

BUCHAN HOUSE

**Mocking Bird Hill Farm
943 Landslide Road**

Bylaw #92-18



*This is an edited copy of the original document, originals included in the
Buchan House - Mockingbird Hill Farm Binder

BUCHAN HOUSE, MOCKINGBIRD HILL FARM

Reasons for Designation

The original solid timber structure known as the Buchan House is an excellent, though late, example of traditional early Canadian dressed timber construction.

The house is constructed of solid squared logs of considerable girth, dovetailed at the corners. Craftsmanship in the dovetailing is in the best traditional practice to control shrinkage and allow for proper drainage.

The Buchan House is noteworthy because of the size of timbers used, the original high quality of craftsmanship, its sound condition and minimal alterations, and because it is the only building in the city embodying all of the above characteristics of traditional solid lumber carpentry.

THE BUCHAN RESIDENCE

An assessment for designation as a Heritage Structure - April 1991

Background

While no record of the date of construction has yet surfaced, the land on which this building originally stood first appears in the records as a Crown Patent of October 1884 to one Samuel Coulter, who transferred it three months later to James Coulter, and since the first activity in Northern Ontario was usually timber production, it seems logical to assume that the property was logged off following its acquisition.

Although sawn lumber would be available, and frame construction was the generally accepted building system by the latter half of the 19th century, the availability of large timbers and the presence of skilled loggers suggests this as the logical material for construction of this building, hereafter referred to as the Buchan Residence after the family name of the last private owner.

The Buchan Residence first came to prominence in 1972 when the city of Sault Ste. Marie expropriated the property on which the house sat as part of a land acquisition process for a possible deep water harbour.

At that time, the building was measured and photographed and a description and construction sketches prepared by local architect Perry Short. It is this document that still forms the basis for the present designation.

In those pre-LACAC days (Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee), the fact that the basic fabric of the building was of architectural significance received little public recognition, and the owner's claim for compensation based on the cost of reproduction was denied by the city.

In any event, the harbour project did not proceed and the house was rented out by the municipality, until in 1988, following vacation by the last tenant, its condition had deteriorated to such an extent that the Property Department of the City of Sault Ste. Marie recommended immediate demolition. Subsequent intervention by LACAC produced a directive to secure the premises against further vandalism and ensured a stay of demolition for six months (ie. until April 1990) to permit LACAC to take appropriate action.

In September of 1989, the building was viewed by Mr. Fred Cane, Conservation Officer for the Heritage Branch of the Ministry of Culture and Communications and his report of March 1990 suggested that LACAC recommend to City Council that the building was worthy of designation. Mr. Cain also spelled out certain aspects of funding criteria for buildings relocated from their original site and offered his Department's participation in funding a more detailed study.

Unfortunately, with time running out, it was not possible to follow this procedure and so, rather than see the building demolished out of hand, LACAC found a party who was prepared to record and dismantle the building and store the logs for re-erection, and City Council graciously sanctioned a one-week extension to allow this to happen.

These timbers have now been re-erected in their new location on “Mockingbird Hill Farm” and the carcass of the building has survived intact.

Building Description

The following description of the building “as found” in 1972 is reproduced here since the reasons which made it architecturally important then are equally valid in 1991.

Report on Buchan Residence
Carpin Beach Road
Sault Ste. Marie, ON

Living accommodation consists of a dressed timber or squared log cabin of some age which has been subsequently remodelled and added to over the years and is now winterized to provide a small comfortable 1 ½ storey year-round residence containing a divided living room with stone fireplace, combined kitchen/dining area, bathroom, sewing room and two communicating bedrooms on the upper floor. The building has no basement.

Heating is by a modern space heater centrally located on the ground floor and there is a pressure tank water supply system from an artesian well with a septic tank and 200 lineal feet of tile field sewage disposal system.

The house is situated in large and beautifully maintained grounds fronting the Little Carp River and enjoys extensive views to the south, west and east.

The most interesting part of the building both architecturally and historically is the original solid timber portion, which is constructed of solid squared logs of considerable girth dovetailed at the corner, rising to a height of some 2 feet above the upper floor level with a pole and plank roof over. While probably originally lined throughout with 1” by 4” double grooved pine plank paneling, subsequent alterations have covered up most of this and other early work, making detailed examination difficult.

In the absence of specific written records it is always difficult to accurately date such a structure, but there are aspects of the building which furnish clues to its age.

The size of the logs alone indicate that it was very likely the first building on the property when the virgin timber was being felled because even by the second half of the 19th

century, frame structures were the accepted building form except in areas where timber was abundant. These have been hand dressed (adzed) to four flat faces to a general width of 9".

The craftsmanship in the dovetailing of the corners of the building is in the best traditional practice to control shrinkage and allow for proper drainage which is probably why the timber walls, where still exposed to the elements, are completely free of rot. Such construction, while typical of quite early structures (pre-1850) would still be appropriate much later where both virgin timber, and men to handle it, were available, particularly if a sawmill capable of handling very large logs was not yet in operation.

The proportion of the window openings is somewhat larger than the small squat openings typical of the early log structures suggesting that they were cut for standard mill run sash which were commonly available after mid-Victorian times.

The trim material also presents some contrasts, in the only two mouldings used. The beaded board used for panelling - and the same bead occurs in the stair balusters and newel posts - is deeply cut and almost square shouldered in contrast to the relatively flat profile of the architrave moulding used at doors and windows which is typical of that found in buildings from the 1880's to as late as 1910. The staircase has a simple elegance suggesting a degree of refinement unusual in a rough logging settlement.

For the above reasons I would suggest the original structure may date from the 1880's, but a search of the grant of the original timber rights might give a more positive date.

In brief, the original structure is excellent, though late, example of traditional early Canadian dressed timber construction carried out with some taste.

Because of the size of timbers used, because of its state of preservation and the fact that it could not now be reproduced in its present form, and because no similar building embodying all of the above characteristics has come to my attention before in this area, I believe that this portion of the building is of historic significance and should be preserved regardless of the disposition of the balance of building and site.

Since the above was written, and because circumstances required that the building be removed from the property without delay, only that portion of the building that was unquestionably original and minimally altered (ie., the log portion forming the ground floor) was salvaged. The pole roof structure, staircase and remaining wainscoting, all substantially modified, were not considered to be sufficiently important to justify dismantling, cataloguing and storing.

Reconstruction

Reconstruction, insofar as it is significant for designation purposes, should involve replacement of all original timbers in their original location - augmented where necessary with new material of similar species and appearance (but clearly designated as facsimile or reproduction).

Spaces between timbers should be filled and chinked or caulked all in the fashion of the original building.

Windows, doors, trim, attic and roof treatment, etc. should be sympathetic to the period of the original surviving work but are not considered integral to the designation process.

Reasons for Designation

The Buchan Residence is the only known locally surviving squared log building in sound condition and with minimal alterations. Although of relatively late date for that type of construction, it embodies the highest standard of traditional solid lumber carpentry.

While it is unusual to designate a building which has been relocated from its original site, the Ontario Heritage Foundation has established certain criteria which can justify such action:

1. The importance of the designation must be intrinsic to the structure itself, rather than the location or historic connotation.
- this is certainly the case with the Buchan Residence.
2. The move must have been necessary for the preservation of the building and must not been simply a matter of convenience.
- this too applies to this building.
3. The new location should match as closely as possible the original site and surrounding.

The present site on Mockingbird Hill Farm is very similar to the original with a setback from the road, relationship to existing grade, proximity of similar buildings (rural atmosphere) and extensive views to all four directions.

Respectfully submitted,

D. Perry Short
Sault Ste. Marie LACAC
1972

**Buchan Residence - Carpin Beach Area
(Registry Office Title Search)**

On October 8th, 1884, a Crown Patent was issued to one Samuel Coulter for the East Subdivision of Section number 7 in the Township of Awenge, in the District of Algoma, and Province of Ontario, containing 124 acres, more or less.

From the period of 1884 to 1903, the above-noted property was transferred to the following parties:

- 1) January 26th, 1885 (by instrument #19) Samuel Coulter transferred the 124 acre parcel to James Coulter.
- 2) February 23rd, 1887 (by instrument #35) James Coulter transferred the 124 acre parcel to J.J. Kehoe and H.C. Hamilton.
- 3) October 3rd, 1891 (by instrument #114) J.J. Kehoe and H.C. Hamilton transferred the 124-acre parcel to C.V. Plummer.
- 4) On July 3rd, 1894, a warrant was issued by Reeve John A Moore, "commanding the Treasurer of the said Municipality to levy upon the land hereinafter mentioned for the arrears of taxes due thereon, with his costs, the Treasurer of the said Municipality did on the 15th day of October 1894, sell by public auction to C.V. Plummer, Accountant, of the Town of Sault Ste. Marie, in the District of Algoma, that certain parcel or tract of land and premises hereinafter mentioned, at and for the price or sum of \$38.89 of lawful money of Canada, on account of the Arrears of Taxes alleged to be due thereon up to the 31st day of December in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and ninety three, together with costs."

The land conveyed (by Treasurer's Deed #148) consisted of the Northeast Quarter of Broken Section number 7 in the Township of Awenge, in the District of Algoma and Province of Ontario, containing 18 acres more or less.

- 5) On July 20th, 1903, Charles Vernon Plummer of the town of Sault Ste. Marie, in the District of Algoma, Accountant, an unmarried man transferred (by registered instrument #223) to Susan Griffis of the Township of Awenge in the said District, Widow, that portion of the broken north east subdivision of Section 7 in the said Township of Awenge, which lies to the north of the Big Carp River or Creek running through said subdivision, and containing by admeasurement 15 acres, more or less. Price of sale was \$500.00.
- 6) July 27th, 1917, Susan Griffis transferred the above parcel (by registered instrument #442) to Winnie Johns, the wife of Thomas Johns, of the Township of Tarentorus, in the District of Algoma, for the sum of \$1,000.00.
- 7) June 2nd, 1919 (by instrument #455) Winnie Johns transferred the above parcel to Henry N. Anderson, Music Dealer, and William J. Hesson, Lumberman, both of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, in the said District of Algoma, for the sum of \$2,000.00.

- 8) On October 22nd, 1925, William J. Hesson transferred to Henry N. Anderson, a one-acre parcel with a frontage of 150 feet on the Big Carp River and a depth of approximately 300 feet. This parcel as described in instrument #483, abuts the east boundary of the North East Subdivision of Broken Section 7.

On the same day (October 22, 1925), Henry N. Anderson transferred to William J. Hesson, a one-acre parcel with a frontage of 250 feet on the Big Carp River, and a depth of approximately 200 feet. This parcel as described in instrument #484, is west of and adjacent to the firstly described one acre parcel.

(*Note: It would appear that the original log dwelling was situated on the firstly described one acre parcel and used as a residence by the Henry N. Anderson family. A second building situated on the adjacent westerly one acre parcel was used as a residence by the William J. Hesson family.)

- 9) On August 25th, 1941, (and after the death of William J. Hesson on June 17th, 1929) Mary A. Hesson, widow and sole devisee of W. J. Hesson, transferred to Henry N. Anderson that parcel or tract of land and premises being composed of that portion of the broken northeast subdivision of Section number 7, in the said Township of Awenge, which lies to the north of the Big Carp River, and containing by admeasurement 25 acres, more or less. This deed was registered on October 14th, 1941, as instrument #572. Price of sale was \$2,000.00. Included in this grant were the following chattels situate on or about the said property: "3 double beds, 3 double mattresses, 3 double springs, 1 double-decker cot with springs and mattresses, 2 single cots, 1 dresser, 2 commodes, 1 large oak dining table and six chairs, 1 small table, 2 davenports, 1 magazine rack, 1 drop-leaf table, 4 rockers, 3 arm chairs, 1 hammock swing, 3 side tables, 3 benches, dishes, 1 stove, 2 2-burner electric plates, 2 lawn mowers, 3 hoes, 2 rakes, 1 spade, 1 long-handled shovel, 1 potato digger, and 1 hay fork.
- 10) On August 18th, 1947, Henry N. Anderson transferred to Frank J. A. Buchan, of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, in the District of Algoma, the one acre parcel with the frontage of 250 feet on the Big Carp River that was originally conveyed to William J. Hesson on Oct. 22, 1925 under the registered instrument #484. The price paid by Frank J. A. Buchan was \$1,800.00.
- 11) On June 6th, 1963, John Ross Rae, of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, in the District of Algoma, and Hazel Mary Everett of the City of Sault Ste. Marie, in the State of Michigan, one of the United States of America, being the Executors of the Last Will and Testament of Henry Nicol Anderson (who dies on or about the 20th day of August, 1962), transferred the remainder of the parcel of land lying north of the Big Carp River and containing the old log homestead to Frank J. A. Buchan. This deed of land was registered as instrument #T-55956 on June 28th, 1963.
- 12) On January 5th, 1971, Frank J. A. Buchan transferred to Frank J. A. Buchan and Mildred Buchan his wife, as joint tenants, all of that portion of the broken Northeast Subdivision of Section 7 in the Township of Awenge, lying to the north of the Big Carp River. The deed of land was registered on January 10th, 1972, under registered instruments #T-122629 and #T-122630.

- 13) On July 14th, 1975, approval was given to the City of Sault Ste. Marie, to expropriate the lands designated as "Part 1" on Expropriation Plan #T-158415. The land expropriated was all that portion of the North East Subdivision of Broken Section 7, in the Township of Awenge, as described in registered instruments #T-122629 and #T-122630.

IDS. July '03.



EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS - Showing additions to original Cabin.



note
shutter
holdback.

PORCH SIDE
Showing original log size.
note one @ 1.7 ft.



Gen view
of Porch.

BUCHAN HOUSE
CARPIN BEACH RD
SAULT STE MARIE



Various views



IPS - July 83.



corner of original cabin
& junction with addition.

BUCHAN HOUSE
CARPIN BEACH ROAD
SAULT STE MARIE



↑ Log Joint details at
corner of original cabin
↓



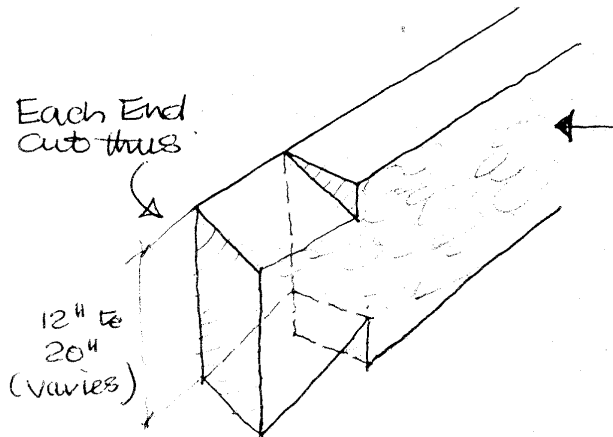
↑ Log joint details
at corner of original
cabin.
↓



All photographs taken 1972.
This report prepared 1985.

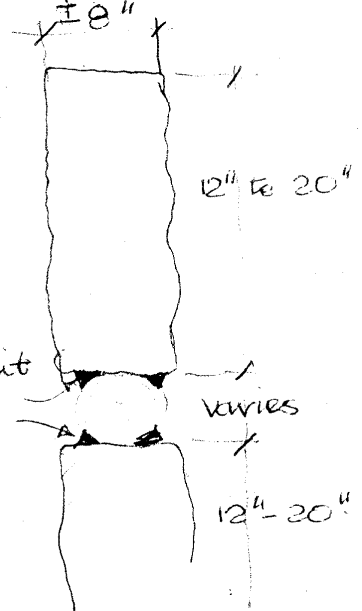
IPS. July '83.

BUCHAN HOUSE
CARPIN BEACH ROAD
SAULT STE MARIE

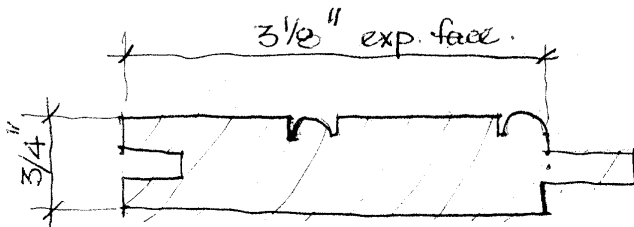


EXT. WALL
DETAIL

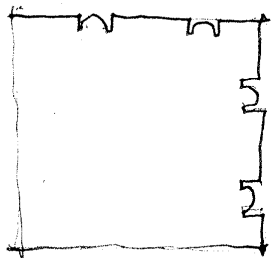
Hand adze
to both faces.



WALL
CONSTRUCTION
typical older
section



DOUBLE GROOVED PANELLING



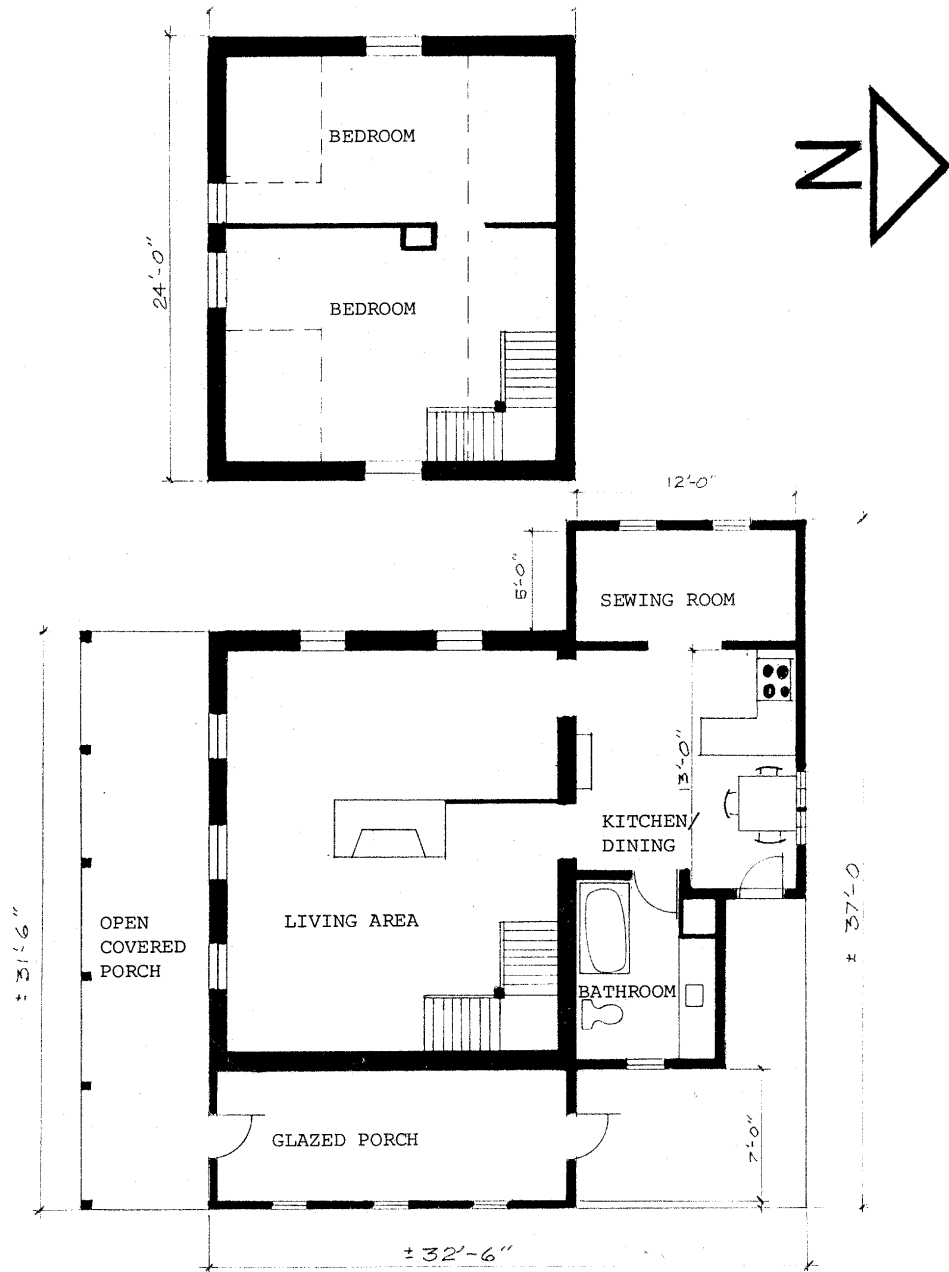
NEWEL POST.

Newel post &
baluster, same
detail as panelling



BAUSTER.

BUCHAN RESIDENCE
Carpin Beach Road,
Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario



FLOOR PLAN

BUCHAN RESIDENCE
 Carpin Beach Road,
 Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

APPENDIX 'A' Page 2
 July 1972
 Scale 1/8" = 1'-0"