

OLD BARN HAS HISTORY WITH GROUP OF SEVEN ARTIST

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It doesn't happen often, but occasionally a single car garage gets the recognition it deserves.

The Barrett Barn (98 Confederation St. in Glen Williams), essentially a single car garage built in the 1920s, will be designated a heritage property by Heritage Halton Hills.

Aside from a century of vehicle storage, the barn appears in a painting by the Group of Seven's youngest member, Alfred John Casson.

Old Man in a Rocker is a portrait of the barn's owner, Harry Barrett, painted by Casson around 1930, after an addition to the barn to house horses had been added.

Today, the property is owned by two well-known Canadian artists, animators Dave and Dale Cox who

purchased the property, the barn and a house, in 1978.

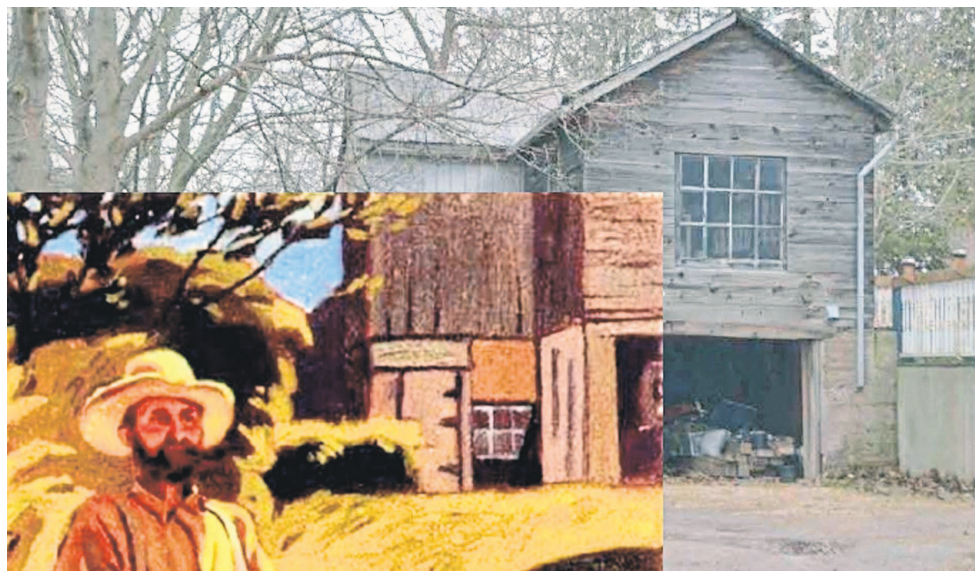
While the house dates back to the 1850s, renovations through the years have rendered it too far removed from the original structure.

"Heritage buildings have cultural value," John Mark Rowe, vice-chair of Heritage Halton Hills, the organization responsible for designating heritage properties, said.

"The barn itself is nothing extraordinary, it's an interesting design," Rowe said, "but its claim to fame is that Harry Barrett was painted in front of it in a rocking chair by AJ Casson."

The current owners of the property, the Cox', made the request for the designation.

"Dave saw the painting and recognized the barn and he wants to work on restoring it to the way it



Painted in 1930, AJ Casson's Old Man in a Rocker, shows a barn built in 1920 that is still standing today.

Bryan Myers/Torstar

looked in the 1920s," Rowe said.

For Heritage Halton Hills, Rowe put together a report on the Barrett Barn in the process of working to

ward the designation.

"The whole purpose of the report is to catalogue what is there, and to give a view of what it looked like originally," Rowe said. "The

objective is that the owners will try to bring them back to what they looked like."

Though, the group can't and won't force owners to do restoration work.

"Some people are afraid of designation because they look at what happens in England, where they control things like the colour of paint used, but it has to be specifically mentioned," Rowe said.

But generally, heritage properties are designated at the request of the owner, with conditions agreed upon before approval by Heritage Halton Hills.

"We've got far more requests for designation than we can handle," Rowe said. "We're in no rush to designate things just because we can."

There are benefits to receiving a heritage designation though. A 20 per cent rebate on property taxes and a small matching grant program.

"Every year, if the owner wants to do something to the building that's related to the reasons for designation, they can apply for a matching grant up to \$3,000," Rowe said, adding that the money is not guaranteed.

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