

Research and Evaluation Report



(Jessie Banwait REMAX 2019)

Grey Vernon

5 Albert Street, Georgetown, Town of Halton Hills

May 2024

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1.0 Property Description

5 Albert Street	
Municipality	Georgetown, Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Region of Halton
Legal Description	LOT 6, PART OF LOT 5, PLAN 37 NORTH WEST SIDE OF ALBERT STREET DESIGNATED AS PARTS 2 & 3, 20R-21420 TOWN OF HALTON HILLS
Construction Date	1889
Original Use	Residential
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	Unknown
Architectural Style	Second Empire with Queen Anne Revival influences
Additions/Alterations	One-storey additions; Property access and frontage
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 5 Albert 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*.

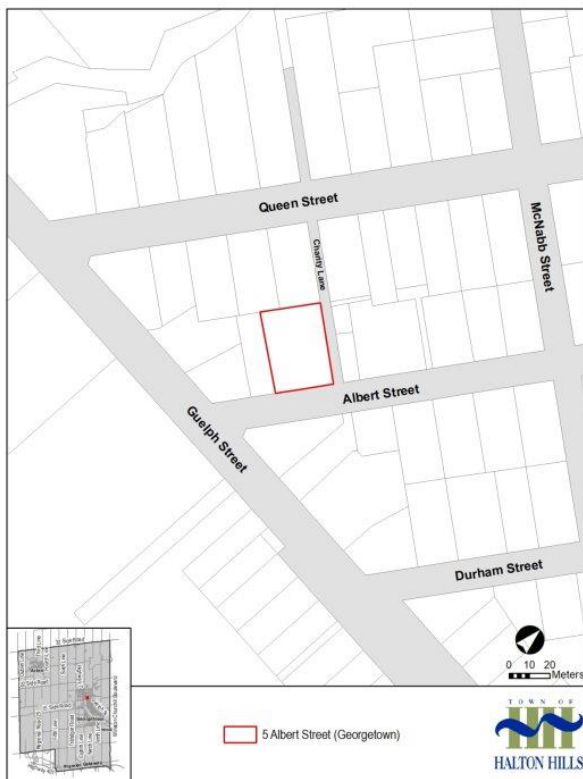


Figure 1: Location Map – 5 Albert Street



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 5 Albert 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.

Early History

In 1821, the Crown granted the two hundred acres of Lot 18, Concession 9 of Esquesing Township to John Moore, who sold the property to George Kennedy on December 15, 1823.

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.

5 Albert St | LOT 6, PART OF LOT 5, PLAN 37 NORTH WEST SIDE OF ALBERT STREET DESIGNATED AS PARTS 2 & 3, 20R-21420 TOWN OF HALTON HILLS



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

The land was first subdivided in 1837 when Kennedy sold 13 acres, 3 rods to William and James Barber with the privilege of damming up the creek. In the 1850s, George Kennedy laid out this survey around the new railway station. The first passenger train came through Georgetown in 1856. Henry Cook purchased this lot in 1855 from Kennedy.

Lots 5 and 6 of Plan 37 were transferred to Jacob Kennedy from George Kennedy in 1870, following which they were transferred to Harriet Higgins, George's daughter. In 1874, the property was purchased by Peter McCollum, and the following year (1875) sold to Barbara Jane Crombie, wife of John Henry Crombie. The property was subsequently sold to Edward McCannah in 1880 who owned the property until his death.

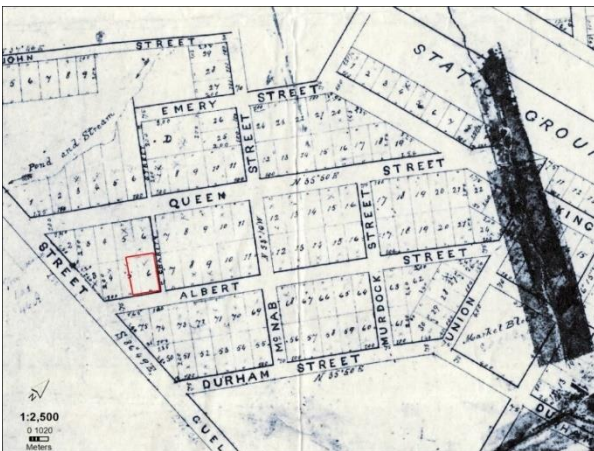


Figure 5: Subject property identified on the 1859 Plan of Town Lots for Georgetown



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

Edward McCannah

Edward McCannah (1852-1932) was born in Ogdensburg, New York and came to Canada as a child. In 1870, Edward McCannah began work at the Grand Trunk Railway and in 1879 was appointed stationmaster for the Grand Trunk Railway at Georgetown Station (Figure 7), constructed in 1856, after previously serving as station agent for the Hamilton North Western Railway. The 1891 census identifies

5 Albert St | LOT 6, PART OF LOT 5, PLAN 37 NORTH WEST SIDE OF ALBERT STREET DESIGNATED AS PARTS 2 & 3, 20R-21420
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McCannah as a Railway Agent, married to Hannah Clariner "Clarie" (nee Bailey) (1857-1925), a dressmaker.



Figure 7: A crowd waits for the train outside the Grand Trunk Railway Station in Georgetown, c.1908 (EHS p315f)



Figure 8: Subject property identified on the 1909 *National Topographic Map*



Figure 9: Subject property identified on the 1918 *National Topographic Map*

McCannah was a successful man in the Town, serving as a member of Town Council and as the Collector of Taxes. McCannah constructed several other houses along Queen Street.

McCannah had Grey Vernon constructed in 1889. The building cost \$16,000 to build, a huge amount at the time². Understood to be designed and built by an E. McCarrok, the house was built on a large lot that sloped down to Queen Street which featured pine and chestnut trees within the grounds as well as a circular stone driveway at Queen Street. The prominent house was featured in the *Toronto Daily Mail* in 1893. McCannah resided at the subject property in the house, known as Grey Vernon, which was

² Today's value would be approximately \$543,000 with inflation.

5 Albert St | LOT 6, PART OF LOT 5, PLAN 37 NORTH WEST SIDE OF ALBERT STREET DESIGNATED AS PARTS 2 & 3, 20R-21420
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oriented towards Queen Street. In 1907, Edward McCannah retired from the Grand Trunk Railway after 37 years in the business and became involved in local politics.

The 1921 Census identifies Edward and Hannah living on Queen Street in a single stone house. McCannah's wife Hannah died on July 25, 1925. After her death, McCannah lived alone in at Grey Vernon until his death in 1932 at 80 years of age.



Figure 10: Grey Vernon (Toronto Daily Mail, June 24, 1893)

Apartments at Grey Vernon and Infill along Queen Street

Following McCannah's death, the property was sold to George and Margaret Watt who converted the home into rental units. George was an employee of the Provincial Paper Company between 1915 and 1947 and a member of the Quarter Century Club of that company. In 1947, Margaret Watt advertised the two large lots fronting onto Queen Street in the *Georgetown Herald*. Watt sold the subject property on Queen Street in 1948 and then moved to Toronto with wife Margaret Watt who was quite ill.

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Figure 11: Subject property identified on the 1934 *Fire Insurance Plan of Georgetown*



Figure 12: Subject property identified on the 1938 *National Topographic Map*



Figure 13: Subject property identified on the 1974 *National Topographic Map*

In 1948, the property was sold to Gordon and Hazel Mickus (nee Lamb) (1919-2001). Gordon (1909-1950) was an electrician for the Guelph Stone Company. Hazel is identified in the 1958 Voter's list as a clerk at 5 Albert Street. After Gordon's death, Hazel owned the property until 1973 when it was sold to Otto Frank Regent. The 1968 Urban Preliminary List of Electors identifies the following individuals at 5 Albert Street: Hazel (apartment owner); Stanley Mickus (car washer), Miss. R. Clark (secretary), Joseph Hall (retired), John Peddie (office worker) and Margaret Peddie.



Figure 14: Subject property identified in 1952 aerial photograph, the former circular driveway to the house from Queen Street (Lots 5 and 6 along the southeast side of Queen Street)



Figure 15: Subject property identified in 1960 aerial photography. There are now two new houses within Lots 5 and 6 to the north of the property along Queen Street.

The property was advertised for sale in 1966 in the *Georgetown Herald*:

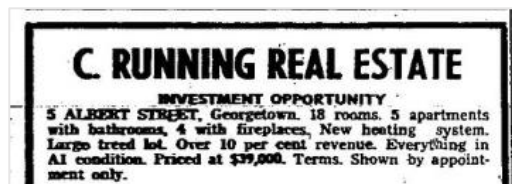


Figure 16: Notice in the *Georgetown Herald*, May 26, 1966, p. 15

The property was eventually purchased in 1973 by Otto Regent (1922-1980), a labourer and mechanic who had previously been living in Limehouse and who also operated the Happy Day Nursery in that community. Otto's wife Edith (nee Ratschke) (1927-1993) was a nursing school operator, who married Walter Roedger (1911-1992) following Otto's death.

In 1977, the property was owned by Theresa Shaefer, who sold the property in 1983 to Frank, Mary, and Steven Leben as joint tenants. The property was owned by the Lebens until 2010 when it was transferred to its current owners, Laura and Mark Watson.



Figure 17: Subject property identified in 1999 aerial photography

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The subject property is located between Queen Street and Albert Street in the community of Georgetown, and historically fronted onto Queen Street. The property is a rectangular lot and features a two-and-a-half storey stone structure with a mansard roof and additions. Real estate photographs have been provided from 2019 to supplement staff's photographs and provide additional clarity as access to the property to obtain clear photographs of each elevation was not feasible prior to the finalization of this report.



Figure 18: Subject property identified in 2023 aerial photography



Figure 19: Aerial photograph c.2019 (Jessie Banwait Re/Max)

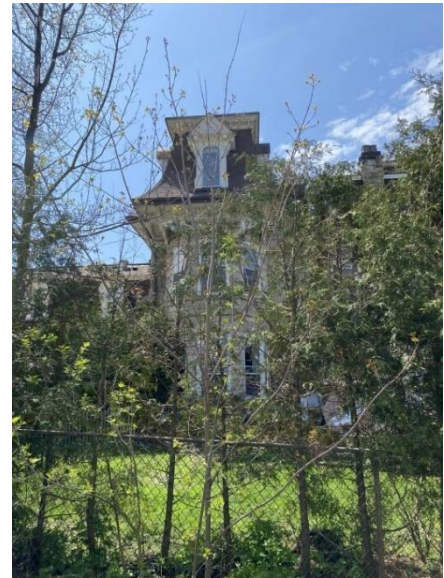


Figure 20: Northeast elevation of Grey Vernon, partially obscured by vegetation (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The northwest façade, the original primary elevation, faces Queen Street. The elevation is dominated by the two-and-a-half storey projecting bay with mansard roof. The bay features three flat-headed window openings at both the first and second storeys. Below the projecting eaves are carved wooden brackets, and above is a large dormer flanked by two smaller dormers within the mansard roof. Adjacent to the projecting bay, a covered wooden porch with transom and sidelights is extant at the first storey with a modified porch above accessed via a door opening above at the second storey; a segmental dormer is extant above. Narrow window openings are extant as the façade steps back on the side elevation.



Figure 21: Existing roof form and northwest elevation of Grey Vernon, c.2019 (Jessie Banwait Re/Max)

The side (northeast) elevation features the rear one-and-a-half storey addition and side one-storey addition towards the original primary elevation of the building and is visible via a walkway that extends from Albert to Queen Street. The northeast elevation of the rear addition features two flat-headed openings at the first storey with stone lintels and two segmental dormers within the addition's mansard roof. The first bay of the northeast elevation features a two-storey projecting bay with flat-headed window openings featuring stone lintels and sills. The roof above features decorative brackets at the corners and along the soffit. A flat-headed window, with evidence of a segmental window opening, is in the dormer above, which features decorative wooden detailing beneath its gable peak. Above the dormer, the mansard roof is capped with bracketed, projecting eaves. On the sides of this portion of the mansard roof are single segmental dormers with flat-headed openings that appear to have been modified from segmental openings. Moving along the elevation, a one-storey addition with hipped roof obscures the first storey. Above, a single window opening with stone quoining surround is located at the second storey beneath the bracketed projecting eaves. The mansard roof features another segmental dormer with modified window opening and a stone chimney.



Figure 22: Partial side (southeast) elevation of Grey Vernon (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 23: Side (southeast) elevation of Grey Vernon c.2019 (Jessie Banwait Re/Max)

The side (southwest) elevation of the rear one-and-a-half storey addition features a small bump out with entry door and flat-headed window opening beneath the mansard roof, which features two symmetrically placed segmental dormers with decorative wooden detailing and flatheaded window openings. A flatheaded window opening with stone sill and lintel is extant on the rear elevation of the two-and-a-half-storey portion of the building adjacent to the rear addition. Two small segmental dormers with flatheaded window openings are extant on the rear elevation of the main mansard roof. Moving north along this elevation is a single flatheaded entrance at the first storey with a single flatheaded window opening above, and a segmental dormer within the mansard roof. Towards the front (northwest) elevation, a two-and-a-half storey bay, or tower, is prominently located at the corner and features flat-headed window openings at the first and second storeys, separated by stone courses. The upper storey of the tower is wooden and intersects with the main mansard roof, features a narrow entry opening facing Albert Street, decorative wooden detailing around the window openings, and is capped with a smaller bracketed truncated hip roof. A metal fire escape extends to the second and third storeys along this elevation.



Figure 24: The southeast and southwest elevations of Grey Vernon, c.2019 (Jessie Banwait Re/Max))

The rear (southeast) elevation facing Albert Street features the rear elevation of the one-and-a-half storey addition, which appears to have been added later given the difference and quality in the stone used as well as the detailing on the roof itself. The rear elevation of the addition features a flat-headed door opening with stone lintel and a flatheaded window opening with stone lintel. Stone quoining is extant at the corners and the roof is a modified mansard form.



Figure 25: Rear (southeast) elevation of Grey Vernon (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 26: Rear (southeast) elevation of Grey Vernon (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

2.3 Architectural Style and Comparative Analysis

Grey Vernon at 5 Albert Street exhibits architectural features and detailing that are characteristic of the Second Empire style with Queen Anne Revival influences.

Characteristics of Second Empire architecture, prevalent within Ontario between 1860 and 1900, include the mansard roof, often covered with multicoloured slates, with dormers of various shapes and sizes; large windows with one or two panes, framed with enriched surrounds and mouldings; brick used as a material with dichromatic brick quoining typical at the corners; double door entrances; and, typically found in the best part of town. Shannon Kyles of *Ontario Architecture* notes that these houses were often divided up to be used as rental units between the 1950s and 1990s, likely due to the nature of the roof structure allowing for a large upper unit.

The Queen Anne style was built primarily between 1870-1880 to 1910 and was popular amongst the wealthy upper middle classes as buildings in this style are designed to be impressive. Shannon Kyles notes that the inspiration of Queen Anne Revival architecture was from medieval principles of neighbourhoods and towns that focused on craftsmanship and community. The style featured a variety of decorative elements and forms, with complex and variable aesthetics that served to express the success of those who built the homes, often featuring characteristics including asymmetrical facades, steeply pitched and irregular rooflines, front-facing gables, overhanging eaves, towers with turrets in the corners, unusual windows, detailed textures, and bright colours.

Grey Vernon, built c.1889, falls within the period that these styles were most prevalent in Ontario and displays a number of the architectural features and characteristics that distinguish the Second Empire style, along with those that are characteristic of the Queen Anne Revival style, including: the mansard roof (previously covered in slate tiles), dormers of various shapes and sizes, large windows frame with enriched surrounds and mouldings, a variety of decorative elements, asymmetrical facades, irregular rooflines, overhanging eaves, towers, and detailed textures. The design and detailing of Grey Vernon serve to reflect the wealth of its owner at the time; these details together with the costs associated with the construction of the residence as well as its prominent location on a rise above Queen Street represents the prominent position its original owner once had in this area around the Grand Trunk Railway line.

Within Georgetown, there are very few extant examples of the Second Empire architectural style, with only three other examples currently identified on the Heritage Register as “Second Empire” within the Town of Halton Hills. Second Empire residential buildings within the Town include Idlywyld at 150 Main Street/26 Market Street (Figure 29), Grandview House at 56 Queen Street (Figure 28), and the Angus Ross Home at 77 Main Street North (Figure 27). The only other grand residence in Halton Hills known to be constructed in the Queen Anne Revival Style is the former Sunderland Villa in Acton at 55 Mill Street East (Figure 30). These extant heritage resources, including Grey Vernon at 5 Albert Street, are each unique and exhibit distinctive features and elements characteristic of Second Empire and Queen Anne Revival architecture in Ontario.



Figure 27: Angus Ross Home at 77 Main Street North, Georgetown (Google Streetview 2022)



Figure 28: Grandview House at 56 Queen Street, Georgetown (Google Streetview 2020)



Figure 29: Idlywyld at 150 Main Street South/36 Market Street (Town of Halton Hills 2023)



Figure 30: Sunderland Villa at 55 Mill Street East, Acton (Town of Halton Hills 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	X
Demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement	N/A

The property at 5 Albert Street has physical and design value as a unique example of a Second Empire mansion with Queen Anne Revival influences in the community of Georgetown. This landmark home, built for its prominent owner Edward McCannah in the late nineteenth century, the existing residence known as Grey Vernon features various roof slopes including its mansard roof (previously covered in slate tiles), dormers of various shapes and sizes, large windows framed with enriched surrounds and mouldings, a variety of decorative elements, asymmetrical facades, irregular rooflines, overhanging eaves, towers, and detailed textures. The design and detailing of Grey Vernon serve to reflect the wealth of its owner at the time; these details together with the costs associated with the construction of the residence as well as its prominent location on a rise above Queen Street represents the prominent position its original owner once had in this area around the Grand Trunk Railway line. Grey Vernon demonstrates a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit in its form and massing, elaborate and varied roof forms, carved wooden detailing throughout, and its use of wooden and stone detailing throughout the exterior of the building.

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 5 Albert Street has historical and associative value as it is directly associated with Edward McCannah, long-time station agent for the Grand Trunk Railway, a member of the Town Council, as well as a Tax Collector, and his wife Hannah. McCannah was a successful man in the Town who constructed several other houses along Queen Street. The property is associated with the growth and success of the area following the establishment of the Grand Trunk Railway through Georgetown. Following McCannah's death in 1932, like many Second Empire residential buildings, Grey Vernon was converted into rental units and has continued to be used for this purpose for almost one hundred years.

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 5 Albert Street has contextual value as it is important in defining and maintaining the late nineteenth and early-twentieth-century character of the area surrounding the former Grand Trunk Railway Station in Georgetown. Located on a rise above Queen Street in Georgetown since its construction in the late-nineteenth century, Grey Vernon remains physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings in the residential neighbourhood; its connection to Queen Street has been altered with the 1950s infill of two homes along Queen Street, however it can still be viewed in its prominent location along Queen Street. Grey Vernon has been identified as a landmark in the community and serves as an example of one of many homes along Queen Street constructed by Edward McCannah at the turn of the last century.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 5 Albert 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 5 Albert Street are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the existing Second Empire residential building with Queen Anne Revival influences above Queen Street and along Albert Street in the community of Georgetown;
- The scale, form, and massing of the two-and-a-half storey structure with one-storey addition, stone foundation, and mansard roof;
- The materials, including stone exterior and detailing, wooden elements including the front porch and upper portion of the projecting bay along the southwest elevation;

- On the front (northwest) elevation:
 - o The two-and-a-half-storey projecting bay with mansard roof, featuring flatheaded window openings at the first and second storeys and dormers within the mansard roof;
 - o The covered wooden porch featuring sidelights and transom with the existence of a balcony above accessed via the second storey flatheaded entrance and dormer within the mansard roof above;
- On the side (northeast) elevation:
 - o The side elevation of the one-storey addition including flat-headed window opening and dormer within the mansard roof above;
 - o The two-and-a-half-storey projecting bay featuring flatheaded window openings at the first and second storeys and dormers within the mansard roof;
 - o The single flatheaded window opening at the second storey in the northernmost bay of the elevation;
 - o Small dormers and stone chimney within the mansard roof;
- On the side (southwest) elevation:
 - o The two-and-a-half-storey projecting tower with stone at the first two storeys and wood at the upper storeys, featuring flatheaded window openings, stone courses, and bracketed wooden eaves beneath the mansard roof;
- On the rear (southeast) elevation:
 - o The one-storey stone addition with mansard roof, flatheaded door and window openings, stone quoining at the corners, and segmental dormers within the roofline; and,
 - o On the rear elevation of the two-and-a-half-storey building, the extant flat-headed window opening and segmental dormers within the mansard roof.

The interiors have not been identified as cultural heritage attributes as part of this report.

5.0 Sources

Primary Sources

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