

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2024)

Laird House

8 Noble Street, Norval, Town of Halton Hills

May 2024

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1.0 Property Description

8 Noble Street	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Region of Halton
Legal Description	PT LT 11, CON 11 ESQ, AS IN H701020; TOWN OF HALTON HILLS
Construction Date	c.-1924
Original Use	Residential
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	Constructed by Lewis Laird
Architectural Style	Vernacular dwelling with Craftsman influence
Additions/Alterations	Rear addition; Cladding and parging
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town’s Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Caylee MacPherson with Laura Loney
Report Date	May 2024

2.0 Background

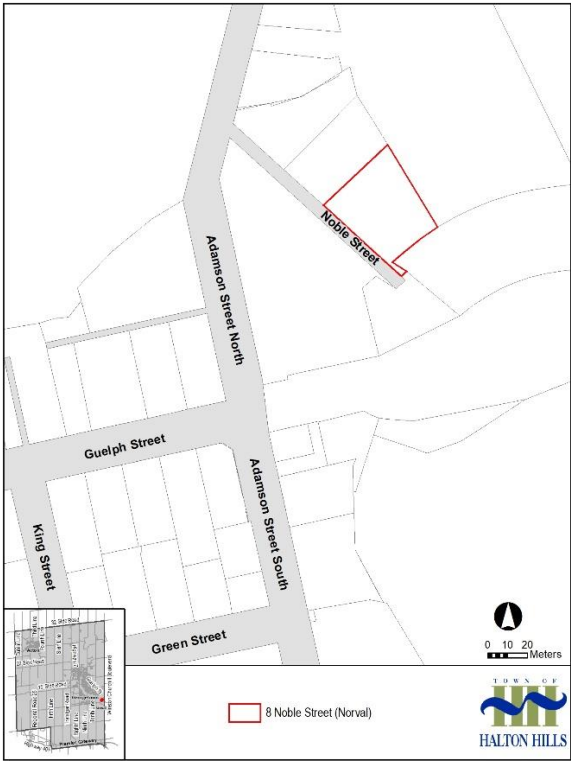


Figure 1: Location Map – 8 Noble Street



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 8 Noble Street (2023)

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the properties at 8 Noble 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

Indigenous History Background

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 approximately 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 as a result 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.

Noble Flour Mill

The community of Norval was originally formed in the early nineteenth century by the McNab family, Scottish settlers who moved to Upper Canada from Vermont following the American Revolution. Shortly after arriving in Norval, James McNab purchased lands from a Robert Miller, which were used to construct a grist mill along the Credit River in 1828. In addition to the mill, the McNab family constructed a farmhouse across the Credit River, otherwise known as the “McNab farmhouse”, or “Elm’s House”, located at 10184 Winston Churchill Boulevard. While working at the mill, McNab sustained a severe injury, following which he leased the mills to John Barnhart in 1830.

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.



Figure 3: Subject property identified on the 1822 Patent Plan



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

In 1859, General Peter Adamson (1775-1865) purchased the mills and surrounding property, and appointed his son-in-law, Colonel Charles Mitchell (born 1808), to run the mills. General Adamson was a native of Dundee, Scotland, and had served in the Portuguese army, awarding him land in Upper Canada from the British Government for his distinguished military service.

During his ownership, General Adamson commissioned the survey of Norval, organizing the village into streets and plots. General Adamson eventually leased the mill lands to Gooderham and Worts from 1846 to 1858. In 1868, General Adamson ceased ownership of the mill, and the lands were purchased shortly after by Robert Noble (1835-1908).



Figure 5: Portrait of General Peter Adamson, date unknown (Mississauga Library System BA0201)

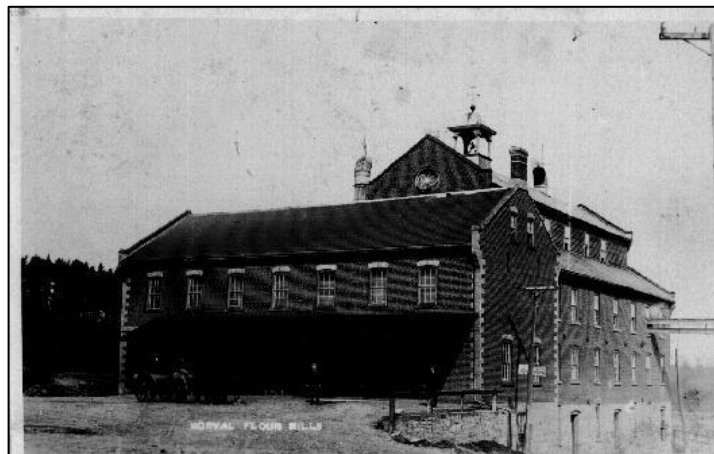


Figure 6: Photo of Norval Flour Mills postcard c.1908 (EHS10273f)

Noble immigrated to Canada from Cumberland, England, living in Dundas, Elora, and Freelton before settling in Norval. Upon purchasing the property, Noble began constructing the extant residential house in 1869, and rebuilt the mills in 1881 to feature “modern” technology. During this time, the Noble family

was living in the McNab farmhouse. Robert Noble, alongside his son, Alexander L. Noble, oversaw the steady increase in flour mill production, and became prominent actors in the Canadian flour industry.

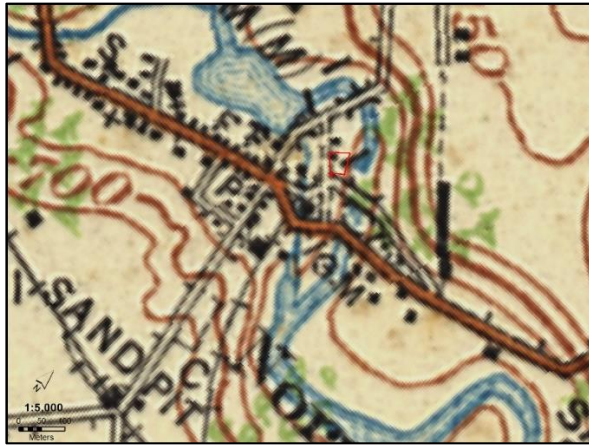


Figure 7: Subject property identified on the 1909 National Topographic Map



Figure 8: Subject property identified on the 1926 Birds Eye View of Norval (Artist's Impression)

The mill was eventually sold to W.J. Campbell Ltd., in 1919, however the McNab farmhouse and property at 8 Noble Street (formerly "Race Street") remained under the ownership of the Noble family. In 1924, Noble sold the property at 8 Noble Street to Lewis O. Laird (1894-1964) who constructed the present red-brick house. Prior to living in Norval, Laird had worked as a farmer at the "Laird House", located a short distance away along Bovaird Drive West in Brampton. In the 1931 Census, Laird was identified as a postal worker.

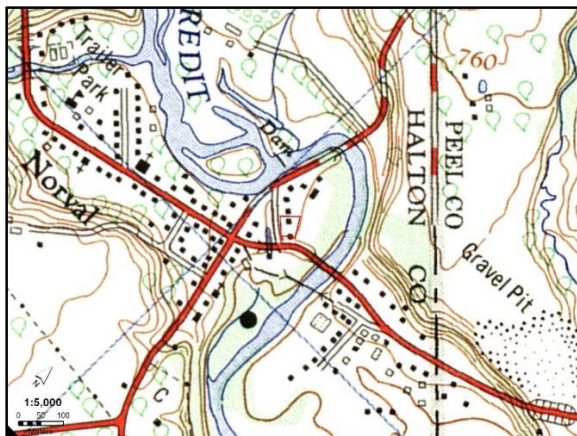


Figure 9: Subject property identified on the 1973 National Topographic Map



Figure 10: Subject property identified in 1977 aerial photography

In 1958, Laird granted the property to his daughter, Joy G. Laird (1917-2003), who worked as a secretary. In previous years, Joy was in a relationship with Stuart Macdonald, the son of Lucy Maud Montgomery. During her time in Norval, Montgomery recorded her life in journal entries through 1925 and 1935. Montgomery often mentioned the Laird family in her entries and was not supportive of the relationship between her son and Joy. Montgomery also expressed her dislike for the Laird family and

made note of her spite towards them, however her accounts of the family have been disputed by other Norval residents.



Figure 11: Lucy Maud Montgomery with Stuart Macdonald c.1924 (L.M. Montgomery Collection XZ1 MS A097017)



Figure 12: Joy G. Laird in the Norval School class photo c. 1923 (EHS11512)

Joy Laird continued to live in the family home until 1985 when the property was sold to Brant and Patricia Turgeon. The property was shortly thereafter sold to Anthony and Sarah J. Backhouse, who remained in the house until 1991 when it was purchased by William and Teresa Stone. In 2001, Marko Bosnjak purchased the property, and transferred ownership to Ivanka Bosnjak in 2006. Following the Bosnjak's ownership, Michael Scrivo purchased the property in 2011, and recently sold the property to its present owners in 2022.



Figure 13: Subject property identified in 1999 aerial photography



Figure 14: Subject property identified in 2011 aerial photography

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The subject property at 8 Noble Street is located along the northeast side of Noble Street in Norval within the Town of Halton Hills. The one-and-a-half-storey building features red brick cladding at the first storey, with horizontal vinyl siding at the second storey. The building is surrounded by mature trees along the northwest, southeast, and east elevations, and contains a small contemporary accessory structure in the rear yard. The property can be accessed via an asphalt driveway fronting onto Noble Street.



Figure 15: Subject property identified in 2021 aerial photography



Figure 16: South corner of the existing dwelling (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 17: Front (southwest) elevation of the existing dwelling (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The existing dwelling is a representative example of a vernacular bungalow with Craftsman influence, constructed in the early twentieth century, which features a Dutch gable roof and a dormer on the side (southeast) elevation. A Dutch gable roof typically consists of a combination of a hipped and gable roof,

where the gable peak is located above the hipped roof; which is consistent with the roof shape on the existing dwelling. The front (southwest) elevation features flat-headed window with a parged lintel and concrete sill, along with a recessed porch and entrance. Beneath the Dutch gable roof is a flat-headed window, surrounded by contemporary vinyl shutters.



Figure 18: Recessed porch located on the front elevation (Tours4Listing 2023)



Figure 19: Entryway and window opening located in the recessed porch (Tours4Listing 2023)



Figure 20: Looking northwest along Noble Street towards the subject property, partially obstructed by vegetation (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

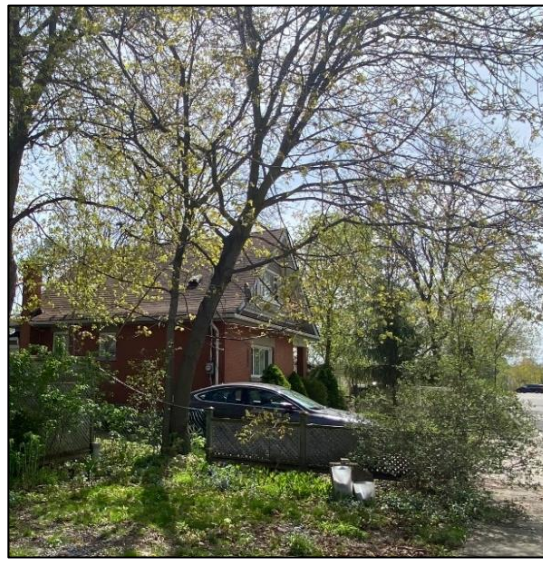


Figure 21: Looking southeast along Noble Street, towards Guelph Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The side (southeast) elevation features two flat-headed windows with parged lintels and stone sills at the first storey, and a dormer with a central flat-headed window on the second storey. Along the northwest (side) elevation are two flat-headed window openings, with parged lintels and concrete sills. The northwest elevation also features a brick chimney that extends beyond the roofline.



Figure 22: Side (southeast) elevation of the existing dwelling (Tours4Listing 2023)



Figure 23: Partial side (southeast) elevation of the existing dwelling (Tours4Listing 2023)

Towards the rear (northeast) elevation of the dwelling is a flat-headed window opening beneath the gable peak, and a one-storey contemporary brick addition. On the southeast elevation of the addition is a concrete porch encased by a stone knee wall, along with an entryway and a flat-headed window opening with a parged lintel and stone sill. The northeast elevation of the addition features a brick chimney extending from the roofline, as well as an entryway.



Figure 24: Rear (northeast) elevation of the existing dwelling, and rear addition (Tours4Listing 2023)



Figure 25: Side (southeast) elevation of the existing rear addition (Tours4Listing 2023)

2.3 Architectural Style and Analysis

The existing c. 1924 building at 8 Noble Street in Norval can be described as a vernacular bungalow with Craftsman influence. According to Shannon Kyles of *Ontario Architecture*, the Craftsman Bungalow style originated from the Midwest, and started gaining traction in Canada in the 1910s. The Craftsman Bungalow style was popular in North America from 1900-1945, and typically features one to one-and-a-

half storey massing, with low-pitched roofs, overhangs, large porches, single chimneys, and materials such as brick cladding. The American design was heavily influenced by the British, however, the two design styles remain very different. The Craftsman Bungalow style often features influence from the Arts and Crafts movement, which includes ornamental designs, ample garden spaces, and greater attention to material details. The Arts and Crafts movement prioritized function over aesthetics and were designed to connect the house to natural elements, such as taking advantage of sunlight. Many similar examples of Craftsman Bungalows exist throughout the Town, such as the Listed properties at 38 Brock Street, Acton, and 5 Murdock Street, Georgetown.

Architectural features extant within the dwelling, that contribute to the Craftsman Bungalow style, include the one-and-a-half storey massing, shed dormer, brick cladding, and gable roof. Similar to the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement, the Laird House features minimal design aesthetics and focuses primarily on function.

The dwelling has been modified, with the installation of vinyl windows, construction of a rear addition, and the parging of the foundation and the existing lintels. However, the existing building remains a representative example of a vernacular bungalow with Craftsman influence, despite the contemporary alterations.



Figure 26: Example of a Craftsman Bungalow at 38 Brock Street, Acton (Google Maps 2020)



Figure 27: Example of a vernacular Craftsman Bungalow at 5 Murdock Street, Georgetown (Google Map 2023)

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 8 Noble Street has physical and design value as a representative example of a vernacular bungalow, with Craftsman influence in the community of Norval, in the Town of Halton Hills. Features that contribute to the Craftsman style include the one-and-a-half storey massing, shed dormer, brick cladding, and gable roof. The dwelling features a vernacular design, as it includes minimal ornamental details and focuses primarily on the function of the building. While the dwelling has been modified over time, with the installation of vinyl windows, construction of a rear addition, and the parging of the foundation and the existing lintels, the existing building remains a representative example of a vernacular bungalow with Craftsman influence.

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 8 Noble Street has historical and associative value due to its associations with the Laird family. Located on the former lands connecting to the Norval flour mills, the subject building was constructed c.1924 by Lewis. O. Laird, who worked as a postal worker in the Town. The Laird family was also associated with Lucy Maud Montgomery, whose son, Stuart Macdonald, was once in a relationship with Joy Laird. Montgomery is a famously known Canadian author, who wrote five novels and a third of her personal journals during her time in Norval, while also serving the Norval Presbyterian Church between 1926 and 1935 and residing in the Norval Presbyterian Manse. Montgomery often described the relationship between the Laird family and herself in her personal journal entries.

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 8 Noble Street has contextual value, as it is important in defining and maintaining the early twentieth century character of the streetscape within the community of Norval. While the existing house has been modified, it remains physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings as an early 1920s infill building along Noble Street. The building is small in scale and has not been identified as a landmark.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 8 Noble 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 8 Noble Street are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the existing residential building along Noble Street in the community of Norval, Town of Halton Hills;
- The scale, form, and massing of the one-and-a-half vernacular bungalow with brick cladding, Dutch gable roof, dormer, and brick chimney at the side;
- The front (southwest) elevation, including:
 - The flat-headed window openings at the first and second storeys;
 - Recessed porch, including the entrance and flat-headed window openings;
- The side (southeast) elevation, including:
 - Flat-headed window openings at the first and second storeys;
 - Dormer at the second storey;
- The side (northwest) elevation, including:
 - Red brick chimney extending above the roofline; and,
 - The flat-headed window openings at the first storey.

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

5.0 Sources

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