

Historical Research

A Guide for Property Owners



Table of Contents

Windsor Public Library	4
Museum Windsor	4
City of Windsor	5
Heritage Planning Legislation	5
Online	6
Other	7
How to Conduct Research	8
Sample Checklist	9

Please make an appointment prior to visiting the Windsor Community Archives, the Windsor Public Library's Local History Branch or the Planning Department

Windsor Public Library

Windsor Public Library Local History Branch (3312 Sandwich St):

- City Directories (almost Full Set until the 1980s)
- Print, microfilm, and digital collections
- Ontario Genealogical Society, Essex County Branch collections

Windsor Community Archives (85 Pitt St E):

- Property Tax Assessment Rolls
- Land Title Deeds (using Instrument Numbers)
- Architectural Drawings
- Variety of Newspapers on Microfilm

Online:

- Windsor Public Library Obituaries
https://www.windsorpubliclibrary.com/?page_id=123
- Windsor's History & Pictures
<http://heritage.windsorpubliclibrary.com/index.php>

Museum Windsor

- Museum Windsor Online Database Website
<http://windsormuseum.ca:8080/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=advform>
- Fire Insurance Maps
Windsor Community Archives (Maison François Baby House, 254 Pitt St W)
or in scanned format at the Planning Department
- City Directories (almost Full Set)
Windsor Community Archives (Maison François Baby House, 254 Pitt St W)

City of Windsor

- History of Windsor - includes map with boundaries of former Border City municipalities
<https://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/historyofwindsor/Pages/default.aspx>
- Use “MyCity” app to search for property information such as legal description and property dimensions
<http://www.mappmycity.ca/>
- Windsor Aerial Photos 2000-2019 Side-By-Side Comparison
<http://www.mappmycity.ca/MyWindsorAerial/index.html>

Planning and Building Department

- Municipal Heritage Register
<https://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/planning/Plans-and-Community-Information/Know-Your-Community/Heritage-Planning/Pages/Windsor-Municipal-Heritage-Register.aspx>
- Heritage File Information (by request)
- Heritage Planning
<https://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/planning/Plans-and-Community-Information/Know-Your-Community/Heritage-Planning/Pages/Heritage-Planning.aspx>

Heritage Planning Legislation

- Ontario Heritage Toolkit - Designating Heritage Properties
http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/publications/Heritage_Tool_Kit_DHP_Eng.pdf
- Legislated Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060009>
- Ontario Heritage Act
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o18>

Online

Ontario Land Registry Office:

- Historical Books now available online
<https://www.onland.ca/ui/12/books/search>
- Parcel/Abstracts (revealing land transactions such as ownerships)
<http://help.onland.ca/en/historical-books/#historical-books-categories>

City Directories (1888-1977)

<http://scholar.uwindsor.ca/windsor-directories/>

Newspapers:

- ProQuest Historical Newspapers* (1893-2010)
<https://ezp.windsorpubliclibrary.com:4048/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/hnpwindsorstar?accountid=31270>
*Must have a Windsor Public Library membership/library card to log in
- INK - ODW Newspaper Collection - OCR searchable
<http://ink.scholarsportal.info/searchadv>

Available collections include:

- The Windsor Evening Record (1893-1918)
<http://ink.scholarsportal.info/wer>
- The Border Cities Star (1918-1935)
<http://ink.scholarsportal.info/bcs>
- Google News Archive
<https://news.google.ca/newspapers>

Available collections include:

- The Windsor Daily Star (1935-1959)
<https://news.google.ca/newspapers?nid=4b-LE5UluQcC>
- The Windsor Star (1959-1986)
<https://news.google.ca/newspapers?nid=SAguW2jnL4UC>

Other Online Resources

- International Metropolis and Lost Windsor - local website about the history of Windsor and Border Region
<http://internationalmetropolis.com/>
- County Atlas Digital Project (1880 Map of Ontario Counties)
<http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/countyatlas/searchmapframes.php>
- DTE Aerial Photography (1949-1997) - only applicable to areas close to Detroit River
https://digital.library.wayne.edu/dte_aerial/index.html
- Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada
<http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/introduction>
- Library of Congress (US) photos – Walkerville (also Windsor and Sandwich)
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?q=Walkerville&sp=5&co=det>
- Library of Congress (US) photos – general search
<https://www.loc.gov/photos/>
- Southwestern Ontario Digital Archive
<https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/swoda/>
- Virtual Motor City - Wayne State University digital collections
<https://digital.library.wayne.edu/item/wayne:collectionvmc>

Other Resources to be Explored

- Land Registry Office; Land Titles
- Business Records
- Business Webpages
- Private Manuscripts
- Municipal Records
- Published works
- Personal Interviews

How to Conduct Research

- Use the Sample Checklist to organize your research
- Reference all sources for ease of searching back
- Take pictures to record all materials referenced
- For Land Registry Office Records (also available online), it is necessary to know the Legal description of the property (i.e. the Registered Plan number and lot numbers) in order to search for ownership
- A USB stick is needed for saving microfilm records at the Windsor Public Library
- Use a variety of resources to confirm:
 - Property addresses- numbers (and some street names) changed at certain times
 - Some locations were not numbered until the late 1800s and have to be checked under the correct physical boundary of the municipality at the time of interest.
(Visit <https://www.citywindsor.ca/residents/historyofwindsor/Pages/default.aspx>)
 - Some addresses changed multiple times in the 1920s
 - In 1937, for Windsor, former Walkerville, Sandwich and Ford City (East Windsor), addresses changed. The 1937 City Directory lists both old and new numbers and the Fire Insurance Maps showed both numbers
 - For the former Riverside, Sandwich East and West Townships, addresses changed after 1965
 - Refer to successive years of City Directories to trace changed address numbers
 - People associated with the property
 - Check the Land Registry Office records to determine ownership dates through the land transaction records
 - Look up City Directories for residents and their occupations
 - Note that some tenants became owners later (owners have an asterisk * beside their names in the City Directories)
 - Year of building construction
 - If the property is subdivided (eg. Into lots from farm/undeveloped lands), the building is usually constructed after the date of the subdivision (date of subdivision found on Registered Plan). However some buildings could have been constructed prior to subdivision.
 - Land Registry Office transaction records show ownership changes; however these records usually do not indicate if a property has building on it
 - City Directories, using current addresses for the time, show occupancy; the earliest record may indicate the first occupant, with construction likely completed the same or previous year
 - Use years of deed and/or early City Directory dates to check against the relevant Property Tax Assessment Roll for signs of building

Sample Checklist

HISTORIC RESEARCH RESOURCES – SAMPLE CHECKLIST

Property Name: _____

Resource Type	Check	Info
Registered Plans		
Insurance Plans		
Aerial Photos (DTE: Walkerville 1956, 1967)		
Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada		
Illustrated Atlas/History Maps		
Land Registry Records		
Property Tax Assessment Rolls		
City Directories		
Architectural Drawings		
Obituaries (Windsor Star)		
Photographs (Detroit Publishing Company, WPL)		
Newspaper		
Business Records, Private Manuscript, Municipal Records/ Info from Owners		