

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2023)

Knox Presbyterian Church
116 Main Street South, Georgetown, Town of Halton Hills

July 2023

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1.0 Property Description

116 Main Street South	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Region of Halton
Legal Description	LTS 7 & 8 & PT LTS 43 & 44, PL 27, AKA YOUNG AND BARBER'S SURVEY, AS IN G10564; HALTON HILLS
Construction Date	c.1887
Original Use	Religious
Current Use	Religious
Architect/Building/Designer	Unknown at this time
Architectural Style	Gothic Revival
Additions/Alterations	One-storey rear hall addition (1956)
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town's Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Laura Loney
Report Date	July 2023

2.0 Background



Figure 1: Location Map - 116 Main Street South



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph - 116 Main Street South (2023)

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 116 Main Street South 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 neighbourhood surrounding Church Street and Main Street in Georgetown is one of the oldest in the area, established after George Kennedy settled in the area in 1823. Georgetown continued to grow following the Barber brother's industry in the area and attracted other industrialists such as the Dayfoot's, who operated a leather and shoe trade in Ontario in the mid-19th century.

The first organized service for the Presbyterian congregation in Esquesing Township was held on the future site of Boston Presbyterian Church in Lot 6, Concession 8. The Presbyterian congregation in Georgetown held services as early as 1840 within the community. During the early 1840s, student minister Robert Wallace served local Presbyterians, while in the 1850s Reverends Grey and Alexander, from the Norval and Union churches, served as ministers.

The subject property is located within Plan 27, of the Young and Barber's Survey. In 1853, Lots 7 and 8 were sold by Joseph Pratt and his wife to Hugh Milloy, a blacksmith and plough maker. Figure 4 shows the property boundary overlaid on *Tremaine's Map of the County of Halton, Canada West* within the Town of Georgetown.

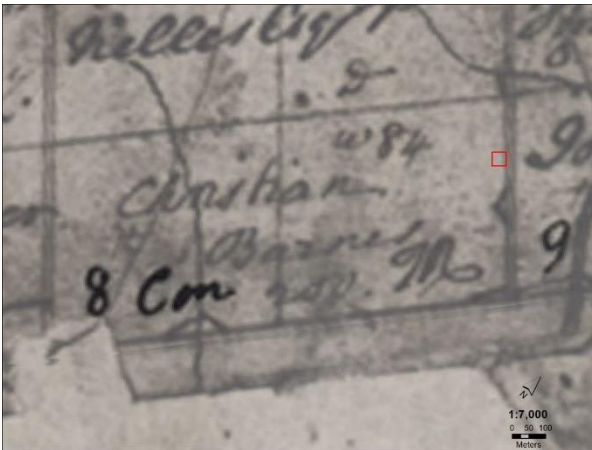


Figure 3: 1819 Patent Plan, subject property outlined in red

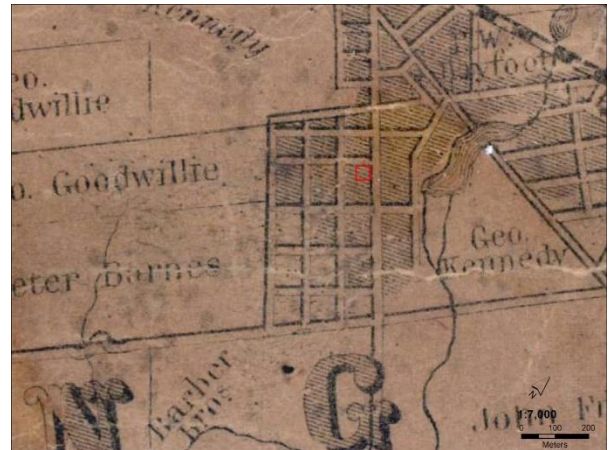


Figure 4: 1858 Tremaine's Map of the County of Halton, Canada West

Reverend Robert Burns preached in Georgetown every other Sunday between the fall of 1859 and June 1861. The congregation met in the old Town hall, Congregational Church, and later the Wesleyan Methodist Church. The congregation was officially established in 1860. Rev. Robert Burns presented a bible to the new congregation on 13 October 1860. In 1861, the Presbyterian Church in Limehouse was opened, and by 1863 it was determined that the Georgetown and Limehouse churches should unite. Robert Ewing was a student when he was called as the first minister. In April 1865, Robert Ewing was officially ordained and remained minister until 1872.

In 1866, Hugh MacKay and Thomas Young, Trustees of the Presbyterian Church, purchased the blacksmith shop property from Milloy. In 1867, a one-storey brick church was constructed on the subject property for approximately \$3,000 and the cornerstone was laid by Reverend Burns in May of that year. The architect for the original church building was prominent Toronto architect James Avon Smith. The first communion rolls for the church featured several prominent community members (Figure 5). Unfortunately, a fire in the home of Robert Young in 1878 destroyed early church records.

The members of the first Communion Roll were as follows:		
Mr. and Mrs. Hugh McKay	Stewart McCullough	
Mr. and Mrs. James Breckenridge	Mrs. H. Davidson	
Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Young	Mrs. Ramsey	
Mr. and Mrs. Walter McKay	Mrs. Hugh McCullough	
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Henderson	Mrs. Robt. Smith	
Mr. and Mrs. Donald McKinnon	Robert Anderson	
Mr. and Mrs. William Lawse	Mrs. E. W. Devereaux	
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Reid	Mrs. McGregor	
Mr. and Mrs. Alex Reid	Mrs. Wm. McMaster	
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Geddes	Miss A. Forbes	
Mr. and Mrs. Alex Grieve	Mrs. R. McCormack	
Mr. and Mrs. George Goodwillie	Mrs. P. Evens	
Mr. and Mrs. George C. McKenzie	Mrs. Hardy	
Robert Young	Mrs. Christison	

Figure 5: First Communion Roll for Knox Presbyterian Church
(*Centennial Knox Presbyterian Church: Georgetown, Ontario,
1860-1960*)



Figure 6: Original brick Knox Presbyterian Church, c.1886. It was erected in 1867 and dismantled in 1887 and rebuilt as a house at the entrance to Fairgrounds Park (EHS00447)

As the church congregation grew over time, construction began on a new stone church in this location to seat approximately 500 people at an estimated cost of \$15,000. It was completed in 1887 while Reverend W.G. Wallace was minister. Brick from the original church was used to construct a house at the corner of Park Avenue and Charles Street known as Pine Grove Cottage (Figure 8), owned then by the local McDermid family who owned a local grocery business.

The Carillon Bells at Knox Presbyterian were cast by Taylors of Loughborough in England. The Bell Foundry cast over 25,000 bells that were hung in over 100 countries worldwide since 1839, including the 16 ½ tonne bell “Great Paul” within the southwest tower of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London. The history of Taylors of Loughborough is traceable back to the 1300s.

116 Main Street South, Georgetown | LTS 7 & 8 & PT LTS 43 & 44, PL 27, AKA YOUNG AND BARBER'S SURVEY, AS IN G10564;
HALTON HILLS



Figure 7: Knox Presbyterian Church at Main and Church Streets, c.1887 (EHS26017)



Figure 8: Pine Grove at 53 Charles Street (Virtual GTA, 2015)

On February 16, 1901, the church was partially destroyed by a fire believed to have started in the church furnace (Figure 9 and Figure 10). The fire resulted in an estimated \$8,000 in damage to the building, with insurance covering \$5,525 of the cost. The December 10, 1901, edition of *The Conservator* notes the fire almost completely destroyed the church roof and interior, leaving only the stone walls. The one exception was the stained glass window on the north side, dedicated to Hugh McKay.

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HALTON HILLS



Figure 9: Fire at Knox Presbyterian Church, February 16, 1901 (*Halton Sketches*)



Figure 10: Fire at Knox Presbyterian Church, February 16, 1901 (*Halton Sketches*)

By December 1901, the congregation was able to return to their building, with the interior having been restored exactly as it was before the fire, with the re-building cost tendered at \$2,625. The article reflects on the interior of the church at that time, with dark brown terra cotta-coloured walls, a stencil fresco border, blue transept windows with gold stars done by Elliot & Son of Toronto, rich Brussels carpet, black ash seats by The Valley City Seating Co. of Dundas, brass electroliers from Keith & Fitzsimmons, and a beautiful pipe organ.



Figure 11: Postcard c.1908, showing Knox Presbyterian Church at 116 Main Street (EHS26074)

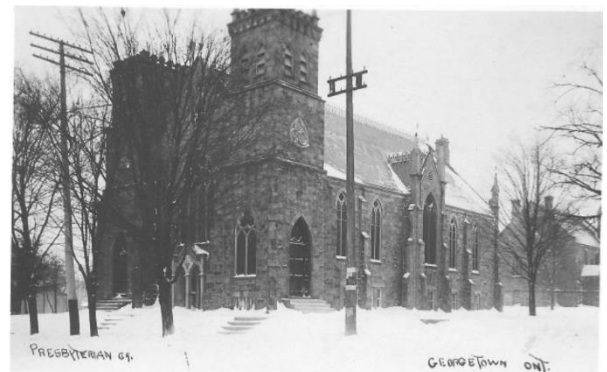


Figure 12: Postcard of Knox Presbyterian Church, c.1908 (EHS21570)



Figure 13: Postcard of Knox Presbyterian Church, c.1908 (EHS00318)



Figure 14: Knox Presbyterian Church c.1908 (EHS00649)



Figure 15: View of the Park District from Knox Presbyterian Church Bell Tower. The ridge of the roof with decorative iron work runs along the bottom of the photo, c.1908 (EHS26092)

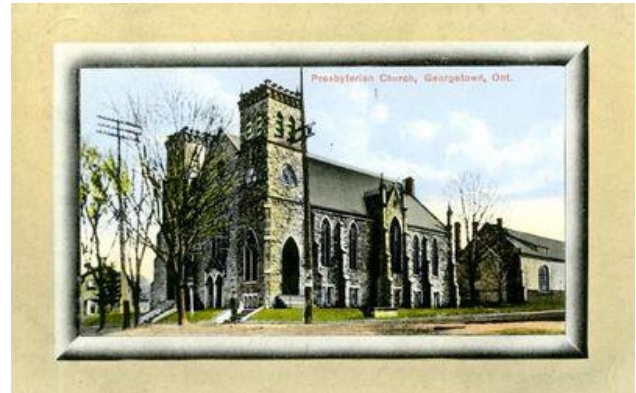


Figure 16: Postcard of Knox Presbyterian Church, c.1910 (EHS26073)

In 1922, Henry Pratt Lawson was honoured by his former congregation as a carillon of eight bells was dedicated to his memory following his death in 1920. The Lawson family were active members in the church and in the Georgetown community. Lawson's wife Mable taught Sunday School classes for over 12 years. A plaque hangs in the church in her memory upon her death in 1926. The Lawson home at 11 Church Street is adjacent to the Halton Hills Cultural Centre at 9 Church Street, which backs the Knox Presbyterian Church. In 1890, Lawson constructed 3 homes directly behind his home at 51, 53 and 55 Market Street. He constructed these for homes to financially assist local merchants and manufacturers. He was always lending a helping hand to citizens in need when purchasing or constructing a home. H.P Lawson was known primarily as the provider of Georgetown's first hydropower and the earliest industrialist in the local lumber business. He owned numerous sawmills and lumbering operations and was an extensive landholder throughout Esquesing. The Lawson Mill in Glen Williams generated electric light power for the Georgetown community.

Figure 17 shows the church building in its existing location within downtown Georgetown.

116 Main Street South, Georgetown | LTS 7 & 8 & PT LTS 43 & 44, PL 27, AKA YOUNG AND BARBER'S SURVEY, AS IN G10564;
HALTON HILLS

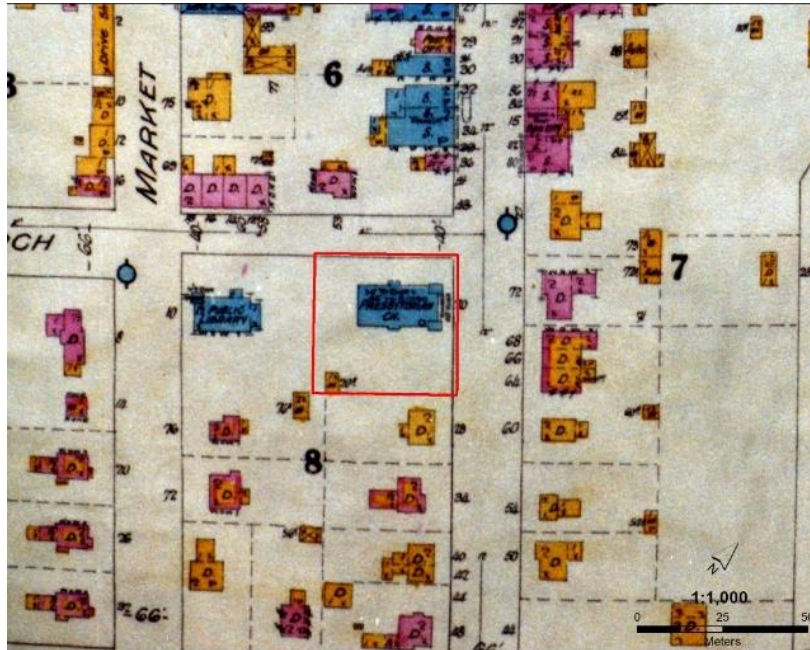


Figure 17: 1922 Fire Insurance Map, subject property outlined in red

In 1922, Major Lachlan Grant presented a carillon of bells, manufactured by Taylors of Loughborough, to Knox Church, saying “these bells . . . have been solemnly set apart from all common or unhallowed uses”. Changes continued to be made by the church’s congregations over time. By 1946, a new lighting system and oil furnace had been installed. In 1956, the new hall was officially opened and dedicated, with Samuel Mackenzie (son of local builder J.B. Mackenzie) supervising the construction (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Official opening and dedication of the new hall at Knox Presbyterian Church, February 15, 1956 (EHS04699)

In 1960, the congregation of Knox Presbyterian Church celebrated its centennial. By that time, thirteen ministers had served the church congregation, with Reverend Alex Calder currently serving as the minister.



Figure 19: Tree removal in front of Knox Presbyterian Church, c.1963 (EHS00239)



Figure 20: Back window at Knox Presbyterian Church, c.1975 (EHS01479)



Figure 21: Stained Glass Window at Knox Presbyterian Church, c.1975 (EHS01457)

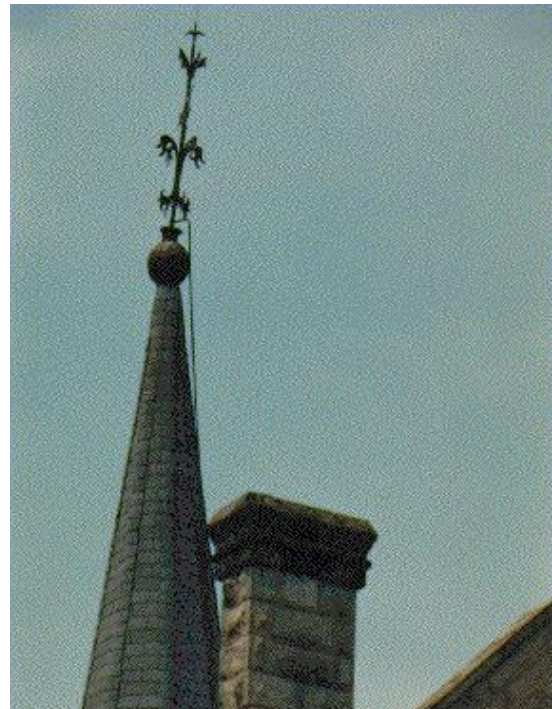


Figure 22: Knox Presbyterian Church Spire, c.1988 (EHS010726)



Figure 23: Knox Presbyterian Church, c.1995
(EHS16839)



Figure 24: 1966 Aerial Photograph, subject property outlined in red

The subject property continues to be owned by the Trustees of the Congregation of the Canada Presbyterian Church.

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The property at 116 Main Street South is located at the intersection of Church Street and Main Street South in the community of Georgetown, Ontario. The property includes a one-storey stone church building with a raised basement in the Gothic Revival style. The church is set back from Main Street South and accessed by a paved walkway extended from the sidewalk and features a large, grassed area south of the church building along Main Street South (Figure 25).



Figure 25: Looking northwest towards Knox Presbyterian Church from Main Street South (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The front (northeast) elevation of the church facing Main Street South (Figure 26) is dominated by square, crenellated, flat-roofed towers at each corner of the elevation, with stone buttresses at each

corner of the tower. The tower to the south end (Figure 28) features a lancet-arched entrance above a flight of stone steps, featuring double wooden doors with wood surround, with trefoil window with wooden tracery within the transom above. A stone lintel with keystone is located above the entrance.



Figure 26: Front (northeast) elevation of Knox Presbyterian Church at 116 Main Street South (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The tower to the north features a large lancet window opening with wooden tracery, including trefoil tracery within the arch, with stone sill and surround. Beneath this window are three small vertical flat-headed window openings at the basement level with smooth stone surround. A stone course separates the entrance and large lancet window at grade from the upper portions of both towers. Triangular openings with stone surrounds, featuring carved wooden trefoils, each containing a quatrefoil pattern, are located above. An additional stone course is located above each of these details, and each corner of the tower at this level features stone quoining. Beneath the castellated tower parapets are louvred lancet window openings with stone sills, surrounds and voussoirs. These elements are featured on all sides of each tower.



Figure 27: Detail of central entrance on the primary (northeast) elevation (Town of Halton Hills 2023)



Figure 28: Detail of entrance within the south tower along Main Street South (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

Centered within the front elevation, a pair of wooden entrance doors within wooden surrounds are located within lancet-shaped, symmetrically placed openings. The stone entrance surround projects from the front elevation and features an engraved stone above the entrance reading “Presbyterian 1887” (Figure 27). Above the central entrance, a large lancet window opening dominates the front elevation, featuring stained glass and elaborate wooden tracery with a trefoil beneath the arch. A round window with wooden trefoil (currently covered with a storm window) is located above, with a small round detail beneath the gable peak at the roofline.

The southeast elevation of the tower features a large lancet window opening with wooden tracery, trefoil, and stained glass, above three small vertical windows with stone lintel at grade. Beyond the tower, the southeast elevation features a central bay with gable roof intersecting with the main gable roof of the church. A large lancet stained-glass window and opening are featured beneath the gable peak, featuring wooden tracery and stone stills and surrounds. A small louvered opening is located beneath the gable peak. Two paired lancet window openings with wooden tracery and stained glass are located on either side of the central bay, which features stone buttresses. The paired window openings are each separated by a stone buttress extended to the eaves. A stone course extends along the roofline. Flat-headed window openings are extant along the basement level between these buttresses. A stone chimney is visible at the roofline at the rear of the church (Figure 29).



Figure 29: South elevation of Knox Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The side (northwest) elevation of the tower features an entrance above concrete steps similar to the entrance extant within the southeast tower, with wooden double doors and stained glass within the tracery above the doors. Beyond the tower, the northwest elevation reflects that of the southeast elevation in its detailing. At the rear, the one-storey flat-roofed addition, built c.1956, features a similar lancet-arched entrance with trefoil window above and double wooden doors, with stone exterior. Beyond the entrance, the elevation features a row of flat-headed window openings at the basement and first storeys, with a brick chimney above at the very rear. A paved parking pad is located in front of the rear addition (Figure 30).



Figure 30: Partial northwest elevation of Knox Presbyterian Church, showing rear hall addition (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The rear elevation of the original church building (Figure 31) is partially obscured by the one-storey addition. Above the addition, the dual chimneys extend above the church roof and between them are additional circular window openings with trefoil tracery in the large window, and a lancet window opening below.



Figure 31: Partial rear elevation of Knox Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

2.3 Architectural Style

Within Ontario there are several examples and variations of Gothic Revival architecture, popular within the province between 1830 and 1900. After 1850, Gothic Revival architecture became influenced by Augustus Pugin and his emphasis on medieval construction. In Gothic Revival church architecture in Ontario, many features help to articulate the style, including: lancet, or pointed arch windows; asymmetrical elevations with Medieval-inspired details, architectural details such as string courses, mouldings and surrounds, steeply-pitched and cross-gabled roofs, dormers, oversized towers, or a tall thinly proportioned tower with bell-cote, rock-faced stone walls with smooth stone trimming. Knox Presbyterian Church at 116 Main Street South in Georgetown features many of these hallmarks of Gothic Revival architecture, including lancet windows, tracery, asymmetrical elevation, string courses, mouldings, surrounds, steeply-pitched gable roof, dormers, oversize towers, and rock-faced stone walls, in addition to detailed tracery within the stained glass windows extant throughout.

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	X
Demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement	N/A

The property at 116 Main Street South has physical and design value as a representative example of a Gothic Revival Church within the community of Georgetown. The existing church building has retained its original features and architectural detailing throughout the exterior that contribute to its Gothic Revival style, including lancet windows, tracery, asymmetrical elevation, string courses, mouldings, surrounds, steeply-pitched gable roof, dormers, oversize towers, and rock-faced stone walls, in addition to detailed tracery within the stained glass windows extant throughout, including the Hugh McKay memorial window, c.1887, that survived the church fire in 1901. Knox Presbyterian Church demonstrates a high degree of craftsmanship in its construction, and of specific note are the stained glass windows and wooden tracery within window openings throughout, as well as the bells manufactured by the significant bellfoundry of London, Taylors of Loughborough.

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 116 Main Street South has significant value to its associations with early Protestant Christian communities in Georgetown and the surrounding area, with linkages to Limehouse Presbyterian Church, and a long-standing association with the Georgetown community. In 1960, the congregation of Knox Presbyterian Church celebrated its centennial. By that time, thirteen ministers had served the church congregation, with Reverend Alex Calder currently serving as the minister.

The Knox Presbyterian Church has connections to the Lawson family, particularly H.P Lawson and his wife, Mrs. Lawson. H.P was a prominent member of the Georgetown community, known as the provider of Georgetown's first hydropower, earliest entrepreneur in the sawmill and lumber business, an extensive landholder in Esquesing, and a helpful member providing financial assistance for those in need when purchasing or constructing a home. A dedication service was held at the Church for the carillon of eight bells in memory of H.P Lawson upon his death in 1920. A plaque hangs in the church to Mrs. Lawson's memory upon her death in 1926.

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

The property at 116 Main Street South has contextual value as a significant landmark within Georgetown at the corner of Church Street and Main Street South. A church building has been extant in this location since the late 1860s, with the current church having been extant since 1887. Knox Presbyterian Church helps to define, maintain, and support the character of Downtown Georgetown in its position on a slight rise above Main Street South within an open space. Together with the Georgetown Library and Cultural Centre at 9 Church Street to the west, Knox Presbyterian Church serves as historic anchor in the community at the southern end of the commercial core along Main Street South in Georgetown, linked physically, functionally, visually, and historically to its surroundings within the community.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 116 Main Street South 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 116 Main Street South are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the existing 1887 church building;
- The scale, form, and massing of the one-storey church building with raised basement;
- The gable roof with dormers on the northwest and southeast slopes;
- The materials, including rock-faced and smooth stone walls and detailing, wooden window and door surrounds and architectural detailing throughout; lancet window openings throughout with wooden tracery;
- The Hugh McKay memorial window, c.1887;
- On the front (northeast) elevation:
 - The double towers, with stone buttresses, stone courses and all stone detailing, lancet door and window entrances with stone detailing and surrounds, triangular window openings, lancet louvred window openings, castellated parapets, and basement-level flat-headed openings with stone lintels, and wooden tracery within window openings throughout;
 - The central entrance within projecting stone surround, including the paired wooden doors, stone detailing, and engraved stone reading "Presbyterian 1887" above;
 - The central lancet-arched window opening with wooden tracery and detailing, stone surrounds and lintel;
 - The round window openings beneath the gable peak;
- On the side (southeast and northwest) elevations:

- The projecting, gable roofed bay with stone buttresses, louvred window beneath the gable peak, and lancet window opening with wooden tracery, stone sill, and surrounds;
 - The paired lancet window openings with stone sills and surrounds and wooden tracery;
 - At the basement level, flat-headed window openings with stone lintels and surrounds;
- At the rear (southwest) elevation:
 - The paired stone chimneys, circular window opening with trefoil tracery, and lancet window opening below.
- The church bells, manufactured by the significant bellfoundry of London, Taylors of Loughborough.

The flat-roofed addition and interiors have not been identified as part of this report, however, should there be support within the congregation, it is recommended that the interiors be investigated to identify potential interior attributes that contribute to the cultural heritage value of the property.

5.0 Sources

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