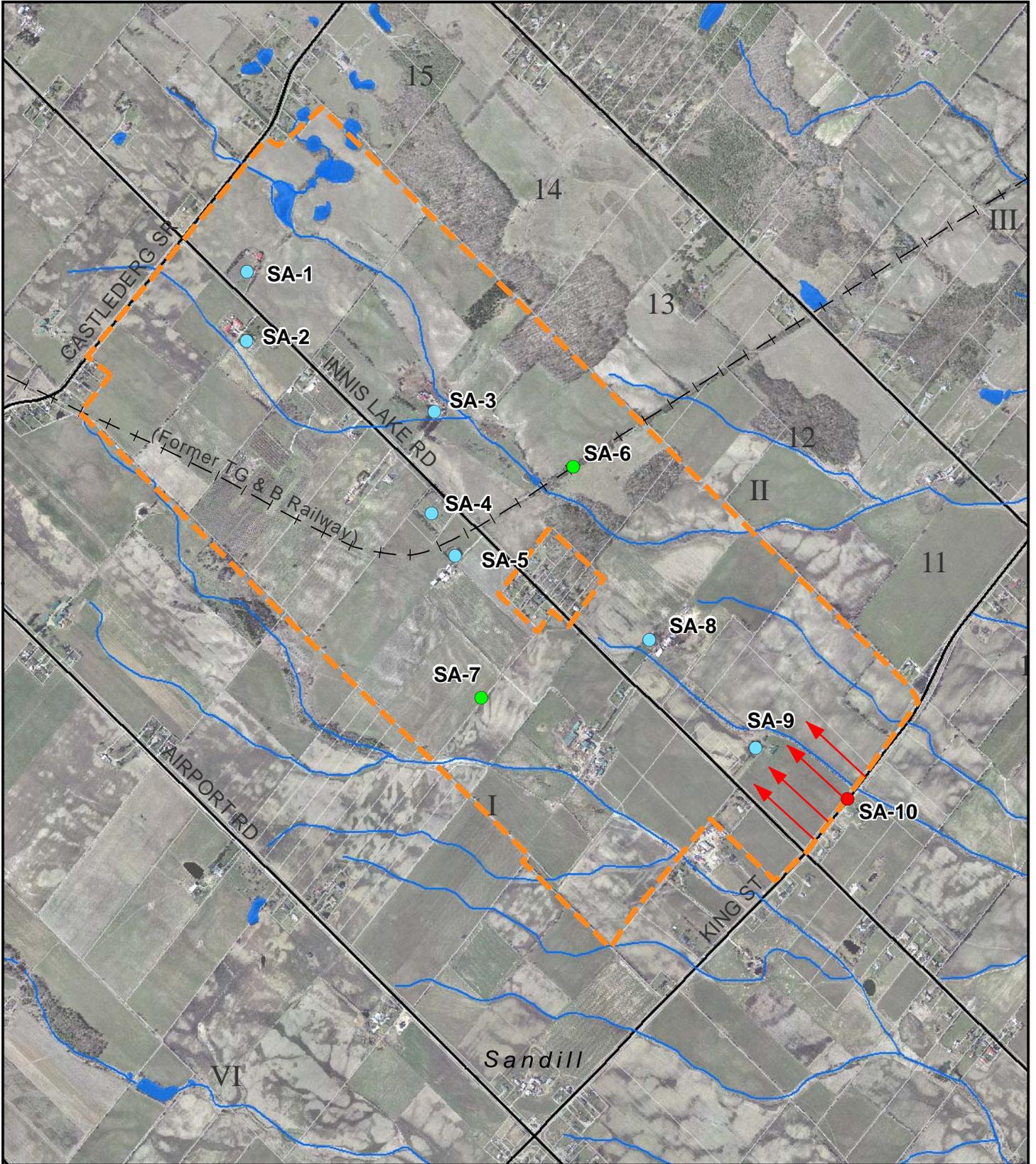
## 10.5 BOUNDARIES

The boundary of the South Albion Farmsteads CHL may be most simply described thus: between Lots 11 and 15 in the eastern half of Con. 1 and the western half of Con. 2 along Innis Lake Road with the exclusion of an area of new development on Lots 12 and 13.

Refer to **Figure 12 South Albion Farmsteads** for detailed delineation of boundaries.



# South Albion Farmsteads Figure 12



- |                             |                          |                  |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Character Defining Elements | CHL Boundary             | Rivers / Streams |
| Built                       | Road                     | Lakes / Ponds    |
| Landscape                   | Former Railway           | Viewshed         |
| View                        | Property Boundary (2006) |                  |