

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2024)

Clark House

35 Bower Street, Acton, Town of Halton Hills

May 2024

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1.0 Property Description

35 Bower Street	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Region of Halton
Legal Description	PT LTS 173 & 174, PL 227, ALSO SHOWN ON PL 1098; PT LT 262, MUP 1098, AS IN 674304; HALTON HILLS
Construction Date	c.1905
Original Use	Residential
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	Builder John Cameron
Architectural Style	Edwardian
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town’s Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Laura Loney
Report Date	May 2024

2.0 Background

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 35 Bower 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*.



Figure 1: Location Map – 35 Bower Street

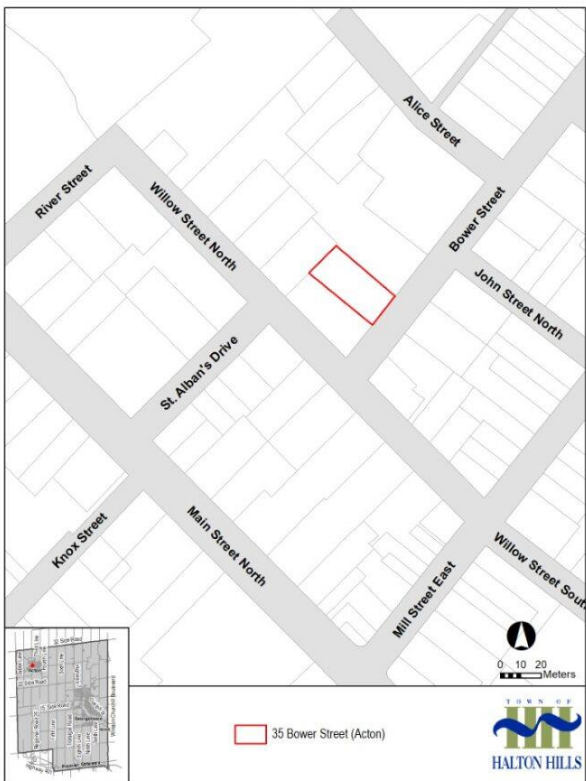


Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 35 Bower Street

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 permanently¹.

¹ 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.

Early Settlement

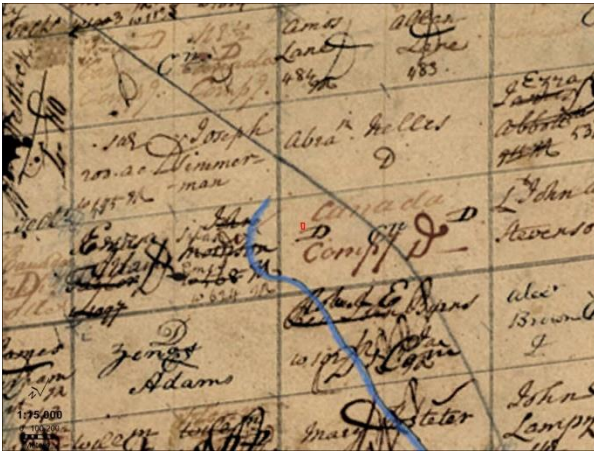


Figure 3: Subject property identified on the 1822 Patent Plan



Figure 4: Subject property identified on Tremaine's 1858 Map of the County of Halton, Canada West

In 1829, Lot 28, Concession 3 was granted to the Canada Company. Three years later, Rufus Adams purchased the lot. The orchard lane within the property later became Bower Avenue. David Henderson purchased the old Adams farmhouse and surrounding property from the Adams family towards the end of the nineteenth century and created three properties from the land.



Figure 5: Subject property identified on the 1877 Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton

The Hon. David Henderson was born in 1841 and moved to Acton in 1878. Henderson was a storekeeper for many years, later forming a partnership with his wife Alison Christie's family to establish Christie, Henderson & Co., a private bank. Henderson was soon elected to Council and the Board of Education, and in 1888 was elected as the Conservative candidate for the House of Commons. While defeated at a

by-election in 1891, Henderson was re-elected in 1893, appointed member of the King's Privy Council of Canada in 1916 and served in the House of Commons until his retirement in 1917. Henderson's wife Alison died a tragic death in 1914, falling off their balcony, while Henderson died in 1922.



Figure 6: Hon. David Henderson, c.1900 (MHS 5969)

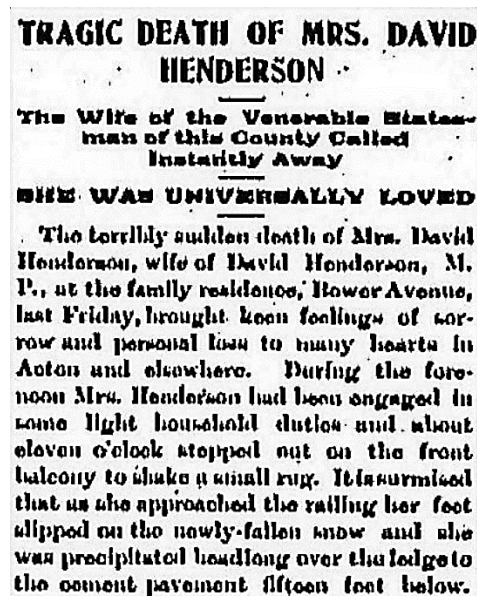


Figure 7: Excerpt from the Acton Free Press, 26 November 1914

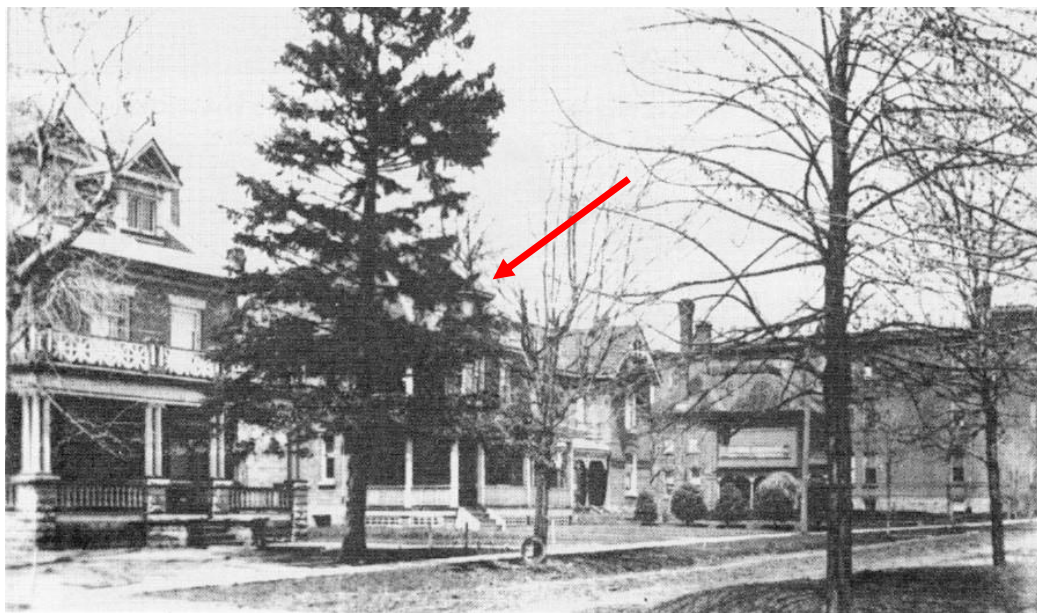


Figure 8: Bower Street looking east, c. early 1900s; subject property identified with a red arrow (A.T. Brown/Dills Collection)



Figure 9: Aerial view of Acton, subject property identified with arrow (A.T. Brown/Dills Collection c. early 1900s)

Clark & Gould Families

Gelard Clifton Clark (1860-1905) attended Rockwood Academy when he was younger and worked at the Canada Glove Works as a “traveller” for W.H. Storey and Son in the mid 1880s. He later moved to Peterborough, however in 1889 it was reported that he would return to Acton and take possession of Mr. A. Martin’s Royal Hotel as of March of that year. Clark was involved with local horse racing, the Acton Hockey Club, was a member of the Walker Lodge, and was a director of the Acton Horticultural and Agricultural Society.

The Acton Hotel was located at the corner of Mill Street and Main Street in Acton. A hotel was extant at the intersection by at least 1843 under the management of Simeon Anderson, and in 1952 a two-storey stone building was constructed at the corner of Mill Street and Main Street, while the former site became the site of the Dominion House. Anderson died in January 1853, before the building was finished, following which the hotel was operated by many different owners and known by several names, including the “Acton Hotel”. It was also known as the “Royal Exchange Hotel” while owned by proprietor James Campbell (1822-1887) who was convicted several times of illegally selling alcohol during the 1880s. Campbell’s wife Margaret (1833-1890) took place at the Clark House in October 1890. Following Campbell’s ownership, G.C. Clark took over the hotel after which it was known as “Clark House”.

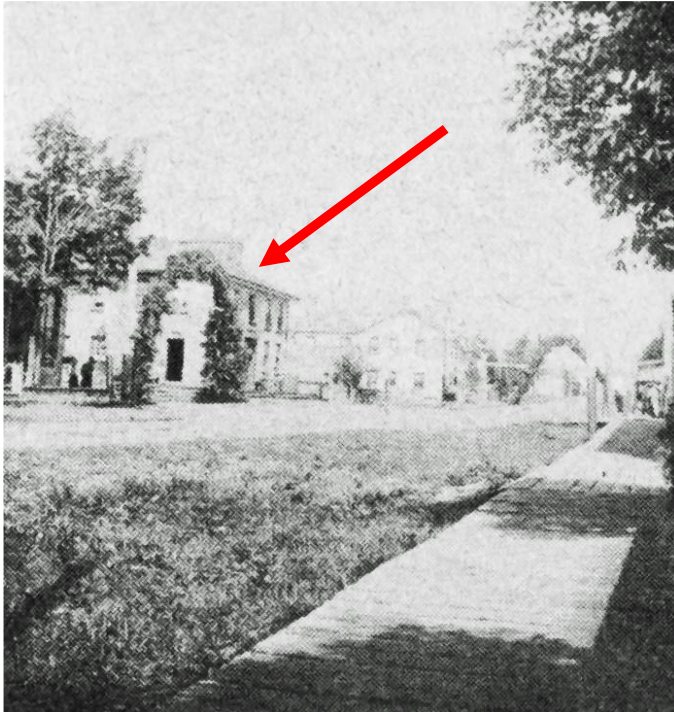


Figure 10: Looking north on Main, south of the intersection at Mill Street and Main Street, c.1899. The former Acton Hotel is identified with a red arrow (A.T. Brown/Dills Collection, courtesy of Vintage Acton)

ROYAL EXCHANGE HOTEL, Acton,
Jas. Campbell, Proprietor. Mr. Campbell, late of the Rossin House, near G. T. R. Station, takes pleasure in announcing to his many old friends and patrons that he has recently purchased and refitted the Royal Exchange in the neatest and most comfortable style, and is prepared to accommodate all who may favor him, in the most comfortable manner. Choice Wines, Liquors, Cigars and cool summer drinks always in stock. Stable in charge of an attentive hostler. The patronage of the public is respectfully solicited, and no effort will be spared to give the very best attention.

Figure 11: Advertisement in the *Acton Free Press*, October 7, 1880, p. 1.

J. M. BELL, D.D.S., L.D.S.
DENTIST,
BROOKVILLE.
HONOR GRADUATE OF TORONTO UNIVERSITY.
Work made Satisfactory. Prices Moderate.
VISITING DAYS.—Monday afternoon, Campbellville; Tuesday, Acton, Office—Clark's Hotel; Friday, Rockwood.

Figure 12: Directory Listing in the *Acton Free Press*, August 25, 1898, p. 1.

Following Clark's death in 1905, his wife Margaret Ann (nee Campbell) (1863-1949), James and Margaret Campbell's adopted daughter, operated the hotel property until summer 1905. The building was destroyed by fire in August 1905, with the *Acton Free Press* reporting that the barn had been on fire causing damage to the roof, upper storey, and much of the ground floor of the hotel. W.R. Roche later rebuilt the hotel and added a third storey built in wood to the lower storeys, opening in January 1906 and changing the name from Clark House to The Acton. The Acton House was again destroyed by fire in November 1909, then owned by a Mr. E. R. Bigger.

After her husband died, Margaret had the existing home built on the property at 35 Bower Street (then Avenue). Margaret soon remarried William J. Gould (1870-1954), and the 1921 census identifies the couple living on Bower Avenue. According to his obituary, William J. Gould was one of Acton's best known citizens and a veteran of the South African War (the Boer War) and WWI. Gould was an employee of Beardmore & Co. for many years, and served as the first president of the Acton Branch of the Canadian Legion.

The 1934 *Fire Insurance Plan of Acton* (Figure 13) identifies the existing frame building with brick veneer on the subject property, and a frame garage towards the rear of the property.

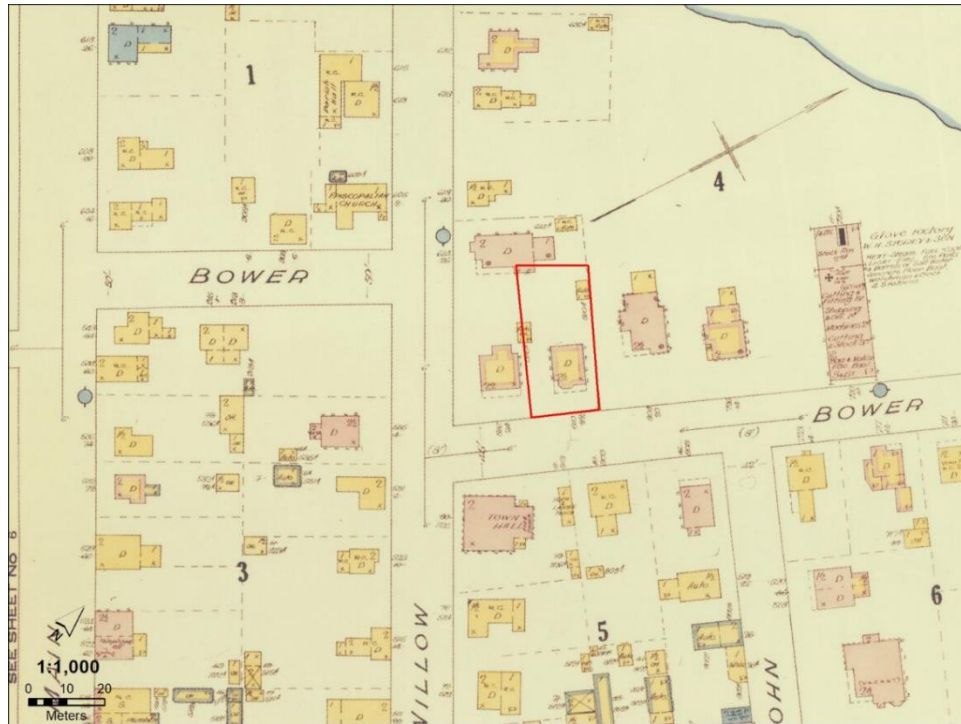


Figure 13: Subject property identified on the 1934 *Fire Insurance Plan of Acton*



Figure 14: Subject property identified on the 1935 *National Topographic Map*



Figure 15: Subject property identified in 1974 aerial photography

G.C. and Margaret's son Clifton Boyd Clark (1895-1967), was a prominent local banker with the Merchant's Bank in Acton, member of a Masonic Lodge and served in the first world war. Although later living in Toronto, the *Acton Free Press* reported that he spent weekends at his sister's home on Bower Avenue. Daughter Rubina (also Robena) "Ruby" C. Clark (1888-1988) was a teacher at the Queen Victoria School in Toronto, a member of the I.O.D.E., and a member of the Knox Women's Missionary Society (also known as Knox Ladies Aid). Ruby owned the property for many years after her mother until it was purchased by William E. and Nancy L. Lathrope in 1979.

Late Twentieth-Century Ownership

The Lathrope's owned the property until August 1987 when it was sold to Gloria Elliotson and Lloyd Bagley. In 2008, the property was sold to Ami Falcone, and purchased by Ruth and Jonathan Bunbury in 2017.



Figure 16: Subject property identified in 1999 aerial photography



Figure 17: Subject property identified in 2005 aerial photography

2.2 Property & Architectural Description



Figure 18: Subject property identified in 2023 aerial photography

The subject property is located along the north side of Bower Street in the community of Acton in the Town of Halton Hills. The property contains a two-and-a-half storey brick residential building with hipped roof and stone foundation that fronts onto Bower Street.



Figure 19: Looking along Bower Street towards the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 20: Looking along Bower Street towards the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 21: Front (southeast) elevation of the existing residence along Bower Street in Acton (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The front (southeast) elevation facing Bower Street features a three-bay façade. At the first storey, a covered wooden porch stretches along the elevation and overhangs the entrance which is recessed beyond the primary elevation. A central projecting bay extends upwards along the first and second storeys and features three single flat-headed window openings with stone sills and lintels at each storey beneath the roofline. Adjacent to the bay on the first storey is a large flat-headed window opening with stone sill and lintel. A smaller flatheaded window opening, the same size as those in the projecting bay, is located above the large window at the second storey. A portion of the second storey is enclosed with a small sunporch where the façade recesses at the southeast corner. A dormer is extant above the two-storey projecting bay, giving the appearance of a tower, with pyramidal roof and small rectangular window openings below.



Figure 22: The front (southeast) elevation of the existing residence at 35 Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The side (northeast) elevation features three flat-headed window openings at the first storey, with one being larger than the others, and two flat-headed window openings at the second storey. A brick chimney extends along the elevation and above the roofline.



Figure 23: The side (northeast) elevation of the existing residence at 35 Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The side (southwest) elevation features irregularly placed window openings at the first and second storeys with stone sills and lintels. There is evidence of a former window opening that is now infilled towards the rear of the elevation.



Figure 24: The side (southwest) elevation of the existing residence at 35 Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The rear elevation, rear addition, and interiors were not investigated as part of this report.

2.3 Architectural Style

John Blumenson describes Edwardian Classicism as follows: “In contrast to the highly colouristic, complicated and often eclectic compositions of the late nineteenth century, Edwardian Classicism, through its balanced facades, simplified but large roofs, smooth brick surfaces and generous fenestration, restored simplicity and order to domestic architecture” (*Ontario Architecture*, p.166). Edwardian Classicism is typically understated with relatively simple detailing. Popular in Ontario between 1890 and 1916, Edwardian residential buildings often appear more humble than their Victorian predecessors, which were much more extravagant and detailed. Edwardian homes typically feature a gable front with a generous front porch, smooth brick surface, and many windows with stone sills.

The Clark House at 35 Bower Street exhibits those features that are characteristic of Edwardian Classicism in residential buildings, including its balanced façade, large hipped roof, smooth brick exterior, generous front porch, and many flatheaded window openings with stone sills. Although the two-storey projecting bay with dormer are not typical of the style, the flatheaded window openings and lack of additional fenestration on the bay are in keeping with the restrained character of the style.

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 35 Bower Street has physical and design value as a representative example of an Edwardian residential building with an unusual two-storey projecting bay with pyramidal roof dormer in the community of Acton within the Town of Halton Hills. The Clark House at 35 Bower Street exhibits those features that are characteristic of Edwardian Classicism in residential buildings, including its balanced façade, large hipped roof, smooth brick exterior, generous front porch, and many flatheaded window openings with stone sills. Although the two-storey projecting bay with dormer are not typical of the style, the flatheaded window openings and lack of additional fenestration on the bay are in keeping with the restrained character of the style.

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 35 Bower Street has historical and associative value due to its associations with the Henderson family, and for its long-term ownership by the Clark and Gould families. MP David Henderson created this property and two other lots from land that was originally owned part of the Adams' farm property. The existing home was built for the Clark family who is associated with late nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century ownership of the Acton Hotel, then known as the Clark House, an establishment with origins that date back to 1843. Following the death of her husband Gelard Clark, Margaret remarried and lived with her second husband William J. Gould at the subject property. Gould was one of Acton's best known citizens and a veteran of two wars, working at Beardmore & CO. for several years and the first president of the Acton Branch of the Canadian Legion. Margaret's son Clifton Boyd was a prominent local banker and spent many weekends at the home that would become his sister Ruby's for many years until it was sold in 1979 to its new owners.

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 35 Bower Street has significant contextual value as an early-twentieth-century Edwardian residential building along Bower Street in the community of Acton. Together with the neighbouring properties along Willow Street North and Bower Street, the existing building helps to define and maintain the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century development of this residential neighbourhood on the periphery of Acton's historic downtown. The property and existing residence are physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings in the community and has maintained its significant presence along the streetscape as captured in historical photography. The property is similar in scale and materials to the neighbouring properties and has not been identified as a landmark in the area.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 35 Bower 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 35 Bower Street are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the early 20th-century residential building along Bower Street in the community of Acton in the Town of Halton Hills;
- The scale, form, and massing of the two-and-a-half storey building with hipped roof with brick chimney and stone foundation;
- The materials, including the red brick exterior and architectural detailing, stone sills, and stone foundation;
- The front (southeast) elevation, including:
 - The recessed flatheaded entrance with stone lintel;
 - Flatheaded window openings with stone sills and lintels at the first and second storeys;
 - Covered painted wooden porch stretching along the entire elevation with simple squared columns;
 - The two-storey brick bay with flatheaded window openings with stone sills and lintels;

- Above the roofline, the dormer with pyramidal roof and narrow window openings;
- The side (northeast) elevation, including:
 - Flatheaded window openings with stone sills and lintels
 - Brick chimney extending along the first and second storeys and above the roofline; and,
- The side (southwest) elevation, including flatheaded window openings with stone sills and lintels at the first and second storeys.

The rear elevation, rear addition, and interiors have not been identified as heritage attributes as part of this report.

5.0 Sources

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