

# Research and Evaluation Report



(Denny 2022)

## **Limehouse Presbyterian Church**

12418 Sixth Line, Limehouse, Town of Halton Hills

March 2023

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12418 Sixth Line | PT LT 23, CON 6 ESQ, AS IN 251192, EXCEPT 328345, 328346 & 328347; PT LT 23, CON 6 ESQ, AS IN EH189; HALTON HILLS/ESQUESING

## 1.0 Property Description

<b>12418 Sixth Line</b>	
<b>Municipality</b>	Limehouse, Town of Halton Hills
<b>County or Region</b>	Regional Municipality of Halton
<b>Legal Description</b>	PT LT 23, CON 6 ESQ, AS IN 251192, EXCEPT 328345, 328346 & 328347; PT LT 23, CON 6 ESQ, AS IN EH189; HALTON HILLS/ESQUESING
<b>Construction Date</b>	c. 1861
<b>Original Use</b>	Religious
<b>Current Use</b>	Religious
<b>Architect/Building/Designer</b>	Myles McDonald (Builder)
<b>Architectural Style</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> century rural church architecture
<b>Additions/Alterations</b>	1961 Vestibule Addition; 1972 Rear Addition
<b>Heritage Status</b>	Listed on the Town's Heritage Register
<b>Recorder(s)</b>	Ray Denny; Laura Loney
<b>Report Date</b>	May 2022

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 12418 Sixth Line in Limehouse, Halton Hills, Ontario. The report includes an evaluation of the property's cultural heritage value as prescribed by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

## 2.0 Background

### 2.1 Historical Background

The village of Limehouse is situated on the main line of the CN railway approximately three miles west of Georgetown. The property was originally owned by the Stull and Meredith families. In 1840, a Mr. Clendenning purchased the land, built a sawmill, and named the village Fountain Green. The name was changed to Limehouse by the Post Office Department with the establishment of the village's own post office in 1857, for which John Newton was the first postmaster.

Limehouse grew into a very busy manufacturing centre, particularly due to the opening of the Grand Trunk Railway through Limehouse in 1856. The village was celebrated for its lime works and stone quarries. In 1857, Mr. Gowdy and Mr. Moore purchased the Bescoby works which consisted of six lime kilns, a water lime mill, and a sawmill. Mr. Farquhar bought out Mr. Lindsay who owned four kilns and operated a large stone quarry. Stone from this quarry was used for the base of the fence that surrounds Osgoode Hall in Toronto. In 1872, Mr. Meikle and Mr. Newton and Company began manufacturing fire-proof paint made from clay taken from the side of the road on the hill just east of the church.

The first organized Presbyterian Service, or religious service of any kind of any denomination in Esquesing Township, was held in 1820 on stumps and logs on Lot 6 Concession 4, the future site of Boston Presbyterian Church. In 1845, the churches of Acton and Union (Glen Williams) were organized, giving the people from Limehouse area the option of three churches to attend.

On July 5th, 1832, a two-acre piece of land on the east corner of Lot 23, Concession 6 was deeded from John Marradith (Meredith), who held the original patent from the Crown in 1819, to Thomas Burns, James Fraser and William Nickell, trustees of the Calvinistic Presbyterian Church, and registered as the Second Presbyterian Congregation in Esquesing on March 15th, 1833 (Figure 1 through Figure 3). The property was to be used as a burying ground and as a site for a church. There had already been a burial in 1826 of three-year-old Agnes Starrett who had been mauled by a bear.

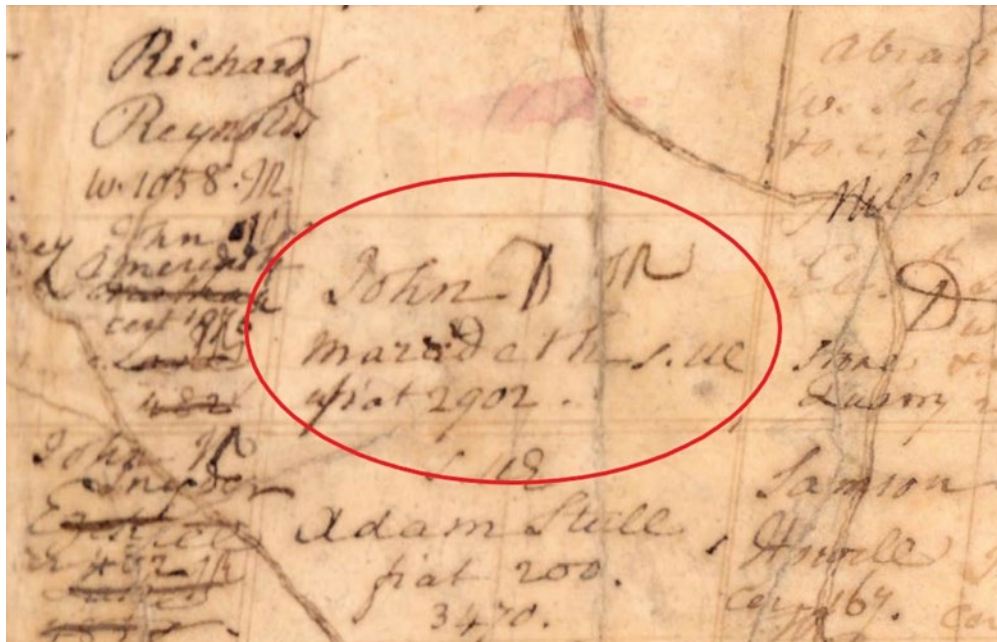


Figure 1: 1819 patent plan for Esquesing Township noting John Maradath (Meredith) as owner

And this Memorial thereof is required thereby to  
 be registered by me the Grantor therein named.  
 Witness my hand and seal at Exeter this fifth  
 day of July in the Year of our Lord the thousand eight  
 hundred and thirty two.

Signed and Sealed in presence of

John Burns  
 James Fraser  
 William Nickell  
 John Meredith

Figure 2: July 5th, 1832, deed transferred from John Marradith (Meredith) to John Burns, James Fraser, and William Nickell Trustees of the Calvinistic Presbyterian Church

Memorial N<sup>o</sup>. 189  
 of an  
 Indenture of Mortgage  
 and Sale  
 John Marradith  
 Thomas Burns James Fraser  
 and W<sup>m</sup> Nickell Trustees  
 of the second Presbyterian  
 Congregation in Exeter

Registered the 15<sup>th</sup> March  
 1833 at 3. of both Cts.  
 upon the oath of John  
 Burns Secy of the 18<sup>th</sup>  
 Group Durand  
 15/11/1833

Figure 3: The deed is registered on 15th March 1833

Between 1857 and 1858, a meeting of Thomas Somerville, Thomas Fraser, and Ninian Lindsay was held to establish a more convenient place of worship for the congregation. Work commenced the following year on a building at the front of the lot.

The church was constructed by Myles McDonald, the local tavern keeper and carpenter in the village. In October 1861, the church was completed and opened debt-free. Both the Anglican and Methodist families in the neighbourhood helped and contributed. An Article of Agreement in 1861 allowed the three congregations to share the use of the building on Sundays, however the Presbyterian congregation had first choice for their time of worship. The agreement was signed by James Lindsay, Thomas Fraser, John Nickell, John Meredith, John Newton, and Charles Meredith. The grave markers of these well-known and respected Limehouse residents can be observed in the cemetery behind the church. The 1877 County Atlas identifies the church in its current location (Figure 4).



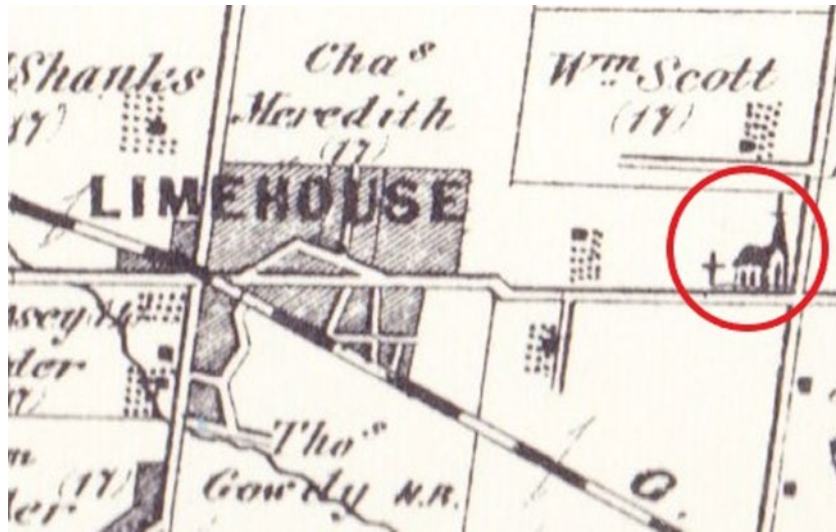


Figure 4: The 1877 Halton County Atlas shows the church and cemetery.

Since 1861 the Limehouse Church in has always been connected with Georgetown Knox Presbyterian Church. While in the early days Limehouse was the stronger congregation, for many years the position has been reversed and Georgetown has been the larger and stronger Church. For this reason Limehouse has always had some of the best ministers in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. A shared minister continues to this present time.

The first regular minister to preach at Limehouse and Georgetown was the Rev. Robert Ewing who preached from 1862 to 1875. Mr. Ewing and his family members are buried in the Limehouse cemetery. Ewing Street in Georgetown is named after him.

In 1896, the congregation's Managing Committee considered an addition to the back of the church to be used as a vestry and Sunday School room. There is no record of when it was completed but it was there for many years prior to being replaced in 1972. In 1897, a basement under the church was also considered. However, it was not constructed until 1961 on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church, at which time the vestibule at the front of the church was also constructed.

In 1961, the church was raised on temporary beams while the existing rubble stone foundation was removed and replaced with a full eight-foot-high basement wall made of concrete block under all three sections. This included an exterior exit as well as a stairway leading up to the new front vestibule which features a concrete floor laid with vinyl tile. Three small basement windows are centred under the tall windows above them on the north wall, while two windows are centred under the tall windows on the south side. The exterior exit and stairs are centred under the middle window. The front vestibule was designed by Sandy McKenzie of J.B. Mackenzie Lumber of Georgetown. The construction was done by the contractors Hawes and Nelson. The original doors remain on the opening into the sanctuary. The outside of the vestibule was covered in wood siding matching the original on the sanctuary.

In 1966, aluminum storm windows were added to the north side of the church protecting the original stain glass windows. In the same year a well was drilled and a pump installed. In 1969, the back vestry was destroyed by fire. A new larger room with washrooms and basement kitchen was built in 1972. It is covered with aluminum siding that also covers the back of the main structure.



Figure 5: The church is raised on supports to dig out and construct the basement. The original doors remain in place inside the new front room (Brown 1961)

The main section of the church has not been altered in its 160 years of existence. The small entryway which was removed in 1961 shows a matching stain glass window over the door. Historically, there was also a second horse shed on the property which was perpendicular to the existing one. A small part of a second horse shed can be seen on the right of the front door in this 1910 photo. It was removed in the early twentieth century as the automobile became more popular.

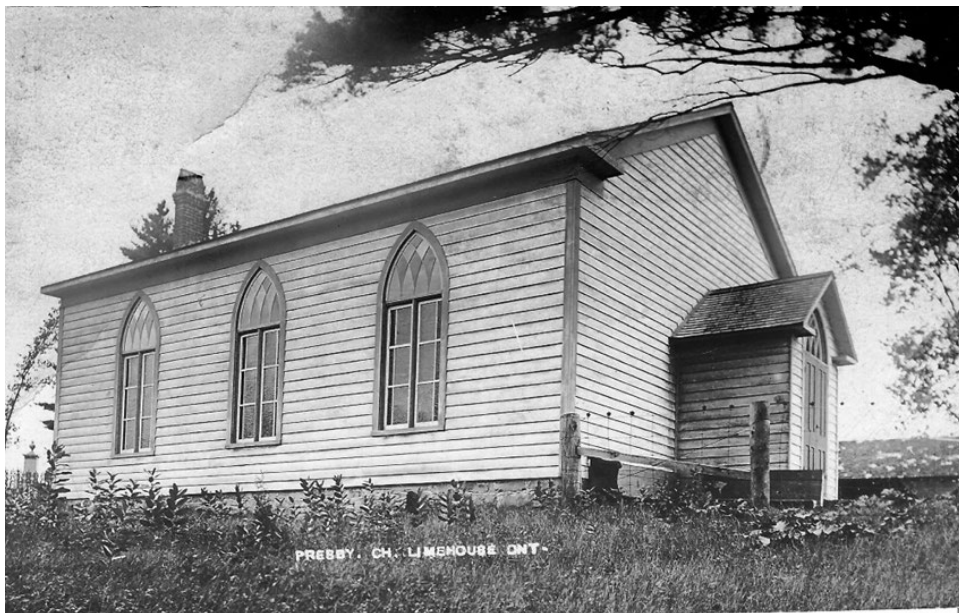


Figure 6: The second horse shed can be seen on the right side of the front doors (EHS 10834)

## 2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The property is located at 12418 Sixth Line, Limehouse, Halton Hills, and is a rectangular parcel situated at the northwest corner of the intersection of Sixth Line and 22 Side Road. The property is legally known as PT LT 23, CON 6 ESQ, AS IN 251192, EXCEPT 328345, 328346 & 328347; PT LT 23, CON 6 ESQ, AS IN EH189; HALTON HILLS/ESQUESING.

The church is situated on flat ground elevated above the Sixth Line and 22 Side Road intersection, providing a panoramic view of the fields and forests south of it. The sanctuary is a simple, rectangular, single-storey structure approximately 41 feet by 30 feet in size. It has three symmetrically placed identical pointed-arch windows on both sides of the church. The 1961 vestibule is located at the front elevation of the church, centred in front of the sanctuary. A 1972 addition is located along the rear elevation of the church building.

The main roof and addition roof with asphalt shingles have a moderate twelve over seven or eight pitch with gable ends on the front and back. The structure is typical of rural churches and one room schoolhouses of the mid-nineteenth century with its single-storey construction with tall walls and ceilings. The flat ceiling inside the church is 13-feet high. The front and back rooms have regular eight-foot ceilings.



Figure 7: North side showing the three sections. L to R: front vestibule (entrance), sanctuary (original), back vestry with washrooms (Denny 2022)

The original building is post-and-beam construction with pegged mortise and tenon joints. The exterior walls of this sanctuary are covered with original seven-inch white painted wood siding, which may have been sourced from the Gowdy sawmill in Limehouse. Six-inch flat painted vertical boards are located at each corner of the main structure, and a twelve-inch bargeboard is located beneath the eaves. The roof features twelve-inch eaves with eave returns on the gable ends, while aluminum soffit, fascia, and eavestroughs cover the original wood construction.





Figure 8: South side showing the main structure, additions, and exterior exit from the basement (Denny 2022)



Figure 9: South-east side displaying basement and exterior features including eave returns, corner trim, gables, barge board and window placement (Denny 2022)

The original pointed-arch windows are approximately four-and-a-half feet wide and ten-and-a-half feet tall. The rectangular portion of the window consists of three pairs of single pane pebbled clear translucent glass bordered with three pairs of gold translucent glass. One of the panels is hinged so it can be opened for air circulation. The top portion of the window consists of red and blue transparent glass laid out in a geometric design. The center window on each side consists of the same red and blue glass but reversed in the colour pattern (Figure 10). All the glass parts are held together with wooden mullions. The windows sit on a wooden sill and are trimmed outside with flat six-inch original wood, while the trim on the inside of the windows consists of slightly more elaborate moulded wood. The plain aluminum storm windows were likely installed in the 1960's.



Figure 10: Inside view displays the rich colours and mullions, while aluminum storms protect the outside of the windows (Denny 2022)

The stain glass windows on the sides and front of the front vestibule are recent additions from the 1980's and 1990's. The entrance double doors on the north side of this room are sympathetic to the historic architecture but are new steel doors. The original double doors and hardware that opened into the sanctuary remain but are enclosed by the front vestibule.



The interior of the main building (sanctuary) consists of an open, undivided space. The side windows are located approximately eighteen inches off the floor, and a trimmed moulding feature at the front of the sanctuary matches size and shape of the windows. In the centre of the moulding feature is the Presbyterian symbol "the burning bush" painted by local artist Dorothy Stone in the 1960's. The walls and ceiling were re-plastered in 1964. Four original electric ceiling lights with white glass globes (c. 1930's) hang from chains from the ceiling. The original pine plank floors range in width from ten inches to twenty inches. Because they have been clear coated the grain and knots are very visible. Dark-panelled wood wainscoting is located around the entire room, however, is not original.



Figure 11: The alternating red and blue coloured window glass can be seen in this photo (2010 Brown)

The interior reveals the oak pews from 1904 and the original 1930's electric lights which replaced the Victorian oil lamps that would have been lowered from the ceiling by chains to light them. On each side wall is hung the Roll of Honour for the men and women from the Limehouse community who served or were killed in action in the two World Wars. The bronze plaque at the front commemorates two of the men killed in action in WWI.



Figure 12: Front vestibule shows the stairs to the basement, original doors on the right, stain glass windows that have been added in the last forty years. (Denny 2022)



Figure 13: New steel entry doors with stain glass windows from the last two decades, (Denny 2022)

## The Horse Shed

The shed adjacent to the church was originally built to protect the horses from the weather while the service was being held in the church (Figure 14). It was built after the church; however, the exact date of construction is unknown.

The shed is 45-feet long and 21½ feet deep. The exposed square poplar beams display pegged mortise and tenon joints. The corner posts and posts between the openings are approximately ten inches square, and all beams and posts display the hand-hewn markings of an adze or broad axe.



Figure 14: Front view of the shed facing northeast. (Denny 2022)

Two 10x8 inch cross beams connect the front wall to the rear wall to provide strength to the middle of this long structure. These beams are low, about five-and-a-half feet above the gravel floor. All posts are supported with 4" x 48" diagonal braces mortised into the horizontal beams. The two plate beams at the top of the front and back walls were originally forty-five feet long. However, because of the damage caused by a huge falling pine tree slicing through the middle of the shed in a windstorm in 2020, the middle part of the beams has been replaced with historic poplar beams mortised and pegged into place.

The roof is supported by six-inch rafters set 32 inches apart and notched into the plate beams. The rafters are butt-jointed at the peak with no ridge plate. They extend about ten inches beyond the walls on the gable ends and about six inches on the front and back. There is no fascia, however aluminum eavestrough has been added to the front of the shed using wooden brackets to support it. The roof boards vary in size from 10" to about 18", spaced approximately one inch apart to allow for air ventilation for the original shakes, and are covered with plywood.





Figure 15: Traditional post and beam construction (Denny 2022)

The shed has three, symmetrically placed rectangular openings with mitred top corners. The three openings are the same height, approximately seven feet, and the outer two have a width of 11 feet and the one in the middle is 14 feet wide.

The gable ends of the shed are covered with 10- to 12-inch-wide barn boards. The front of the shed has been covered with some rough lumber repairing the tree damage and earlier alterations made for an outhouse in the shed. The front and two ends are painted while the back boards remain weathered gray.



Figure 16: Northwest view of the horse shed, bordering on the cemetery (Denny 2022)

In the centre of the three walls, the girt (horizontal support board) has been well chewed by the horses and still displays the rings used to tie up the horses.



Figure 17: Horse damage and tie rings (Limestone Presbyterian Church 2022)

In 2012, the shed was moved approximately eight feet from the church so the corner of the shed could be replaced. It had been altered to accommodate the new back room built onto the church in 1972. The shed was also raised several inches, and concrete piers were added beneath the posts. In 2021, the shed was repaired due to the extensive damage caused by the falling tree. All repairs were completed using historic techniques and reclaimed lumber.



Figure 18: Tree damage from a storm on November 16, 2020 (Denny 2020)



### 3.0 Description of Heritage Attributes and Evaluation Checklist

The following evaluation checklist applies to Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the *Ontario Heritage Act*: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The criteria are prescribed for municipal designation of Heritage Properties under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The evaluation tables utilize an 'X' to signify applicable criteria and 'N/A' to signify criteria that is not applicable for this property.

<b>Design or Physical Value</b>	
Is rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method	<b>X</b>
Displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	<b>N/A</b>
Demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement	<b>N/A</b>

The property 12418 Sixth Line has physical and design value as a unique example of a mid-nineteenth-century church and shed, symmetrically designed using timber frame construction and hand-hewn materials. It is well preserved after 161 years. The church structure references the simplicity of a rural Protestant church architecture in its form and detailing with wood siding, rectangular shape, modest roof pitch and a balanced facade of three symmetrically placed windows on both sides. The horse shed is a well-preserved structure compatible with the church building and demonstrates the use of horses when the church was originally constructed.

<b>Historical or Associative Value</b>	
Has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to a community	<b>X</b>
Yields, or has potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	<b>X</b>
Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community	<b>N/A</b>

The property at 12418 Sixth Line has historical and associative value with the Presbyterian church in the early European settlement of Limehouse and the Halton Hills community. It has an association with early European pioneers, who had the desire to form a congregation as early as 1832 reflecting the Protestant Christian beliefs of the residents in the Limehouse area. There are very few of these frame structures so well-preserved remaining in the rural area of Esquesing. The shed reinforces the importance of horse transportation in the nineteenth century and the need to protect the health of the horses so essential to their lifestyle.

<b>Contextual Value</b>	
Is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area	<b>X</b>
Is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings	<b>X</b>
Is a landmark	<b>X</b>

The property at 12418 Sixth Line is important for its contextual value. The church and shed are compatible with the character of the area. It is physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to

its surroundings. It is recognized as a landmark in the area and part of a unique collection of nineteenth century homes, stone one room schoolhouse, blacksmith shop, stone memorial hall (Methodist Church), the Gowdy mill powder house, lime kilns, Iron Bridge and conservation parks and trails in Limehouse. The wood siding, symmetry, roof pitch and eave returns of the church are very similar to the old hotel (apartments) in the village of Limehouse.

#### **4.0 Statement of Significance and Heritage Attributes**

The Limehouse Presbyterian Church was built in 1861 and the shed was built in the years following. It is a representative example of a simple rural Protestant church displaying monetary and architectural restraint. It is devoid of much exterior ornament except for the large, coloured glass windows. It represents the social and economic fabric of its era and surroundings. The people in the Limehouse village area worked in industries such as stone quarries and mills while the remainder of the population were farmers from the surrounding area. Some of the early members of the church were local business owners, merchants, and landowners. e.g., Gowdy (owner of sawmill), Newton (first Postmaster, owner of water lime mill and woollen mill), Lindsay (lime kilns), Meredith (1819 landowner of large tract of land in Limehouse including church site), Hainer (United Empire Loyalist). The stone markers in the cemetery remind us of these pioneering families and their descendants. The church and cemetery located at the eastern extent of the village of Limehouse serve as an unofficial entrance to the village.

The heritage attributes of the property at 12418 Sixth Line are identified as follows:

##### **Church**

- The setback, placement, and orientation of the one-story church building within the property;
- The scale, form, and massing of the one-story rectangular church structure with high walls;
- The moderately-pitched roof with gable ends facing Sixth Line and the cemetery towards the rear with twelve-inch bargeboard and eave returns;
- The materials, including original clapboard siding including wide, flat, vertical corner details;
- Along the sides of the main structure, the three original tall-pointed windows, symmetrically placed and trimmed with flat six-inch wood casing, with stained glass windows with wood mullions featuring clear and amber pebbled translucent glass within the lower two-thirds of the window and dark red and blue transparent glass within the upper third; and,
- The 1961 addition, featuring wooden seven-inch siding, eave returns, moderately pitched gable roof, and central window.

##### **Horse Shed**

- The setback, placement, and orientation of the one-story horse shed building within the property;
- The scale, form, and massing of the one-story horse shed of wood construction including two-by-six-inch rafters beneath a moderately-pitched roof with gable ends and shallow eaves;
- Visible post and beam construction with mortise and tenon joinery of hand-hewn posts and beams supported by diagonal braces;
- Mid-height girts and iron rings within the interior;



- Materials, including the vertical ten-to-twelve-inch barn board on the exterior and pine boards along the roof; and,
- The central opening flanked by two smaller openings.

## **5.0 Summary and Conclusions**

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 12418 Sixth Line has physical and design, historical and associative, and contextual value and therefore meets Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest.

## **6.0 Sources**

Pope J.H., Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton, Toronto: 1877

1819 Patent Plan for Esquesing Township (Archives of Ontario)

School Section map of Esquesing Township, 1856

Limehouse Presbyterian Church minute books, 1861 to present.

Archival Photographs, Esquesing Historical Society Archives and Halton Images

McDonald John, Halton Sketches Revisited: 1996

History of Limehouse Presbyterian Church 1861-1961, 100th Anniversary Committee:

History of Limehouse Presbyterian Church 1861- 1986, 125th Anniversary Committee:

1832 Deed (original), Limehouse Presbyterian Church wall display