

2. THE FAR NORTHWEST CORNER

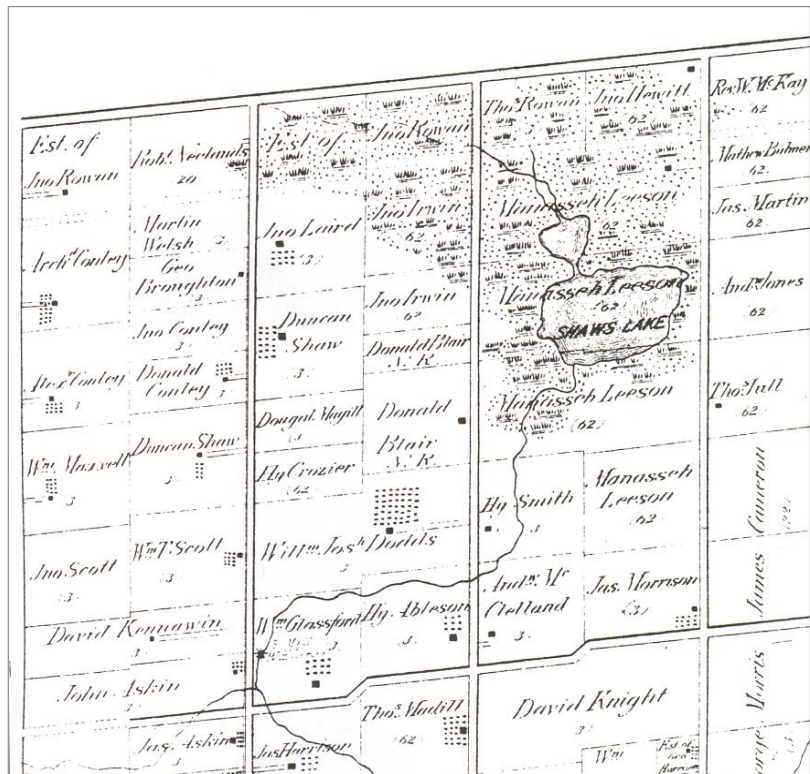
2.1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Note: All lot references are WHS unless otherwise noted.

This is an *organically evolved rural landscape*, as described in the Town of Caledon: Criteria for the Identification of Cultural Heritage Landscapes, extending, for study purposes, from the west half of Con. IV, (east side of Mississauga Road) to the Townline with Erin (Winston Churchill Blvd.) in the west, and between High Point Sideroad in the south to the Townline with East Garafraxa in the north.

It was considered for CHL candidacy because it apparently ‘embodies and/or is associated with’ a number of Caledon’s major historic themes.

The themes with which it is most closely associated are: *pioneer settlement; early subsistence farming and early industry – grist and sawmills on the Credit*. The fact that it contains the source of the Alton Branch of the Credit, i.e., the Caledon Lakes and associated wetlands, further magnifies its significance.



The Far Northwest Corner of Caledon, 1877
Source: 1877 Historical Atlas of Peel

2.2 INVENTORY

1. Physiographic Description

The Caledon Lakes (originally Shaws Lake) are situated at the northwest corner of the Candidate CHL area on the Orangeville Moraine. The surrounding area is a Quaternary deposit of peat, muck and marl. Caledon Lake itself is positioned on a glacial spillway and is “a shallow, marl-floored lake that appears to owe its existence to a mass of sandy drift dropped in the spillway just south of it.”(Chapman and Putnam 1984)

The forest wetlands around the western and northern section of the lake have been designated an ANSI and contain several regionally rare plant associations including a marsh dominated by wild rice. The vegetation shifts from shrub thickets by the lake itself to a

coniferous swamp forest dominated by tamarack with white cedar, balsam fir and black spruce at the heart of the ANSI.

The rest of the Candidate CHL area is crisscrossed with creeks and rills extending from this wetland heart, which eventually form into a main branch of the Credit River.

2. Processes

Land Uses and Activities

Though no archaeological survey has yet been undertaken in the area, the presence of water, the abundance of fish, game and wild edibles, including wild rice and the ease of transportation virtually guarantees at least seasonal occupation by the First Nations and their ancestors.

The survey of Caledon Township was completed in 1819-20 and Euro-Canadian settlement began shortly thereafter in the southwest corner. However, it does not appear that there was much development of the land until after the mid-1830s when Thomas Russell settled on the lots where the village of Alton now stands. Given the distance from civilization at the time and the extent of the local swamplands, it is understandable that growth was slow. However, the 1859 Tremaine Map may indicate all the lots had been spoken for, with four homes, a school house and William Glassford had established a saw mill at the northwest corner of his lot (W ½ Lot 26 Con.

V). The mill dam was located just where the creek bends southward, above where it joins another tributary stream (the mill pond, dam and spillways are still in evidence on the property) Glassford's sawmill would have been critical to further settlement of the area, greatly facilitating the house building process.

By 1877, this corner of the Township, with the exception of the extensive swamplands northwest of the lake, was virtually fully settled with homes dotting almost every lot beyond the marsh as depicted in the County Atlas of that year. The well-watered land was farmed and, given the relative lateness of development, moved quickly through the stages of subsistence and wheat farming to the mixed farming with livestock more typical of the last quarter of the 19th century. Many properties had orchards. As noted above, the typical domestic diet was augmented by wild fish and game, which was available close at hand. Unlike most areas, this remained a feature of life up until recent times. It is likely that the



Former Glassford mill site with remaining mill ponds
(now incorporated into domestic landscaping)

wild rice available in the marshes as well as watercress and other edible marsh plants and herbs were utilized by the settlers.

The Glassford Mill remained in operation into the last quarter of the 19th century but does not appear to have expanded into grist milling. Manasseh Leeson obtained ownership of the Shaw Lake (later known as Caledon Lake) properties as well as lots to the south and may have built the first hotel on the lake c.1878 (see Caledon Lake Resort Community).

A series of excavations were undertaken in the swamplands northwest of the Caledon Lake in 1908 by the Superior Portland Cement Company for extraction of 'marl', then a key ingredient of cement. The channels measured 300 feet long, 150 feet wide and 40 feet deep. Although the marl beds fell into disuse, they were later stocked with fish by Ontario Fisheries Department for local anglers.¹

Patterns of Spatial Organization

The survey of Caledon Township was completed by Samuel Rykman 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. The 100 acre half lots are almost square. Concessions run essentially north-south in this region (actually northwest). At every five lots there was an allowance for a side road. The inclusion of a sixth lot between Highpoint Sideroad and the Garafraxa Townline created an unopened road allowance between Lots 30 and 31. Several of the northernmost lots in Concession V were completely within the wetland and have never sustained settlement.

The other major determinant of domestic organization on the land was the great wetland and the myriad small creeks and minor sloughs emanating from that area. The lots to the north, northwest and directly adjacent to the west and southwest shores of Caledon Lake were never developed, allowing for preservation of the swamp forest now known as the Caledon Lake Forest Reserve. Mississauga Road (4th Line West) could not be extended north through the swamp to meet the Townline. Highpoint Sideroad had to be built to jog around impassable areas, and did extend to Winston Churchill Blvd. (6th Line West) due to the presence of another tributary creek. Houses were sited, where possible, on knolls to avoid inundation in the spring.

¹ Bull, Wm. Perkins, [From rattlesnake hunt to hockey](#) : *the history of sports in Canada and the sportsmen of Peel, 1798 to 1934* , Toronto : The Perkins Bull Foundation, 1934, p. 102

3. Elements

Circulation Networks

As noted above, the typical concession and sideroad network associated with the double front grid, was quite fractured in this area due to impassable topography. On the other hand, the presence of two Townline roads meant reasonable ease of movement once those roads have been reached. With all the creeks in the area, bridges are essential components of the local road system. At the corner of Highpoint Sideroad and Shaw's Creek Road there is a concrete shallow arched bridge spanning each of the two streams which merge just southeast of this location. Along Winston Churchill Blvd., just north of Highpoint, there is a single-lane concrete arched bridge.

The closest rail station was Alton, the initial line being operated by the Toronto, Grey and Bruce Railway, followed by the Credit Valley Railway (both later amalgamated with the CPR).

Boundary Demarcations

The boundaries for this Candidate CHL area are established by a combination of administrative jurisdiction, roads and natural features. The eastern boundary and a portion of the northern boundary are demarcated by the western end of Caledon Lake. This is the 'wild' end of the lake from which the wetland wilderness extends; the eastern portion of the lake has a much different character (see Caledon Lake Historic Resort Community) The northern and western boundaries are defined by the Townline Roads. The northern boundary is much more obvious due to the Highway status of that road. To the west, the Erin side of Winston Churchill Blvd. seems to share the same general character as the Caledon side and that first lot is certainly visually part of the CHL landscape. Similarly the southern boundary can be taken as Highpoint Sideroad, though the lot to the south can be included. Beyond that the influence of Alton is more readily apparent.

Within the Candidate CHL area the original individual lots are mostly still demarcated in the traditional manner by cedar rail fences and windrows.

Vegetation Related to Land Use

The extent of creek tributaries and swampland in the northwest corner limited farming over large portions of the area, and ultimately shaped the settlement patterns that remain today. Although the original vegetation composition has been somewhat altered by invasive non-native species adjacent to roads, the overall landscape character through the wetlands appears much as it would have in the 19th century. Cedar and dogwood thickets predominate. The ANSI designation of the Caledon Lake swamp forest recognizes the presence of rare, native species such as wild rice that were once abundant in that area. It is likely that the wild rice available in the marshes, as well as watercress and other edible marsh plants and herbs, were utilized by the settlers.

Buildings, Structures and Objects

Note: All concessions indicated below are West of Hurontario Street. All references to 1859 and 1877 pertain to the 1859 Tremaine Map and 1877 Historical Atlas of Peel map, respectively.

A relatively high percentage of 19th century structures survive in the Candidate CHL area , and, coupled with the open space still dictated by the wetlands, do generally project the character of an earlier time.

Shaw's Creek Road:

21496 (E ½ Lot 29, Con. VI)

Centre-gable 1 ½ storey red brick structure with buff detail. Framed English barn raised on stone foundation. Creek runs behind. Cedar rail fence. Mature trees. Donald Conley has house on property by 1859. Existing house c.1880.

(W ½ Lot 29, Con. V)

Frame building with remnant log section but not shown in 1877.

21225 (W ½ Lot 28, Con. V)

2-storey 'L'- plan gabled red brick house with buff detailing set on knoll overlooking valley. Large frame banked barn. Remnant orchard. Not shown in 1877. Existing house c.1885.

20909 (W ½ Lot 28, Con. V)

Quebec style wood frame structure with log section. Appears to be replica structure. No building shown in 1877. Mature maples along frontage

20855 (W ½ Lot 27, Con. V)

Red brick house not shown on the property in 1877. Existing house c.1885

20725 (W ½ Lot 27, Con. V)

Brick schoolhouse (U.S.S.#13) with segmentally arched window and door openings, oculus at gable, bell tower and quoins. Mature maples along frontage. Not shown in 1877. Existing structure c.1895.

20537 (W ½ Lot 26, Con. V)

Former mill site with remaining mill ponds (now incorporated into domestic landscaping), dam (waterfall), spillway (ruins). William Glassford's sawmill 1859, 1877. Existing house c 1930 house on the property surrounded by cedars.

20566 (E ½ Lot 26, Con. VI)

Red brick centre gable with verandah. Possibly replica structure but occupies site of David Kennawin's 1877 home.

2 concrete shallow arch bridges c.1940

Located on Highpoint Road and Shaw's Creek Road, close to the intersection.

Winston Churchill Blvd. (All properties Con. VI):

21253 (W ½ Lot 30)

Brick centre-gabled house with buff brick detailing and segmentally arched openings. Set far up lane at height of land with rolling hills to the east. Mature maples line driveway. Home of Archibald Conley, 1877.

21145 (W ½ Lot 29)

Centre gabled 'L' plan red brick house with buff detailing and segmental window and door arches treated decoratively. Fine frame barn unusual for being banked on two planes and is built to take advantage of natural grade change. Cedar rail fence.

Note: Directly across road is the fine Erin property known as Swallow's Bridge (6128 Winston Churchill Blvd.)

20947 Winston Churchill Blvd.

Stuccoed 2 storey dwelling sited atop knoll. Mature trees and cedar fence.

Single lane concrete arch bridge c. 1940, located north of Highpoint Sideroad.

Settlement Clusters

There are no settlement clusters within the Candidate CHL area. However the Candidate CHL area is closely associated with the historic mill village of Alton. The development of Alton in the mid-19th century was one of the factors which catalyzed growth in the Candidate CHL area. Alton would have been the main local market, source of supplies and occasionally employment for the settlers in the Candidate CHL area. (see also Site Context)

Archaeological Sites

Though no archaeological survey has yet been undertaken in the Candidate CHL area the presence of water, the abundance of fish, game and wild edibles including wild rice and the ease of transportation virtually guarantees at least seasonal occupation by the First Nations and their ancestors. A reasonable comparison would be with the Silver Creek area where several aboriginal sites have been found on tributaries of the Credit.

4. Site Context

While much of the northwest region of Caledon is riverine, the Candidate CHL area is particularly characterized by wetlands. Historically, and up to the present day, the large swamp area was an impediment to settlement and large sections remain undeveloped lending a wild, open sense to the landscape. As this has resulted in far less new construction in the area than further to the south, its heritage character remains more intact. The east shore of Caledon Lake has always been the accessible portion of the lake and here, in contrast to the wild western shore within the Candidate CHL area, cottages and resorts have been in place since the late 19th century.

The most distinctive views within and from the Candidate CHL area are of the rolling hills looking southeast from several high points along Winston Churchill and Shaw's Creek roads. As well, the view back to the southeast corner of the Candidate CHL area from Highpoint Sideroad is noteworthy. While many of the individual properties can be described as picturesque, the old Glassford mill property with its series of ponds deriving from its milling past is especially so.

2.3 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 their 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. The 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

While the Far Northwest Corner generally contains attributes associated with Significance Criteria C and D, they are not considered to be manifest at such a level, or in such a distinctive manner, that the overall area is substantially distinguished from a number of other locations in the Town.

Furthermore, while the retention of 19th century housing stock throughout the Candidate CHL area is generally quite good and much undeveloped area does remain due to the wetlands, there have also been many land severances with associated new construction which have broken up the continuity of the heritage landscape. As well a large quarry exists directly across from the northwest corner of the Candidate CHL area in Erin.

However, within this Candidate CHL area there is a section which does merit identification as a CHL. This is primarily focused on the old Glassford Mill Property (W ½, Lot 26, Con. V) but includes the crossroads of Highpoint and Shaw's Creek with its 2 associated bridges, and the adjacent 19th century farm properties located on the other three corners. It is here that the west branch (Alton Branch, Shaw's Creek) of the Credit River is formed of the confluence of two tributary streams. The picturesque qualities of the landscape with its large pond and waterfall, are very much the result of the historic mill operation. This milling legacy, central to the development of Caledon and associated thematically with the mills of Alton, is still readily legible on the landscape at the site.

2.4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE



Glassford mill site and environs 1877
Source: 1877 Historical Atlas of Peel

This isolated corner of Caledon underwent its pioneer phase relatively late due to the wildness and inaccessibility of the lands. The large coniferous swamp dominated the area and settlement had to be established as the land permitted.

However, by 1859 William Glassford had dammed up the stream (Shaw's Creek) issuing from Caledon Lake and established a sawmill on his property. This sawmill would have greatly facilitated the settlement of the area, providing essential building materials relatively close at hand. Operable until at least the last quarter of the 19th century, the mill directly assisted in creating the picturesque landscape of large pond (with island) and waterfall now

apparent on the property. The dam still survives while other elements such as the sluiceways are visible as ruins or landscape features. The current house on the property, while seemingly not mid 19th century (more likely c.1920 though possibly containing earlier elements), is still generally sympathetic architecturally with the current nature of the site.

South of the dam this stream merges with a tributary originating in Erin to form the Alton Branch of the Credit. These streams required bridging at both Highpoint Sideroad and Shaw's Creek Road, which, since c.1940, have been shallow arch concrete bridges.



Heritage farm complex, southwest corner
Highpoint Sideroad and Shaw's Creek Road

The farm properties at the other three corners generally reinforce the integrity and picturesque qualities of the landscape. Particularly notable is the heritage farm complex at the southwest corner (Lot 25, Con. V), which appears to have been the property of James Askins in 1877 (possibly related to the prominent U.E.L. Askins). The southeast and northwest corners are characterized by open space associated with the streams, the Erin tributary at the northwest corner and Shaw's Creek at the southeast

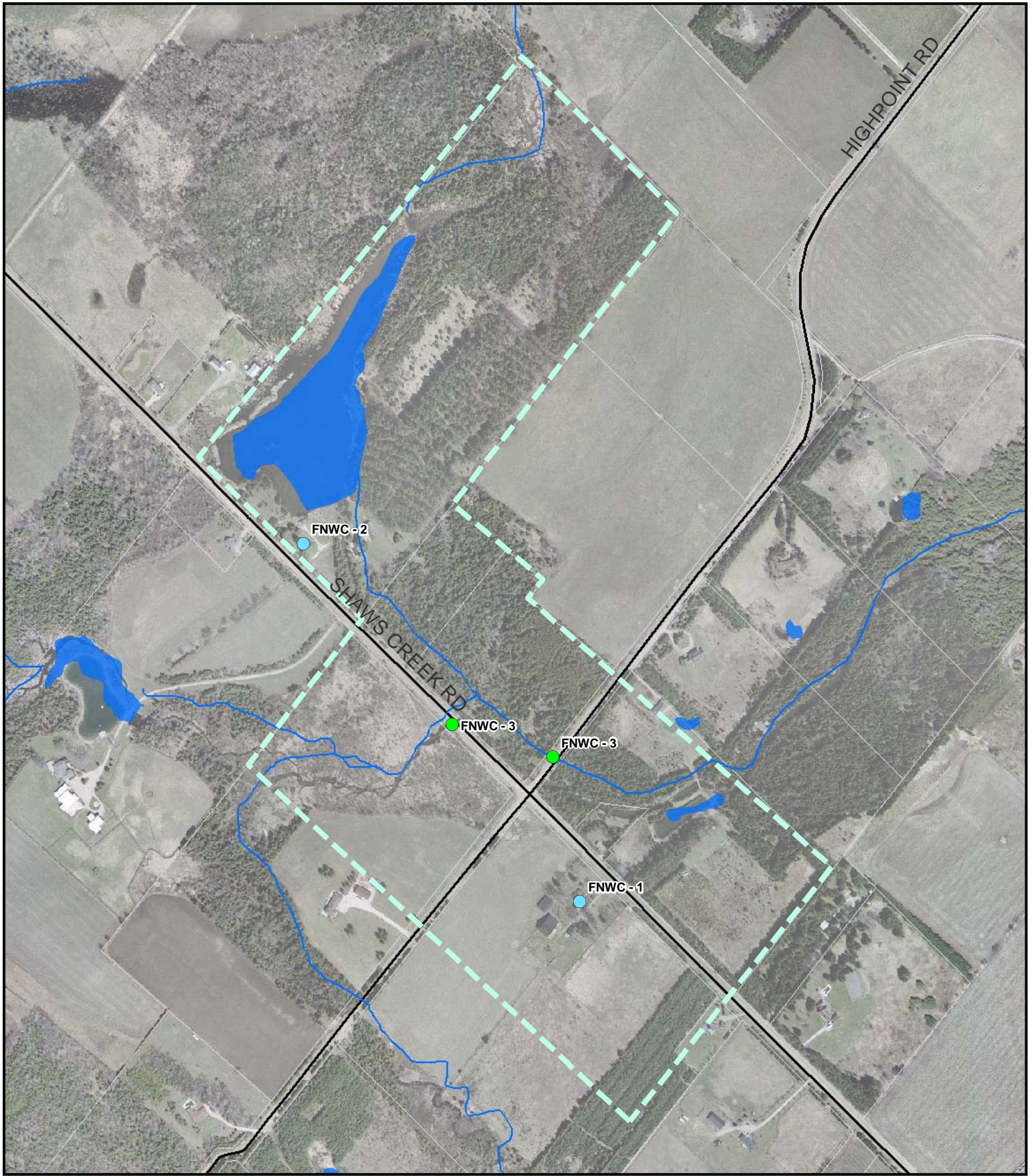
Character-Defining Elements (Numbers refer to Caledon CHL Inventory database)

- FNWC-1 20348 Shaw's Creek (E ½ Lot 25, Con. VI)
- FNWC-2 20537 Shaw's Creek (W ½ Lot 26, Con. V), with remaining mill pond, and remnants of dam and spillway
- FNWC-3 Concrete shallow arch bridges, near the corner of Highpoint Road and Shaw's Creek Road c.1940 and the confluence of Shaw's Creek with the Erin tributary to form the Alton Branch of the Credit River.

It is thus recommended that the Highpoint/ Shaw's Creek four corners area of the Far North-West Corner Candidate CHL be identified as a Cultural Heritage Landscape (CHL).

2.5 BOUNDARIES

The CHL boundaries are generally defined as including the four corner lots centered on the Highpoint Sideroad / Shaw's Creek Road junction.(E ½ Lot 25,26 Con. VI, W ½ Lot 25,26, Con. V).



- Character Defining Elements
- Road
 - Built
 - Landscape
 - CHL Boundary
 - Rivers / Streams
 - Lakes / Ponds
 - Property Boundary (2006)