

# Osler Castle ruins to be part of Blue Mountain resort development

by Tom McAuley, staff writer  
Osler Castle, which since the early 1900's has declined and fallen into ruins will be kept as a ruins by the developers of Castle Glen Estates, the present owners.

Richard Strong, of Strong, Steven and Moorehead Ltd., Landscape Architects and Resource Planners, said the condition of the castle prevented it from being restored to its original condition, but the castle would remain in ruins as part of the Castle Glen Developments.

"We hope to stabilize its present condition so it can continue to be the historical landmark that it is," he explained. The castle was originally constructed in 1893 by Britton Bath Osler a Toronto criminal and corporate lawyer who wanted to build a home for his ailing wife, Caroline.

Mr. Osler spent a great deal of time searching throughout Ontario before he found the location in Collingwood Township part way up Blue Mountain, just northwest of what now is known as Osler Bluff.

He purchased 330 acres on the hillside at the headwaters of Silver Creek. He then went about planning the mansion which would surround his wife with natural beauty, and ease her pains of arthritis so severe, it confined her to a wheel chair.

Built of gigantic stones, the castle was constructed starting in 1893, on a rise of land on the north side of the stream. The location provided a breathtaking view of the sloping hills and flat plain to the southeast, and to the east the southern horizon of Nottawasaga Bay and the town of Collingwood.

At the completion of its construction in 1895, Osler Castle, was the most modern of buildings. It boasted — highly unusual at that time — indoor plumbing, a full basement, gigantic verandah and ap-

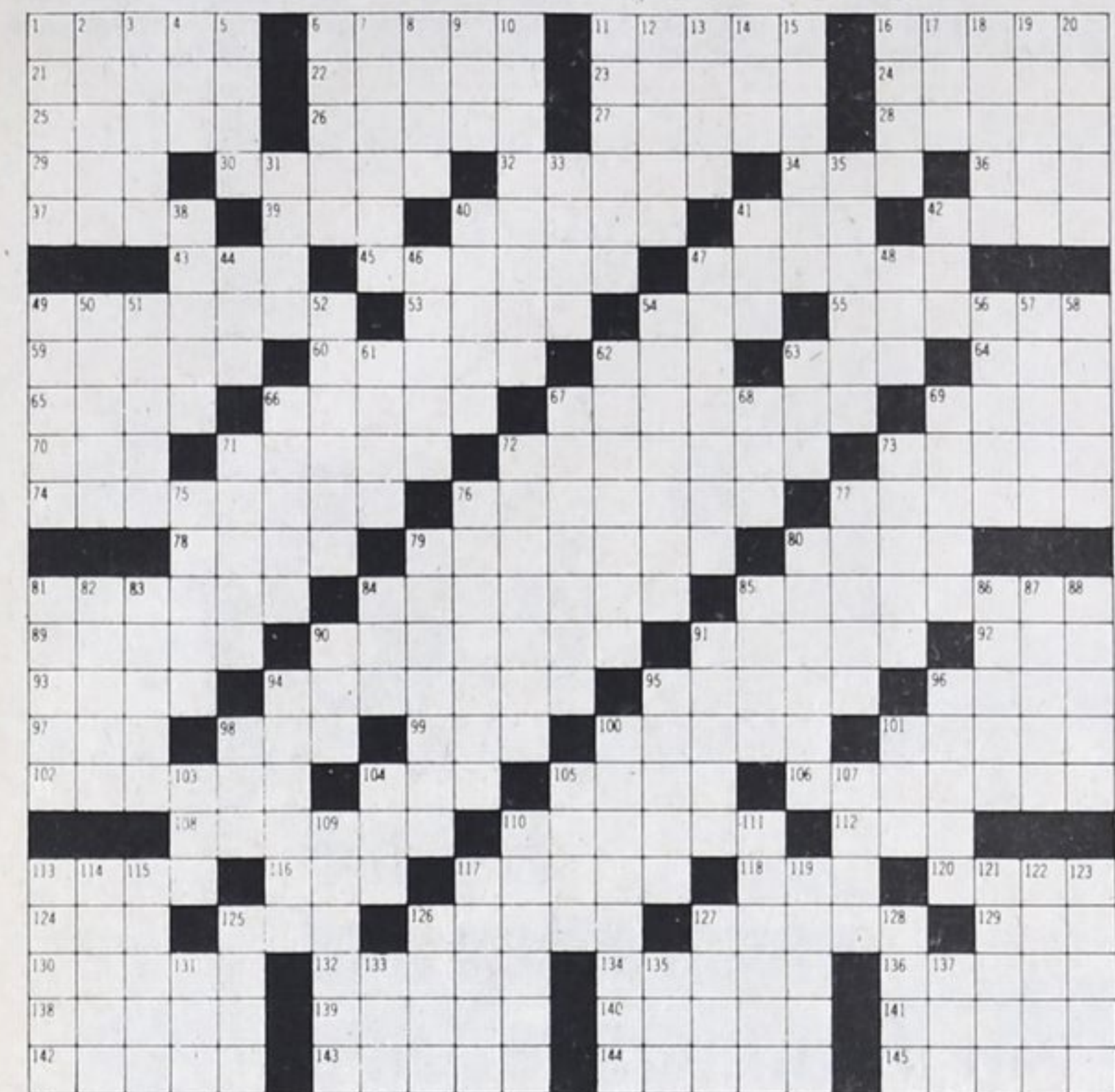
proximately 15 rooms. The indoor plumbing was made possible due to a large storage tank located above the house which received water pumped from the stream, and fed by gravity through lead pipes to the plumbing fixtures.

Servants or members of the family could be summoned through use of a signaling system and a mechanical lift service was installed between the basement and kitchen. The inside woodwork, constructed by the best of local craftsmen, was cut from mahogany, oak, birds eye maple and walnut.

Outside Osler Castle was even more glorious. Using the wealth of the neutral landscape, the lawn was terraced in steps down to the stream and the backyard was a wall of hardwood forest. To the west lay wooded bluffs and a large apple orchard. In the middle ground was the coach house and several barns.

As fine as the original structure was the interior and furnishings were even more grandeur. Only the best linen and table ware, imported from Britain, graced the table and furniture.

## Huronia crossword



- ACROSS
- 1 Crazy slang
  - 6 Epic
  - 11 Map
  - 16 Striped animal
  - 21 Entertain
  - 22 Social outcast
  - 23 Weird
  - 24 Girl's name
  - 25 Yule
  - 26 Musical drama
  - 27 Comes to earth
  - 28 Lariat
  - 29 Philippine dwarf
  - 30 Flutter around
  - 32 Mediterranean island
  - 34 Annamese measure
  - 36 Legal matter
  - 37 Pig
  - 39 Chess pieces
  - 40 Abraham's wife
  - 41 River bottom
  - 42 Arabian district
  - 43 Historical period
  - 45 Giggly
  - 47 Pamper
  - 49 Hide processors
  - 53 Rostrum
  - 54 Canine
  - 55 Grass-hopper
  - 59 Suppress
  - 60 Purposive
  - 62 German
- DOWN
- 2 no
  - 3 Choir voice
  - 4 Shelter
  - 5 Look at again
  - 7 Mature
  - 8 Fish eggs
  - 9 Stormed
  - 10 Tropical fruits
  - 12 Nero's language
  - 13 Colander
  - 14 Slightly pointed
  - 15 Amusing event
  - 17 Shane star
  - 18 Removers
  - 19 Chinese name
  - 20 Settlement
  - 21 Preceptors
  - 22 N.A.S.A. tele
  - 23 Representative
  - 24 Removes stalks
  - 25 Linger
  - 26 Nigerian people
  - 27 Contribute
  - 28 Sways
  - 29 Pulverize
  - 30 Male party
  - 31 Night before
  - 32 Church seat
  - 33 Tax agency
  - 34 Priggish person
  - 35 Dutch news agency
  - 36 More profound
  - 37 Abstract
  - 38 Stylish
  - 39 L.W.E.s
  - 40 Set free
  - 41 Vine fruits
  - 42 Corded

plumbing, a full basement, gigantic verandah and ap-



**The ruins**

Osler Castle, in ruins for decades, will be preserved as a historical attraction at Castle Glen Developments, a gigantic resort complex being constructed at Collingwood's Blue Mountain.

Since then the castle has declined into ruins, weathered by the rages of time and indiscriminately prodded by vandals and sightseers.

The mortar which held the magnificent cut stone has deteriorated to a point beyond restoration.

Now, however, Osler Castle may remain the historical landmark of Collingwood, Southern Georgian Bay, and Blue Mountain, that it truly is.

It will become a permanent fixture of Castle Glen Estates, a large housing and recreation development, planned by

the noted developer and planner Thomas Merritt. "Mr. Merritt loved the Roman styling of the castle and realized the historical significance it represented," explained Mr. Strong.

"The castle was something that he didn't want to see removed and he intends to stabilize the structure as much as possible to insure that it stays as a focal point of the area."

Castle Glen Estates, intends to build in five stages a gigantic resort complex comprising 1,536 acres. The resort will feature 1,720 residential resort units, a 300 room lodge, ski slopes, two 18 holes golf courses, two recreational centres and a 65 acre lake for swimming and boating.

The complex will also feature something that Mr. Osler originally

hoped to accomplish for his Blue Mountain home — a wildlife centre.

Before he died and the castle went to ruins, Mr. Osler had begun the construction of a fenced area, where he hoped to cultivate a herd of whitetail deer. It was to complement his existing wildlife program which already boasted a number of ponds stocked with speckled trout.

With the completion of Castle Glen Estates, Mr. Osler might finally see his dream come true and the deer herd may be developed.

Thomas Merritt and his company Castle Glen Estates Ltd., have already received the approval for the complex from Collingwood Township, the Beaver Valley Planning Board and the Province.

However, recently it has run into criticism from the 12,000 member Federation of Ontario Naturalists and the Bruce Trail Association.

The two environment groups argue the project is incompatible with the wild nature of the Niagara Escarpment and have called upon the Province to put a halt to the development.

Mr. Merritt acknowledges that it appears a problem has developed concerning the sensitivity of the project, but blames the criticism on people who are less than well-informed.

He suggests that critics should look at his company and the planners who are working on the project.

Mr. Merritt explained his companies have a record of being sensitive to the fragile surroundings in which they have

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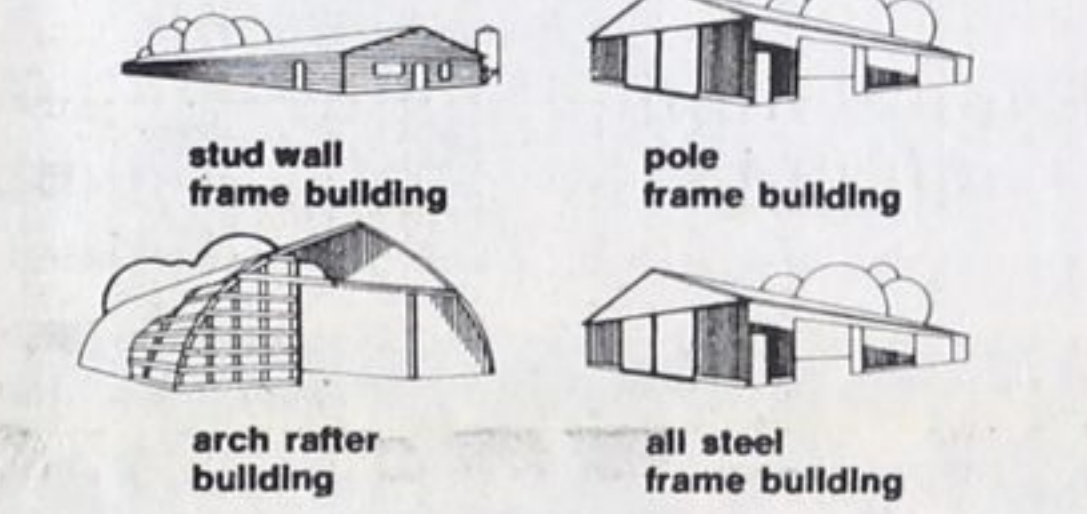
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## Before the fall

Before vandals and the elements reduced it to ruins, Osler Castle was a magnificent landmark on the Blue Mountain. It was a modern showpiece in the 1890s, with indoor plumbing, a full basement and 15 rooms — with handcrafted woodwork on the inside of Mahogany, oak, bird's eye maple and walnut.

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