

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2024)

United Church Parsonage

29 Bower Street, Acton, Town of Halton Hills

May 2024

Project Personnel

Report Authors

Laura Loney, MPlan, MCIP, CAHP, RPP
Manager of Heritage Planning

Historical Research

Laura Loney

Field Review

Laura Loney

Report Preparation

Laura Loney

Mapping Graphics:

Rehan Waheed, MA
Planning Data Analyst

Report Reviewers:

Caylee MacPherson
Planner – Development Review & Heritage

Bronwyn Parker
Director of Planning Policy

John Linhardt
Commissioner of Planning & Development

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1.0 Property Description

29 Bower Street	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Region of Halton
Legal Description	PT LTS 173 & 174, PL 227, AS IN H710861; HALTON HILLS
Construction Date	c.1908
Original Use	Residential
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	Builder John Cameron for Charles C. Henderson
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 29 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*.

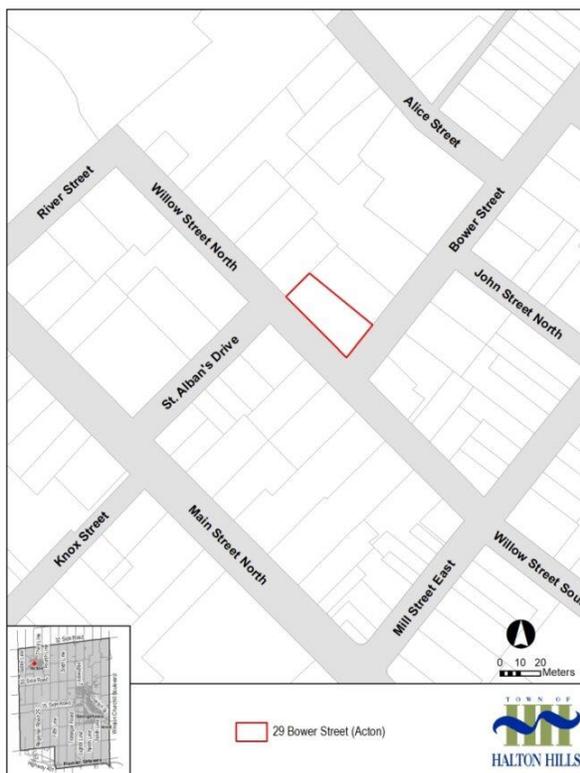


Figure 1: Location Map – 29 Bower Street



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 29 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 Dr. Robert Morrow towards the end of the nineteenth century and created three properties from the land, including the subject property. Henderson divided the lands but kept 29 Bower Street for his own home.



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



Figure 6: Frame farmhouse built c.1835 for Rufus Adams; the farm lane later became Bower Avenue. The house was demolished c.1900. (A.T. Brown/Dills Collection c.1899)

David Henderson

The Hon. David Henderson (1841-1922) moved to Acton in 1878. Henderson was a storekeeper for many years, and partnered with his father-in-law David Darling Christie, forming a partnership to establish Christie, Henderson & Co., a private bank. The company also owned lime kilns in Galt and Kelso and expanded in Toronto as well. 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 (nee Christie) (1842-1914) died a tragic death in 1914, falling off their balcony, while Henderson died in 1922.



Figure 7: Hon. David Henderson, c.1900 (MHS 5969)

TRAGIC DEATH OF MRS. DAVID HENDERSON

The Wife of the Venerable Statesman of this County Called Instantly Away

SHE WAS UNIVERSEALLY LOVED

The terribly sudden death of Mrs. David Henderson, wife of David Henderson, M. P., at the family residence, Bower Avenue, last Friday, brought keen feelings of sorrow and personal loss to many hearts in Acton and elsewhere. During the forenoon Mrs. Henderson had been engaged in some light household duties and about eleven o'clock stopped out on the front balcony to shake a small rug. It is surmised that as she approached the railing her feet slipped on the newly-fallen snow and she was precipitated headlong over the ledge to the cement pavement fifteen feet below.

Figure 8: Excerpt from the Acton Free Press, 26 November 1914

**Christie,
Henderson
& Co.,**
ACTON.

NEW PRINTS,
NEW DRESS GOODS,
NEW MILLINERY,
NEW FELT HATS,
NEW TWEEDS, &c

The Biggest Stock and Best Value in
White and Gray Cottons, Ducks, Denims, Boots and
Shoes—Cases Arriving Daily.
Best Value in
Teas, Sugars, Raisins,
Currants, Biscuits, Soaps, &c.

We want all the Eggs you can
bring.
New Advertisement Next Week.
Christie, Henderson, & Co.

Figure 9: Advertisement for Christie, Henderson & Co. (*Acton Free Press*, April 29, 1880, p.3)

HENDERSON & CO.
CLASGOW HOUSE.

Millinery Opening
—AND—
Grand Display
—OF—
DRESS GOODS,
MANTLES, ETC.

We wish to intimate to the ladies of Acton and vicinity that our stock of Fall Millinery will be open for their inspection on
Wednesday, Sept. 27th,
and following days.
Miss Campbell is again in charge and has spared no pains to make this the most successful season we have ever had.
Our whole staff have gone to great trouble and expense this season to equip themselves with all the latest ideas and how to execute them.

EVERYBODY WELCOME.

1111 St. Acton. Henderson & Co.

Figure 10: Advertisement for Henderson & Co. (*Acton Free Press*, September 21, 1899, p. 3)



Figure 11: Advertisement for Henderson & Co, c.1889 (*Acton Free Press*, March 16, 1899)



Figure 12: Henderson's store on Mill Street East, c.1900 (demolished in the early 1900s) (MJ Hassard Collection c.1900)

Charles C. Henderson

The existing house on the subject property was constructed for Charles Christie Henderson (1873-1944), David Henderson's son, in 1910 by builder John Cameron, following the demolition of the former farmhouse. Charles had been living with his parents as of 1901, according to census records, and married his wife Ella Mae (nee Dorland) (1872-1960) in 1904. Charles C. Henderson was a merchant and operated his business Henderson & Co. at the current location of the Bank of Montreal in downtown Acton with his brother David Milton Henderson.

The house at 29 Bower Street served as the primary residence for the Henderson family. Much of the mill work in the home was supplied by prominent local builder J.B. MacKenzie.

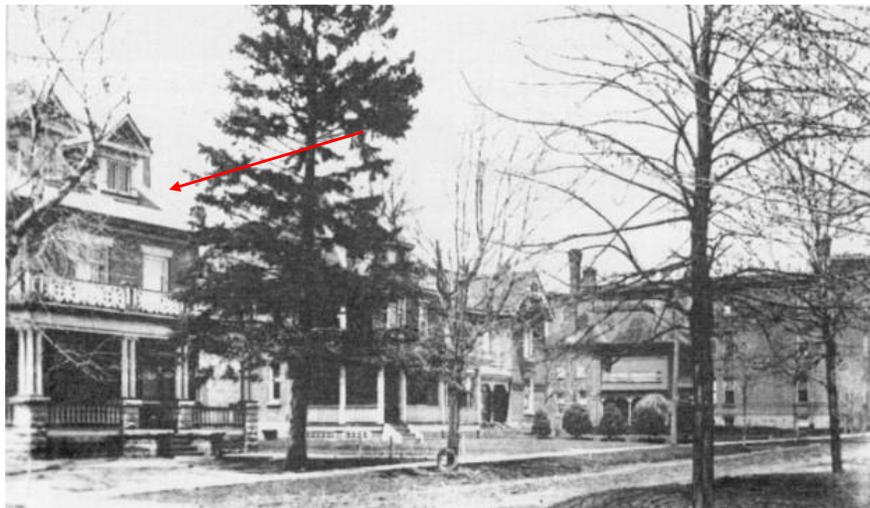


Figure 13: Bower Street looking east, early 1900s; subject property identified with a red arrow (A.T. Brown/Dills Collection)



Figure 14: Aerial view of Acton, subject property identified with arrow, early 1900s (A.T. Brown/Dills Collection)



Figure 15: Contraband beer from the Dominion Hotel was poured down the gutter in front of Town Hall, c.1911. The subject property is identified with a red arrow in the background (A.T. Brown/Dills Collection - Vintage Acton)

United Church in Acton & the United Church Parsonage

Two years after Reverends Ezra and Zenas Adams' arrival in the area in 1826, the first Methodist sermon was given by Zenas Damas in a log schoolhouse near the future site. The same year, regular Methodist services were held in the Adams brothers' log house. By 1844, the Methodist church was officially established in Acton with regular Sunday preaching in the community. Services were held in various farmhouses until the first Methodist church building, a frame structure, was built in Acton by Angus Kennedy. By 1872, Acton was the head of the circuit and there were 136 members of the church across Acton, Silver Creek, and Crewson's Corners.

In 1874, membership had increased significantly and a new church building was required. The groundbreaking for the church was in August 1875, with the cornerstone laid on September 29, 1875. The new church building opened on July 1, 1876, costing approximately \$8,000.

In 1866, the Acton church broke from the others in the circuit to become an independent station. The first parsonage for the United Church in Acton was at the property now known as 111 Bower Street, and in 1908 the second parsonage at 53 Willow Street North was purchased, in close proximity to the Knox Presbyterian Manse (39 Willow Street North), and St. Alban's Rectory (address). In 1925, the Acton church joined with the United Church of Canada.

In 1928, the subject property was purchased by the United Church from the Henderson family, who were leaving Acton to live in Toronto, for \$6000. The house was to be used as a parsonage for the United Church. Its first occupant following the sale of the property from the Hendersons was Reverend C.L. Poole and his family who had been living at 53 Willow Street North. In April 1928, Poole's wife Helen passed away; Poole remarried in October 1929 to Bertha M. Smith and the *Acton Free Press* reported that the post-nuptial reception for Mrs. (Rev) C.L. Poole was held at the parsonage on Bower Avenue. In November 1944, the United Church had a mortgage burning ceremony as the original mortgage on the property, \$2,500, had been paid off in full.



Figure 16: Burning of the Parsonage's mortgage, c.1930. B. Vledhuis, Mrs. Veldhuis, R.F. Bean, A.T. Brown, T. Watson, E.J. Caldwell, D. Richardson, Rev. Fosbury, E. Jones (Austin - source)



Figure 17: United Church Parsonage, c.1945 (Austin - source)

The United Church used the parsonage to house its ministers between 1928 and 1973, with the Onions family being the last ministers to reside in the parsonage. Over the years, the parsonage had hosted numerous social events and meetings and was a vital part of the church's community activities. In 1972, due to high maintenance costs, the congregation voted to sell the parsonage and to instead provide their ministers with a living allowance.



Figure 18: Subject property identified on the 1935 *Fire Insurance Plan of Acton* (detail)



Figure 19: Subject property identified on the 1939 *National Topographic Map*

Late-Twentieth Century Ownership to Present

The subject property was purchased by Doug and Janis Fread in 1973 for \$38,131, and they moved to the property in November of that year.



Figure 20: Subject property identified in 1974 aerial photography



Figure 21: Town Hall with the subject property in the background, c.1984 (EHS 13762)



Figure 22: Subject property identified in 1999 aerial photography



Figure 23: Subject property identified in 2011 aerial photography

In 2007, the property was purchased by Allan and Fiona Paaren, and in 2021 was purchased by its current owner.

2.2 Property & Architectural Description



Figure 24: 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 existing residential building on the subject property is a two-and-a-half storey frame building with brick veneer, featuring a hipped roof with bracketed eaves and stone foundation.



Figure 25: Looking towards the subject property along Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 26: Looking along Bower Street, showing the existing two-and-a-half storey residential buildings at 29, 35, and 41 Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 27: Looking towards the front elevation from Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The front (southeast) elevation facing Bower Street features a symmetrical façade that is dominated by a covered wooden porch across the first storey. The porch is accessed via stone steps, however the porch floor is wooden. The stone piers support paired wooden Corinthian columns. The central entrance is located within a flatheaded opening with a heavy stone lintel above. On either side of the entrance at the first storey are two large window openings, featuring multiple divisions and leaded glass surrounding a large single pane, with stone lintels and sills. Three window openings are located above at the second storey. The central window features multi-divided lites and leaded windows on each side with a similar large single pane within. Smaller flatheaded window openings are located on either side of the central window and feature windows with multi-divided lites above a large single pane, both with stone lintels and sills. Two symmetrically placed gable-roofed dormers, featuring wooden architectural detailing and flatheaded window openings with casements are located in the roof above.



Figure 28: Front (southeast) elevation of the existing building at 29 Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The side (northeast) elevation features a brick chimney that has been removed above the roofline. A single entrance with stone lintel is located at grade, with two flat-headed windows with stone lintels at the basement level within the stone foundation. This elevation features four flatheaded window openings of various sizes, with a smaller window towards the front elevation, two flatheaded windows in line with one another towards the rear elevation, and a larger window opening featuring a similar pattern to the central window on the front elevation, all with stone sills and lintels.



Figure 29: Side (northeast) elevation of the existing building at 29 Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The side (southwest) elevation features another brick chimney, which is extant above the roofline, and which features detailing in the form of recessed panels along its height. The elevation features a slight projection beneath a gable which includes a small flatheaded window opening and siding. The first storey features a large flatheaded window opening with leaded glass transom and large single pane below, while the second storey features a smaller window opening with stone sill and lintel and a hung window with multi-divided lights above and a single pane below. Towards the rear of this elevation is a two-storey projection featuring smaller window openings with stone sills and lintels on the southwest side as well as on the rear elevation.



Figure 30: Side (southwest) elevation of the existing building at 29 Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 31: Rear (northwest) elevation of the existing building at 29 Bower Street (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

2.3 Architectural Style

While previously identified as a combination of styles in former inventories and studies including the subject property, the existing building at 29 Bower Street can be best described as a representative example of an Edwardian building with Arts and Crafts influences.

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.

Arts and Crafts architecture was popular in Ontario between 1890 and 1940, stemming from a movement in Britain that was a reaction to industrialization. The style incorporated design principles that brought back artisanship and craftsmanship, emphasizing simplicity, strong textures, local materials, handicraft, and vernacular traditions. Arts and Crafts homes typically feature a steep roof pitch, wood or slate shingles on walls and roof, brick or stuccoed exteriors, simple geometric forms,

open eaves with exposed rafter ends, a recessed or side entrance, and asymmetrical facades. A form of the Arts and Craft style was the Craftsman bungalow.

The former United Church Parsonage features elements characteristic of the Edwardian style, although also contains elements of the detailing and artisanship characteristic of Arts and Crafts architecture. The form, massing, rooflines, and symmetrical, balanced façade, with a generous front porch, smooth surfaces, multiple window openings, and simplified dormers are all consistent with the style. The Arts and Crafts influence is apparent in the windows throughout featuring multi-divided lites and leaded glass, as well as the bracketed eaves and more elaborate covered porch featuring Corinthian columns. The home, while overall restrained in its form and presenting a balanced façade, features significant detailing, artisanship and craftsmanship that make this home stand out along the streetscape.

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 29 Bower Street has physical and design value as a representative example of an Edwardian residential building with Arts and Crafts influences within the community of Acton in the Town of Halton Hills. The form, massing, rooflines, and symmetrical, balanced façade, with a generous front porch, smooth surfaces, multiple window openings, and simplified dormers are all consistent with the Edwardian residential style. The existing building also features detailing characteristic of the Arts and Crafts style, with several windows featuring multi-divided lites and leaded glass, as well as the bracketed eaves and more elaborate covered porch featuring Corinthian columns. The Edwardian home, while overall restrained in its form and presenting a balanced façade, features significant detailing, artisanship and craftsmanship that make this home stand out along the streetscape.

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 29 Bower Street has historical and associative value due to its associations with the Henderson family, and the United Church of Acton with its origins in the Methodist congregation in

Acton established by Reverends Ezra and Zenas Adams. 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 Henderson’s son, Charles C. Henderson, an important local merchant and businessman within the community. The property was later used as the parsonage for the Acton United Church between 1928 and 1973, and was a significant community hub for social events and meetings over these years. The parsonage was the third for the Acton United Church, which had its roots in the Methodist congregation established in the early 19th century in Acton by Reverends Ezra and Zenas Adams. The property is also associated with prominent local builder J.B. Mackenzie who supplied much of the mill work for the home.

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 29 Bower Street has significant contextual value as an early-twentieth-century Edwardian residential building with Arts and Crafts influences at the corner of Bower Street and Willow Street North 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 29 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 29 Bower Street are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the existing early-twentieth-century residential building at the corner of Bower Street and Willow Street North 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 featuring gable-roofed dormers, bracketed eaves, and brick chimneys, and a stone foundation;
- The materials, including the red brick exterior and architectural detailing, wooden windows, stone sills and lintels, and stone foundation;
- The front (southeast) elevation, including:
 - At the first storey:
 - The covered wooden porch featuring stone piers, stone steps, and paired Corinthian columns;
 - The central flatheaded entrance with stone sills;

- The large flatheaded window openings on either side of the entrance featuring wooden windows with multiple divisions and leaded glass surrounding a large single pane, with stone lintels and sills;
- At the second storey:
 - The central window opening featuring a wooden window with multi-divided lites and leaded windows on each side with a similar large single pane within the opening;
 - The flatheaded window openings located on either side of the central window featuring wooden windows with multi-divided lites above a large single pane, both with stone lintels and sills.
- The paired gable-roofed dormers within the roofline above;
- The side (northeast) elevation, including:
 - The brick chimney extant below the roofline;
 - The flatheaded window openings throughout, featuring wooden windows with multi-divided lites and leaded glass, all with stone sills and lintels;
- The side (southwest) elevation, including:
 - The brick chimney featuring recessed panels at the first and second storeys; and,
 - The flatheaded window openings featuring wooden windows with multi-divided lites and leaded glass, all with stone sills and lintels.

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

5.0 Sources

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