



Heritage Property – Wissler-Cascaden House



438 Malabar Dr.

Wissler-Cascaden House was built by John Wissler, 1842; modified 1845-58 and 1859-75
Designated Jan. 10, 1983: bylaw 83-11, “The Wissler-Cascaden House”

John Wissler, a pioneer from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, established his Eagle Tannery in 1835 and built his house shortly after. The leather from his tannery, and the multiple trades and businesses it supported, fostered the hamlet of Lexington around Bridge Street and Lexington Road, a little removed from the odours of the tannery.

The simple Mennonite Georgian style, popular with Pennsylvanian settlers, inspired the design of his two-storey house. Its red brick is laid uncommonly in a durable Flemish bond: every course offset by a brick's width from the previous course consists alternately of a stretcher and a header (a brick laid lengthwise and a tie-brick). The front façade, oriented eastward, is graced by an elegant portico – which was recently restored – embodying slender columns and returned eaves, echoing those of the main roof gables.

The front door is recessed and the panelling of the deep door jambs neatly echoes that of the door itself. The symmetrical arrangement of each elevation, with a regular fenestration of small panes (12-over-12 on the ground floor, 12-over-eight above) adds an impression of solidity. A protruding horizontal binding course of stone between the first and second storeys declares the building's stability.

A balanced pair of corbeled chimneys, one at each end of the gable roof, reinforces an overall sense of genteel refinement. Inside, a magnificent plaster medallion in the ceiling of



the entrance hall seems intended, like the outside of the house itself, to impress a visitor with the prosperity of its inhabitants.

Over the years since the Wissler House became their home, Ronald and Wendy Cascaden have given a great deal of time, money and care to the extensive restoration of a building that now offers a faithful representation of a prosperous life and the remarkable craftsmen in early Waterloo's history.