

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The Birches

75 Mill Street, Georgetown, Town of Halton Hills

August 2023

75 Mill Street | PT LT UNNUMBERED LOT, PL 37, TRIANGULAR PIECE BTN WATER ST & LT 7 S OF MILL ST,
AS IN 608487, EXCEPT PT 6, 20R7534; HALTON HILLS

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1.0 Property Description

75 Mill Street	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Regional Municipality of Halton
Legal Description	PT LT UNNUMBERED LOT, PL 37, TRIANGULAR PIECE BTN WATER ST & LT 7 S OF MILL ST, AS IN 608487, EXCEPT PT 6, 20R7534; HALTON HILLS
Construction Date	c. 1915
Original Use	Residential
Current Use	Commercial
Architect/Building/Designer	John B. Mackenzie
Architectural Style	Craftsman Bungalow
Additions/Alterations	Front Porch, Window Openings in the Central Dormer
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town's Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Tharushe Jayaveer; Laura Loney
Report Date	August 2023

2.0 Background



Figure 1: 75 Mill Street East



Figure 2: 75 Mill Street East

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 75 Mill 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*.

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2.1 Historical Background

The property is located at 75 Mill Street in the community of Georgetown, Halton Hills. The property is situated along the northeast side of Mill Street and at the terminus of Park Avenue. The property is legally known as PT LT UNNUMBERED LOT, PL 37, TRIANGULAR PIECE BTN WATER ST & LT 7 S OF MILL ST, AS IN 608487, EXCEPT PT 6, 20R7534; HALTON HILLS (Figure 1) and will be referred to as “The Birches” throughout this report.

Lot 18, Concession 9, Esquesing, which was designated as a mill seat, was granted by the Crown to John Moore in 1821 (Figure 3). In 1823, Moore sold the entire 200 acres to George Kennedy. Kennedy had also received a 100-acre grant (Lot 20) from the Crown for his service in the War of 1812, however he later sold it to his brother Morris and continued to subdivide and sell off lots.



Figure 3: Excerpt from 1819 Patent Plan for Esquesing Township (Archives of Ontario RG 1-100-0-0-570)

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Figure 4: The subject property overlaid on 1858 *Tremain's Map of the County of Halton, Canada West*

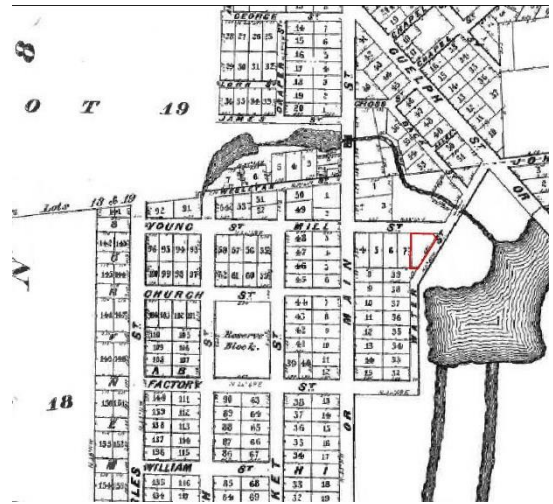


Figure 5: The subject property overlaid 1877 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton, Ontario*

John Boyd Mackenzie (1876-1947) (Figure 6 and Figure 7) was born in Esquesing Township and attended Dublin School. He was trained in carpentry and opened his first shop in Acton. His interest in contracting led him to become a dealer in lumber, and the growth of his business resulted in him establishing a planing mill in Acton in 1900. In 1907, Mackenzie married Eliza McQueen, who taught classes in Acton. The couple resided at Church and Main Street in a block home Mackenzie had constructed prior to the marriage, before moving into The Birches in Georgetown in 1915. In 1909, Mackenzie bought contractor H. P. Lawson's planing mill (8 James Street) (Figure 8) in Georgetown. At only the age of 33, Mackenzie owned both the Acton and Georgetown mills.



Figure 6: John B. Mackenzie (left) and Samuel J. Mackenzie (right) pause for portrait (EHS008541)



Figure 7: John B. Mackenzie, c. 1920 (*Halton Sketches Revisited*)

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Georgetown Planing Mill

Figure 8: Stone building constructed by H.P. Lawson in 1897 and sold to J.B. Mackenzie in 1909 (Georgetown Herald, 17 Dec 1913, p. 4)

Mackenzie constructed “The Birches” at 75 Mill Street in 1915 for his family upon their move to Georgetown. Willoughby sold the lands for \$500 to Mackenzie, who prepared plans for his new residence. Plans for The Birches (Figure 9 through Figure 11) show Mackenzie’s vision for the building as a Craftsman bungalow. The lands now known as 75 Mill Street were originally designated as the site for the construction of a public library in Georgetown, however when the Congregational Church was deeded for this purpose, Willoughby sold the lands to Mackenzie and donated the money for the purchase of new books and equipment.

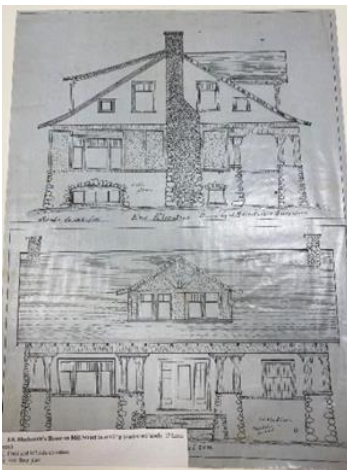


Figure 9: Elevation Drawings for The Birches, 75 Mill Street (EHS ARCHIVES MG12 C6 #44)

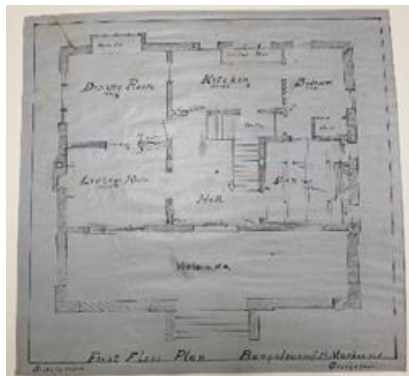


Figure 10: First Floor Plan, The Birches, 75 Mill Street (EHS ARCHIVES MG12 C6 #44)

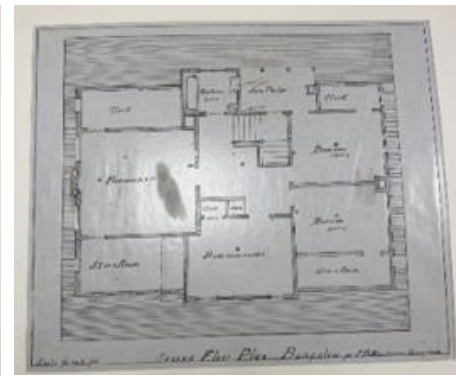


Figure 11: Second Floor Plan, The Birches, 75 Mill Street (EHS ARCHIVES MG12 C6 #44)

Alongside running the two mills, J.B Mackenzie ran a contracting business for a variety of different buildings. Operating under the name J. B. Mackenzie & Son of Georgetown. Mackenzie acquired the

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contract for the Post Office and Customs House at 70 Mill Street, which was noted in the 24 April 1935 edition of the paper. Work on the Post Office was to commence on May 1, 1935. The Georgetown Herald revealed that the limestone and sandstone structure would include a clock tower and be designed by J. E. Walker and J.G. Elliott, prominent Toronto architects. Mackenzie also built the theatres in Georgetown and Acton, namely the Roxy Theatre at Mill Street, Acton and the Mackenzie Building which had the Roxy Theatre on Mill Street in Georgetown. Both the Post Office and Customs House and Roxy Theatre are within close proximity to his home, The Birches. Mackenzie constructed the Coated Paper Mill beside the CNR tracks. He remodeled the Willoughby Stables into what is now the Georgetown Royal Canadian Legion and is responsible for numerous homes in Halton Hills. Mackenzie's family also joined his business, including daughter Jean who was his bookkeeper for many years, and Samuel (Sam) (Figure 6) who operated the store and office for many years, son Ken, who managed the Acton Branch between 1945 and 1950, and daughter Marjory who helped at home.

Mackenzie was a prominent local and contributed significantly to the Town of Halton Hills. His business also manufactured small incubators by a coal-oil burner which was found in many chicken farms from coast to coast during the early 1900s. Mackenzie served on Georgetown Council for four years (Figure 12) and was Mayor from 1930-34 and then Chief Magistrate (Figure 12). Mackenzie was member of the Public School Board for ten years, and was also a member of the Board of Management of Knox Presbyterian Church. He was one of the members who arranged the Lawson Memorial Chimes in the Church. He was also a charter member of the Lions Club, president of the Ontario Retail Lumber Dealers' Association, members of Walker Masonic Lodge, Acton, and Halton Chapter, Georgetown.

Mackenzie died in his sleep in 1947 after attending the Acton Fall Fair. Local businesses closed for an hour during the funeral services as a token of respect.



Figure 12: Town Council in 1930, J.B. Mackenzie identified (EHS00899)

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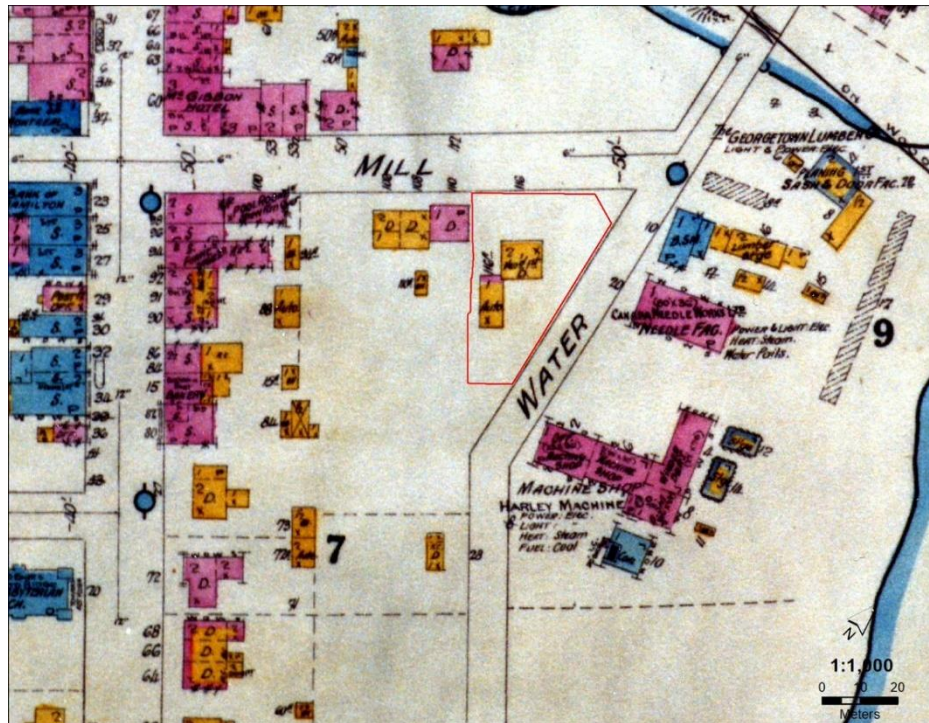


Figure 13: The 1922 Fire Insurance Map of Georgetown, subject property outlined in red, identifying a 2 ½ storey wood frame building with one-storey wood framed garage with brick or stone cladding to the rear.

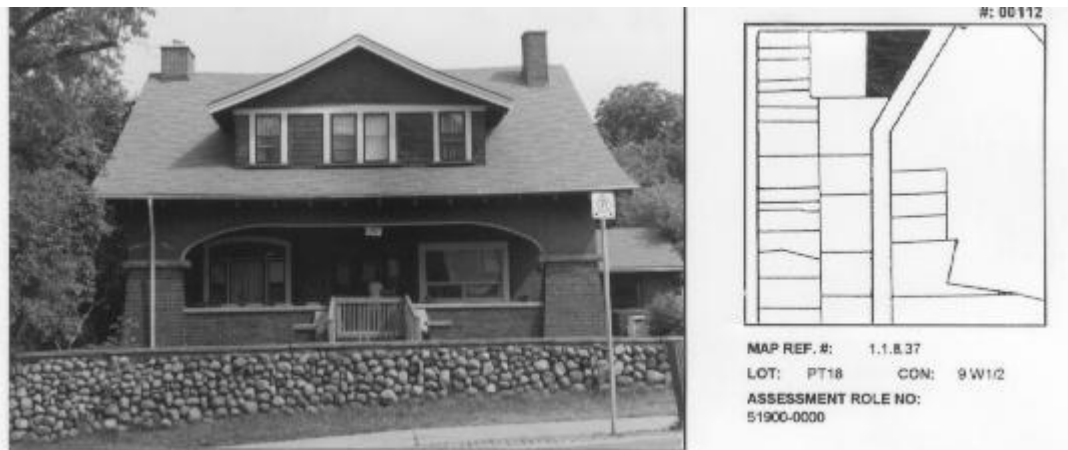


Figure 14: 75 Mill Street, c.1994. Note the unaltered front porch and window openings within the central dormer (EHS 10994)

Upon Mackenzie's death in 1947, the property was transferred to his wife Eliza Mackenzie. The property remained in the Mackenzie family until 1959 when it was sold to the Baird family. The property changed hands a few more times until July 1975 when the property was sold to William and Elizabeth Garrard.

By October 15, 1975, Garrard Photo was at 75 Mill St. In 1979, the *Georgetown Herald* reported an electrical fire in Garrard's studio on Mill Street that was confined to the studio however did considerable

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damage to it at the time. In 1984, William (Bill) Garrard and Elizabeth Garrard sold the property to the organization then known as the North Halton Association for the Mentally Retarded, who owned it until 2010 and operated the residence as a group home. In 2010, the property was purchased by Raymond Chesher. The current owners, Philip and Denise Karda, have owned the property since 2015. The property is currently the office of Phil Karda Insurance Agent and on the upper level, home to Crystal Tree Yoga Inc.

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The property is located at 75 Mill Street along the southeast side of Mill Street and to the southwest of Park Avenue. The triangular shaped lot is located just northeast of Main Street South within Downtown Georgetown. The existing property features a paved parking lot and drive along Mill Street with a one-and-a-half storey bungalow within the property (Figure 15 through Figure 17). Mature trees extend along the northeast/east property line along Park Avenue and to the rear along the southeast lot line.



Figure 15: Looking southwest towards 75 Mill Street from Mill Street, Georgetown (Town of Halton Hills 2023)



Figure 16: Looking southeast towards 75 Mill Street from Mill Street, Georgetown (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The front (northwest) elevation of The Birches (Figure 17) is dominated by its broad, low-pitched roof with an overhang over the front porch. The central columns have been replaced, however the wide columns on either end of the porch remain extant. The walls and columns at the base of the porch are brick, with stucco above and painted wooden columns were replaced on either side of the entrance. Beyond the porch on the front elevation, the main entrance features a segmentally arched opening with contemporary door and sidelights on either side of the door. A segmentally arched window opening with glass transom is located on the northeast side of the main entrance, featuring three three-over-one hung windows. A flat-headed window opening is located to the southwest of the main entrance and features three three-over-one windows with no transom window above. A large gable-roofed dormer is located on the front (northwest) slope of the roof, featuring a pair of window openings beneath the

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gable peak with three-over-one windows, and on either end of the dormer's façade, single window opening with three-over-one windows. Brick chimneys are visible at the northeast and southwest ends of the roof.



Figure 17: Front elevation of The Birches at 75 Mill Street, showing the cobblestone wall along Mill Street (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The southwest elevation of The Birches (Figure 18) reflects the mix of materials used within the exterior of the home, including the brick porch and façade, cobblestone chimney (beneath the roofline), shingled projecting bay with shed roof and small flat-headed window opening, small window tucked under the eaves, and one-storey addition with brick, wood shingles and contemporary entrance with glass door and sidelights.

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Figure 18: Southwest elevation of The Birches (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

The northeast elevation of The Birches (Figure 19) takes advantage of the change in grade, with the basement, first and upper storeys visible. At the basement level, the façade features cobblestone to the base of the first storey window at the rear, with segmentally arched window openings on either side of the cobblestone chimney (beneath the roofline). At the first storey, a large segmentally arched window opening with glass transom and three-over-one openings are featured with two smaller windows with concrete sills on either side of the chimney. Above the first storey, two flat-headed window openings with four-over-one windows are extant on either side of the cobblestone chimney exterior.



Figure 19: Northeast elevation of The Birches at 75 Mill Street (Town of Halton Hills 2023)

2.3 Architectural Style, Comparative Analysis & Integrity

The Arts and Crafts architectural style was popular in Ontario between 1900 and 1940. The Craftsman Bungalow, a form of Arts and Crafts style, was brought to Canada from the United States in the 1910s.

Typical features characteristic of the Craftsman Bungalow style in Ontario include:

- One or one-and-a-half storey homes with broad, low-pitched roofs;
- Large porches, overhangs or verandas;
- Abundant exterior space around the building;
- Appear as a single storey building, with a second storey concealed beneath an overhanging, gently pitched roof;
- Variety of building materials, including combination of rustic textures such as brick or stone with siding or shingles;
- Grouped windows that are multi-paned or single, and diamond-paned casement windows; and,
- Large chimneys centrally located or along a wall.

The Birches at 75 Mill Street is an excellent example of the Craftsman Bungalow style in Georgetown as it exhibits the above characteristics that are typical of the style. Although the exterior space around the building is primarily paved along Mill Street, there is significant open space between the front elevation of the house and the public realm.

There are currently 19 properties on the Town's Heritage Register identified as Craftsman style that are currently listed, dating between 1910 and 1930. Of the Craftsman style buildings that are located within Georgetown, the most comparable in terms of scale, form, and design include the properties at 25 King Street (Figure 20) and 37 Charles Street (Figure 21), which are both located within residential streets, while The Birches is uniquely located within a primarily commercial area within Downtown Georgetown. All three of these buildings are excellent examples of the Craftsman style, however the use of cobblestone within the exterior of the house and within the stone wall along Mill Street and the side property line are unique to The Birches. Some features have been altered on the front elevation, including the central columns within the front porch, and the placement of windows in the central dormer, however the building has retained its integrity overall since its construction almost 100 years ago.



Figure 20: 25 King Street, Georgetown (Halton Hills Heritage Register 2010)



Figure 21: 37 Charles Street (Halton Hills Heritage Register 2010)

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 is 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 75 Mill Street has physical and design value as an excellent example of a Craftsman Bungalow within the community of Georgetown. The Birches, despite minor alterations to the front porch columns, has retained significant architectural details characteristic of the style, including its one-and-a-half storey form, broad and low-pitched roof, large porch with overhang, exterior space around the building, a variety of building materials including brick, stone, and wood, grouped window openings that feature multi-paned windows, and large chimneys. Built by J.B. Mackenzie for his family, The Birches is an excellent example of Mackenzie's skill and craftsmanship as reflected by a number of his remaining buildings within the Town of Halton Hills, including the Old Post Office across the street.

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 75 Mill Street has historical and associative value due to its association with prominent contractor and resident of Halton Hills, J.B Mackenzie. In addition to running two mills in Georgetown and Acton, he ran a contracting business under the name J.B Mackenzie & Son and constructed numerous buildings in Town. Mackenzie's family also joined his business, including daughter Jean who was his bookkeeper for many years, and Samuel who operated the store and office for many years, son Ken, who managed the Acton Branch between 1945 and 1950, and daughter Marjory who helped at home. Notable contracting jobs include the Post Office and Customs House, The Gregory Theatre and Roxy Theatre, Coated Paper Mill, and the remodeled Willoughby Stables, now the Georgetown Royal Canadian Legion. He was also an active member of the community, he served on Georgetown Council and was a former Mayor, and was a member to many clubs, boards and associations. J.B Mackenzie's wife, Eliza MacKenzie (nee McQueen) owned The Birches upon his death in 1947. She taught classes in Acton.

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 75 Mill Street has contextual value due to its location in Downtown Georgetown on Mill Street. It is the only residential home of its size located in the downtown and contributes to the streetscape. It is also situated adjacent to two notable projects acquired by J.B Mackenzie & Son, such as the Post Office and Customs House and the Roxy Theatre in Georgetown.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 75 Mill 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 75 Mill Street are identified as follows:

- The location, setback and orientation of the residential building along Mill Street in Georgetown, Ontario;
- The scale, form, and massing of the one-and-a-half storey Craftsman Bungalow, including its gable roof and central dormer on the front elevation;
- The materials, including brick, cobblestone, stucco, and wood;
- The front (northwest) elevation, including:
 - The front porch, featuring a broad roof, brick columns, and cobblestone detailing;
 - The central entrance, featuring a central door flanked by sidelights;
 - The extant window openings, including the segmentally-arched and flat-headed window openings at the first storey;
 - The central dormer on the northwest roof slope, with gable roof and symmetrically placed openings;
- The side (southwest) elevation, including:
 - Small segmentally arched window with concrete sill and segmentally arched single door opening at the first storey;
 - Shed-roofed projecting bay with flatheaded window opening between the first and second storeys;
 - Flat-headed window opening at the second storey;;
 - Cobblestone at the foundation and within the chimney detailing extending up to the roofline, with brick above the roofline;
 - Shallow projection above the first storey with bracketed eaves;
 - Brick cladding at the first storey; shingles within the projecting bay and at the second storey with brick at the rear;
- The side (northeast) elevation, including:
 - Segmentally arched window openings at the basement level;

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- Large segmentally arched window opening with glass transom, and two small window openings on either side of the chimney;
- Cobblestone at the foundation and within the chimney extending up to the roofline, with brick above the roofline; and,
- Flat-headed window openings within the upper storey, flanking the chimney.

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

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5.0 Sources

Primary Sources

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