

# Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2024)

## **Norval Presbyterian Church**

499 Guelph Street, Norval, Town of Halton Hills

February 2024

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## Table of Contents

|     |   |    |
|-----|---|----|
| 1.0 | Property Description.....   | 5  |
| 2.0 | Background .....  | 6  |
| 2.1 | Historical Background .....                                       | 6  |
| 2.2 | Property & Architectural Description .....                        | 15 |
| 2.3 | Architectural Style & Comparative Analysis .....                  | 19 |
| 3.0 | Description of Heritage Attributes and Evaluation Checklist ..... | 20 |
| 4.0 | Summary .....   | 21 |
| 5.0 | Sources.....  | 23 |

## Table of Figures

|            |   |    |
|------------|---|----|
| Figure 1:  | Location Map – 499 Guelph Street .....  | 6  |
| Figure 2:  | Aerial Photograph - 499 Guelph Street.....  | 6  |
| Figure 3:  | Reverends Gray and Alexander (One Hundred Years to the Glory of God, Norval Presbyterian Church).....   | 7  |
| Figure 4:  | Subject property identified on the 1822 patent plan .....   | 8  |
| Figure 5:  | Subject property identified on the 1858 Tremaine's Map of the County of Halton, Canada West .....       | 8  |
| Figure 6:  | Subject property identified on the 1877 Illustrated Atlas of the County of Halton .....                 | 8  |
| Figure 7:  | Sketch of the frame church at Union, 1848-1884 (The Georgetown Herald, June 7, 1933) .....              | 9  |
| Figure 8:  | Union Presbyterian Church, c.1908 .....   | 9  |
| Figure 9:  | Norval Presbyterian Church, c.1908 (EHS 00302).....   | 10 |
| Figure 10: | Lucy Maud Montgomery, c.1929 (L.M. Montgomery Collection XZ1 MS A097017).....                           | 10 |
| Figure 11: | Lucy Maud Montgomery, c.1932, in her garden at Norval ((L.M. Montgomery Collection XZ1 MS A097017)..... | 10 |
| Figure 12: | Norval Presbyterian Church as seen from Draper Street, c.1935 (EHS 20708) .....                         | 11 |
| Figure 13: | Subject property identified on the 1942 National Topographic Map .....                                  | 11 |
| Figure 14: | Subject property identified in 1952 aerial photography .....  | 11 |
| Figure 15: | Rev. G. Lockhard Royal in front of Norval Presbyterian Church, c.1955 (EHS 02360).....                  | 12 |
| Figure 16: | Steeple of the Presbyterian Church reflected in the Credit River millpond, c.1964 (EHS 02331) .....     | 12 |
| Figure 17: | Subject property identified on the 1973 National Topographic Map .....                                  | 12 |
| Figure 18: | Subject property identified in 1977 aerial photography. ....  | 12 |
| Figure 19: | A pen & ink sketch of Norval Presbyterian Church, c.1978 (EHS 27038) .....                              | 13 |
| Figure 20: | Norval Presbyterian Church at 499 Guelph Street, at Draper Street, c.1982 (EHS 17567) .....             | 13 |
| Figure 21: | Norval Presbyterian Church at 499 Guelph Street, at Draper Street, c.1982 (EHS 12569) .....             | 13 |
| Figure 22: | Norval Presbyterian Church, c.1995 (EHS 16835).....   | 14 |
| Figure 23: | Front entrance of Norval Presbyterian Church, c.1995 (EHS 16836) .....                                  | 14 |
| Figure 24: | Norval Presbyterian Church at 499 Guelph Street, c.1997 (EHS 23707) .....                               | 14 |
| Figure 25: | A rear view of Norval Presbyterian Church at 499 Guelph Street, c.1997 (EHS 23708).....                 | 14 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Figure 26: Looking southeast towards the subject property, c.2016 (EHS 24700).....  | 15 |
| Figure 27: Interior shot of Norval Presbyterian Church, c.2017 (EHS 25504) .....  | 15 |
| Figure 28: Subject property identified in 2023 aerial photography .....   | 15 |
| Figure 29: Looking east along Guelph Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024) .....   | 16 |
| Figure 30: Looking west along Guelph Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024) .....   | 16 |
| Figure 31: Looking northeast towards the Norval Presbyterian Church (right) and Norval Presbyterian<br>Manse and Cottage (left) (Town of Halton Hills 2024) ..... | 16 |
| Figure 32: Front (south) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024).....   | 17 |
| Figure 33: Detail of front (south) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024)..  | 17 |
| Figure 34: Detail of front (south) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024)..  | 18 |
| Figure 35: Looking northwest towards Norval Presbyterian Church from Guelph Street, showing the<br>steeple (Town of Halton Hills 2024).....                       | 18 |
| Figure 36: Side (west) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024) .....  | 19 |
| Figure 37: Side (east) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024) .....  | 19 |
| Figure 38: Rear (north) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024) .....   | 19 |

## 1.0 Property Description

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| <b>499 Guelph Street</b>           |  |
| <b>Municipality</b>                | Town of Halton Hills   |
| <b>County or Region</b>            | Region of Halton   |
| <b>Legal Description</b>           | LT 2 EAST OF DRAPER STREET PL NORVAL AS IN EW2722, PT LTS 11 & 12 CON 11 ESQ AS IN EW2768, PT LT 3 EAST OF DRAPER STREET PL NORVAL AS IN EW5283; EXCEPT PT 1 20R7356 & PT 20R20592; HALTON HILLS/ESQUESING; PIN: 250590413 |
| <b>Construction Date</b>           | c.1878   |
| <b>Original Use</b>                | Religious  |
| <b>Current Use</b>                 | Religious  |
| <b>Architect/Building/Designer</b> | Walter McKay (architect); Thomas Maxted (masonry); and James and Peter Laird (carpentry)   |
| <b>Architectural Style</b>         | Gothic Revival   |
| <b>Additions/Alterations</b>       |  |
| <b>Heritage Status</b>             | Listed on the Town's Heritage Register   |
| <b>Recorder(s)</b>                 | Laura Loney  |
| <b>Report Date</b>                 | February 2024  |

## 2.0 Background

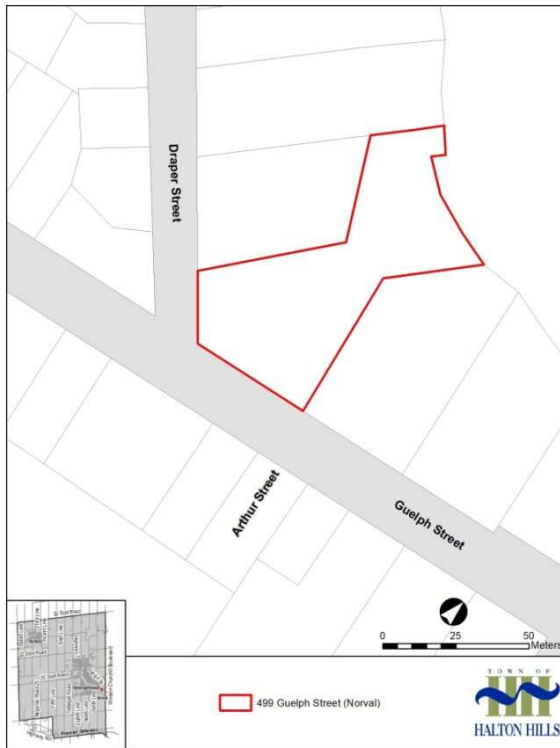


Figure 1: Location Map – 499 Guelph Street



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph - 499 Guelph Street

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 499 Guelph Street in Norval, 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

### *Indigenous History*

The enduring history of First Nation Peoples in Halton Hills can be traced back through time immemorial before contact with Europeans in the 1600s. Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the Credit River was central to Indigenous ways of life, supporting settlements, fisheries, horticulture, transportation, and trade. Iroquoian-speaking peoples, ancestors of the Wendat, occupied the Credit River Valley for hundreds of years until the mid-1600s, establishing semi-permanent villages. There are numerous archaeological sites in Halton Hills dating from this period, ranging from village sites to burial grounds, which reveal a rich cultural heritage.

The Wendat were displaced by the Haudenosaunee around 1649-50 amid the conflicts that arose between European colonial powers and their First Nation allies. The Mississaugas (part of the Anishinaabe Nation) arrived in southern Ontario in the 1690s, settling in two groups along the north shore of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie. The western group, occupying the area between Toronto and Lake Erie, became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Until the early 19th century, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation followed a seasonal cycle of movement and resource harvesting

along the Credit River (Missinnihe, meaning “trusting creek”), and other rivers. In the winter months, extended family groups hunted in the Halton Hills area, travelling south towards the mouth of the river in the spring for the salmon run. The Mississaugas’ fisheries and traditional economies were diminished because of increased Euro-colonial settlement, leading to a state of impoverishment and dramatic population decline.

In 1818, the British Crown negotiated the purchase of 648,000 acres of land from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, including present-day Halton Hills, under the Ajetance Treaty (No. 19), named after Chief Ajetance. This left the Mississaugas with three small reserves on the Lake Ontario shoreline. The legitimacy of early land “surrenders” to the Crown is questionable when considering the Mississaugas’ traditional understanding of property ownership. Unlike the British, the Mississaugas understood land in spiritual terms, and did not share the idea that access to land and resources could be given up permanently<sup>1</sup>.

In 1986, the Mississaugas initiated a claim against the Government of Canada over the 1805 Toronto Purchase. On June 8, 2010, the parties involved reached a final compensatory agreement. It resulted in a cash payment of \$145 million to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

### *Church Beginnings*

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 4 in 1820. The Presbyterian congregation in Georgetown held services as early as 1840 within the community. In Norval, Presbyterians began meeting in the area during the 1830s, with a congregation organized in connection with the Union Presbyterian Church in 1838. During the early 1840s, student minister Robert Wallace served local Presbyterians, while in the 1850s Reverends Gray and Alexander, from the Norval and Union churches, served as ministers. Reverend Joseph Alexander served the congregation between 1852 and 1887.

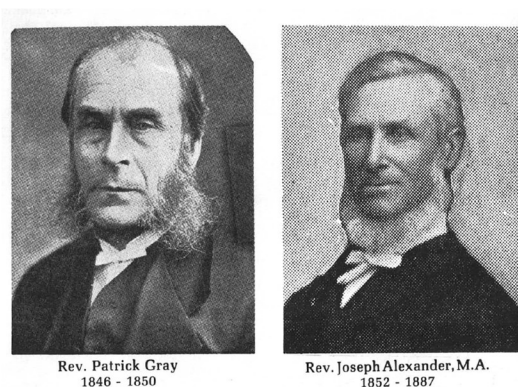


Figure 3: Reverends Gray and Alexander (One Hundred Years to the Glory of God, Norval Presbyterian Church)

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<sup>1</sup> This brief overview of Pre-Treaty Indigenous Territory within the land now known as Halton Hills is taken from the Town of Halton Hills’ 2023 *Cultural Heritage Strategy*. This document includes additional recommendations relating to Truth and Reconciliation in Heritage Planning as part of the Town's commitment to advancing Truth and Reconciliation.





Figure 4: Subject property identified on the 1822 patent plan

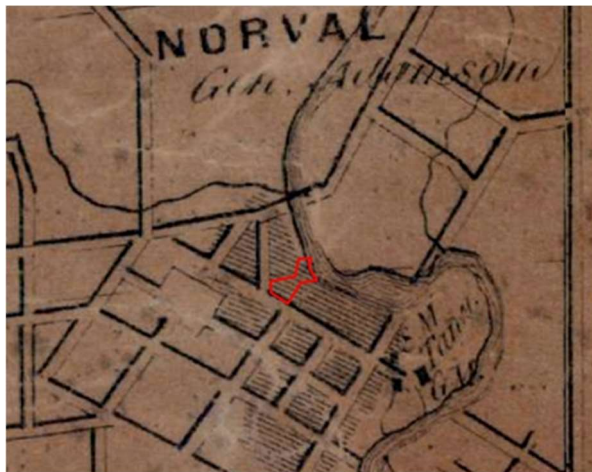


Figure 5: Subject property identified on the 1858 Tremaine's Map of the County of Halton, Canada West



Figure 6: Subject property identified on the 1877 Illustrated Atlas of the County of Halton

A frame church was constructed on the property that is now Hillcrest Cemetery at Winston Churchill Boulevard and Ten Side Road in 1839. The  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre property was purchased from James Mitchell for five shillings and the frame church was constructed. In 1849, Boston Presbyterian Church within the Scotch Block became affiliated with the Norval and Union Presbyterian Churches.

As the congregation grew under the leadership of Reverend Joseph Alexander (the congregation's longest-serving minister), a new building was required. The congregation purchased the subject property from Thomas Maxted, and plans for the church were copied from the Congregational Church in



Georgetown (now the Georgetown Library and Cultural Centre). The adjacent house and lot were also purchased from a Mrs. Elms.

In 1878, the congregation completed the construction of the existing Gothic Revival church at the subject property, with influence in its location from Alex Nobel (Lieutenant Colonel of the 20<sup>th</sup> Halton Rifles, now Lorne Scots) and son of Colonel Alexander Noble and grandson of Robert Noble who had established Norval as a significant flour milling centre). The church officially opened for worship on February 23, 1879.

Norval Presbyterian Church was designed and built by Walter McKay for a total of \$7,000, with Thomas Macted doing the masonry and James and Peter Laird (local businessmen who owned a planing mill in Brampton) doing the carpentry. The manse adjacent to the church was constructed by the Norval and Union Presbyterian churches in 1888 to house their shared minister who replaced Reverend Joseph Alexander. The manse construction cost \$2,700 and was built by the same contractors who built the church. In 1903, the church floor was raised, new seats were installed, interiors decorated, and a pipe organ was added.

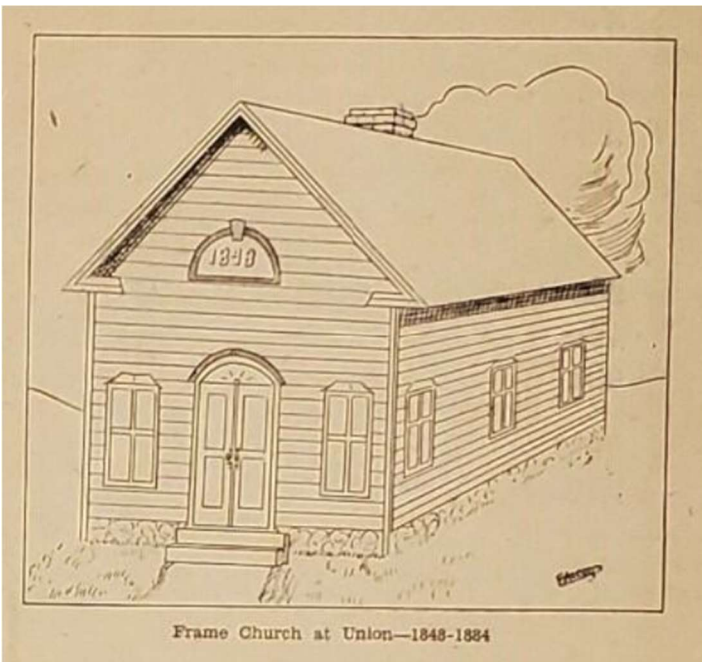


Figure 7: Sketch of the frame church at Union, 1848-1884 (The Georgetown Herald, June 7, 1933)



Figure 8: Union Presbyterian Church, c.1908

### *Walter McKay*

Walter McKay (1822-1886) was a local carpenter, architect, and builder and was originally from northern Scotland. McKay immigrated to Canada in 1846, and in 1852 moved to Georgetown. McKay worked on several churches in the community, including the Presbyterian Church in Ballinafad (1878), Congregational Church in Georgetown (1877-78), and the Norval Presbyterian Church (1878). McKay was also a member of Knox Presbyterian Church in Georgetown.

In 1882, McKay moved to Manitoba where he had an office in Brandon until 1884. McKay also served in the military and was a sergeant-major for several years, living in Streetsville for five years while in Ontario. McKay's obituary from the *Canadian Champion* on January 21, 1886, notes that McKay died suddenly at his doorstep.



Figure 9: Norval Presbyterian Church, c.1908 (EHS 00302)



Figure 10: Lucy Maud Montgomery, c.1929 (L.M. Montgomery Collection XZ1 MS A097017)



Figure 11: Lucy Maud Montgomery, c.1932, in her garden at Norval ((L.M. Montgomery Collection XZ1 MS A097017)

### *Lucy Maud Montgomery and Reverend Ewan Macdonald*

In 1926, Reverend Ewan Macdonald was inducted at Union Presbyterian Church. Macdonald was the joint minister of Union Presbyterian and Norval Presbyterian Churches between 1926 and 1935, and they lived in the manse adjacent to the church. Montgomery played the organ and taught Sunday School and was a significant part of the local community. During the time they lived in Norval, Montgomery wrote five novels, and about a third of her personal journals described her life between 1925 and 1935. Montgomery and Macdonald lived in the manse until Macdonald's resignation in 1935.

### *Church Life and Transition*

During the mid-twentieth century, additional changes were made within the church, including but not limited to: the sale of the church shed and repainting of the church sanctuary (1953); replacing the existing window with medallion windows (1954); installing a new oil heating system (1958); installing a memorial organ (1959); building a vestry in the basement (1959); erecting a new sign (1963); installing running water, washroom, and water heater (1965); installing chimes in the church tower (1967); installing a new furnace (1969); installing new sanctuary carpet (1973), and upgrades to the manse building (1970s).



Figure 12: Norval Presbyterian Church as seen from Draper Street, c.1935 (EHS 20708)



Figure 13: Subject property identified on the 1942 National Topographic Map



Figure 14: Subject property identified in 1952 aerial photography



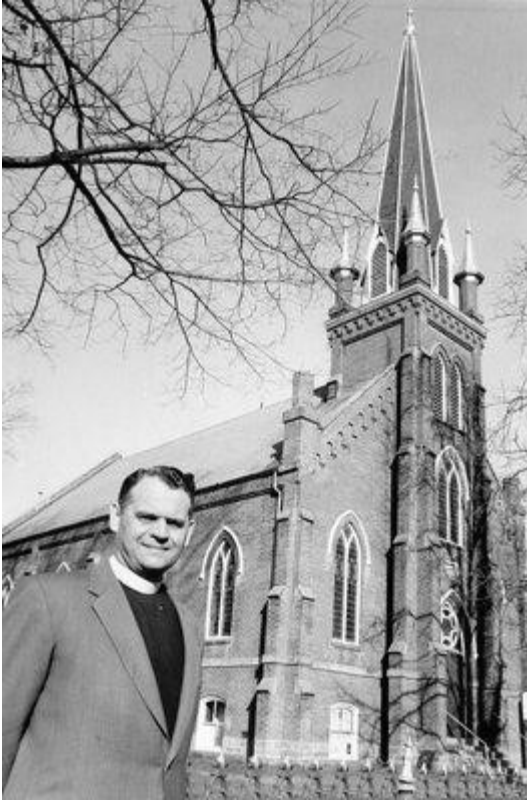


Figure 15: Rev. G. Lockhard Royal in front of Norval Presbyterian Church, c.1955 (EHS 02360)



Figure 16: Steeple of the Presbyterian Church reflected in the Credit River millpond, c.1964 (EHS 02331)

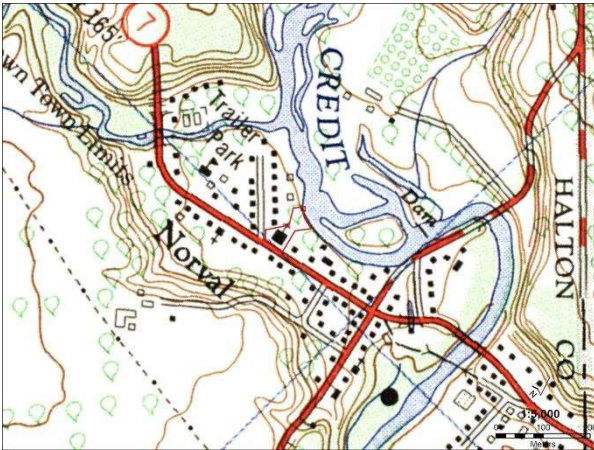


Figure 17: Subject property identified on the 1973 National Topographic Map



Figure 18: Subject property identified in 1977 aerial photography.

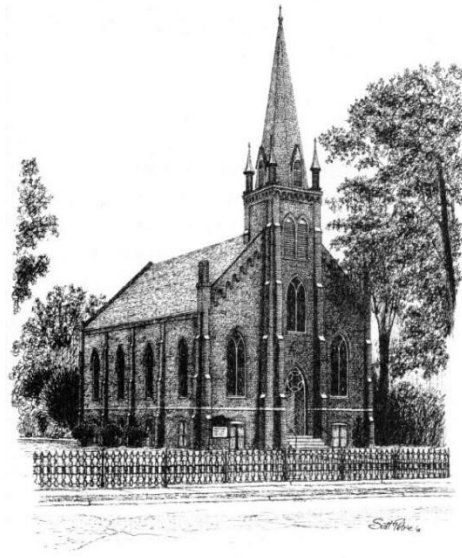


Figure 19: A pen & ink sketch of Norval Presbyterian Church, c.1978 (EHS 27038)



Figure 20: Norval Presbyterian Church at 499 Guelph Street, at Draper Street, c.1982 (EHS 17567)

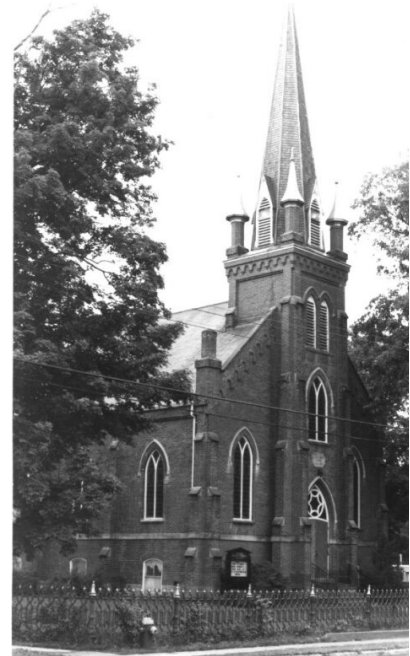


Figure 21: Norval Presbyterian Church at 499 Guelph Street, at Draper Street, c.1982 (EHS 12569)



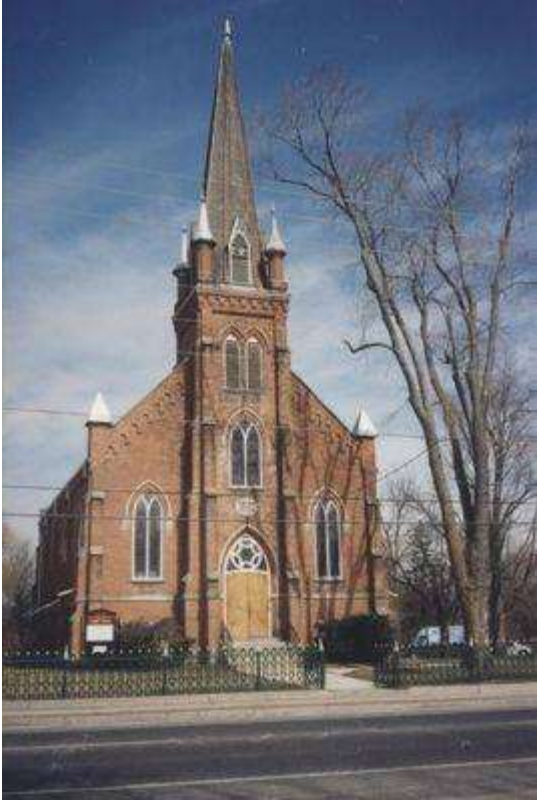


Figure 22: Norval Presbyterian Church, c.1995 (EHS 16835)



Figure 23: Front entrance of Norval Presbyterian Church, c.1995 (EHS 16836)



Figure 24: Norval Presbyterian Church at 499 Guelph Street, c.1997 (EHS 23707)



Figure 25: A rear view of Norval Presbyterian Church at 499 Guelph Street, c.1997 (EHS 23708)

Norval Presbyterian Church and Union Presbyterian Church separated in 2010 and each hired their own minister.



In 2016, the properties at 402-404 Draper Street (now known as 402 Draper Street) were severed from the subject property; Norval Presbyterian Manse and Cottage were sold in 2015 to the Norval Montgomery Society (now the Lucy Maud Montgomery Museum and Literary Centre Norval).

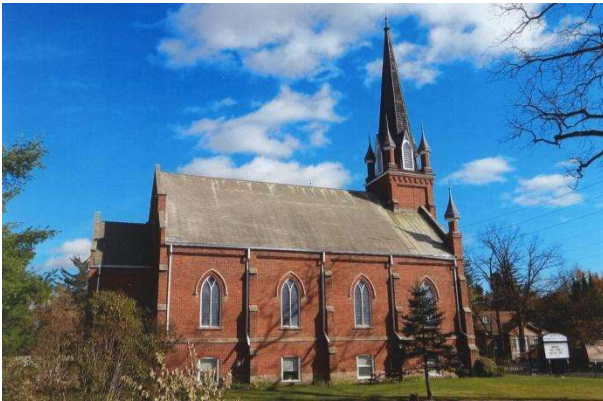


Figure 26: Looking southeast towards the subject property, c.2016 (EHS 24700)



Figure 27: Interior shot of Norval Presbyterian Church, c.2017 (EHS 25504)

After many years of providing worship services within the community, Norval Presbyterian Church had its last service on February 25, 2024, and the church was closed.

## 2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The property at 499 Guelph St is an irregularly shaped parcel at the intersection of Draper Street and Guelph Street. The Credit River extends along the rear lot line of the property which features mature trees. The church is located within the southern portion of the property, which is accessed from Guelph Street, with a paved parking area extending along the east side of the church and towards the rear. A decorative wrought-iron fence partially extends along the south and west lot lines along Guelph Street and Draper Street, respectively.



Figure 28: Subject property identified in 2023 aerial photography



Figure 29: Looking east along Guelph Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 30: Looking west along Guelph Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 31: Looking northeast towards the Norval Presbyterian Church (right) and Norval Presbyterian Manse and Cottage (left) (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The front (south) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church is dominated by the central red brick tower. The central entrance within the tower is accessed via a flight of concrete/stone steps and is located within a pointed-arch opening. The existing painted wood doors are located beneath a transom with wooden tracery featuring stained glass. Brick voussoirs and a stone hood mould are located above the entrance. A date stone reading “PRESBY<sup>N</sup> CHURCH ERECTED A.D. 1878” is located above the entrance. A smaller pointed-arch window opening with stone hood mould, brick voussoirs and stone sill, with a wooden window with tracery and stained glass within the opening is located above the date stone. At the basement level are two segmentally arched window openings with contemporary windows. A stone course extends along the front elevation between the basement and first storeys.





Figure 32: Front (south) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 33: Detail of front (south) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

Pointed-arch window openings with stone hood moulds, brick voussoirs, and stone sills flank the projecting central bay which features brick buttresses with stone detailing extending upwards. The existing wood windows feature tracery and stained glass. Above this opening is a pair of pointed-arch louvered openings with stone hood mould, brick voussoirs and stone sill connecting the openings. At the base of the steeple, the tower features a detailed cornice with arched brick detailing. Brick turrets on squared bases are located at each corner of the tower; the turret tent roofs have octagonal bases with steeply pitched slopes rising to a peak. The steeple features wooden louvered openings with pointed roofs featuring trefoils and terminates in a finial.



Figure 34: Detail of front (south) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 35: Looking northwest towards Norval Presbyterian Church from Guelph Street, showing the steeple (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The side (east and west) elevations are divided into four bays with brick buttresses. At the basement level, segmentally arched window openings are located between the buttresses within the stone foundation and capped with brick voussoirs. A stone course extends along the west elevation continuing from the front (south) elevation. Above the stone course, pointed-arch window openings like those on the front elevation are symmetrically placed between each buttress. On the east elevation, instead of a window there is a segmentally arched door opening with brick voussoirs above.





Figure 36: Side (west) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 37: Side (east) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The rear (north) elevation features a smaller, gable-roofed projection, with the same stone foundation, single entry door within a segmentally arched opening at grade and pointed-arch window opening with brick voussoirs and stone sill, featuring a wooden window with tracery and stained glass.



Figure 38: Rear (north) elevation of Norval Presbyterian Church (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

### 2.3 Architectural Style & Comparative Analysis

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, emphasis on verticality, and leaded windows.

Modelled after the Congregational Church in Georgetown (now the Georgetown Library and Cultural Centre). Norval Presbyterian Church at 499 Guelph Street is a representative example of the style, exhibiting many of its key features including its emphasis on verticality, string courses, hood moulds, pointed arch windows, the central buttressed tower, steeply pitched gable roof, leaded stained-glass windows.

### 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.

| <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 499 Guelph Street has physical and design value as a representative example of a late-nineteenth-century Gothic Revival church, exhibiting many features typical of the style including its emphasis on verticality, string courses, hood moulds, pointed arch windows, the central buttressed tower, steeply pitched gable roof, leaded stained-glass windows. The existing church building has been well-maintained over its almost 150-year history and has retained most of its original features.

| <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>X</b>   |

The property at 499 Guelph Street has significant value to its associations with early Protestant Christian communities in Norval and the surrounding area, and with the growth of Presbyterian congregations



within the Township of Esquesing. Located along Guelph Street in Norval, the church has a long association with the Norval community.

The property is also associated with local carpenter, architect, and builder Walter McKay, as well as the Reverend Ewan Macdonald and Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery, who served Norval Presbyterian Church between 1926 and 1935 and lived in the Norval Presbyterian Manse adjacent to the subject property.

| Contextual Value  |          |
|---|----------|
| 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 499 Guelph Street has significant contextual value as it serves to define the character of the area within the community of Norval. Norval Presbyterian Church is physically, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings, with its historic relationship to the adjacent Manse and Caretaker’s Cottage along Draper Street to the northwest of the subject property. In its existing location for almost 150 years, Norval Presbyterian Church is a landmark in the community at the corner of Guelph Street and Draper Street.

#### 4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 499 Guelph Street 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 499 Guelph Street are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the church building along Guelph Street in the community of Norval within the Town of Halton Hills;
- The scale, form, and massing of church building on a stone foundation with steeply pitched gable roof, buttresses, and central tower;
- The materials, including brick exterior and detailing, stone detailing including hood moulds, lintels, stone courses and capping on buttresses, wooden stained-glass windows throughout; as well as the wrought-iron fence extending along the south lot line and a portion of the west lot line;
- On the front (south) elevation:
  - The central buttressed tower, featuring:
    - The pointed arch door opening with stone hood mould, brick voussoirs, transom stained-glass window with wooden tracery, and wooden door;

- The date-stone above the entrance, inscribed with “PRESBY<sup>N</sup> CHURCH ERECTED A.D. 1878”;
- The single pointed arch window opening with stone hood mould, brick voussoirs, and stone sill with stained glass window featuring wooden tracery, and above the paired pointed arch openings with wooden louvers featuring a stone hood mould, brick voussoirs, and stone sill;
- At the tower roof, the base of the steeple with detailed cornice featuring arched brick detailing, brick turrets on squared bases are located at each corner of the tower with steeply pitched slopes rising to a peak on octagonal bases, and the steeple featuring wooden louvered openings with pointed roofs featuring trefoils and terminates in a finial;
- On either side of the central tower:
  - Segmentally arched window openings with brick voussoirs at grade with stone course extending along the front elevation above;
  - Buttresses extending upwards at the corners terminating with brick turrets on squared bases are located at each corner of the tower with steeply pitched slopes rising to a peak on octagonal bases;
  - Large, pointed arch window openings with stone hood moulds, brick voussoirs, and stone sills, featuring stained glass windows with wooden tracery;
  - Brick detailing at the parapet;
- On the side (east and west) elevations:
  - Brick buttresses with stone caps dividing the elevation into four bays;
  - Segmentally arched door and window openings at grade within the stone foundation, with brick voussoirs;
  - Large, pointed arch windows within each bay with stone hood moulds, brick voussoirs, and stone sills;
  - Stained glass windows with wooden tracery;
- On the rear (north) elevation, the projecting, buttressed, gable-roofed bay with centrally placed pointed arch window openings with brick voussoirs, stone sill and featuring a stained-glass window with wooden tracery.
- The wrought iron fence along the south and partial west lot lines.

The interiors were not investigated as part of this report.

## 5.0 Sources

### Primary Sources

#### *Halton Hills Week End/Marketplace*

Ruggle, Richard. "Presbyterian beginnings in Norval." (May 21, 1988). *Halton Hills Week End/Marketplace*.

#### *Georgetown Herald*

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