

# Research and Evaluation Report



(EHS01020)

**WILLIAMS-WHEELER GENERAL STORE**  
517 Main Street, Glen Williams, Town of Halton Hills

July 2023

517 Main Street | PT LT 21, CON 10 ESQ, AS IN 675018; AKA LT 64 PLAN 49 EAST OR SOUTHEAST SIDE OF PRINCE ST; HALTON HILLS/ESQUESING TOGETHER WITH AN EASEMENT OVER PART LOT 21, CONCESSION 10 ESQ, PART 1 20R21669 AS IN HR1705511

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## 1.0 Property Description

<b>517 Main Street</b>	
<b>Municipality</b>	Town of Halton Hills
<b>County or Region</b>	Region of Halton
<b>Legal Description</b>	PT LT 21, CON 10 ESQ, AS IN 675018; AKA LT 64 PLAN 49 EAST OR SOUTHEAST SIDE OF PRINCE ST; HALTON HILLS/ESQUESING TOGETHER WITH AN EASEMENT OVER PART LOT 21, CONCESSION 10 ESQ, PART 1 20R21669 AS IN HR1705511
<b>Construction Date</b>	c. 1856
<b>Original Use</b>	Commercial/Residential
<b>Current Use</b>	Commercial
<b>Architect/Building/Designer</b>	Built by Charles Williams
<b>Architectural Style</b>	Vernacular 19 <sup>th</sup> century commercial building
<b>Heritage Status</b>	Listed on the Town’s Heritage Register
<b>Recorder(s)</b>	Mark Rowe; Laura Loney
<b>Report Date</b>	July 2023

## 2.0 Background

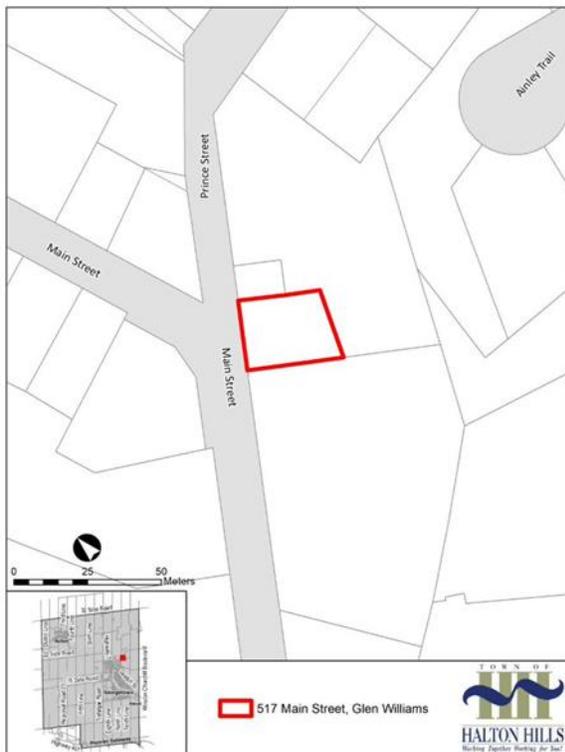


Figure 1: Location Map – 517 Main Street, Glen Williams



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 517 Main Street, Glen Williams

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 517 Main Street 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 son of a Loyalist family, John Butler Muirhead (1800-1824) received a location ticket for Lot 21, Concession 10, Esquesing in 1818. John Butler Muirhead completed his settlement duties on his two hundred acres on 13 June 1823. On 25 September 1824, the Crown patent was issued to Muirhead. John Butler Muirhead died suddenly on 29 November 1824 and was buried at St. Mark's Church, Niagara.



Figure 3: 1819 Patent Plan, subject property outlined in red

Benajah Williams (1765-1851) was a clothier in Gainsborough Township, Niagara. His third wife was Elizabeth Kennedy (1788-1842) and since most of her family had left for Esquesing, they decided to move there as well. On 12 October 1824, he listed his mill property and Grimsby township property for sale in the *Niagara Gleaner*. Whether Benajah had a deal with the young Muirhead, or it was happenstance, he purchased Lot 21, Concession 10, Esquesing Township from the heirs of John Butler Muirhead on 9 November 1825. Sixty-year-old Benajah reportedly had a saw mill up and running that same year.

The hamlet of Williamsburg took some time to start to grow. Charles Williams' frame house dated from 1836 and the Jacob Williams woolen mill did not start until 1839. The Kennedy and Williams families had accounts at Samuel Watkins dry-goods store at Ashgrove from 1836-1838. William Clay had a store at McNab's Mill (Norval) since 1831, but there were only six merchants in the entire township in 1838.

William Wyllie was the first general merchant in the village, setting up shop in 1848. On 6 August 1852, Williamsburg was granted a post office named Glen Williams. Charles Williams was named as Postmaster, which was a political appointment. Charles Williams built the two-storey brick "Manor House" (514 Main Street) for his son-in-law, Moffitt Forster in 1856 and the similar construction suggests the brick general store at 517 Main Street dates from the same year. Upon completion, it was leased to the Norval general merchants Webster & Sutcliffe.

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Figure 4: Tremaine's Map of the County of Halton, Canada West, subject property outlined in red (1858)

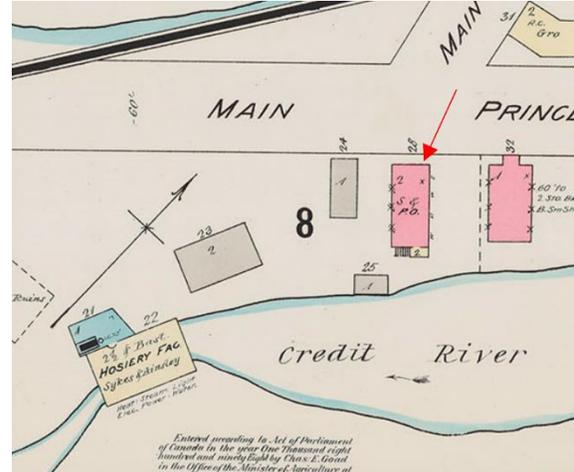


Figure 5: Excerpt from the 1898 Fire Insurance Map of Glen Williams, annotated with red arrow identifying the two-storey brick building at 517 Main Street in Glen Williams (Library and Archives Canada)

By 1866 William McMaster was the general grocer and served as deputy postmaster. James Laidlaw had the post office in his store at 519 Main Street prior to this. By about 1871, McMaster's store was taken over by Rufus S. McCrae who operated the store until 1883.

In 1883, Andrew and Margaret Ann Wheeler moved from Limehouse to take over running the general store. Andrew's brother Robert Wheeler had taken over the Limehouse store in 1880. With the death of Charles Williams, Andrew Wheeler was named as the second postmaster of Glen Williams in 1889.

The Williams-Wheeler Store is well-documented throughout the twentieth century, likely due in part to its central location within the community of Glen Williams (Figure 6 through Figure 13).



Figure 6: Credit Lodge of the Free Masons, Wheeler's Store identified with the red arrow, c. 1902 (EHS00295)



Figure 7: Tom J. Hill Sr. in a double horse trap; to the rear is Wheeler's General Store at 517 Main Street, c.1902 (EHS12703)

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Figure 8: Detail of Bird's Eye View of Glen Williams, 517 Main Street identified with red arrow, c.1908 (Francis Kerwood Hunter)



Figure 9: Main Street looking towards the Wheeler Store, c.1908 (EHS00442)



Figure 10: Glen Band, Wheeler's Store in background, c.1910 (EHS12702)



Figure 11: Wheeler's Store on Main Street, c.1910 (EHS00973)



Figure 12: Wheeler's General Store, c.1913 (EHS00079)

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Figure 13: Delivery horse outside Wheeler's General Store, c.1915 (EHS20349)

The subject property was transferred to Lydia (Williams) Board, and she sold the general store and post office (517 Main Street) to Andrew Wheeler on August 26, 1909. Andrew Wheeler lived in Limehouse with his wife Margaret (nee Martin) until 1886, after which they moved to Glen Williams. Andrew Wheeler ran the general store in the Glen for several years and was a member of the Methodist Church. Their son, John Alexander Wheeler, an avid early photographer of Glen Williams, took over the business following Andrew Wheeler's death in 1922. His siblings transferred all rights to him in 1944 and in 1950, John A. Wheeler sold the property to his son Harold Wheeler (Figure 15).



Figure 14: Armed Forces parade in Glen Williams, c.1946 (EHS01009)

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Figure 15: John Alexander Wheeler and his wife, c.1950. (EHS01015)



Figure 16: Wheeler's General Store and Post Office, c.1950 (EHS01020)

Harold and Irene (Nan) Wheeler operated the store and post office together. Four members of the Wheeler family had served as postmasters in Glen Williams in total between 1885 and 1972. Harold Wheeler died in 1971 and Irene Wheeler carried on until 4 October 1972 when it was sold to Charles and Olive Bush. Charles Bush, originally from England, was a sheet metal fabricator at Orenda and lived on the Eighth Line near Hornby.



Figure 17: 517 Main Street, c.1973 (*Georgetown Herald*, February 8, 1973, p.19)

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The post office at 517 Main Street was closed in 1973 and was transferred to 520 Main Street where it existed until 1967. 517 Main Street was sold on 16 October 1973 to Melvyn and Barbara Smith, who opened an antique store. They poured a concrete pad between the store and the Glen Williams Town Hall to support a Quonset hut as a storage facility.

Wimmy Hutchinson Ltd. purchased the store in 1976. They sold to Breunis Kamphorst and Carol McMullen. During this time, it housed a few different businesses. On 1 February 1983, John and Elaine Kemshead purchased the property and successfully opened a tearoom where they sold the meat pies made famous by John's father, Jack, in his Georgetown bakery in the 1930s. They named the tearoom, "The Copper Kettle."

On 31 August 1987, Graham and Brenda Gove purchased the business and moved upstairs. They applied for a liquor license and the tearoom became a British style "Copper Kettle Pub."



Figure 18: 517 Main Street, Glen Williams, Oct 2009 (Esquesing Historical Society)



Figure 19: 517 Main Street, Glen Williams, Oct 2009 (Esquesing Historical Society)



Figure 20: 517 Main Street, Glen Williams, Oct 2009 (Esquesing Historical Society)

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It was sold to Jasper and Janet Martin in 2015, the current owners. They closed the Copper Kettle Pub and renovated the neglected building from basement to rooftop before re-opening.

## 2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The property at 517 Main Street is located along the southeast side of Main Street at the intersection of Main and Prince Streets in Glen Williams. The property contains a two-storey brick structure with gable roof and rear two-storey addition (Figure 21).



Figure 21: Front (northwest) elevation of the existing building at 517 Main Street, Glen Williams (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The two-storey building is constructed of two-foot square hand-hewn beams and triple-wythe hand-made brick walls that are 13 inches thick on the lower storey and double-wythe at the second storey. The pine used to construct the building was sourced from the Glen.

The front elevation of the existing building (Figure 22) is largely unchanged from early twentieth century photographs. At the first storey, the recessed single entrance is accessed via a shallow step, with the original wooden storefront windows on either side in a three over three pattern facing Main Street and two-over-two pattern on either side of the entrance. Below the storefront windows are wooden panels and a wooden surround.

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Figure 22: Detail of front entrance, 517 Main Street (Glen Williams)

Above the front entrance, a shed-roofed single storey porch is extant, with painted wooden columns, that, while modified from the original, are sympathetic to the original porch design (Figure 23). The porch accessing the front entrance has been modified over time due to road resurfacing, as photographs from the 1950s show a porch with two steps to access the entrance from Main Street.



Figure 23: Detail of front elevation and porch at 517 Main Street, Glen Williams (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

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Two flat-headed window openings are extant above the porch at the second storey (Figure 24), symmetrically placed on the elevation and centered beneath the gable with returning eaves. The window openings feature painted sills and dichromatic brick voussoir above. The front elevation features buff brick quoining at the corners and dichromatic brick designs. A brick chimney that appears to have been reconstructed is extant above the central gable.



Figure 24: Detail of the second storey of the front elevation, 517 Main Street, Glen Williams (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The northeast elevation has retained some of the original features, it however, has been modified with the introduction of a brick fireplace towards the rear of the elevation. The two-storey rear addition extends beyond the original building. A low brick wall surrounds a patio used by the restaurant. At the second storey, symmetrically placed window openings with painted sills and brick voussoirs are extant.



Figure 25: Northeast elevation of the existing building at 517 Main Street, Glen Williams (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The southwest elevation (Figure 26) features basement access underneath a shallow shed-roofed porch, with fire escape to the second floor. Brick repair is evident at the second storey which features three

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symmetrically placed window openings and a single entrance door where the original building meets the new addition.



Figure 26: Looking towards the southwest elevation of the existing building at 517 Main Street, Glen Williams (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The rear of the existing building was not reviewed as part of this report.

### 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 at 517 Main Street has physical and design value as a representative vernacular nineteenth-century brick commercial building within the community of Glen Williams. The red and buff brick building, with gable roof, rubble stone foundation and wooden architectural detailing makes the Williams-Wheeler store an excellent example of early European development in the mid-nineteenth century in the Glen. The historic wooden storefront with wooden panels, display windows and recessed entry, along with the one-storey shed-roofed porch reflect those characteristics typical of mid-nineteenth century commercial buildings in Ontario, while the dichromatic brickwork and detailing reflect the use of local materials, as well as prosperity of the industrialists Williams family.

<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>N/A</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 517 Main Street has significant historical and associative value due to its associations with the Williams Family, Wheeler Family, and the European settlement and early growth of Glen Williams. The Wheeler-Williams Store was constructed by leading community figure Charles Williams, son of Glen Williams founder Benajah Williams, an industrialist, Justice of the Peace, and the first Postmaster in the community. The store was also run for decades by members of the Wheeler Family, with four members of the family had serving as postmasters in the hamlet between 1885 and 1972. The Williams-Wheeler Store reflects the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century development of the community as the first post office and one of the early prosperity of industrialists in Glen Williams.

<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 517 Main Street has significant contextual value as a landmark along Main Street in the heart of Glen Williams. The Williams-Wheeler Store has stood in this location since 1856, before Confederation, and has remained an integral part of the community since its construction. One of several mid-nineteenth century buildings along Main Street, the Williams-Wheeler Store at 517 Main Street is physically, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings in Glen Williams. Functionally, the Williams-Wheeler Store has served as a public destination since the mid-nineteenth century as a store and post office and has continued to serve as a landmark community hub and restaurant. The Williams-Wheeler store contributes to the heritage character and cultural heritage value of the community and is an integral part of the historic core of Glen Williams.

#### **4.0 Summary**

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 517 Main Street, Glen Williams 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 517 Main Street, Glen Williams are identified as follows:

- The location, setback, and orientation of the two-storey building along Main Street in Glen Williams;
- The scale, form, and massing of the two-storey building, including the gable roof with returning eaves and rubble stone foundation;
- The materials, including red and buff brick, wooden storefront windows and entry surround, and wooden porch;
- On the front (northwest) elevation:
  - o The historical wooden storefront with wooden lower panel, display windows with wooden muntins and recessed entry;
  - o The one-storey shed-roofed porch with wooden columns;
  - o The symmetrically placed flat-headed windows at the second storey with dichromatic brick voussoirs;
  - o The red brick façade including decorative dichromatic brickwork throughout, including buff brick quoining at the corners;
  - o The central brick chimney above the central gable;
- On the side (northeast) elevation:
  - o Red brick façade and buff brick quoining at the corners;
  - o Flat-headed window openings at the second storey;
- On the side (southwest) elevation:
  - o Red brick façade and buff brick quoining at the corners;
  - o Flat-headed window openings at the second storey;

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## 5.0 Sources

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