

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2024)

Harrison-Wolfe House

93 Bower Street, Acton, Town of Halton Hills

August 2024

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93 Bower Street | LOT 17 PLAN 75, ALSO SHOWN ON PLAN 1098; PART BLOCK A PLAN 345, ALSO SHOWN ON PLAN 1098, AS IN 431875; PART ALLEY PLAN 75, ALSO SHOWN ON PLAN 1098, PART 1 PLAN 20R20521 TOWN OF HALTON HILLS

Figure 22: Southwest corner of the existing building at 93 Bower Street, showing the side (northwest) and front (southeast) elevations (Town of Halton Hills 2024) 13

1.0 Property Description

93 Bower Street	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Regional Municipality of Halton
Legal Description	LOT 17 PLAN 75, ALSO SHOWN ON PLAN 1098; PART BLOCK A PLAN 345, ALSO SHOWN ON PLAN 1098, AS IN 431875; PART ALLEY PLAN 75, ALSO SHOWN ON PLAN 1098, PART 1 PLAN 20R20521 TOWN OF HALTON HILLS
Construction Date	c. 1909
Original Use	Residential
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	W.D. Anderson
Architectural Style	Edwardian
Additions/Alterations	Front Porch enclosed
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town’s Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Laura Loney
Report Date	August 2024

2.0 Background

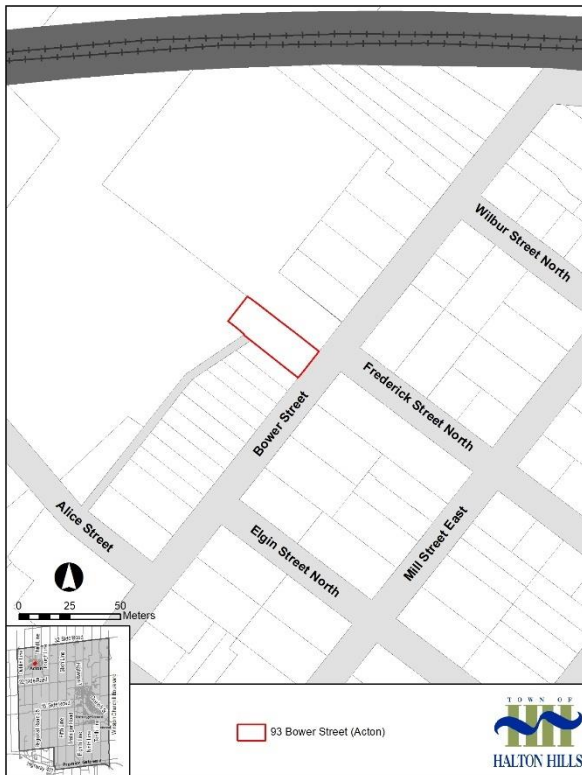


Figure 1: Location Map – 93 Bower Street



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 93 Bower Street

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 93 Bower Street in Acton, 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 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 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.

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 Nation¹.

Early European Settlement

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.

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.

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Figure 3: Subject property identified on the 1819 Patent Plan



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

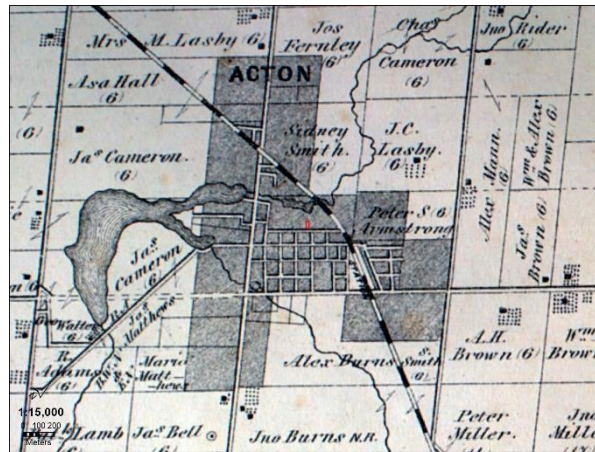


Figure 5: Subject property identified on the 1877 Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton

Henderson Family

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)

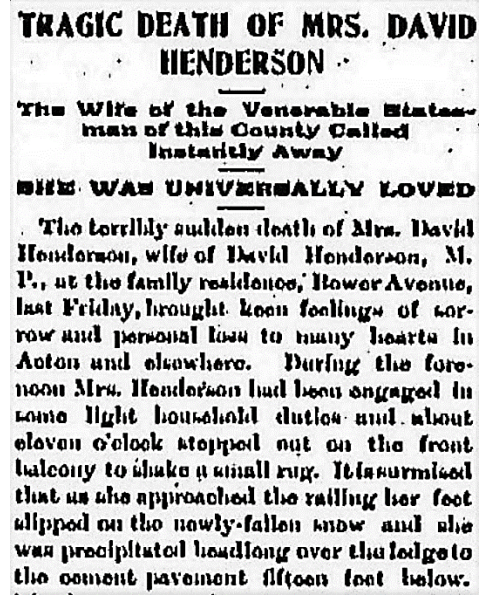


Figure 7: Excerpt from the Acton Free Press, 26 November 1914

In 1898, David Henderson and his wife sold the property to John Henderson and Charles Christie Henderson, who sold the property a few years later in 1906 to William Dutton Anderson (1871-1939) who constructed the residence for his family.

Anderson & Bell Families

The 1901 Census identifies William Anderson as a plasterer living with his wife Ada Williamson (1871-1931) with their two children and their lodger, Mary Lambert. Anderson appeared to undertake many different jobs within the community and served as chief of the Acton Fire Brigade. Local papers reported that he did the plastering for D.M. Henderson's new residence at Bower Avenue and Elgin Street which was completed in 1908. The *Acton Tanner* reported that Anderson's tannery business had been purchased by Mr. Robert Lasby in 1911. The 1921 census shows Anderson working as a tanner at the tannery, and he is noted as the plasterer for a home built by prominent local builder J.B. Mackenzie in 1926 (*Acton Free Press*, July 8, 1926, p.4). A tender for repair of the chimneys on the Acton Town Hall was awarded to Anderson in 1932 (*Acton Free Press*, August 4, 1932, p.1). On his death certificate, Anderson is identified as a stonemason.

Anderson owned the property until 1911 when it was sold to Jeremiah Bell (1876-1953). Bell was married to Mary Elizabeth (nee Storey) (1875-1931), daughter of farmers Robert and Mary Storey. Bell served as a local councillor in Acton and owned the property, likely using it as a rental property, until 1918.

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Figure 8: Subject property identified along Bower Street (then Ave), showing the Corporation Pond towards the rear, c.1919 (EHS 00152)

The subject property had several tenants in the early twentieth century; located directly beside the Syndicate Housing, the home also served as one of the Beardmore residences until it was purchased by Cecil (C.) Watson Hartley Harrison in 1919 from Jeremiah Bell.

Harrison Family

Cecil (C.) Watson Hartley Harrison (1888-1960) married Florence Langton Russell (1892-1982) on Dec 20, 1914. The 1921 Census identifies that the couple were then living in Winnipeg as Harrison had been appointed the circulation manager for western Canada for McLean's Magazine, however they soon returned to Acton. In 1922, Harrison founded the Acton Machine Company, first by selling auto parts made by Mr. F.S. Blow, and then growing his business and moving it to a factory on Maple Avenue, Georgetown.



Figure 9: C. H. Harrison Gray-Dort Car advert from Acton Free Press; Thursday, May 13th, 1920 (Courtesy Vintage Acton)

The 1931 Census identifies Harrison as a Manager Distributer in Auto Supplies, living with Florence on Bower Street (formerly Avenue) with their two daughters, Elizabeth and Margaret.

A prominent citizen, Harrison served his community in many ways, as he was involved with the local United Church, served as YMCA Director, was involved with the local Lodge, served as a Trustee of the School Board, on Council and as Reeve, served on the Chamber of Commerce and the Acton Fall Fair Board. Florence was also very involved in the community, serving on the Welfare Board, and led the Girl Guides and other activities.

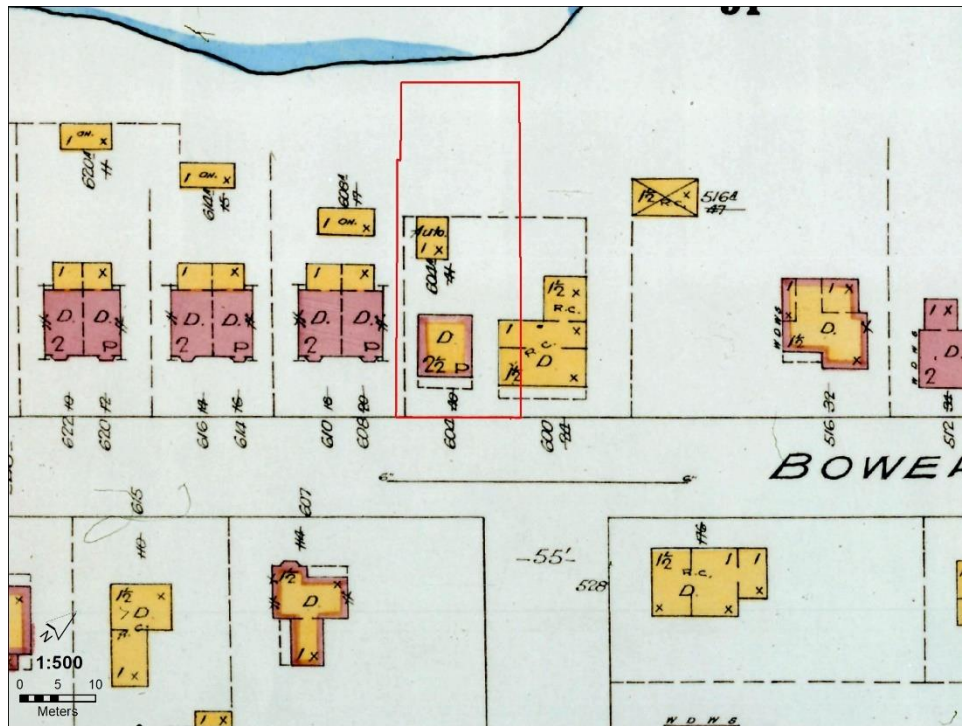


Figure 10: Subject property identified on the 1934 Fire Insurance Plan of Acton, showing the frame two-and-a-half storey building with brick veneer and rear one-storey frame garage within the subject property.

The Harrison family lived in Acton for 17 years. In 1936, Harrison sold the Acton Machine Company to J. Donnefield and moved with his wife to High Park Boulevard in Toronto, however he owned the property until 1950.

Wolfe Family and Late-Twentieth Century Ownership

In 1950, the property was sold to John Wesley Wolfe (1914-1980). Wolfe, a graduate of the Ontario Agricultural College in Guelph, lived in Acton since 1936 and married his wife Helen Lorraine (nee Ostrander) (1914-1962) in 1942. Wolfe was a leather industry executive, developing the Pers Pro Tan tanning process, raising cattle and operating a turkey farm (“Lorraine Farms”) along First Line which was the target of a community petition due to the smells it produced. Wolfe was also the chairman of the Acton Public School Board, member of the Masonic Lodge and North Halton Golf Club, YMCA member, and an Intercollegiate Wrestling Champion (1936).

Helen Wolfe was an active community member and worked raising turkeys and cattle with Wesley, was a member of the Arts and Crafts Guild of Georgetown, the Presto Club in Guelph, the Acton Music Club,

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the I.O.D.E, and a member of the Acton Women's Institute. Helen was also a Wolfe Cub leader, member of St. Alban's Anglican Church, a representative of the Halton County's Children's Aid, and a member of the St. Andrew's College Ladies' Guild.



Figure 11: J. Wesley Wolfe, c.1956 (EHS 00746)



Figure 12: Helen Ostrander, c.1938 (*"Canada, Selected School Yearbooks, 1908-2010"*; School: *University of Toronto*; Year: 1938)



Figure 13: Cornerstone laid for the addition to Acton Public School, c.1951. Wolfe is pictured back left (Acton Free Press / Dills Collection courtesy Vintage Acton)

In 1961, Wolfe sold the subject property to Donald Gordon Ryder and Dora Marguerite Ryder (nee Wood), and moved to Toronto. In 1963, it was reported that Wolfe would open a specialized leather product industry in the former Davis Leather Company building in Newmarket.

Donald Ryder (1920-2014) was a veteran of WWII serving in the Dental Corps as a Sergeant for the Canadian Army. Donald worked for Dills Printing and Publishing for 29 years, followed by Metroland Media, as a photographer, sports editor, and then advertising manager. He was also actively involved in local sports, a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Masonic Lodge, and the Acton Volunteer Fire Brigade in addition to other local community groups. Dora (1925-1977) also served in the Royal Canadian Navy during WWII and worked at Dills Printing and Publishing for 32 years before retiring due to health complications. Dora was a linotype operator and proofreader at Dills Printing and Publishing, and was also active in sports, the Lakeside I.O.D.E., and other community activities.

Following Dora's death in 1977, Donald owned the property until 2003 when he moved to Alberta to be with family and it was purchased by its current owners.

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Figure 14: Subject property identified in 1971 aerial photography (Courtesy Vintage Acton)



Figure 15: Subject property identified in 1999 aerial photography



Figure 16: Subject property identified in 2007 aerial photography



Figure 17: Subject property identified in 2023 aerial photography

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The subject property at 93 Bower Street is a rectangular parcel located along the northwest side of Bower Street in the community of Acton in the Town of Halton Hills and contains a single detached brick dwelling with a rear detached garage. The existing residence is located adjacent to the Syndicate Housing Heritage Conservation District on Bower Street to the southwest, with a vacant lot located directly northeast. The property is legally known as LOT 17 PLAN 75, ALSO SHOWN ON PLAN 1098; PART BLOCK A PLAN 345, ALSO SHOWN ON PLAN 1098, AS IN 431875; PART ALLEY PLAN 75, ALSO SHOWN ON PLAN 1098, PART 1 PLAN 20R20521 TOWN OF HALTON HILLS.

The existing two-and-a-half storey frame building on a stone foundation with brick exterior features a hipped roof with dormer facing the southeast, and brick chimney on the southwest elevation. The front (southeast) elevation is dominated by a one-storey brick porch that has been enclosed and modified,

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obscuring the main entrance within. The second storey features evenly spaced single flatheaded window openings with concrete sills and lintels. The central dormer in the roof above features a hipped roof and paired openings that have been infilled with contemporary windows.



Figure 18: Looking towards the subject property from Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 19: Front (southeast) elevation of the existing building on Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The side (southwest) elevation is divided into two bays with the brick chimney that extends above the roofline. Towards the front elevation are single flatheaded window openings with concrete sills and lintels at the first and second storeys. Beyond the chimney and towards the rear are paired single window openings with continuous sill and lintel at the first storey, and a single flatheaded window opening with concrete sills and lintel above.

The side (northeast) elevation features a single flatheaded window opening and paired single window openings with continuous sill and lintel at the first storey and smaller single flatheaded window opening at the second storey.



Figure 20: Southeast corner of the existing building at 93 Bower Street, showing the side (southwest) and front (southeast) elevations (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 21: Southwest corner of the existing building at 93 Bower Street, showing the side (northwest) and front (southeast) elevations (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

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

2.3 Architectural Style

The Edwardian style, or Edwardian Classicism, incorporates Classical detailing and features sparingly and in an understated way. A common style in Ontario between 1900 and 1930, the hallmark of Edwardian Classicism is its simple designs and detailing, straight rooflines, smooth surfaces, many windows with flat-arches and plain lintels, restrained ornamentation, and simplified massing. Edwardian residential buildings typically feature a generous front porch (often with wooden columns atop brick piers), simplified dormers that reflect the simplified roof shape, and undecorated chimneys. Shannon Kyles of *Ontario Architecture* notes that a subtype of the style is “Foursquare”, with uncomplicated buildings featuring equal sides and a massed, cubical shape, with four rooms per floor being typical.

The existing residential building at 93 Bower Street reflects those characteristics typical of Edwardian residential buildings, including its simple designs and detailing, smooth surfaces, flatheaded windows with plain sills and lintels, simplified massing, a generous front porch (although now enclosed), and simplified roof with dormer and simple brick chimney. As such it can best be described as representative of the Edwardian Classical 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 93 Bower Street has physical and design value as a representative example of Edwardian Classical residential architecture due its simple designs and detailing, smooth surfaces, flatheaded windows with plain sills and lintels, simplified massing, a generous front porch (although now enclosed), and simplified roof with dormer and simple brick chimney. The building has maintained significant integrity since its construction in the early twentieth century and is compatible with buildings of a similar vintage along Bower Street, including the Syndicate Housing adjacent to the southwest.

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	X

The property at 93 Bower Street has historical and associative value due to its associations with its early owners through to the mid-twentieth century. The existing home was built on land previously owned by

the Honourable D. Henderson by local tradesperson W.D. Anderson for his family. Anderson undertook work throughout the Acton community as a teamster, plasterer, builder, tanner, and stonemason.

The property was later owned by Cecil Watson Hartley Harrison, who worked as an auto supplies distributor and was involved with the local United Church, served as YMCA Director, was involved with the local Lodge, served as a Trustee of the School Board, on Council and as Reeve, and served on the Chamber of Commerce and the Acton Fall Fair Board. Cecil's wife Florence Harrison was also very involved in the community, serving on the Welfare Board, and led the Girl Guides and other activities.

In 1950, the property was owned by J. Wesley Wolfe, a leather industry executive who developed the Pers Pro Tan tanning process, operated a turkey farm in the community, and was chairman of the Acton Public School Board, member of the Masonic Lodge and North Halton Golf Club, YMCA member, and an Intercollegiate Wrestling Champion (1936). Helen Wolfe, Wesley's wife, was an active community member and worked raising turkeys and cattle with Wesley, was a member of the Arts and Crafts Guild of Georgetown, the Presto Club in Guelph, the Acton Music Club, the I.O.D.E, and a member of the Acton Women's Institute. Helen was also a Wolfe Cub leader, member of St. Alban's Anglican Church, a representative of the Halton County's Children's Aid, and a member of the St. Andrew's College Ladies' Guild.

The property was also home to long-time owners Donald and Dora Ryder from the 1960s onwards. Both Donald and Dora were WWII veterans who worked for many years at Dills Printing and Publishing (later Metroland Media) and were actively involved community members.

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 93 Bower Street has contextual value as it 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 residence is physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to the surroundings in the community along Bower Street. 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 93 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 93 Bower Street are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the existing residential building along Bower Street in the community of Acton in the Town of Halton Hills;
- The scale, form, and massing of two-and-a-half storey frame building with brick exterior with stone foundation, hipped roof, and brick chimney;
- The materials, including brick exterior, concrete sills and lintels, stone foundation, and wooden porch detailing where extant;

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- The front (southeast) elevation, including the existing of a covered front porch at the first storey and single flatheaded window openings at the second storey;
- The side (southwest) elevation, including the brick chimney and flat-headed window openings at the first and second storeys; and,
- The side (northeast) elevation, including the flat-headed window openings at the first and second storeys.

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

5.0 Sources

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