Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The Old Armoury

1 Park Avenue, Georgetown, Town of Halton Hills

July 2022

Prepared by: Dawn Chan, Cultural Heritage Assistant – Town of Halton Hills

with

Laura Loney, Senior Heritage Planner – Town of Halton Hills Mark Rowe, Vice-chair – Heritage Halton Hills

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1.0 Property Description

1 Park Avenue (Georgetown Fairgrounds)		
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills	
County or Region	Regional Municipality of Halton	
Legal Description	PT LT 18, CON 8 ESQ, PT 1, 20R12058; TOWN OF HALTON HILLS	
Construction Date	c. 1866	
Original Use	Drill Hall/Shed	
Current Use	Theatre and Event Hall	
Architect/Building/Designer	Walter Moberly	
Architectural Style	Drill Shed	
Additions/Alterations	Relocated to existing site in 1890; interior and exterior alterations	
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town's Heritage Register	
Recorder(s)	Dawn Chan with Laura Loney & Mark Rowe	
Report Date	June 2022	

2.0 Background

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 1 Park Avenue in Halton Hills, Ontario. The report includes an evaluation of the property's cultural heritage value as prescribed by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

2.1 Historical Overview of the Lorne Scots Regiment





Figure 1: The Lorne Scots Badge (Canada.ca)

Figure 2: Lorne Scots Trainees (Georgetown Herald; 18 Aug 1966)

Dates	Significant Events
1790	The Canadian government formed volunteer sedentary regiments in Upper Canada. Among these were the Halton, Peel and Dufferin Units.
1866	Infantry companies from Stewarttown, Georgetown, and Norval joined with companies in Brampton and Oakville to respond to Fenian Raiders coming in from the Niagara region.
1868	The 20 th Halton Battalion was mobilized for the first time and began training in Oakville.
1872	The 20 th Halton Battalion changed its name to the Halton Rifles to reflect their new status as a rifle company.
1885	Lorne Rifles and the 20 th Battalion (Dufferin and Peel Regiments) served in composite battalions in the Northwest Rebellion and the South African War.
1914 - 1918	Members of the Lorne Rifles served in the 4 th Battalion of the 1 st Canadian Division during World War I.
1936	The Lorne Rifles merged with the Dufferin-Peel Units to form the Lorne Scots Battalion.
1939 - 1945	Members of the Lorne Scots served in defense platoons and for Canadian formations. Most notable of these included the Dieppe Raid and the Sicilian Invasion.
1963	The Lorne Scots held a Presentation of Colours under The Honourable W. Earl Rowe

2.2 Property and Structure History

The property at 1 Park Avenue was previously undeveloped land until 1890, when the land parcel was registered under Her Majesty the Queen as Lot 18, Concession 8, Esquesing Township, PT1. Sections of Lot 18 were sold as land grants to residents as time went on.

In 1890, the remaining land was leased to the Department of National Defense which used it as a training ground for the Halton Rifles. Around this time, the Georgetown Drill Shed was moved from its previous location at the Reserve Block at Church and Market Street in Georgetown to its current location.

The Georgetown Old Armoury, or Georgetown Drill Shed, was constructed in 1866 alongside several other drill sheds in the Halton Region as a response to the Fenian Raids that had begun in the Niagara region. The Georgetown Drill Shed was originally erected on the reserve block at the site of the old Market Square to house the Halton Regiment of the 20th Infantry Battalion under the Norval Company. The Georgetown Drill Shed would serve as the military training site for the Halton Rifles, now known as the Lorne Scots (Halton, Peel and Dufferin Units).



Figure 3: The Original Location of the Old Armoury prior to its move in the 1890s (1877 Halton County Atlas)



Figure 4: The location of the Old Armoury (1877 Halton County Atlas)



Figure 5: 1990 Aerial Photography of the Georgetown Fairgrounds. The red outline indicates the location of the Armoury (ArcGIS)

In 1867, the Municipal Corporation of the County of Halton and Esquesing Council approved By-law No. 50 to grant \$200 to the companies of the Halton Battalion towards the construction of a Company Drill Shed at each of their headquarters. The shed was constructed prior to the approval of the By-law that granted funds to the Halton Battalion.



Figure 6: Halton Lorne Rifles performing drills c.1881 (AA Grey & Co Collection; TTACL001)

Following the Fenian Raids and into the twentieth century, the drill shed was used by the Halton Rifles as a training facility and for their biweekly meetings. A rifle range had been set up within the interior to allow for training to occur even during the winter months. Light .22 ammunition was fired at a steel wall to ensure safety and reduce noise, but this rifle range was later removed due to safety concerns.

In the 1890s, the Department of National Defense made the decision to move the drill shed and training grounds of the Lorne Rifles to the Georgetown Fairgrounds as it provided more space for training exercises and parade marches.

During WWI, the drill shed served as a recruitment centre and training ground for young Canadian volunteers to join the 4th Battalion that was part of the Overseas Expeditionary Forces in 1914. New recruits studied and practiced rifle training on the fairgrounds.



Figure 7: 20th Halton Battalion Recruitment Photo c. 1914 Figure 8: Photograph of two new (EHS 21542)



recruits for the 20th Lorne Rifles c. 1914 (EHS 127 2.0.1.5)

Lorne Scots seek recruits

The Lorne Scols #676 Canadian Army Cadets are starting a new training year and have vacancies for young people (male and female) age 12-17 years. Parade night is every Wednes-

day night, 7 p.m. starting tonight (Wednesday), at the Georgetown Armoury located just inside the Georgetown Charles Street. Fairgrounds off

The Army Cadet training program covers a wide scope of ac-tivities which challenge cadets to reach their maximum potential.

Further information on the Lorne Scots #676 Royal Canadian Army Cadets can be obtained by contacting the Armoury at 877-3311 or Capt. J.H. Harrison at 877-4215.

Figure 9: Recruitment Advertisement for the Lorne Scots (Georgetown Herald; 12 Sept 1990)

The Georgetown Drill Shed functioned as a recruitment centre for the Lorne Scots and the No. 676 Army Cadets long after WWI and WWII. While the drill shed and grounds were primarily used by the Department of National Defense for training the Lorne Scots and later the Army Cadets, the Drill Shed and Fairgrounds were also used by local groups such as the Boy Scouts for organization and community events.



Figure 10: Children at the annual Canadian Legion picnic at the Old Armoury (Georgetown Herald; 11 July 1963)



Figure 11: Advertisement for the Halton Hills Winterfest in 1981 (Georgetown Herald; 6 Feb 1981)

In 1994, the Lorne Scots and Cadets announced that they would be moving their headquarters to a new constructed armoury citing that the Old Armoury at the Fairgrounds was insufficient for their current activities. The new building, dubbed the Col. J. Barber Armoury, was constructed in 1994, and the Lorne Scots and Army Cadets moved their headquarters to the new location in the same year. The town made an offer to the Department of National Defense who had decommissioned the building after the move.





Figure 12: Main Room of the Armoury facing the northeast wall. Photo taken prior to 1994. The various side rooms were used as office spaces for officers (EHS 12557)

Figure 13: Main Room of the Armoury prior to 1994 facing the southwest wall. The concrete storage block (white structure) was used to store cadets' weaponry (EHS 12550)

The Old Armoury was officially purchased by the Town of Halton Hills from the Department of National Defense on October 15, 1997. The drill shed was abandoned for several years as the town attempted to find a new use for the building.



Figure 14: The Armoury in 2009 prior to the renovations (Globe Productions)

In the interim, the building was primarily used as a fairground storage shed for equipment and fair displays during severe weather. The building's lack of use and neglect eventually led to the building falling into disrepair, leading the town to propose that the building be demolished.



Figure 15: The Old Armoury used as storage for displays and floats, n.d. (Globe Productions)



Figure 16: Interior of the Armoury prior to renovations c. 2009. The original barn had been previously painted (Globe Productions)



Figure 17: The upstairs mess hall c. 2010 (Globe Productions)



Figure 18: The upstairs office prior to renovations c. 2010 (Globe Productions)

In 2010, ownership of the Georgetown Armoury was transferred to Georgetown Globe Productions. The land on which the Armoury sits is leased by Georgetown Globe Productions for \$2 annually on a 20-year contract. The contract is renewable by Globe Productions at five-year increments beyond 2030.

During the transfer of ownership, the Town of Halton Hills also transferred the remaining money in the account that had been initially set aside for the demolition of the building, which was used for repairs and to pay the Town solicitor for work on the Agreement between the Town and Globe Productions.

Globe Productions received a grant from the Trillium Fund to help aid in the restoration. Additional money was raised through fundraising ventures including book sales and concerts run by Globe Productions, in addition to private donations provided by Georgetown residents.



Figure 19: Metallic Plaque dedicated to the donors for the Armoury Restoration Project (Globe Productions)

From 2010 to 2015, Globe Productions restored the building. They replaced the previous deteriorating roof with a new Vic West steel roof and new support systems to help secure the building's roof and structure





Figure 20: Roof reconstruction at the Old Armoury c. 2010 (Globe Productions)

Figure 21: Old roof being replaced with green steel c. 2010 (Globe Productions)

The work also reversed several of the contemporary additions to the structure over time. This included the removal of the previous exterior siding and replacing it with a fibre-cement that mimics the original board-batten siding and removing the drop ceiling.





Figure 22: Installation of the James Hardie fibre cement cladding, reminiscent of the original board-batten cladding (Globe Productions 2010)

Figure 23: The process of removing the drop ceiling in the main interior hall (Globe Productions 2010)

The interior space was also restored during the 2010 renovations. The interior barn-boards were sandblasted to remove the whitewash and the drop ceiling was removed to expose the roof trusses and barn-board roof. A few windows on the structure were removed and their openings covered. The set of staircases were removed from the old mezzanine of the structure and a secondary wall was built to create a workshop for set building (Figure 24).

Interior upgrades were also made to the structure to bring it to contemporary standards. This included the installation of foamboard insulation, drywall, electrical rewiring, energy-efficient heating and water systems, the replacement of a set of stairs to a second floor and an accessible washroom. Walls were constructed in the interior to create more space for a kitchen, bathrooms, and office and storage spaces.



Figure 24: The old mezzanine converted into an in-house set workshop c. 2010-2015 (Globe Productions)

Figure 25: The installation of new walls and stairs for new amenities and second floor access c. 2010-2015 (Globe Productions)

Today, the Armoury primarily serves as a rehearsal and event hall for Globe Productions. The theatre company also runs smaller theatre productions and summer day camps in the space and occasionally uses the space for fundraising and community events such as book fairs and concerts.



Figure 26: Book Fair run by Globe Productions in 2012 (Mike Davis, *Escarpment Views: Events along the Rock*)



Figure 27: Advertisement for a benefit to support the Armoury and Globe Productions (Globe Productions 2019)



Figure 28: Globe Production's production of *Little Women* in 2021 performed at the Old Armoury (Globe Productions)



Figure 29: Advertisement for a Globe Production theatre production in 2022 (Globe Productions)

2.3 Property & Architectural Description



Figure 30: View of the entrance to the Georgetown Old Armoury looking west from Park Avenue and Charles Street (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The subject property is located at 1 Park Avenue, Georgetown, Halton Hills, and is a rectangular-shaped parcel situated at the northeast corner of the Georgetown Fairgrounds. The property is legally known as PT LT 18, CON 8 ESQ, PT 1, 20R12058; TOWN OF HALTON HILLS. The property is accessible via Park Avenue and oriented to the southwest facing the parking lot of the Georgetown Fairgrounds.

The Old Armoury building sits across from the Fairgrounds baseball diamond. The driveway to enter the property is flanked by two masonry pillars, the left featuring a bronze plaque (Figure 26). A pair of mature deciduous trees can be found on the right side of the driveway into the property.

The notice board located near the right entrance is a repurposed Go Transit Map display board used to display the on-going and upcoming recreational programs and productions that Globe Productions runs.



Figure 31: Bronze Plaque on the left stone pillar at the entrance to the Fairgrounds, established 2011 (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 32: A repurposed Go Transit Display Board used by Globe Productions as a notice board for upcoming shows and events (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 33: The Georgetown Old Armoury facing west (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

Architectural Description

The Georgetown Old Armoury is a rectangular two-storey building that is approximately 5000 square feet. There are two paved pedestrian walkways leading to the centre and right entrances on the southeast elevation. An addition on the northeast side of the main building was constructed at an unknown date.

The timber frame is original to the structure and was restored after previous modifications had covered it. The main structure has a gabled roof, with a shallow lean-to roof over the northeast addition, both of which are constructed of Vic West steel. The exterior siding has been replicated using fibre-cement cladding in a board-batten style to mimic the original. The original windows on the southeast and northeast elevations were replaced with vinyl windows at an unknown date.

Additional modifications to the exterior of the structure include the installation of modern doors on the left and right of the central roll-up door and the installation of an awning and sign reading "Globe Productions."

Exterior Description

Southeast Elevation



Figure 34: Front (Southeast Elevation) of the structure facing the Fairgrounds parking lot (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

A mature deciduous tree is located to the left of the building. The building features three doors on the south elevation of the property. The left door adjacent to the center entrance is a modern metal door that has been painted. The center entrance is a roll-up door painted in the style of a barn-door to mimic the original. The right entrance was modified as part of the 2010 renovations. The awning and sign that overhangs the entrance was added in August 2018.



Figure 35: Service entrance (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 36: Central entrance (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 37: Visitor's Entrance (Town of Halton Hills 2022)







Figure 39: Detail of the double pane windows just above the left entrance (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

There are six pairs of vinyl double pane windows placed symmetrically over the central entrance.

A stone monument with a bronze plaque is located to the left side of the main entrance facing the front parking lot between the barndoor entrance and main entrance.



Figure 40: Stone Memorial with Bronze Plaque found just off the right entrance to the Armoury (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 41: Bronze Plaque on the Stone Memorial (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

Side Elevation (Southwest)



Figure 42: Southeast Elevation of the structure facing the southeast fairground parking lot (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The southeast elevation has three double-pane vinyl windows placed symmetrically towards the center of the elevation. A storage unit matching the colour of the siding has been placed adjacent to the elevation of the building.



Rear Elevation (Northwest)

Figure 43: Rear (northwest) elevation of the structure from 3 Park Avenue (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The northwest elevation also has two double pane windows, placed just above a metal door off to the left side. There is no paved pathway along this elevation. A berm is situated along the elevation to allow for water drainage.

A young deciduous tree has been planted to the right of the door. Another deciduous tree has also been planted near the corner of the property.



Figure 44: Orientation of the windows and door on the rear elevation (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 45: The door and windows on the rear elevation (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 46: Northeast Elevation of the structure from the driveway of 3 Park Avenue (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The northeast elevation has four double hung vinyl windows located just below the shed roof line. The shallow lean-to roof of the addition sits just below the gabled roof line.

Side Elevation (Northeast)



Figure 47: Double Hung Windows are located along the northeast elevation of the Armoury building (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

Three deciduous trees of varying maturity surround this side of the structure. The elevation also faces the driveway to 3 Park Avenue.

Interior Description

Photos of the interior from the 1990s and early 2000s feature the roof trusses characteristic of drill sheds constructed during the 1860s. These had previously been covered by a drop ceiling that was removed in 2010.



Figure 48: Photo of the roof trusses taken by the Department of National Defense (EHS 12567)

Figure 49: Photo of the roof trusses' structure (EHS 12554)

The walls of the structure have also been renovated. The interior barn-boards were sandblasted to remove the previous coat of paint and to reveal the original barn board and timber frame structure. Remains of the old paint and hardware are still extant throughout the main interior.

Additional layers were added between the barn board and the exterior fibre-cement siding; these included the timber frame and original barn-board interior siding, tongue and groove bead-board exterior siding, foam-board insulation, and the fibre-cement exterior siding.







Figure 51: Parts of the original tongue-in-groove siding beneath the barn-boards and foamboard insulation (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 52: Fibre-cement (James Hardie) exterior siding, done in a board-batten style (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

Other construction details found in the interior include graffiti dating to 1915 and small bullet holes that were found on the southwest wall of the main room. Original hardware such as square head nails and iron hoops were found installed on the timber frame structure.



Figure 53: Graffiti found on the southwest wall of the main room (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 54: Original hardware found on the timber frame structure (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The Main Room



Figure 55: The barnboard roof. Modern installations such as lighting fixtures and stage lights have been installed into the timber frame (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The main interior is a large, rectangular space that demonstrates the size and scale of the structure. The interior also displays the original timber framing and exposed barn-board walls and roof.

Some modern additions have been included in the structure. These include the installation of stage lights and lighting fixtures on the timber frame and roof trusses. Another recent addition is a low-level stage was installed at the southwest portion of the room, just between the two entrances into the main room.



Figure 56: Northeast end of the main hall (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 57: The southwest section of the main room (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The Set Workshop

A wall and storage closets were installed near the northeast section of the room to divide the interior space. The division allowed for a workshop to be established where sets could be built. A raised level on the far corner of the workshop utilizes the remaining portion of the old mezzanine that once occupied the northwest end as a lighting setup for Globe Productions' various theatrical shows.



Figure 58: The newly installed wall that divides the main room from the workshop (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 59: Workshop located at the rear (southeast) section of the main room (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

Figure 60: The raised platform for additional storage space and a lighting setup located in the workshop (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The southeast interior wall has two upper window openings that have been boarded up, located just above the current window openings. Additional windows that have been boarded up can be found at the centre of the northwest interior wall.



Figure 61: The left boarded-up window opening on the southeast interior wall, located just above the workshop (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 62: A pair of boarded-up window openings on the northwest interior wall of the main room outlined in red (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The Hallway and Additional Rooms

An additional wall was installed on the first floor during the 2010 renovations to create more rooms, including a staff kitchen and washrooms.



Figure 63: Staff Kitchen located on the first floor (Town of Halton Hills 2022)



Figure 64: The main first floor hallway, from the right entrance (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

The Second Floor

The second-floor has since been converted into storage spaces by Globe Productions; the former mess hall and upstairs office have been newly renovated and converted into a costume room and prop room, respectively.





Figure 65: Prop storage room on the second floor; facing the northeast wall (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

Figure 66: The costume storage room using the old mess hall (Town of Halton Hills 2022)

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.

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

The property at 1 Park Avenue is a rare surviving example of an early drill shed built in the 1860s in Ontario. Very few examples of drill sheds built during this time remain in the area as most were demolished in the latter half of the 20th century, including the Hornby Drill Shed in 2005 and the Norval Drill Shed. The only remaining mid-nineteenth century drill sheds known to be extant in Ontario include the Elora Drill Hall located in Wellington County, the Aurora Drill Shed in Aurora County, and the Acton Drill Shed in Halton County.

Drill sheds of the time period were simple and utilitarian in design, making them quick and easy to build. The large spacious interior made them ideal for drilling practices and basic rifle training and were also an engineering feat of the time period, designed by railway engineer Walter Moberly. Key features of drill sheds built in the mid-19th century included reinforced truss systems and timber framed structure, all of which are reflected in the Georgetown Armoury's architectural design.

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

The property at 1 Park Avenue is a direct example of the Canadian response to the Fenian Raids that occurred in 1866. The drill sheds of the time period are a representative example of an early form of this type of building in Ontario and served primarily as training facilities for volunteer regiments in Upper Canada.

The Georgetown Armoury is also connected to the Georgetown's military history and the Lorne Scots. This local battalion served in the 4th Battalion in WWI and various battalions in WWI, taking part in important battles such as the Sicilian Invasion in 1943. The Lorne Scots retains an active presence in the community to this day.

The Old Armoury is also still connected to the Battalion, as demonstrated with the plaques located on property. Members of the battalion and Georgetown's community still remember the Old Armoury's use as a site for military parades and multiple community events in the 20th and 21st century.

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

The Old Armoury at 1 Park Avenue is considered a historical landmark of Georgetown and the Fairgrounds due to the structure's location at the edge of the property. The relocation of the building to the Fairgrounds from the Market Square directly correlated with the community's growing population; as the population of Georgetown began to grow, so did the number of recruits into the Halton Rifles. As a result, more space was required to train the volunteer regiment.

The site's surroundings and two memorial plaques pay homage to the Armoury's military history whilst acknowledging the site's use as a space for public events that brought the community together. Globe Productions continues to provide this space by holding fundraising events to help support their theatre productions and maintaining the Armoury building. The town's use of the drill shed and the grounds as space for events helped to reinforce the connection that Georgetown's residents have with the building and its surroundings.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 1 Park Avenue 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.

The heritage attributes of the property at 1 Park Avenue are identified as follows:

- The setback, placement, and orientation of the 19th century drill shed within the Georgetown Fairgrounds;
- The scale, form, and massing of the rectangular, gable-roofed structure;
- On the interior, the large, open space, exposed wooden trusses and original barn-board siding and roof, reflecting its original use and military function;
- On the exterior, the wooden board-and-batten cladding and original window openings; and,
- Adjacent to the drill shed, the stone memorial and plaques commemorating the military history of the building.

5.0 Sources

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