

## The Cottages and offices of the Oakville Historical Society

The Cottages were designed and built during 1953 for two unique sisters.

These Cottages on the north side of the Erchless grounds were designed by sisters Hazel Mathews and Dr. Juliet Chisholm, great-granddaughters of Oakville's founder William Chisholm. Juliet Chisholm was an artist and pediatrician, Hazel an author and historian. In 1953 the two women moved into the newly-built cottages, leaving the Customs House occupied by Hazel's son Monty Hart and his family. Juliet lived at 108, Hazel in 110.



Number 108 was conceived by Juliet as a Normandy cottage with stone floors, inspired by the years she had spent in France. The pinkish tint of the floor tiles is a characteristic of the Credit Valley stone used in their construction. Hazel's residence at Number 110 was in a more contemporary style. The differences in design went as far as the heating systems; 108 (Juliet's) was heated using forced air, whereas 110 (Hazel's) had radiators installed for a hot water heating system. There was a great deal of second-hand material used in the construction of these two homes, possibly due to the shortages brought about by World War II.

By the mid-70s, both the Erchless Family Home and the Cottages were occupied by tenants. The Town of Oakville purchased Erchless Estate in 1977 and continued renting the properties for some time. The Customs House was restored and opened to the public in 1983, while the Erchless Family Home did not open to the public until 1991.

In 1992 the Oakville Historical Society reached an agreement with the Town of Oakville whereby the Society was granted possession of the Cottage at 110 King Street. Juliet's Cottage at 108 King continued to be occupied by its tenant, Commodore Robertson. Eventually, the Society took over the second cottage also and commenced a three-year renovation project. Vintage materials were used to maintain an authentic appearance.

Working every day for eight months, the Oakville Historical Society volunteers completely restored both cottages, joining the two buildings into one. They replaced walls, roofs, rafters, several ceilings, 80% of the existing windows, and added a skylight. They installed baseboards, trim, and fire exits. The kitchens were rebuilt and updated, as were the wiring, heating and plumbing throughout. The buildings were painted, inside and out, and drapes made and hung. Outside, the grounds were freshly landscaped and two new patios constructed.

The renovated cottages contain the Society's archives. This is a collection of historical documents. There is also a Historical and a Marine Library.

Behind our offices by King Street, are beautiful gardens maintained by volunteer members. In front of the offices, member volunteers also maintain the bushes and fountain. Join the team and become a member.

In the fall, our member volunteers are busy preparing the gardens for fall, including leaf gathering.

Our offices are on the grounds of the Erchless Estate. [Enjoy the Self-Guided Walk of the Erchless Estate.](#)