

Slopes of the Speed

Original text by Florence Partridge

Digital revision by Guelph Arts Council (2016)

Some photos courtesy of Guelph Museums

Map by Andy McLennan

Begin this tour at the Guelph Youth Music Centre
75 Cardigan Street.

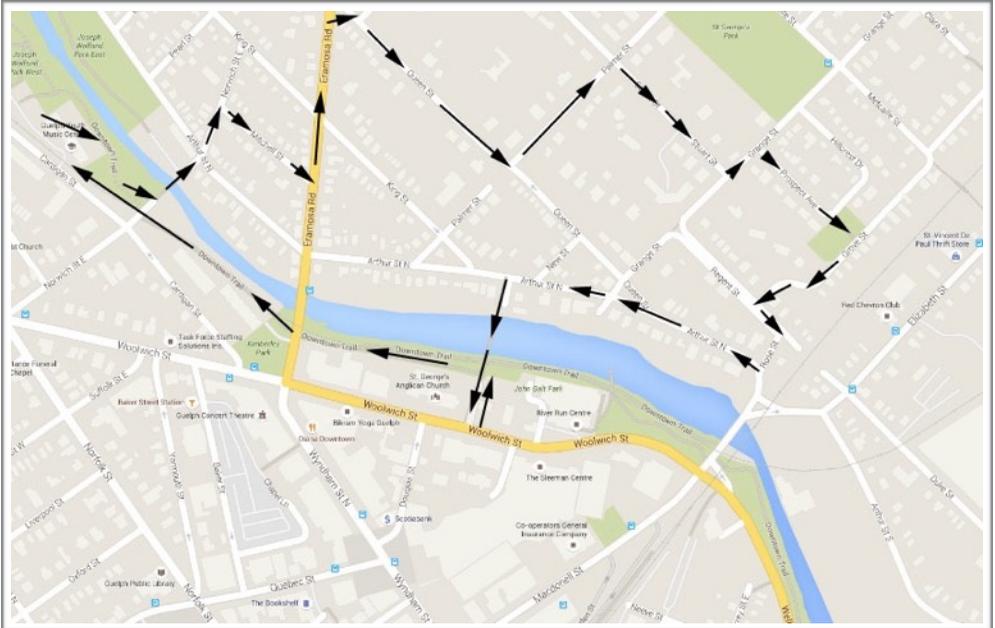
There is 2-hour free public parking on the street.

This route is approximately 3.5 km and takes about 1.5 hour



Drawing by Ida Seto

Route Map

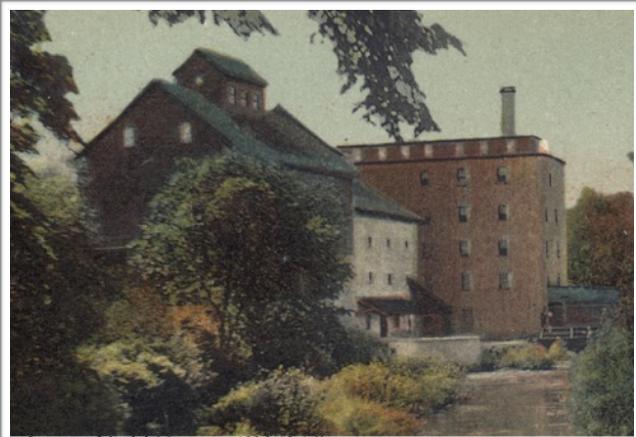




GUELPH YOUTH MUSIC CENTRE

The Guelph Youth Music Centre is an example of Guelph's creative re-purposing of buildings. The former structure was the Heritage Seeds warehouse, which had a dramatic post and beam interior construction. In 1981 a search began to house the Suzuki String School, but the focus broadened to encompass a variety of music and arts activities that educate, enrich and foster the development of youth. The enthusiasm surrounding this unique project convinced the City of Guelph to acquire the property in 1995 and, after six years of renovations, mostly by volunteers, the Guelph Youth Music Centre opened in September 2001. The interior of the facility includes a third-floor dance studio (with a sprung floor), a recital hall and adjacent foyer space, meeting rooms and fifteen studio spaces, all of which are used regularly. More than 1,000 children and their families use the Centre on a weekly basis, while an additional 4,000 area residents benefit annually through community concerts. When work was going on to transform the former Heritage Seeds into the music centre, a pigeon's nest made largely of nails was found on the top of a wall under the roof. The 1.2 kg nest, held together with pigeon droppings, feathers, some wood chips and straw, was unusual enough to merit a paper in the Canadian Field Naturalist newsletter. Attached to the north-west end of the Guelph Youth Music Centre are the quarters of the Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps - Ajax. The group was founded during World War II and moved here in 2001.

Goldie Mill



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 1986_18_262

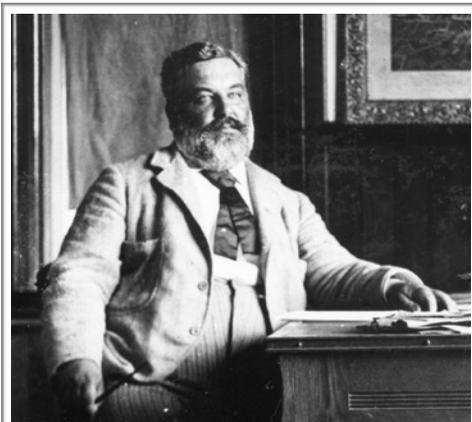
In 1827, David Gilkison, a cousin of John Galt, built Guelph's first saw mill beside the Speed River. Then physicians W. Clarke and H. Orton built Wellington Mills in 1845. After a fire the mill was rebuilt in stone in 1850 and called People's Mills. It expanded to

accommodate grain and flour mills until it burned again in 1864.

James Goldie purchased the property in 1866 and enlarged the structure in 1867. The Goldie family sold the property in 1918 and the mill operated until a spring flood in 1929 carried away the dam.

It was sold and used as a warehouse until 1953 when fire destroyed most of the structure. Part of the ruins was levelled to provide space for a parking lot, while the remainder, dominated by a 90-ft chimney, was stabilized in 1984 and incorporated into the City of Guelph's Parks system. Among the unique architectural features are the thick stone walls with double-reinforced stone lintels, an unusual type of construction in Ontario.

James Goldie's son Thomas Goldie (left) was Guelph's mayor in 1891-92.



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 1979X_00_690



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 2014_3_1



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 1991_7_1

41 Norwich - Royal Knitting

While you are in front of the Guelph Youth Music Centre, turn and look across to Norwich Street. Part way up the hill is #41 Norwich, a rectangular red brick apartment building which was once the Royal Knitting Company. Founded by Samuel Carter in the 1880s as a co-operative owned by the employees, the company was originally located in his house at 60 Manitoba Street (on the Ward One tour). The business moved here in 1902 and for many years made socks, scarves, gloves and sweaters in the colours of the NHL teams (left staff photo 1932).

60 Cardigan Street - Stewart Lumber

Directly across from the Guelph Youth Music Centre is another example of a repurposed building. Now the Stewart Mill Lofts residential units, the building was constructed as the new home of the Stewart Lumber Company, following a huge fire at its previous location on Wyndham Street, which destroyed the lumber yard, the Stewarts' home next door and more than twenty businesses. It is said that 75% of Guelph was built with Stewart lumber. Robert Stewart, born in 1828, a descendant of King Robert Stewart II, was a master carpenter. He attended horse races in Guelph and liked the town so much he moved from Toronto with his bride to establish the town's first planing mill in 1854. He moved the business twice before settling on Wyndham Street in 1869. After the fire, his sons and grandsons built this factory on Cardigan Street, continuing to be the largest lumber dealer in Canada.



Walk to the pathway at the south end of the park and cross the footbridge over the Speed River.

Millside Townhouses

After you cross the bridge you will see a renovated industrial building on your left, the Millside Townhouses, at the corner of Norwich and Arthur Streets.

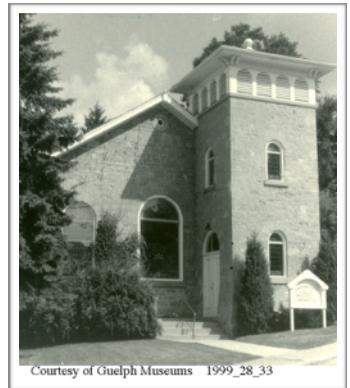
This is a splendid example of a building that has been adapted to various uses. It was built in 1848 as Dr. Clarke's Wellington Foundry. It later operated as a second foundry for Adam Robertson. Robertson's first foundry, built on Norfolk Street in 1847, near the intersection of Paisley, became the Crowe Foundry. In 1852, Robertson moved to a third location on Eramosa Road. The Millside Townhouses structure was sold to Inglis and Hunter (later John Inglis) and became known as the Wellington Foundry. Following that the building was used as a creamery, and then for Marblelike Products, before succumbing to fire in 1978. Notice the parapet end walls and segmented lintel voussoirs (archways) and keystones. This conversion into townhouses received the Guelph Arts Council Heritage Award in 1981.



Cross Arthur Street and continue up Norwich to the corner of Mitchell Street

126 Norwich Street - Disciples of Christ Church

Built as the Zion Chapel in 1856-57 for Scottish Congregationalists, this structure was sold in 1882 to the Disciples of Christ, who had been worshipping in a second-floor room of the Alma Block on Upper Wyndham Street. The Disciples are a reformed denomination in the Protestant Christian tradition. This is thought to be Guelph's second oldest church, after Norfolk United. Constructed of local limestone, it boasts a unique square tower, capped with a four-sided roof with shallow slopes. It is of the Classical Revival style that non-conformist churches used to separate



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 1999_28_33

themselves from the Gothic Revival structures erected by the established denominations, such as Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian. This structure is now the home of the Islamic Society of Guelph.

Turn right onto Mitchell Street.

25 Mitchell Street - Ferndell

This stone house, known as Ferndell, was built between 1852 and 1855 in the Classical Style with a central Gothic gable. The Classical Revival portico over the front door was likely added later. This was originally the home of Adam Robertson Senior, who came to Guelph in 1847. He and his sons, Adam Junior and William, were the founders and machinists who established the industrial sites on Norfolk, then Arthur Street and then at the corner of Mitchell Street and Eramosa Road, all within easy reach of their home. In 1862, during the American Civil War, the Robertson Foundry made cannons, cannon balls and hand grenades for the Confederate Army, shipping them, in crates marked “potatoes,” by train via Georgian Bay. One of the cannons, not shipped because of a fault, stood for years in front of Ferndell, then in front of Riverview, the Higinbotham family home on Queen Street (later on this route). When Riverview was sold, the cannon was acquired by a connection of the Higinbotham family and was removed to a property on an island off the southern coast of British Columbia.

*Continue along Mitchell Street
towards Eramosa Road.
Turn left and walk up the hill
to Queen Street.*



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 1999_28_32

30-32 Eramosa Road

At the corner of Mitchell and Eramosa, this 1855 Neo-Classic Vernacular limestone structure has tooled lintels and sills, with a gable roof (angled in two directions). The double entrances with sidelights are a later addition along with the Scotch arches on the covered porch.



83 King Street

Across the street at the corner of King and Eramosa is a yellow brick home built in 1875 that holds a heritage designation. This home was designed by Victor Stewart for local hardware merchant John M. Bond. It has a hip roof (angled in four directions) and double end chimneys. The symmetrical facade features projecting bay windows with decorative moulding and dogtooth denticulation. The entrance door has leaded, bevelled and stained glass from around 1900 and a bracketed roofed entrance canopy with fretted scalloped fascia. A pagoda-shaped canopy side porch was added around 1890, also with fretted scalloped fascia.



100 Queen Street - Wells-Marshall House

On the south-west corner of Queen and Eramosa is a Tudor Revival house, a style made popular by the Arts and Crafts movement. It was built in early 1895 for Dr. Wells, a physician who occupied it for nearly five decades. The red brick first storey and timbered plaster above are now painted a uniform colour, masking its original style. Notice the bracketed projecting gable bays at the attic level, with bracketed rectangular bays below. In 1955 it was sold and has had a series of owners. This is the first major house by architect William Frye Colwill, who also designed Guelph's Carnegie Library.



Turn left onto Queen Street to view the home two doors behind 100 Queen.

104 Queen Street

This white frame building dates back to 1834, making it one of Guelph's oldest houses. John Mitchell, the first owner, arrived from Ireland in the first year of settlement and was in fact present at the cutting of the



tree with John Galt. He married Ann Thompson whose father, also an Irishman, built Summerhill (see Brooklyn and the College Hill, p. 9). Their daughter Emma later lived in the Queen Street house with her husband Thomas Goldie (above 1940). The gardens originally went all the way to Homewood.

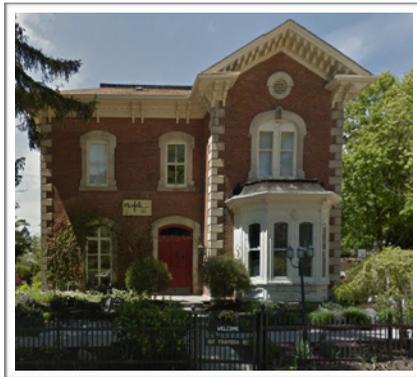
Return to Eramosa Road to cross at the lights at the top of the hill.

Eramosa Road

In Guelph's early days, the Eramosa Road provided a link with the older settlement of Erin. Although the distance between the two communities was only about 30 km, the early settlers took many hours of walking, riding or driving to make the trip. Leaving Guelph, they had first to cross the Speed River, at Trafalgar Square, then climb the Eramosa hill and make their way through the swamp land bordering the Bullfrog Pond. The Bullfrog Inn, a stone building on Eramosa just north of Stevenson, belonged to John Gay, who arrived in 1834 and was a prominent citizen until in 1880 he suffered "brain fever." Gray was a self-proclaimed poet Laureate and considered himself to be Canada's Tennyson. It is interesting to note that Eramosa Road, now County Road #124, is one of the few Guelph thoroughfares which runs due north. As travellers enter Guelph via this route, the Basilica of Our Lady Immaculate, perched on Catholic Hill, appears to be centred at the end of the road.

102 Eramosa Road

On the north-west corner of Queen and Eramosa is a home built in 1875 for James T. Brill. This stately Italianate red brick home has a hip roof that features a flat centre deck that once had iron cresting. Notice the segmented stone architraves featuring a keystone above the second-storey windows and the stone corner quoins. A semi-octagonal bay projects from the front face and ornamental brackets sit below the roofline. This home now serves as a Guest House.



113 Eramosa Road

On the north-east corner of Queen and Eramosa is an 1874-75 Italianate home, originally built in the Tuscan Villa style. The home features a central tower with a low-pitched roof and has deep bracketed eaves. In 1900 additions and alterations included a verandah on the west side with a sunporch roof and timber added to the facade for a Tudor effect. This house was designed for barrister Frederick Biscoe by Victor Stewart. Stewart was a prolific contributor to Guelph's architecture, including the General Hospital, the Wellington Hotel, the Masonic Hall, and the Market Building extension.

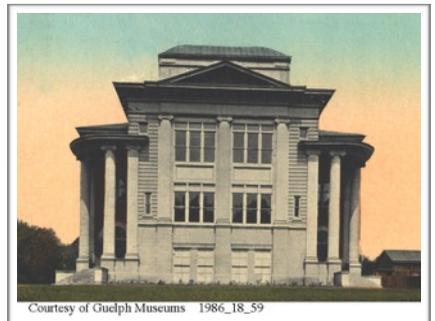
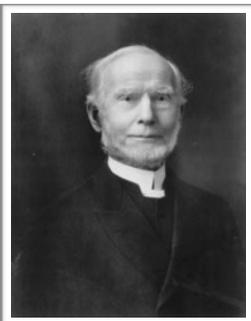
*Proceed east along
Queen Street.*



85 Queen Street - Gilnockie

This house was built in 1873-75 for Guelph merchant James Massie, using reclaimed stone from the second St. George's Church which was removed from the town square. The house was subsequently sold to John Belmar Armstrong who named the house Gilnockie after the home of one of his ancestors in Scotland. J. B.

Armstrong was the owner of the carriage works on Macdonell Street and was responsible for donating the Blacksmith Fountain (shown below) to the City of Guelph in 1884 (see Downtown Tour for the Armstrong Block, now owned by the Co-operators, and fountain in Priory Park). When Armstrong was away in Flint Michigan, where he had a second carriage works, Gilnockie was occupied by the Reverend Dr. Robert Torrance (shown below). Torrance was a Presbyterian clergyman and from 1856 to 1892 also served as Superintendent of Guelph Public Schools. Torrance School (shown below c. 1911), on Waterloo Avenue was named for him. Built in the picturesque Gothic Revival Style, Gilnockie was a set location for the movie "An American Christmas Carol" in 1979 in which it represented an orphanage. In the thriller "Incubus," it was a haunted house. The photo above is from 1910.





67 Queen Street - Wyoming

This home, built in 1866, is an example of Second Empire Style architecture. It was originally the one-storey house of John Hogg, a Guelph dry-goods merchant. A second storey and verandah were added in 1873. In 1880 and 1885 the house was further enlarged with servants' quarters under a third-storey mansard roof (top 1905). At that time it was owned by J. W. Lyon, publisher and developer (below left, 1913) who is discussed in more detail later on this route. He named the house after his native Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania (left middle 1978).



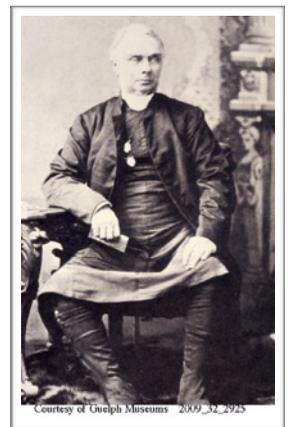
Continue along Queen Street turning left onto Palmer Street.

Palmer Street - Reverend Arthur Palmer



Palmer Street was named for Reverend (later Archdeacon) Arthur Palmer (right 1874). He immigrated to Canada from Ireland and served St. George's

Anglican parish in Guelph from 1832 to 1874. Held in high esteem as a clergyman, he was also an astute businessman. In 1846, he acquired a tract of land of almost 25 acres, lying between Grange and Palmer Streets, extending from Metcalfe Street to the Speed River.





*Walk up the hill on Palmer, to the corner of Stuart Street.
Then turn right onto Stuart.*

20 Stuart Street - Ker Cavan (Tyrcahlen)



Although it is now surrounded by new homes and townhouses, this house exemplifies a restrained early version of the Gothic Revival style of architecture. It was built in 1855 for the Reverend Palmer from plans which, according to local lore, were attributed to Sir Charles Barry, architect of Britain's Houses of Parliament. Palmer named the house Tyrcahlen (top 1870, middle 1932, bottom 1987). When he retired back to Ireland in 1874, he sold the house to A. B. Petrie, a local druggist with a prominent building on Wyndham Street (see Downtown Tour). Petrie made some changes to the house, then in 1926 sold to H. B. Higinbotham who enlarged the home by enclosing the galleries and totally remodelling the northern wing. Higinbotham also renamed the property Ker

Cavan. After Higinbotham's death, the property was owned briefly by Brigadier Kenneth S. Torrance, and from the 1960s to 1986 it was used as a nursing home. This led to the controversial development of the surrounding property.

13 Stuart Street - Tranquille

This yellow brick house with bracketed eaves was built in the mid-1870s. It was owned by Arthur Cutten from 1901 to 1962. Additions were made to the house in 1901 and 1934; from 1962 to 1975 it was used as a nursing home. Its restoration to a single family dwelling received the Guelph Arts Council Bronze Plaque Heritage Award in 1987.



7 Stuart Street



This house was built in 1875. It is a 1.5-storey, L-shaped, Italianate home with a projecting front bay. The round-top windows have working shutters, and there are brackets at the eaves. Note the balcony over the front entrance and the fretted woodwork on the porch.

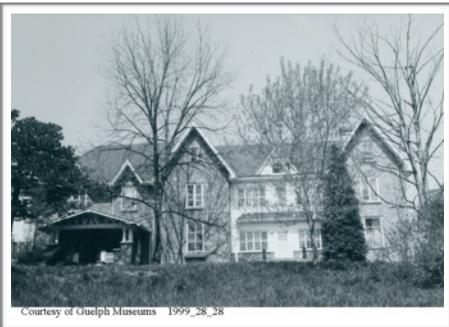
Continue along Stuart Street to Grange, then left on Grange to Prospect Street.

29-31 Grange Street Horsman House/Prospect Place



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 2014_84_1007

Located at the corner of Prospect and Grange Streets, Prospect Place is said to have been built in c. 1880 by Guelph hotelkeeper and businessman John Thorp. The house later become the property of John Horsman who had a hardware business on Wyndham Street between Carden and Macdonell Streets. His ownership explains why the hill on Grange Street became known as Horsman's Hill. After a fire destroyed his hardware store Horsman was forced to sell the house. In 1881, T. J. Day purchased the house and four acres of land for \$6,500 even though it had cost Horseman more than \$18,000. The building is now a multiple-residence dwelling (top left 1920, bottom 1978).



Courtesy of Guelph Museums 1999_28_28

*Turn right on Prospect Street
to Hillcrest Park at the end of Prospect.*

David Johnson Kennedy's 1853 watercolour and pencil sketch shows a view of the Speed River and the Macdonell Street bridge. The large building on the left is Allan's Mill, the remains of which now form Heritage Park (from the U of G art collection).



Hillcrest Park

In the spring and late fall this park provides an excellent view over the southern portion of Guelph. To the right (west) is the Speed River and the downtown core. To the south the University of Guelph can be seen in the distance. The university was established in 1964, combining the Ontario Agricultural College (1874), the Ontario Veterinary College (founded in 1862 and moved from Toronto in 1922) and the Macdonald Institute (1903). It now offers a full slate of arts and science programs with undergraduate enrolment of about 20,000 on its beautiful campus which features many architecturally significant structures. From this vantage point, in the middle distance, you can see Cutten Fields Golf Course, named for Arthur Cutten, the Chicago Wheat King, whose home we saw at 13 Stuart Street.

In the southern foreground are the Eramosa River and the York Road industrial district which was developed by J. W. Lyon between 1903 and 1910. You'll recall that Lyon lived at 67 Queen Street. He was a publisher from Pennsylvania, and his company, the World Publishing Company, had its head office in Guelph. Although they were not printed in Guelph, his books were distributed throughout the world and the business was very successful. Lyon then became involved in real estate ventures in the United States and Canada. In Guelph he bought 400 acres of land in the area of York and Victoria Roads, and offered free building sites to large manufacturers. Eight factories were built in this way. Lyon recovered his investment, and more, by selling building lots to those employed by the factories (at one time employees numbered over 2000). Lyon Park on York Road was named in his honour.

*Take the steps down from the park to Grove Street and proceed right to Regent Street.
At Grange continue down hill to Rose and Arthur Streets.*



9 Arthur Street - Yankee Cottage

The small dwelling at the V formed by Rose and Arthur Streets, beside the railway embankment, was built by William Kennedy, a stonemason who emigrated from Scotland to Canada in 1833. He worked briefly in Kingston, spent time in Guelph, but then moved to Philadelphia in 1839 where he married his wife Sarah and remained until 1845. He returned to Guelph and became known as “Yankee” Kennedy and his cottage was referred to as “Yankee Cottage” (above 1930). Built of stone, the cottage has since been covered with stucco. The photo left shows William and Sarah Kennedy (1850).



In Scotland, Kennedy had worked erecting a lighthouse under the direction of Robert Stevenson (father of Robert Louis Stevenson). At one lighthouse

Kennedy was also visited by Sir Walter Scott, who dedicated a poem to “The Keeper of the Light.”

Cross to the west side of the Macdonell Street bridge, the side nearest the River Run Centre. Look back at the Arthur Street property nearest the bridge.

16 Arthur Street North - Sunnyside

The large Classical style house adjacent to the Macdonell Street bridge is known as Sunnyside. It is a fine example of the symmetry of the Georgian tradition. It was built in 1854 by stonemason William “Yankee” Kennedy as a wedding gift for his daughter and her husband Charles Davidson. The house faces the



river with a turnaround driveway. Above the front portico is a relief carving by Kennedy depicting Abbotsford, the home of Sir Walter Scott. On both sides of the front steps are pedestals holding curling stones; these are replicas of ones carved by Kennedy, which are now inside the house. In the garden is a sundial which is a replica of the one that was installed here in the 1850s and later was donated to Guelph Museums. Sunnyside remained in the Davidson family until it was bought by Karl Briestensky, a local architect. The subsequent restoration in 1979-80 resulted in the house being divided into four residential units while managing to retain the home's unique architectural features. For this work the owner received a Guelph Arts Council Honourable Mention Heritage Award in 1981.

Return to Arthur Street, turn left and proceed on the river side of the street.

34 Arthur Street North - Calderwood

Calderwood was built about 1866 for Robert Melvin. He was associated with various foundries in the community and served as Guelph's Mayor in 1875-76. The house has unusual oval windows on the street side. The

building at 38 Arthur (middle left) is stucco over stone and was originally built for Melvin as the coach house and stable for Calderwood. It was converted to a residence in 1918 and was most recently renovated in 2014.



50-52 & 56-58 Arthur Street North

The semi-detached units at 50-52 and 56-58 were built in 1870 as rental units for Charles Davidson, son-in-law of William "Yankee" Kennedy. Neo-Classic Vernacular in style, these symmetrical units feature bay windows and transom windows above the front doors. Number 58 received a Guelph Arts Council Heritage Award citation for interior renovations.



5 Queen Street - Riverview



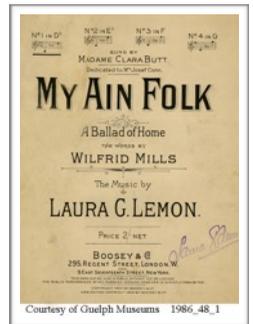
At the point where Queen Street forks off of Arthur is the 1859 home named Riverview. It was originally built as a one-storey cottage for Lieutenant Colonel Nathaniel Higinbothom, who had moved to Guelph from Brantford in

1849 and opened the first drug store in Guelph on Carden Street. In 1876 the Riverview roof was raised and a second storey was added. With its wide trellised verandahs on three sides, the house served as a comfortable home for the Higinbothom family for more than 100 years.

72-78 Arthur Street North - Mavis Bank

Built in 1865, this expansive stuccoed Regency style house was the 1866 birthplace of Laura Lemon. She gained an international reputation as a composer of songs and music, best known for the song “My Ain Folk.” She left Guelph in 1890 to live in England and study at the Royal Academy of Music. The delicate lattice work of the wrap-around verandah was recently restored. The adjoining cottage was likely built in 1920 as a garage.

Notice that this home, and the next one listed, are situated on their lots so the front face of the home is towards the river (right 1987).



86 Arthur Street North

This imposing limestone house was built about 1880. It is a full two-storey structure with a gabled hip and hip roof. Notice the rusticated projecting quoins and ornamental brickwork on the chimney stacks. Exterior alterations were made in the 1920s.



*Continue down Arthur Street to Heffernan and turn left to cross the footbridge.
Pause on the footbridge and look back at the house on the north side.*

96 Arthur Street North & Heffernan Street Footbridge

The modest house at the northwestern end of the footbridge is one of the oldest remaining stone houses on that side of the river. Built in the 1840s it was the home of the Reverend Arthur Palmer of St. George's Church until 1856 when he built Tyrcahlen (Ker Cavan) on Stuart Street. This 1.5-storey structure has a gable roof. The windows have tooled sills and hammer-dressed lintels. The front gable, facing the river, has a Gothic arched window with louvred shutters. The verandah retains original features with ornate posts and fretwork arches. During the time that Palmer lived in the Arthur Street house, there was no footbridge, so he kept a rowboat which he used to cross the Speed River to reach the church which was in St. George's Square at that time. The original footbridge was metal trestle style, built in 1881, to provide pedestrian access across the Speed River between Arthur Street North and Woolwich. It was replaced in 1913-14 because the Dominion Railway felt it was dangerous to have pedestrians crossing the marshalling yard. The current structure was built higher and longer to cross above the tracks. The image to the right is a sketch of the house from 1888, when it was occupied by the Mackenzie family.





St. George's Church

Reverend Arthur Palmer was appointed as Anglican rector for Guelph in 1832. In 1833 a wooden church was built in the middle of St. George's Square. This land had been set aside for a church by John Galt. St. George's was the second church established in Guelph, after Norfolk Street United on the corner of Norfolk and Cork Streets. The original wooden structure was completed in 1834 and renovated to stone in 1851 (top 1866, below 1871). The stone building at St. George's Square served

for the next twenty years. Reverend Palmer resigned his position and retired to England in 1875. The new church on Woolwich Street was consecrated in 1879 and that same year the new rectory was completed (below 1893). After the opening of the third St. George's the Anglican newspaper *Dominion Churchman* called it "the prettiest church west of Montreal." With the growth of the Anglican population in Guelph, a decision was made to divide the congregation, and St. James was built at the corner of Glasgow and Paisley.

Walk down the driveway to the parking lot behind St. George's Church.

From there take the recreational walking trail which follows the river in a westerly direction.

When you cross Eramosa Road the trail continues behind the highrise apartment buildings and will lead right back to Goldie Mill Park and the Guelph Youth Music Centre.

