

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2023)

St. John's Anglican Church

10996 Trafalgar Road, Stewarttown Town of Halton Hills

June 2023

Prepared by:

Laura Loney, Manager of Heritage Planning – Town of Halton Hills

with

Mark Rowe, Heritage Halton Hills

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1.0 Property Description

10996 Trafalgar Road	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Regional Municipality of Halton
Legal Description	PT LT 15, CON 7, AS IN EW4112 & EW4113; HALTON HILLS/ESQUESING
Construction Date	c.1840s
Original Use	Religious
Current Use	Religious
Architect/Building/Designer	N/A
Architectural Style	Vernacular with Gothic Revival Influences
Additions/Alterations	Basement (1950s); Interior Alterations
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town's Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Laura Loney with Mark Rowe and Ray Denny
Report Date	June 2023

2.0 Background

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 10996 Trafalgar Road in Stewarttown, Halton Hills, Ontario (Figure 1 and Figure 2). The report includes an evaluation of the property's cultural heritage value as prescribed by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.



Figure 1: Location Map, 10996 Trafalgar Road



Figure 2: 2021 Aerial Photo, 10996 Trafalgar Road

2.1 Historical Background

The earliest settlement in Esquesing Township, Stewarttown was first settled by Protestant Irish immigrants in 1819, later named for Irish brothers John and Duncan Stewart who settled here in 1842 and took advantage of Black Creek for its waterpower for the construction of mills. Stewarttown was located in an advantageous position along Trafalgar Road, the principal north-south trade route between the 1820s and 1850s to the ports in Oakville, and in 1849 became the site for the permanent Township hall, which has since been demolished. With the advent of the Grand Trunk Railway, Georgetown overtook Stewarttown as the principal village in the area and the community began to decline.

The 1822 Patent Plan (Figure 3) and 1858 *Tremaine's Map of the County of Halton* (Figure 4) show Thomas Thompson as the owner of Lot 15, Concession 7 within Esquesing Township. The 1877 *Illustrated Atlas of the County of Halton* (Figure 5) shows John W. Reid as the owner of the majority of Lot 15 and shows the former schoolhouse in the vicinity of the subject property, pictured in Figure 6.

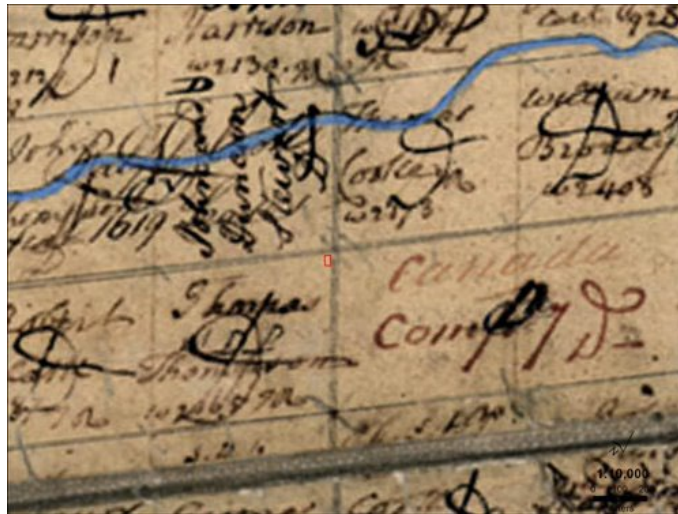


Figure 3: 1822 Patent Plan, subject property identified in red outline



Figure 4: 1858 *Tremaine's Map of the County of Halton*, subject property identified in red outline

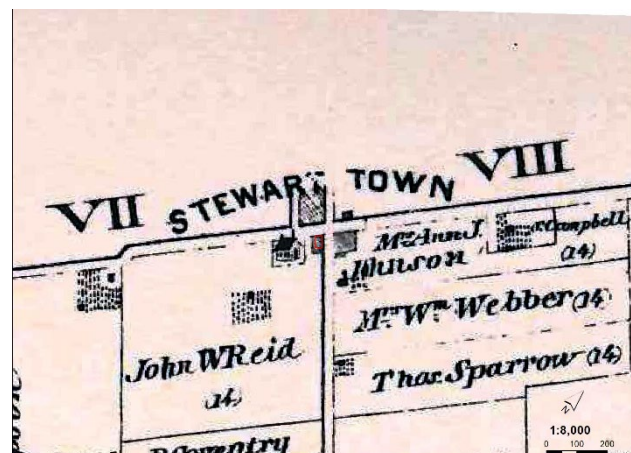


Figure 5: 1877 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton*, subject property identified in red outline



Figure 6: Former Stewarttown School on the southeast side of 15 Side Road, built c.1873 (William Morrison 1897, courtesy of The Georgetown Vault)

St. John's Anglican parish is one of the oldest in Halton Region. Although the existing building did not yet exist on the site in 1834, the parish was officially established that year and services took place in the home of Mr. Thompson by the first missionary priest assigned to St. John's, Reverend Adam Elliot. Elliott was one of many travelling missionaries through the area who served the community, and he also served the Anglican parish in Acton at St. Alban's church.

The first confirmation ceremony for the church was held in July 1846 by Archbishop Strachan, who had travelled from York for the ceremony. John Strachan (Figure 7) was the first Anglican bishop of Toronto and organized the Anglican church in Canada as a self-governing denomination.



Figure 7: Archbishop John Strachan
(Library and Archives Canada via Parks
Canada Directory of Federal Designations)

James Randall donated land for St. John's Cemetery, which opened on May 5, 1819. A frame church was originally planned for the site, however the site was hard to access and a building was never completed on the site (Figure 8).



Figure 8: St. John's Anglican Cemetery, 11091 Trafalgar Road (Town of Halton Hills 2016)

In 1833, Thomas Thompson had donated land to the Wesleyan Methodist Church congregation in Stewarttown in 1833, provided that it was used as a graveyard and a schoolhouse or Methodist Meeting House. The church building at this location, a mile south of Stewarttown along Trafalgar Road, was in use by 1840. Following the building of the "New Connexion" Methodist Church in Ashgrove in 1860, the Stewarttown Methodist congregation closed. The existing church building was moved to this site in 1880 after it was purchased by the Church of England from the Wesleyan Methodists. The church added a chancel and vestry to the building after its relocation in 1884. Prior to 1908, the building was clad with wood clapboard and featured a brick chimney towards the rear (Figure 9). Additionally, a wooden driving shed was located adjacent to the church building (Figure 10).



Figure 9: St. John's Anglican Church, prior to 1908 (Courtesy of the Georgetown Vault)



Figure 10: Rear of St. John's Anglican Church and driving sheds, which were removed in 1958, c.1948. As evidenced in the photograph, the church building has been stuccoed (EHS 475f).

Early records for the church, including parish registers, were destroyed by fire at the home of Colonel Murray in the 1880s, and as a result little information is available about the congregation before this time. However, significant work was undertaken by Lucy Emslie to piece its history together as part of her work *A History of St. John's Anglican Church, Stewarttown, Ontario (Town of Esquesing 1821)*. Emslie identifies the physical changes to the church overtime, including: recladding of the exterior with stucco (prior to 1908); modification to a centre-aisle plan (between 1923 and 1926); introduction of hydroelectricity (1949); removal of the c.1858 driving shed (1955); raising of the church for a new basement (1958); new panelling, hardwood flooring and furnace; and, new choir rails (1972). Despite these changes, the church has remained largely unaltered on its exterior over time and has remained a landmark at 15 Side Road and Trafalgar Road since its relocation to this corner in the late nineteenth century.



Figure 11: St. John's Anglican c.1958 during the basement construction (Courtesy of The Georgetown Vault)



Figure 12: St. John's Anglican after basement construction (Courtesy of The Georgetown Vault)



Figure 13: Pen and ink sketch of St. John's Anglican Church, c. 1978 (EHS 16879)



Figure 14: St. John's Anglican Church, c.1995 (EHS 16799.2)



Figure 15: St. John's Anglican Church, c. 1995 (EHS 16798.2)

A review of National Topographic Maps from the first half of the twentieth century (Figure 16 through Figure 18) shows the church at this location, with the school identified to the west of the church and the development of Stewarttown to the north. 1954 aerial photography (Figure 19) shows the church within a rural context to the south and residential development along Trafalgar Road to the north.

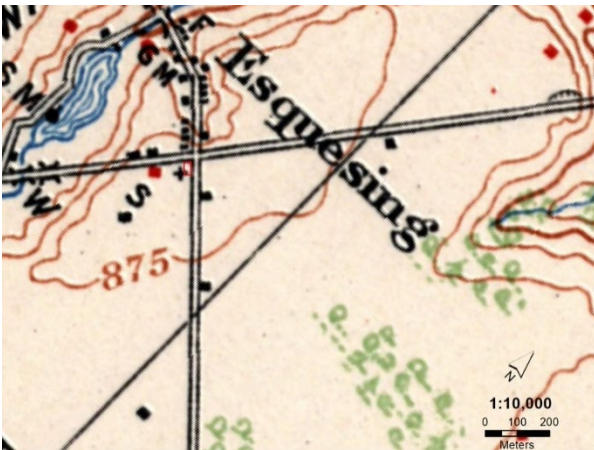


Figure 16: 1909 National Topographic Map



Figure 17: 1929 National Topographic Map

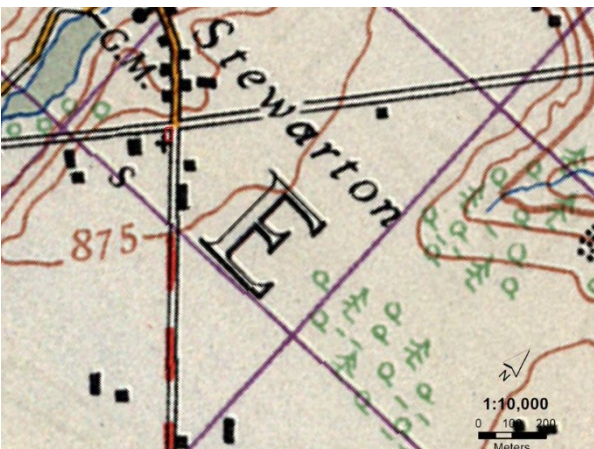


Figure 18: 1942 National Topographic Map



Figure 19: 1954 Aerial Photograph

The 1960 aerial photograph (Figure 20) shows the beginnings of the new Stewarttown Public School on the southeast corner of 15 Side Road and Trafalgar Road, and the 1974 National Topographic Map (Figure 21) also clearly identifies the school along Trafalgar Road to the east.

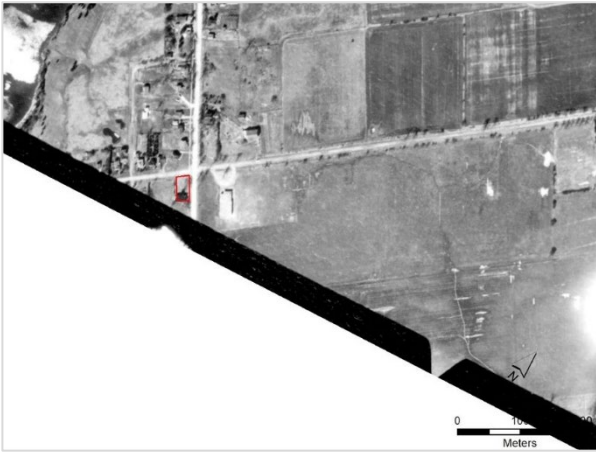


Figure 20: 1960 Aerial Photograph

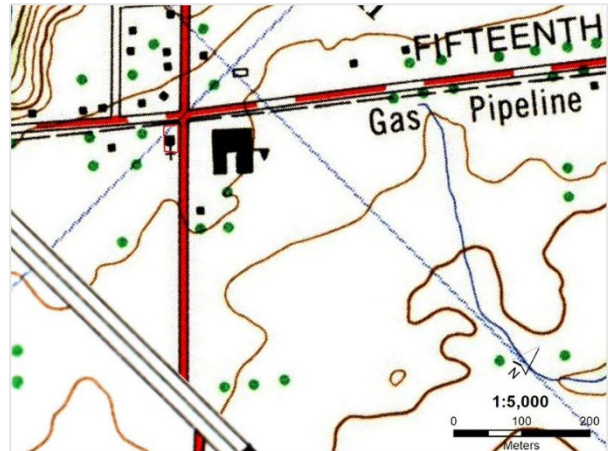


Figure 21: 1974 NTS Map

Aerial photography from 1999 and 2005 (Figure 22 and Figure 23) show the church located at the northeast corner of Lot 15 surrounded by fields, while new residential development is evident to the northeast off of 15 Side Road as the area has developed further north of 15 Side Road.



Figure 22: 1999 Aerial Photograph



Figure 23: 2005 Aerial Photograph

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The property at 10996 Trafalgar Road is located at the southwest corner of 15 Side Road and Trafalgar Road. The property includes a one-storey frame church building with a gravel parking lot, paved walkway to the front entrance, and features several mature deciduous trees along the property line (Figure 24 and Figure 25).



Figure 24: Looking north along Trafalgar Road towards the subject property (Google Streetview 2021)



Figure 25: Looking south along Trafalgar Road towards the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The existing one-storey structure is a wood frame building clad with stucco, with a front gable roof. Each side elevation features three symmetrically placed Gothic-arched windows. On the front elevation along Trafalgar Road, a window opening is located on either side of the entrance vestibule which features a side double-door entrance above a flight of concrete steps. The entrance was previously centered within the vestibule along Trafalgar Road according to historic photographs. Above the vestibule and beneath the gable roof is the church bell within a recess on the front elevation. (Figure 26 through Figure 28)



Figure 26: Front elevation of St. John's Anglican Church (Town of Halton Hills 2023)



Figure 27: Front elevation of St. John's Anglican Church (Town of Halton Hills 2023)



Figure 28: Detail of front elevation of St. John's Anglican Church (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The south elevation of the church features three symmetrically placed lancet windows and flat-headed window openings at the basement level. A rear one-storey addition is visible on the west side of the original church building (Figure 29).



Figure 29: Side (south) elevation of St. John's Anglican Church (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The side elevation along 15 Side Road features the same symmetrically placed Gothic-arched window openings with basement windows located below, and a gable-roofed entrance within the rear one-storey addition. The entrance within the rear addition is located beneath a gable roofed open porch structure (Figure 30 and Figure 31)



Figure 30: Northwest corner of St. John's Anglican Church (Town of Halton Hills 2023)



Figure 31: Side (north) elevation of St. John's Anglican Church (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The rear elevation of the main church building is a blank wall with no openings, while the one-storey addition features a single round-arched window and a tripartite round window opening. A small metal chimney is located above the roof of the addition (Figure 32).



Figure 32: Rear (west) elevation of St. John's Anglican Church (Google Streetview 2021)



Figure 33: Rear (west) elevation of St. John's Anglican Church (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

2.3 Architectural Style and Analysis

The steeply-pitched gable roof of St. John's Anglican Church is characteristic of the Gothic Revival style, as are its pointed lancet windows. Aside from those features, however, the church itself is a vernacular box shape and features no other significant ornamentation on the exterior, apart from the central stained glass window within the front vestibule.

Thomas McIlwraith notes in *Looking for Old Ontario* that “[t]he pointed gothic window is a universal architectural signal of the Christian church. The revival of Gothicism in the Western world in the 1830s was just one more upswing in the cyclical way styles rise and fall in favour. By chance, it coincided with Upper Canada's first widespread demand for church building” (p. 150). McIlwraith goes on to note that a small Gothic Revival building was the choice of many Methodist congregations and that hundreds were built across Ontario. By the 1870s merged congregations were sharing and disposing of their buildings as consolidation amongst Protestant denominations in the late nineteenth century continued, and this is reflected in the Anglican congregation's purchase of the Methodist's church building.

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.

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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 10996 Trafalgar Road has physical and design value as an early, representative example of a rural, vernacular church building with Gothic Revival influences within the community of Stewarttown. Constructed c. 1840, the frame church building has had few modifications on the exterior apart from the stucco which has been extant for over a century and which as such has acquired value as an attribute of the building. Gothic Revival influences within the structure include the lancet windows and steep gabled roof.

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

The property at 10996 Trafalgar Road has significant historical and associative value. The church building is associated with the early Protestant Christian communities in Stewarttown and the surrounding area, with early associations with the Methodist church and later Anglican congregation. Located at the corner of Trafalgar Road and 15 Side Road, the church has a long association with the Stewarttown community

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

In its existing location since the late 19th century, St. John's Anglican Church has long served as a landmark at 15 Side Road and Trafalgar Road. Located at the southern terminus of the community of Stewarttown, the stuccoed church building is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its surroundings at the edge of the residential community of Stewarttown.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 10996 Trafalgar Road 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 10996 Trafalgar Road are identified as follows:

- The setback, placement, and orientation of the c.1840s frame church building at the southwest corner of 15 Side Road and Trafalgar Road
- The scale, form and massing of the one-storey stuccoed frame structure with gable roof with front vestibule;
- The materials, including stuccoed exterior;
- On the front (east) elevation:
 - The central vestibule with wooden lancet stained-glass window with wood surround;
 - Beneath the centre gable, the recessed alcove with bell; and,
- On the side (north and south) elevations, the three symmetrically placed lancet window openings with wood surrounds.

The interiors of the church building, rear one-storey addition and raised entrance within the front vestibule have not been included as part of the heritage attributes of the property. These modifications to the original church building, while complimentary to the structure, should remain flexible to accommodate future uses for the building as well as accessibility as may be required.

5.0 Sources

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