

Research and Evaluation Report



(Royal LePage Meadowtown Realty Inc., 2023)

Towercliffe House

9920 Regional Road 25, Scotch Block, Town of Halton Hills

June 2023

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1.0 Property Description

9920 Regional Road 25	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Regional Municipality of Halton
Legal Description	PT LT 10, CON 2 ESQ, AS IN 835440; TOWN OF HALTON HILLS
Construction Date	c. 1896
Original Use	Residential
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	Joseph Edwin Whiting Bate
Architectural Style	Vernacular with Queen Anne and Romanesque influences
Additions/Alterations	Tower truncated; Front Porch removed
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town's Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Laura Loney
Report Date	June 2023

2.0 Background

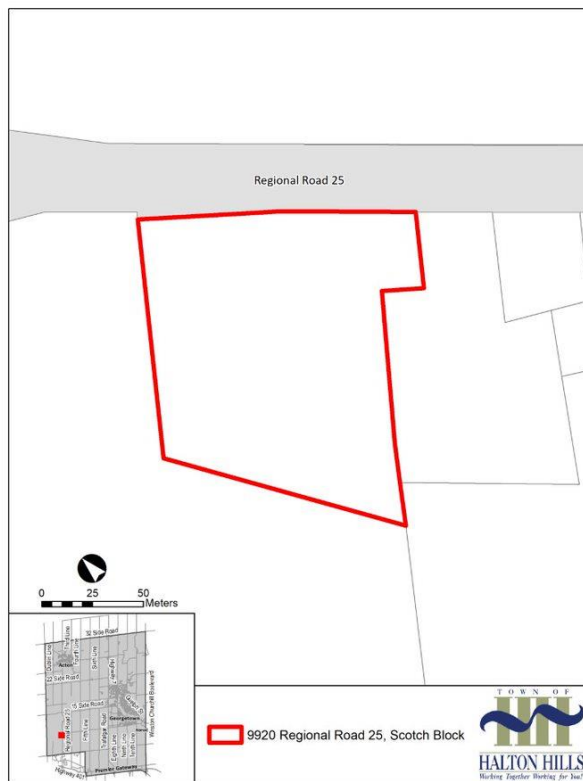


Figure 1: Location Map - 9920 Regional Road 25



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph - 9920 Regional Road 25 (2021)

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 9920 Regional Road 25 in 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*.

2.1 Historical Background

The Crown Patent for Lot 10, Concession 2 was granted to Richard Bower in February 1832. Bower sold the property to James Hume in 1832, and 1858 mapping shows James Hume as owner of the subject property (Figure 3). Hume owned the property until 1864 when it was sold to Robert and William Laidlaw, who are identified as the owners in the 1877 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton, Ontario* (Figure 4). No structure is identified on the property in 1877. In 1877, Lot 10 was sold to Finlay McGibbon, who three years later sold to Henry Pratt Lawson. In 1890, Lawson sold 99 acres of land to Joseph Edwin Bate for \$2800.



Figure 3: The subject property overlaid on 1858 Tremaine's Map of the County of Halton, Canada West

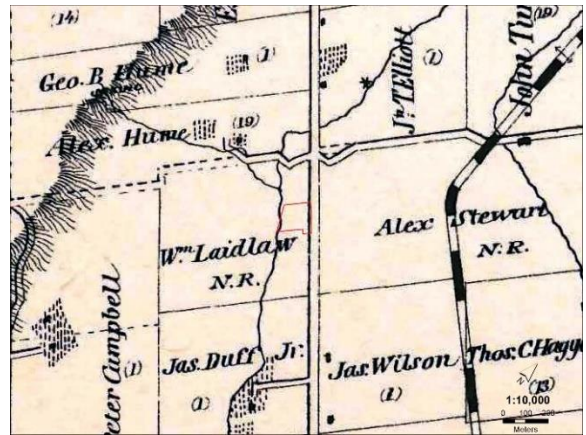


Figure 4: The subject property overlaid 1877 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton, Ontario*

Joseph E. Bate was born circa 1845 in England. Bate, his wife Bessie and their children constructed the house at 9920 Regional Road 25 circa 1896 with local cut limestone (Figure 5 and Figure 6). The 1891 Census identifies Bate as a stone cutter and a Methodist. Bate is described as a “quarry man and bridge builder” in his obituary in the January 23, 1913, edition of the *Acton Free Press*, dying in his 67th year. Bate is buried in the Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Toronto. His wife Bessie (nee Stevens) died on May 18, 1916.



Figure 5: Towercliffe House with the family of builder Joseph Edwin Whiting Bate. Bate moved to the area in 1886, operated a stone quarry at Lot 11, Con. 2, and built this home for his family (EHS 10337 c.1899)



Figure 6: A hunting party in front of Towercliffe House, c. 1902. Pictured are Joseph Bate (standing next to the door), his wife Bessie (black dress), daughter Lillie (with cat), and Dr. Samuel Webster (next to Bate). Note the addition of the elaborate covered front porch since 1899 (EHS 10338)

National Topographic mapping from 1909 and 1931 (Figure 7 and Figure 8) shows a largely unchanged rural context surrounding the subject property in the early 20th century.

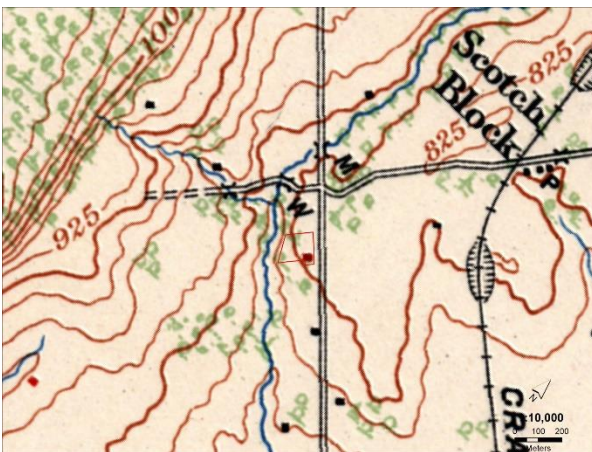


Figure 7: The subject property overlaid on the 1909 National Topographic Map (Department of Militia and Defence)

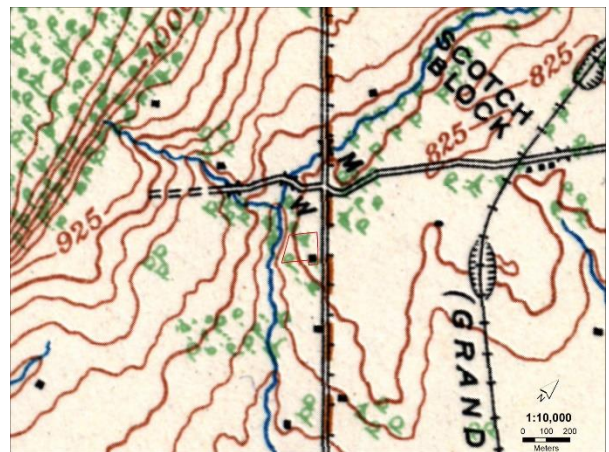


Figure 8: The subject property overlaid on the 1931 National Topographic Map (Department on National Defence)

In 1919, Towercliffe House was purchased by William (Bill) Hampshire (Figure 9 and Figure 10), who had helped to carry mortar and stone to build the house for its previous owner, Joseph Bate. Hampshire was born in Fergus, Ontario. His family moved to Speyside when he was 7 months old, and he was educated at Dufferin School. Heavily involved in the community, Hampshire served on County Council, was an active member of the Boston Presbyterian Church, ran as a federal Liberal candidate in 1926, was a school trustee, and became Sheriff of Halton County in 1935 until 1946. Hampshire, a bachelor, died on January 11, 1968, at the age of 96, and is buried in Fairview Cemetery in Acton.

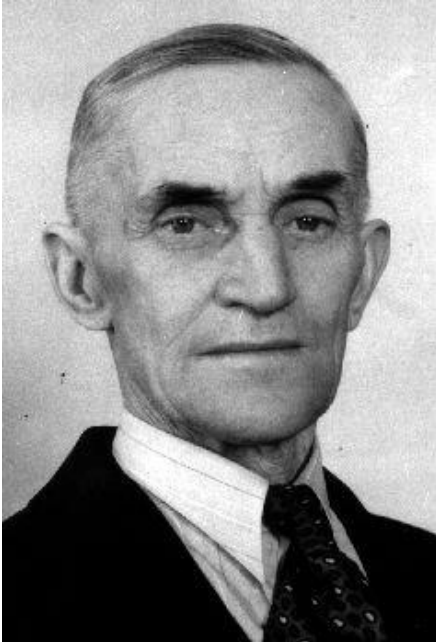


Figure 9: William Hampshire c.1940s
(Milton Historical Society 5964)



Figure 10: William Hampshire at age 81, as shown in the Nov 21, 1953, edition of *The Hamilton Spectator* (EHS 11668)

The 1952 aerial photograph (Figure 11) and 1974 National Topographic map (Figure 12) show the subject property in its rural context.



Figure 11: 1952 Aerial Photograph

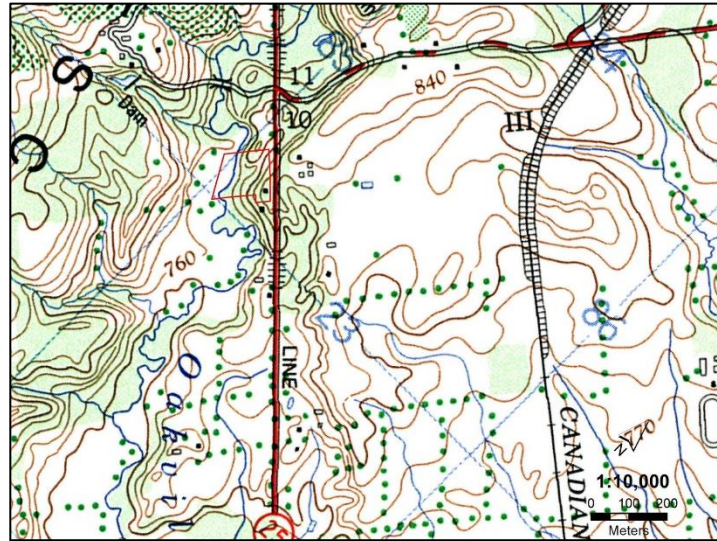


Figure 12: 1974 NTS Mapping (Department of Energy, Mine and Resources)

Towercliffe House has remained in its original location on a rise above Regional Road 25, subject to minor modifications on the exterior including the removal of the porch seen in the 1902 photograph (Figure 6) as well as the truncation of the tower at the roofline.

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The property is located at 9920 Regional Road 25 along the southwest side of the roadway in Halton Hills and contains a two-and-a-half storey stone residential building within a treed lot adjacent to Sixteen Mile Creek. The property is legally known as PT LT 10, CON 2 ESQ, AS IN 835440. TOWN OF HALTON HILLS.

The property was listed for sale in July 2023 and photographs of the entire site were sourced from the real estate listing for those elevations that were not photographable from the public realm.

The existing two-storey house sits on a rise above the roadway and is visible from Regional Road 25 (Figure 13 and Figure 14). A black wrought iron fence with gate extends along the property line, with dense coniferous plantings within the fence line and many mature trees within the property. An asphalt driveway extends to the gate then transitions into a cobblestone driveway and a grassed lawn between the house and the fence. The front entrance is accessed via a walkway extending from the drive.



Figure 13: Looking towards the subject property at 9920 Regional Road 25 (Town of Halton Hills 2023)



Figure 14: Looking towards the subject property at 9920 Regional Road 25 (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The rectangular-plan house is two-and-a-half storeys, constructed of limestone, with a hipped roof and dual chimneys on the northwest and southeast roof slopes and an additional chimney above the rear elevation. The steel roof also features skylights (Figure 15).



Figure 15: Aerial view of property at 9920 Regional Road 25 (Royal LePage Meadowtowne Realty Inc., 2023)

At the front elevation (Figure 16), a two-storey projecting bay is located at the southeast corner and appears to have been truncated from three storeys at some point based on historical photographs of the building. The centrally placed entrance is located adjacent to the projecting bay with a stone surround, with a round-arched window opening with stone lintel and sill adjacent to the entrance at the first storey and two symmetrically placed, smaller round-arched window openings with stone lintels and sills at the second storey. The projecting bay contains three flat-headed window openings with stone sills and lintels at both the first and second storey, with a flat roof above.



Figure 16: Front Elevation of Towercliffe House, 9920 Regional Road 25 (Royal LePage Meadowtown Realty Inc., 2023)

The side (southeast) elevation (Figure 17) features a two-storey projection with two entrances with contemporary doors, one onto a low-profile wooden porch and another above a garden bed beyond. The

upper storeys feature identical flat-headed window openings with stone sills and lintels containing contemporary hung windows. On the other side (northwest) elevation (Figure 18), two symmetrically placed flat-headed window openings are located at the first and second storeys, with stone sills and lintels.



Figure 17: Partial southeast elevation, Towercliffe House at 9920 Regional Road 25 (Royal LePage Meadowtown Realty Inc., 2023)



Figure 18: Northwest elevation, Towercliffe House at 9920 Regional Road 25 (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

A wooden deck is located along the first storey of the rear (southwest) elevation of the building (Figure 19), access via a single entrance door. A flat-headed window opening with stone sill and lintel is located adjacent to the rear door on the first storey with two flat-headed window openings with stone sills and lintels at the second storey.

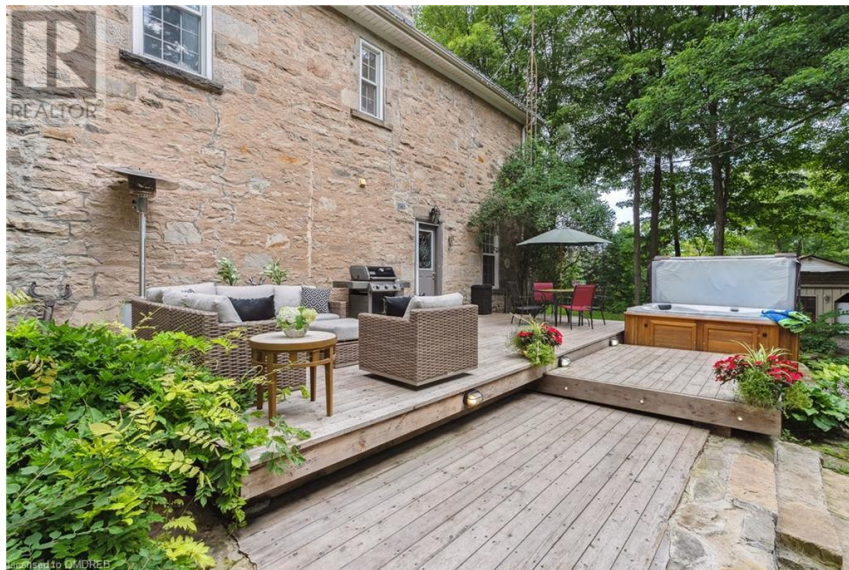


Figure 19: Rear (southwest) elevation, Towercliffe House at 9920 Regional Road 25 (Royal LePage Meadowtown Realty Inc., 2023)

2.3 Architectural Style & Comparative Analysis

Stone cutter Joseph Bate built Towercliffe House with locally quarried cut limestone from his quarry within Lot 11, Concession 2. The existing building features rock-faced stone throughout, with stone lintels, sills, door and window surrounds and keystones, quoining at each corner, the (originally three-storey) tower, and a heavy stone string course between the first and second storey.

The architectural style of the existing structure could be described as vernacular, using local materials, while exhibiting some features characteristic of other architectural styles. The corner stone tower, two-storey projecting bay, top-heavy chimneys and mix of roofing styles (prior to the removal of the domed third storey of the corner tower), and a variety of window sizes and shapes are elements often used in Queen Anne Architecture, with rustic cut stone being reminiscent of more traditional building methods. The round arched windows on the front elevation, heavy quoins and string courses are also architectural elements often included in Romanesque Revival structures, popular in Ontario between 1850 and 1900.

While there are some stone residential buildings within the rural area in Halton Hills that are listed on the Town's Heritage Register (see Figure 20 and Figure 21), Towercliffe House is unique in its size, construction, and architectural detailing within the Town.



Figure 20: 12972 Ninth Line (Google Streetview April 2022)



Figure 21: 10725 Regional Road 25 (Google Streetview August 2021)

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 are 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 9920 Regional Road 25 has physical and design value as a unique example of a vernacular cut-stone residential structure with Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival influences in its design. Built with local materials, the cut limestone exterior of the house has remained largely unaltered since its construction at the turn of the last century. Towercliffe House features a corner tower (altered), two-storey projecting bay, top-heavy chimneys, and a variety of window sizes and shapes often used in Queen Anne Architecture, with rustic cut stone as the material being reminiscent of more traditional building methods. The round arched windows on the front elevation, heavy quoins and string courses are also architectural elements often included in Romanesque Revival structures. Stone cutter Joseph Bate built Towercliffe House with locally quarried cut limestone, and the existing building features rock-faced stone throughout, with stone lintels, sills, door and window surrounds and keystones, quoining at each corner, the (originally three-storey) tower, and a heavy stone string course between the first and second storey.

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 9920 Regional Road 25 has historical and associative value due to its associations with its builder, local quarryman and bridge builder Joseph Bate. The property is also associated with longtime owner William (Bill) Hampshire, who helped construct the building and was a significant figure in the local community. Heavily involved in the community, Hampshire served on County Council, was an active member of Boston Presbyterian Church, ran as a federal Liberal candidate in 1926, was a school trustee and became Sheriff of Halton County in 1935 until 1946.

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	N/A

The property at 9920 Regional Road 25 has contextual value as it remains in its original location within the rural area along Regional Road 25, maintaining the existing context of residential properties along this portion of the highway. The property remains physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings. Due to its situation above Regional Road 25 and dense vegetation, the existing house is not considered a landmark.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 9920 Regional Road 25 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 9920 Regional Road 25 are identified as follows:

- The setback, location and orientation of the existing residential building known as Towercliffe House along Regional Road 25;
- The scale, form and massing of the two-and-a-half storey building including hipped roof with dual stone chimneys on a stone foundation;
- The materials, including cut limestone walls and detailing throughout the building, and a horizontal stone course between the first and second storeys on the front and side elevations of the existing building;
- On the front (northeast) elevation:
 - o The flat-headed entrance with stone surround;
 - o Round-arched window openings at the first and second storeys with stone keystones in stone hoodmoulds and detailed stone surrounds;
 - o At the south end of the northeast elevation, the two-storey stone projecting bay with flat-headed window openings at the first and second storey;
- On the side (northwest) elevation:
 - o Flat-headed window openings at the first and second storeys, symmetrically placed on the elevation with stone sills, lintels, and surrounds;
- On the side (southeast) elevation:
 - o Flat-headed window openings at the first and second storeys, symmetrically placed on the elevation with stone sills, lintels, and surrounds;

The interiors of the building and rear elevation have not been identified as attributes of the subject property.

5.0 Sources

Primary Sources

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Year: 1901; Census Place: *Esquesing, Halton, Ontario*; Page: 8; Family No: 78.
https://www.ancestry.ca/discoveryui-content/view/11308360:8826?tid=&pid=&queryId=cc6aa9206db3154199a1c8f6e5795804&_phsrc=YcZ1&_phstart=successSource.

Year: 1911; Census Place: 1 - *Esquesing, Halton, Ontario*; Page: 8; Family No: 79.
https://www.ancestry.ca/discoveryui-content/view/4649457:8947?tid=&pid=&queryId=cc6aa9206db3154199a1c8f6e5795804&_phsrc=YcZ1&_phstart=successSource.

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