Historical Merit

The residence at 15 Wynarden Court was constructed in 1864 by Henry Yates and was known locally as Wynarden or "Yates' Castle". Henry Yates was instrumental in the development of the Great Western Railway, which was later bought by the Grand Trunk Railway, and finally by CN Rail. Yates, in conjunction with J. Stratford (Stratford Hospital), was involved in a number of significant enterprises, including an engineering consulting and contracting firm and the Lubric Oil Works. He also held the position of Chief Engineer with the Grand Trunk Railway. Yates sat as a Town Councillor from 1859 to 1862.

Henry and his Emily Yates resided at Wynarden until 1894, when Henry Yates died. Emily continued to reside there until 1910. It was then taken over by H. R. Yates and his wife, Mrs. L. Yates, from 1913 to 1920. Mrs. L. Yates remained in the house until 1923. For the period 1924 – 1930, Wynarden remained vacant, and in 1932 the conversion to rental accommodation began.

Architectural Merits

Wynarden represents one of the oldest remaining mansions in Brantford. Incorrectly referred to as "Yates' Castle", the residence is actually patterned on a Victorian country villa design which incorporates numerous Tudor accents such as the doorway arches, window groupings and chimney arrangement. The architect was John Turner, and was built by Bellhouse and Darge. With its garden walls, entrance gate, detached servants' quarters and private school (linked to the main house via a bricked, vaulted tunnel and pit system), and carriage house, the residence is a rare example of English aristocratic traditions. The terraced lawn, one of several in the area, hence the name Terrace Hill, is further evidence of the English influence.

Wynarden is considered to be provincially significant in its architectural form by Peter Stokes, a leading architectural historian. Features of the estate are so extensive that only a brief summary of the more outstanding is provided here: yellow brickwork in Flemish bond was dyed red to provide uniform look; brick accents in the form of quoins, corbelling, joined seven-sided chimney, beading and hood-moulds; excellent stonework, including embossed crests and emblems bearing the messages "HEY" (Henry & Emily Yates) and "1864", windowsills and window heads; numerous bay windows with interior box shutters and oriel windows; tow towers (one added to provide interior bathroom facilities); a "widow's walk on the roof, a number of dormers with fine Gothic detail, a polychromatic slate roof.

The carriage house and the schoolhouse/servants' quarters are the two major outbuildings on the site. Of these, the schoolhouse/servants' quarters is the
more prominent, being joined to the main residence by a brick wall broken by a large wooden gate. It is located in close proximity to the house at a 30-degree angle, forming a small courtyard. It is finished in red brick with yellow brick details and quoins.

**LOCATIONAL DESCRIPTION**

Wynarden; 15 Wynarden Court (formerly 75 Sydenham Street)
Registered Plan of Subdivision 80
C.I.H.B. No. 06173005900075

**ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF WYNARDEN**

Wynarden was built in 1864, and represents one of the oldest remaining mansions in Brantford. This largely Victorian country villa, designed by John Turner and incorporating Tudor elements (evidenced by the doorway arches, grouping of windows and chimneys) is a tribute to Henry Yates. Yates was instrumental in the development and redevelopment of the Great Western Railway, Chief Engineer of the Grand Trunk Railway, and a partner with J. Stratford in a railway consulting and contracting firm. In fact, Wynarden is a testimony to the revenue generated by the railway era in the nineteenth century Ontario. Its location, overlooking the trains which pass by the property frequently, provides a constant reminder of the influence the railway has had on the City's development. Another influence exerted upon Wynarden was Yates' English background. Wynarden, with its garden walls, entrance gate, detached servants' quarters and private school linked to the house via a bricked, vaulted tunnel and pit system, carriage house and bricked cellar entered by a trap door, is a rare example of the English aristocracy. The terraced lawn, from where it is said comes the name Terrace Hill (Street, district), is further evidence of the English influence.

Exterior features include: yellow brickwork (quoins, corbelling, Flemish bonding, a joined seven-side chimney, beading and hood-moulds); excellent stonework (embossed crests, and emblems bearing the messages "HEY" referring to Henry and Emily Yates, and "1864"), windowsills and window heads; numerous bay windows with interior box shutters and oriel windows; two towers, a number of dormers with fine Gothic detail on all three buildings; and a slate roof.
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

I.  HISTORICAL DATA

a)  **Construction Date:**  Wyndarden was built in 1864 (re:  Expositor, May 12, 1985, and re:  plaque embedded in exterior wall.)

b)  **Architect:**  John turner (re:  Expositor)

c)  **Builder:**  Bellhouse and Darge were the sole contractors (re: Expositor)

d)  **Original Owner:**  Henry Yates was instrumental in the development of the Great Western Railway (bought by the Grand Trunk, and thereafter purchased by Canadian National) (re:  Waldie). He formed a railway consulting and contracting firm with J. Stratford (re: Waldie, and the 1875 Business Directory). He functioned as the Chief Engineer of the Grand Trunk (re: Expositor). He also was co-owner (with Stratford) of Lubric Oil Works (re: Reville). Yates served as town councillor from 1859-62 (re: "Waldie"). Note that Jean Waldie attributes her documentation to R.J. Windrim, the compiler of a Tweedsmuir History).

e)  **The Original House – Wynarden:**  was built on the site of Merrigold Villa. Wynarden was described in 1865 as a novel revival of the old Elizabethan style. Wynarden was equipped with a billiards room, butler's pantry, spacious drawing-room, lady's boudoir with a bow window facing east, force pumps, water closets, bathrooms with hot and cold water, stained glass windows with box (interior hide-away) shutters, marble chimney pieces, a staircase, niches in the walls and in the stairwell for sculpture, bells, speaking trumpets, dumb waiters, ventilation system, a slate roof, a five-storey tower and a handsome garden (re: Expositor).

f)  **Other Features and Other Owners:**  Waldie mentions that the Wynarden property contained a high board fence and stone wall, a fountain, four greenhouses, a building that served as a private schoolhouse and as a servants' quarters, fireplaces in most rooms, wood-panelled ceilings, an underground passage linking the main house with the servants' quarters and a carriage house and stables. She also records that Herbert Yates and wife lived in opulence at Wynarden, which then boasted of a wine cellar, dining room, drawing room, billiard room, butler's pantry, dumbwaiter, master bedroom and other bedrooms, living room, den and a baker's pantry.
II. ARCHITECTURAL DATA

a) **Topography and Outdoor Furnishings:** very large corner lot on a terraced section of Terrace Hill; rough stone drive on the flat of the terrace entered via Rushton Avenue, ended by a cement sheathed rubble stone wall; cement wall also along Wynarden Court (formerly Sydenham Street); section of terrace wall in the middle of the lawn converted into a garden.

b) **Vegetation:** tree-lined Usher and Wynarden Court; trees on north slope; dense vegetation on east.

c) **Streetscape Relationship:** Wynarden's height is reduced by surrounding vegetation; is truly a landmark and an unlikely one for the nearby railway developments.

d) **Description of Schoolhouse and Servant's Quarters:** joined to the house by a brick wall and large wooden swing doors with enormous hinges is the schoolhouse and servants' quarters; schoolhouse is closely placed to the main residence at a 30-degree angle from it; has four symmetrically arranged 6-over-6 double-sash windows with brick Tudor hood-moulds; has three gables, two of which (on either end) have a horseshoe-shaped upper sash with corbelled and imbricated brick hood-moulds, and the middle one, which has its full face, including the triangular upper sash, in glass; this middle peak serves as a dormer; finished in red brick on south side and all other sides, plus the quoins in yellow brick beading.

e) **Description of Carriage House:** found nearest Rushton Avenue; half the original size; covered in siding; back wall attached to terrace wall; dormer peaks have a vent design where once was glass.

f) **Structural Condition:** structurally sound, with ongoing program of maintenance and restoration.

g) **Alterations, Additions:** The house has been divided into six apartments, and thus ceiling moulding has been replaced and the central staircase has been removed; balcony, verandah, porch, every fireplace has been removed, with some replaced with non-functioning fireplaces; a narrow window on Usher Street façade has been infilled; second-storey doors have been converted into windows; removal of iron work on roof line; modern cement chimneys; carriage house is half the original size.

h) **Workmanship:** quality features include: quoins and the brick patternwork in general; elaborate embossed stone heads,
bargeboards, bay windows with box shutters, engraved stone emblems including "H.E.Y.", "1864" and a looped design; tunnel system, bricked cellar, two towers, dormers, joined chimneys set on angles, patterned slate roof, brick wall with large wooden gate; cherry-wood paneling, large curved doors, oriel windows, an accompanying schoolhouse and carriage house.

i) **Storeys:** 2 1/2 house plus a tunnel and cellar; five-storey tower.

j) **Arrangement:** symmetrical arrangement of gable peaked projection, dormers and chimney, but asymmetrical placement of the towers and windows.

k) **Exterior Wall Material:** Flemish bond brick, primarily buff brick with colour added with a red wash dye.

l) **North Side:** the 5-storey tower dominates this façade; a verandah from the east side corner to the tower is underneath the pit entrance to the tunnel and contains a porch; past the tower on the first storey is a porch and a picture window divided into four long parts, topped with geometric stained glass facing inward; two 7-sided chimney stacks built together as one; two dormers.

m) **North Side Tower:** 5-foot wide side-by-side centre-ogee shaped door moulding; squared doors with panels which curve with the centre ogee; stoop porch; 3 steps up in vestibule; vestibule has plain east window and shutter beside interior door; interior door has a square transom divided into rectangles; interior door panels have two short rectangles at the bottom and two long rectangles toward the top; embossed moulding around panels; quoins and the wide bands between storeys in yellow brick; at second storey "Tudor"-topped windows with stone sills; the third storey Gothic windows have a brick hood-mould; dormer with Gothic arch and pilaster on each of three sides of tower; plain wide staircase followed by narrow, twisting stairs, diagonal wood paneling on ceiling in the same manner as the courthouse.

n) **East Side:** yellow brick patterns throughout the red brick; on first storey, two picture windows divided into 3 long casement vertical oriented yellow bricks; a similar kind of window is found on the second storey; also at the second storey is an oriel window with paneled wood below the panes of glass; this oriel window has been changed because the yellow brick heads do not fit the shape of the aperture today; at the third storey, there is a rectangular double sash window centred above the oriel.
o) **Usher Street Façade (South Side):** in the farthest western extent is a tower with quoins and an arched entrance to the pit joined to a cement and rubble stone wall; 2 1/2 storey gable topped projection is interspersed between the main façade, recessed 3 feet; box-shaped bay window having on its south side two 6-paned fixed windows attached to one another and transoms, and on its east and west sides having a similar width of window, but with four panes on either side; above is an oriel window with inside-facing stained glass; in the gable are two attached Gothic windows within a Gothic head; bargeboard missing central pendant; on east side a later door with a single pane transom and an Italianate paneled balcony door with transom. Western recessed section – quoin bay window; a recessed Gothic frames narrow window to either side of bay; these tiny windows (one of which has been infilled) have pedestals; above bay is a flat oriel window, and between bay and oriel are stonework crest-shaped ornaments bearing the messages "H.E.Y." (referring to Henry and Emily Yates) and "1864" (the construction date).

Eastern recessed section – all four windows, the two on the first storey and two on the second storey are quoin ed in yellow brick and yellow brick beading divides the storeys; second storey windows have vermiculated stone heads.

Slate roof has four dormers with triangular panes of glass in the top sash and bargeboard, every piece missing its pendants; two red brick chimneys with bellow bases and heads turned on a slant, placed upon the gable roof; three cement joined stacks, one set to the west and another to the east.