

# Edgewood Dry Stone Wall (28 Boyd Street, Bobcaygeon)

## Heritage Evaluation Report

Bobcaygeon

PLAN 70 LOT 2 TO LOT 5 PT; LOT 1 PT LOT 6

PIN: 631290226

September 2020



## Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The subject property has been researched and evaluated in order to determine its cultural heritage significance under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990. A property is eligible for designation if it has physical, historical, associative or contextual value and meets any one of the nine criteria set out under Regulation 9/06 of the Act. Staff have determined that 28 Boyd Street, Bobcaygeon has cultural heritage value or interest and merits designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

### 1. The property has design value or physical value because it:

i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method:

28 Boyd Street is an excellent example of nineteenth-century dry stone wall construction in Ontario. In the nineteenth century, dry stone walls were constructed by early settlers in many areas of the province, but good surviving examples are not common everywhere. The example at 28 Boyd Street is one of two major instances of this wall construction type in Kawartha Lakes which have been well-preserved since the late nineteenth century. It helps place the Edgewood estate within the wider context of landscape design in the nineteenth century in the tradition of the picturesque.

ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit:

The dry stone wall displays a typical degree of craftsmanship for a structure of this type. However, the degree of craftsmanship in dry stone construction, as whole, must be of a high level in order for the structure to survive.

iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement:

The dry stone wall demonstrates a high degree of technical achievement through its construction method. The building methods used in the construction of dry stone walls are technically specific and the example at 28 Boyd Street demonstrates this building method well. Dry stone wall construction has been recognized by UNESCO as part of the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity because of both its cultural significance within agricultural and rural landscapes and its technical merit.

### 2. The property has historical or associative value because it:

i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to the community:

28 Boyd Street has direct historical associations with the Boyd family who made significant contribution to the development of Bobcaygeon in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The property was constructed by W.T.C. Boyd, the son of lumber baron Mossom Boyd, who was also a significant figure in the village in the late

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through his involvement with various business enterprises, the railway, and local government.

ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture:

The dry stone wall at 28 Boyd Street has the potential to yield information about the role of the Boyds in Bobcaygeon during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to the community:

The designer of the wall, specifically, is unknown, but it forms part of a larger estate plan designed by Peterborough architect John Belcher and at least some of the wall was laid out by his son, Alfred Belcher. Belcher, who also designed the former house, was an influential nineteenth century architect in the Peterborough area but appears to also have influenced the growth of Bobcaygeon throughout the mid to late nineteenth century through his decades long friendship with the Boyds and his design for local buildings, including Christ Church Anglican Church. The wall itself was constructed by a mason brought to Bobcaygeon from Scotland specifically to build the wall. He is known in W.T.C. Boyd's journal as "Old Scott" but his exact identity is not known.

### 3. The property has contextual value because it:

i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area:

The property helps support the historic character of Bobcaygeon as an important landscape architecture element dating from the late nineteenth century.

ii. is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings:

The dry stone wall is physically linked to its surroundings as part of the wider landscape of Boyd properties in and around Bobcaygeon. These include the Boyd Lumber office on Canal Street East, the remains of the dry stone walls on the adjacent property and the M.M. Boyd barn and house on County Road 36. Together these properties form a cohesive landscape linked to a prominent family from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

iii. is a landmark.

The dry stone wall at 28 Boyd Street is a local landmark in Bobcaygeon. It is a recognized and well-known landscape feature in the community and can also be seen from County Road 36.

## Design and Physical Value

28 Boyd Street in Bobcaygeon has design as physical value as an excellent example of a historic dry stone wall. This is an uncommon construction type in Ontario and many examples of these dry stone walls, most of which were constructed in rural areas, have not survived or have deteriorated significantly. The dry stone wall, as a construction practice, has been recognized by UNESCO as having global importance as intangible cultural heritage. The dry stone wall at 28 Boyd Street is an excellent example of this type of global craftsmanship, although its application in a small town estate house, makes it unique from much other drystone construction primarily found in rural and agricultural areas.

The drystone wall is one of the last remaining two built elements of the former Edgewood Estate, constructed for W.T.C. Boyd, which once stood on this site, and is the only element still located on its original site. The estate, which once included a large late Victorian home on a landscaped lot, was constructed beginning in 1889. The house itself was completed by 1891. The landscape elements were developed simultaneously with the house. The house was demolished in 2005-2006 but a large portion of the dry stone wall along Boyd Street was left effectively intact. The other built element of this site which is still extant is the Boyd Shanty, a replica log shanty constructed by Silas Crowe for W.T.C. Boyd as a curiosity for his guests, particularly those from Europe. The Shanty was relocated to Kawartha Settlers' Village in 2005.

The wall has significant technical merit in its construction methods as an example of a double stack wall, the most common type of dry stone wall. These walls are constructed by creating two sides to the walls with separate flat stones and filling the voids with rubble stone, also known as hearting. The walls are strengthened by larger through stones which run through both sides of the wall and connect the two faces. The wall is capped with copes or capstones which, like the through stones, span the width of the wall and strengthen it.

Dry stone construction is unique from most other types of masonry because it does not use mortar to hold the stones together. In Bobcaygeon, for example, the vast majority of stone structures from the nineteenth century are constructed with typical masonry construction where mortar holds the stones in place. However, dry stone construction required the mason to fit stones together based on their natural shapes such that they will hold in place and keep the wall standing. The construction method of these walls requires a high level of technical skill and expertise, in both selecting the stone and constructing the wall. In this case, it is believed, but has not been confirmed, that at least the stone was from the construction of the Trent Severn Canal; it is also believed that the Boyds paid local farmers \$1 per load that they brought to the site. However, each stone would still have to be carefully selected by the mason to fit in the wall and hold the structure in place. While the wall at Edgewood is deteriorating in some

sections, it is still extremely well preserved for a wall of this age and demonstrates that the builder had an excellent grasp on the techniques required to build a dry stone wall.

In 2018, the art of dry stone wall construction was added by UNESCO to its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This list, which includes many different intangible cultural practices from across the world, is intended to recognize and safeguard important intangible cultural heritage and to ensure their long-term viability as a practices which have shaped and continue to shape the human environment and experience. This includes traditional craftsmanship, such as the construction of dry stone walls. UNESCO identifies the importance of dry stone wall construction as follows:

The art of dry stone walling concerns the knowhow related to making stone constructions by stacking stones upon each other, without using any other materials except sometimes dry soil. Dry stone structures are spread across most rural areas – mainly in steep terrains – both inside and outside inhabited spaces, though they are not unknown in urban areas.

The stability of the structures is ensured through the careful selection and placement of the stones, and dry stone structures have shaped numerous, diverse landscapes, forming various modes of dwelling, farming and husbandry. Such structures testify to the methods and practices used by people from prehistory to today to organize their living and working space by optimising local natural and human resources.

They play a vital role in preventing landslides, floods and avalanches, and in combating erosion and desertification of the land, enhancing biodiversity and creating adequate microclimate conditions for agriculture. The bearers and practitioners include the rural communities where the element is deeply rooted, as well as professionals in the construction business

Dry stone wall structures are always made in perfect harmony with the environment and the technique exemplifies a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature. The practice is passed down primarily through practice application adapted to the particular conditions of each place.

The dry stone structures considered by UNESCO as part of the evaluation of dry stone wall construction as an important aspect of global intangible cultural heritage are all located in

Europe. However, there are many examples throughout the world in diverse designs and for a multitude of uses. This skill was brought to North America during various waves of settlements in the early modern period and also became an important landscape form in the North American rural environment.

In many rural areas, dry stone walls were used for very practical purposes. As settlers cleared their land for farming, the stones they pulled out of the soil were used for solid fences along fields to keep livestock in or out, and to demarcate property boundaries. In these situations, the constructed of dry stone walls used a material in abundance to fulfil a very practical need. Many settlers would also be familiar with this structural type which had been widely practiced in Europe for centuries. Particular for those from Britain and Ireland where many of the early settlers originated, the use of dry stone walls as a major part of agricultural practice would have been extremely familiar.

The wall at the Boyd property was different from many of its contemporary walls because it was aesthetic, as opposed to practical, beyond its use the demarcate the edge of the estate. While the dry stone walls at the George Laidlaw estate on Balsam Lake, the most significant concentration of dry stone walls in Kawartha Lakes, were explicitly constructed as integral parts of an active ranching operation, this wall was constructed to surround an estate house in town as part of the overall scheme of its landscape design. This was also the case at Mossom Boyd's adjacent estate where dry stone walls were incorporated as part of the overall landscape design of a home in a village, as opposed to its more usual application in a farming area.

The use of a design element more typically found in rural areas with a specific, highly functional purpose in an estate house of this type reflects some of the wider trends in landscape design in the late nineteenth century. The late nineteenth century was a time in Canada when many of the newly rich who had made their fortunes from resource and transport-related activities embarked on building programs to construct new estates in aesthetically pleasing and prominent sites, such as along the shores of lakes and rivers. In addition to large homes in up-to-date styles, such as Italianate or Queen Anne, these estates also generally contained expansive landscaped grounds which integrated elements of the picturesque into their design.

The picturesque, as theory of landscape architecture, emerged in the late eighteenth century as a reaction to the more formal gardens and grounds of the Renaissance and Baroque styles. In practical terms, this mean the creation of landscapes, including gardens and parks, which integrated natural and rustic elements and were non-symmetrical in their layout. At its core, the picturesque took its cues from the natural world and rejected formal, ordered symmetry and precision. While the parks and garden designed in the picturesque style varied significantly, from the large naturalistic parks of the nineteenth century to the integration of asymmetrical beds into formal gardens, the influence of the picturesque was significant on the way in which

it introduced the variety, asymmetry, and irregularity of the natural world into landscape design.

For the new estate houses being constructed by Canada's prominent businessmen, including the Boyds, in the nineteenth century, the use of picturesque elements in their landscape design translated into a number of key elements which can be seen at Edgewood. On a broader scale, the design of the landscape often took advantage of the natural features of the site, particularly water bodies; in the case of Edgewood, this was the location of the house on the Bobcaygeon River. With regard to plantings, picturesque design generally moved away from strictly ornamental, and generally non-native, trees and shrubs towards using native plants that could thrive in the local environment in combination with more exotic species. At Edgewood, it is not clear exactly what plantings were used as part of its grounds due to the significant changes that have taken place over the past century, although older photographs of the property do show native tree species near the house. There are also descriptions of the property from the 1920s which allude to this type of landscaping.

The other main element seen at Edgewood is the use of rustic architectural forms to complement the natural attributes of the landscape, an extremely common aspect of picturesque landscape design which often included ruins and follies. The two architectural elements at Edgewood, not including the house and utilitarian outbuildings such as the stables, which fit into this category are the shanty and the dry stone wall. The shanty is clearly intended as an architectural curiosity of this type, taking the rustic and romantic cabin of the lumberman and transplanting it into an estate setting for the interest of visitors unfamiliar with the actual rigours of life in the lumber camp. Like the faux ruins and rustic cottages often incorporated into picturesque gardens in Britain, it was intended to evoke a romanticism for an audience which did not typically venture into the natural world or engage in the hard labour undertaken by the vast majority of the population.

The dry stone wall also falls into this category. Most typically used on agricultural properties, its use evokes the rural landscapes of the surrounding townships and of the Britain while not serving the practical purpose it would on a farm property. Like other elements in the landscape, the use of the wall falls directly with the category of picturesque landscape design through its use of natural local limestone and its rustic aesthetic drawn from rural traditions. The wall is consciously rugged, rough and irregular by virtue of its natural construction material which is not concealed through finishing. It is firmly within the wider picturesque landscape tradition for this reason and help place the Edgewood estate within larger trends in Canada around landscape design and the construction and planning of estate properties for the newly rich of Canada's business class.

Dry stone walls also surrounded the adjacent Mossom Boyd house and lined the edge of the property along the roadway between the house and the canal (now Canal Street). A stone arch which was built as part of the walls on the Mossom Boyd property was moved to in front of the Boyd Lumber Company offices, now the Boyd Heritage Museum and Bobcaygeon Library. The rest of the wall has been left to disintegrate with some portions remaining on the property but they are not intact and structurally sound as those at Edgewood.

Overall, the dry stone wall's architectural significance derives primarily from its technical merit as a UNESCO-recognized form of traditional craftsmanship which has been executed with a high degree of proficiency, as demonstrated by its relatively intact condition 130 years after it was built. However, it also demonstrates wider trends in landscape architecture, namely the picturesque, which were prevalent in the nineteenth century.

### Historical and Associative Value

The drystone wall located at 28 Boyd Street has historical and associative value as part of the former Edgewood estate which one stood on this location. The estate, which was constructed for William Thornton Cust Boyd (W.T.C.) Boyd and his wife Meta Bridgman, is an important part of the development of the Bobcaygeon waterfront in the late nineteenth century and yields information regarding the role of the Boyds in local society during this period. It also has historical associations with prominent Peterborough architect John E. Belcher who designed the former house and likely had a hand in the landscape design for the estate as well. The drystone wall is the only surviving part of the estate which remains in situ and is an important historical feature which forms part of the historic landscape of Bobcaygeon developed by the Boyd family in the late nineteenth century.

The Edgewood estate was constructed for W.T.C. Boyd, a significant figure in Bobcaygeon in the late nineteenth century. W.T.C. Boyd was the son of lumber baron Mossom Boyd by his second wife, Letitia Cust. The elder Boyd, the son of an army officer in India, had immigrated to Canada in 1834 and settled in Verulam Township, befriending other local families with large estates and business connections including the Dunsfords, Langtons and Needs. In 1844, he married Caroline Dunsford, with whom he would have six children, including Mossom Martin Boyd who became a significant local figure and heavily involved in his father's lumber business. After Caroline's death in 1857, Boyd married again, to Letitia Cust, a childhood friend from Ireland who agree to come to Bobcaygeon to take over the running of his household and look after his children. They would have three more children together, two of whom – W.T.C. and Letitia Kathleen – would survive to adulthood.

Mossom Boyd had made his fortune in the lumber business beginning in the late 1840s and was heavily involved in the development of the local community and its industrial activities until his death in 1883. He is the most significant figure in the lumber industry in Kawartha Lakes and his impact on the development of the local economy cannot be underestimated. The sawmill established in Bobcaygeon by Thomas Need in the early 1830s was taken over by Boyd beginning in the late 1830s and was run in conjunction with the lumber business throughout the nineteenth century. At the same time, Boyd was also involved in the transport networks of the region, namely the development of the canal, which he became involved with as an extension of his business in order to get his lumber to market. He was one of the most prominent citizens in Bobcaygeon in the mid-nineteenth century and had a major impact on the development of local business.

Upon Mossom Boyd's death, the lumber business was taken over by his sons, M.M. and W.T.C., who expanded the lumber harvest area north, even as the lumber industry in the Bobcaygeon area began to slow. They continued the business for the next two decades; the sawmill closed in 1903 as the economic drivers of the county shifted away from resource extraction. They also continued their family's heavy involvement in the development of the canal and local transportation networks. The railway finally arrived in Bobcaygeon in 1904, although this was a period of decline in the lumber industry and the Boyds' business.

It was during this period that W.T.C. Boyd occupied Edgewood, the house he had constructed for his family on the shore of the Bobcaygeon River. He, along with his wife Meta and their baby son Thornton, moved into the house in May 1890. There, they would have seven more children. However, by the end of the First World War, only three of their daughters remained; two sons had died serving in the war and a third drowned in Pigeon Lake in 1917. W.T.C. died in 1919 at the age of 60.

As a result, the property passed out of the Boyd family and, in the intervening century, has passed through a number of different owners and uses. In 1926, Edgewood was purchased by J.H. Neville, a young businessman who had lived in Bobcaygeon as a child when his father served as a minister in the community. At the time of his purchase, Neville had amassed a considerable fortune for the time, estimated to be around a million dollars, through various business ventures, but primarily through speculation on the stock market. After several years, however, he lost the property due to a collapse in his finances.

The house served for a time as the Bobcaygeon Yacht Club before being sold in 1968 to Mr. and Mrs. Lorne Case who transformed it into a nursing home known as Case Manor. The nursing home operated out of the estate house until 2005 when the house was torn down to make way for the newer building which occupies the site today. The accessory structures were removed

as well, leaving the wall as the only remaining original built element on the site and the only remaining connection to the Boyds.

The property also has important historical associations with Peterborough architect John E. Belcher who designed the house and likely played a role in its landscape design as well. Belcher was a close friend of the Boyd family, and was also related to them through marriage; Belcher had married Mossom Boyd's niece Clementina and his son, Alfred, would eventually marry Letitia Kathleen Boyd, Mossom Boyd's daughter by his second marriage and W.T.C. Boyd's sister, in 1899. Alfred Belcher is known to at least laid out some of the wall as part of his father's overall work on the property, as it is recorded in W.T.C. Boyd's journal in September 1889 that the younger Belcher came to the property to lay out a curve in the stone wall.

Belcher was born in Ireland in 1834 where he trained as an architect and engineer at Queen's University, Cork (now University College Cork) then articulated under his father Samuel Belcher and Sir John Benson, the engineer for the Cork Harbour Board. He emigrated to Canada in 1858 and settled in Peterborough where he established a successful architecture career, alongside his work as Town Engineer for Peterborough. He is most well-known for his ecclesiastical work, particularly due to his appointment as the diocesan architect for Peterborough in 1885, but also designed many commercial and residential buildings in Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland, and Haliburton counties. These included a number of buildings in Bobcaygeon such as Christ Church Anglican, the Boyd Building, and the Edgewood estate as well as engineering work on bridges over the canal. It is also believed, that because of Belcher's intimate relationship with the Boyds, he had a significant impact in the physical development of Bobcaygeon in general in the late nineteenth century. Although he lived in Peterborough, Belcher is a significant architect in the history and development of Bobcaygeon because of his strong ties to the community, his relationship with the Boyds, and his influence there.

Belcher himself was not a landscape architect but worked on landscape projects throughout his career, including Jackson Park and Victoria Park in Peterborough. That he would have had a hand in the overall landscape design of the project is highly likely; correspondence and journals shows that Belcher had a hand in nearly every element of the house and designed at least some off the landscape elements, including a gate. His son Alfred, who often worked with his family, is known to have a hand in the design.

The actual builder of the wall is not definitively known. While the younger Belcher certainly had a hand in its design, the labour appears to have been done by someone identified in W.T.C. Boyd's journal as "Old Scott." It is generally believed that a stone mason was brought over from Scotland to construct the wall, as was done at the Laidlaw Estate around 10 years earlier when George Laidlaw commissioned a Scottish stone mason, a Mr. Scott, to construct the walls at his

ranch in Bexley. It is likely that this is the same mason, given the geographic proximity of the two walls.

### Contextual Value

The subject property has contextual value when viewed as part of the historic landscape of Bobcaygeon from the late nineteenth century and as part of the legacy of the Boyd family in shaping the landscape of the village. Although it is the only remaining built feature from the Edgewood estate still left on site, it nevertheless has important contextual connections to its location.

The wall's primary contextual relationship is to the historic Edgewood estate. Unfortunately, the other built elements of the property – namely the house – have been removed and replaced with a modern long term care residence, Case Manor Community Care. However, the wall still retains its relationship to the site itself and the river, the other primary landscape feature around which the estate was planned.

However, there are other extant Boyd properties in and around Bobcaygeon and, taken together, form a wider landscape which speaks to the significant and long lasting influence that the family had on Bobcaygeon and the surrounding region. These properties include the Edgewood dry stone wall, the Boyd Lumber Company Office at 21 Canal Street East, the remains of the dry stone walls on the former Mossom Boyd property adjacent to Edgewood, the M.M. Boyd farm on County Road 36, and several other smaller properties. While these properties, in general, are not contiguous, they still function together contextually because of their historical connections to each other.

On a broader scale, the wall is part of the larger historic landscape of the village of Bobcaygeon. Although the village has changed and evolved over the past two centuries, a wide array of historic built features remain from the nineteenth century in particular. These include elements of the downtown, the Trent Severn Canal, and a range of surviving homes throughout the village. The stone wall serves as one of the first of these historic elements that is seen from County Road 36 when entering the village along Boyd Street as a landmark entryway feature.

## Summary of Reasons for Designation

The short statement of reasons for designation and the description of the heritage attributes of the property, along with all other components of the Heritage Designation Brief, constitute the Reasons for Designation required under the Ontario Heritage Act.

### Short Statement of Reasons for Designation

28 Boyd Street has cultural heritage value as an excellent and unique example of a late nineteenth century dry stone wall. Dry stone wall construction, which has been identified by UNESCO as intangible cultural heritage of global value, was used in some areas of Kawartha Lakes to construct farm and retaining walls in the late nineteenth century and the wall at 28 Boyd Street is an excellent, well-known example that still survives in a significant form. It demonstrates a high degree of technical merit through its successful use of this construction method. Constructed around 1890 for W.T.C. Boyd, the son of lumber baron Mossom Boyd, as part of the landscaping of his Edgewood estate which once stood on this location, the property yields information about the Boyds and their influence on the key economic sectors in the village. It also yields information regarding the evolution of landscape design, particularly with regard to estates for wealthy business people, in Canada during this period which often emphasized local landscape elements and the picturesque. It is a landmark structure in Bobcaygeon and is recognized throughout the community as an important historic structure.

### Summary of Heritage Attributes to be Designated

The Reasons for Designation include the following heritage attributes and apply to all elevations, unless otherwise specified, and the roof including: all façades, entrances, windows, chimneys, and trim, together with construction materials of wood, brick, stone, stucco, concrete, plaster parging, metal, glazing, their related building techniques and landscape features.

- Dry stone construction
- Double wall construction
- Limestone exterior walls
- Cope stones
- Interior hearting
- Relationship to the Edgewood/Case Manor property
- Views to and from the wall along Boyd Street and from County Road 36

## Images



View of the full length of the wall from County Road 36



Intact section of the wall



Cope stones



Western section of the wall



Evidence of double wall construction



Section of wall requiring repairs



Historic Edgewood estate



Exterior and grounds prior to demolition of the house