



Heritage Property – *Brubacher Farmhouse*



Columbia Street West (north campus of the University of Waterloo)

The Brubacher Farmhouse was built by John E. Brubacher, 1850

Designated Nov. 3, 1975: bylaw 75-162, "The Brubacher House"

A Mennonite from Pennsylvania, John E. Brubacher (b. 1822) married Magdalena Musselman in 1846 and purchased the southern half of lot 25 of the German Company Tract, straddling Beaver (Laurel) Creek. He situated his farmhouse, with its long front side facing southward, on a hill above his farmland, much of which is now Columbia Lake. They had 14 children, one of whom, Benjamin (b. 1861), eventually bought a part of his father's land and continued to farm there.

Brubacher's two-storey granite fieldstone building is in the spare Mennonite Georgian style. As in the Rudy farmhouse, typical design elements notably tend towards symmetry and the regularity of the nine-over-six windows (which incorporate a larger pane than the 12-over-12 windows of a generation earlier: see the Rudy Farmhouse), the broad verandah, which spans the length of the south facade, the plaster finish on the wall that backs the verandah, the return eaves on the east and west gable ends, the pairs of small attic windows and a relatively plain porch to protect the entrance on the north facade. Common in early farmhouses was the bell, still mounted on the roof's peak, sounded primarily at mealtimes to call workers in from the fields.



A destructive fire in 1968 virtually gutted the interior of the Brubacher Farmhouse. Restoration was accomplished authentically thanks to the collaborative efforts of a number of Mennonite historians, builders and craftsmen who, for instance, adzed large beams from rough timber to the dimensions appropriate to support load-bearing interior walls.