

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2024)

Secord-Starkman Block

2 Mill Street East, Acton, Town of Halton Hills

September 2024

Project Personnel

Report Authors

Austin Foster, MA
Cultural Heritage Assistant

With

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

Historical Research

Austin Foster

Laura Loney

Field Review

Austin Foster

Laura Loney

Report Preparation

Austin Foster

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

2 Mill Street East, Acton	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Regional Municipality of Halton
Legal Description	LT 40, BLK 4, PL 31, ALSO SHOWN ON PL 1098; HALTON HILLS
Construction Date	c.1870s; Alterations c.1920s
Original Use	Commercial and Residential
Current Use	Commercial and Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	Abraham Louis Starkman
Architectural Style	Early Twentieth Century Vernacular Commercial Building
Additions/Alterations	Exterior alterations c.1920s
Heritage Status	Listed on the Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Austin Foster with Laura Loney
Report Date	September 2024

2.0 Background

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 2 Mill Street East 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 – 2 Mill Street East



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 2 Mill Street East

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 as a result of increased Euro-colonial settlement, leading to a state of impoverishment and dramatic population decline.

In 1818, the British Crown negotiated the purchase of 648,000 acres of land from the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, including present-day Halton Hills, under the Ajetance Treaty (No. 19), named after Chief Ajetance. This left the Mississaugas with three small reserves on the Lake Ontario shoreline. The legitimacy of early land “surrenders” to the Crown is questionable when considering the Mississaugas’ traditional understanding of property ownership. Unlike the British, the Mississaugas understood land in spiritual terms, and did not share the idea that access to land and resources could be given up 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.

European Settlement

In 1829, Lot 28, Concession 3 was granted to the Canada Company. Three years later, Rufus Adams, one of the founders of the community of Acton (originally called Adamsville) purchased the lot. The orchard lane within the property later became Bower Street. The 1819 Patent Plan (Figure 3) shows the subject property within Lot 28, Concession 3. Tremaine’s 1858 *Map of the County of Halton, Canada West*

¹ This brief overview of Pre-Treaty Indigenous Territory within the land now known as Halton Hills is taken from the Town of Halton Hills’ 2023 *Cultural Heritage Strategy*. This document includes additional recommendations relating to Truth and Reconciliation in Heritage Planning as part of the Town’s commitment to advancing Truth and Reconciliation.

(Figure 4) and the 1877 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton* (Figure 5) shows the location of the property within Acton.



Figure 3: Subject property identified on the 1819 Patent Plan

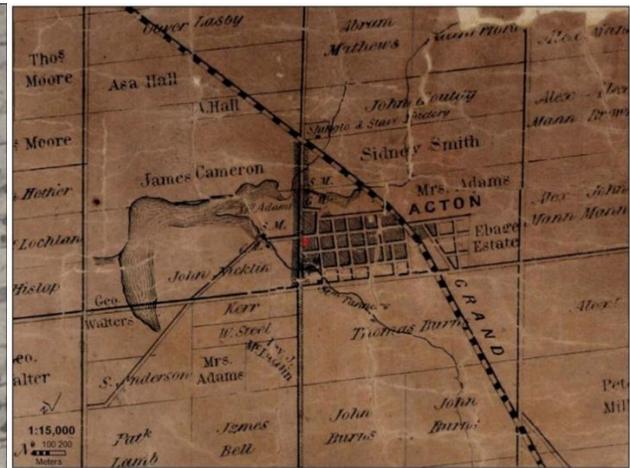


Figure 4: Subject property identified on Tremaine's 1858 Map of the County of Halton, Canada West



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

The Secord Family

The subject property remained within the Adams family until 1849, when Ruth Adams sold Lot 1 to John Folgate. Ownership subsequently passed through several individuals, including Irvine Moore, John Fernie, and Richard Hamilton, before any significant development took place.

The transformation of 2 Mill Street East into a commercial outlet for the village began with the arrival of Sarah Augusta Secord and her family in the 1860s. Sarah (née Culloden) was born on March 13, 1821, in Wicklow, Ireland, to Captain Lawrence Culloden (1795-1849) and Anna Eliza Culloden (1799-1860). At the age of thirteen, she emigrated with her family to Hamilton, Ontario, where she was educated at Mr. Cruickshank's select school for young ladies. In 1841, Sarah married Elijah Secord (1818-1860) in Oakville, Ontario, and they settled in Hamilton with their three sons: John Pearson Tanny Secord (1843-1920), Charles Frederick "Fred" Forbes Secord (1845-1920), and Andrew C. P. Secord (1856-1911).

By 1859, following the death of her husband, Sarah and her children relocated to Acton from Lowville, where she became a prominent businesswoman and community leader. In 1860, Sarah purchased the subject property at the southeast corner of Mill and Main Streets, where she established a successful general goods store.

In 1874, a fire destroyed Secord's shop at the original location, prompting her to move to the northeast corner of Mill and Main Streets, now 1 Mill Street East, which had previously been the site of her vegetable and flower garden. On this new property, Sarah constructed a timber-framed, white-washed building that was later described as "the best building in town for some years" (*The Acton Free Press*, July 21, 1898, p. 3). Here, she opened Mrs. S.A. Secord's Fancy Goods and Varieties.

Sarah Secord maintained ownership of the subject property at the southeast corner of Mill and Main Streets, where she had a new timber-framed shop built, with residential units on the upper floors. The shop was rented by her sons, John and Fred, who operated Secord Bros. Groceries and Hardware and the Secord Brothers' Montreal House. While the brothers sold both hardware and general goods, they earned a reputation for offering high-quality imported items. In July 1875, *The Acton Free Press* advertised that the Secord Bros. were "foremost in the army of progress and enterprise," having imported "the largest stock of teas, sugars, syrups, coffees, tobaccos, etc., the product of every land and climate, ever shown in Acton" (*The Acton Free Press*, July 23, 1875, p. 4). The sale of "exotic" teas became the Secord Brothers' specialty, and they quickly gained a reputation for fine goods and salesmanship.



Figure 6: Secord Bros' Grocery and Hardware advertisement (*The Acton Free Press*, February 22, 1877, p. 3.)

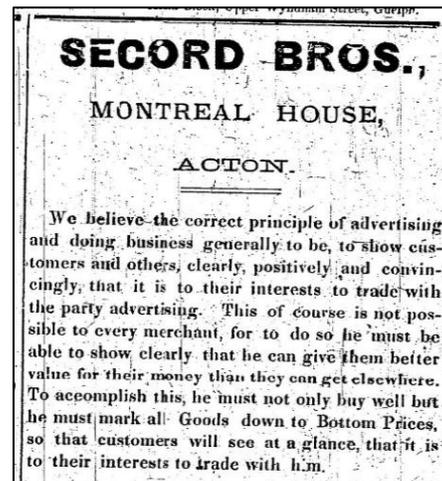


Figure 7: Advertisement for the Secord Bros' Montreal House (*Acton Free Press*, June 29, 1876, p.3)

Despite early success, the Secord Brothers were forced to declare insolvency in 1877 after overextending their credit with importers. In August 1878, their remaining stock was purchased by Mr. Alex Augustus Secord (a distant relation) of Secord & Co. With the Secord Brothers' business no longer operating at the location, a new shop, R. Cudmore's Groceries, moved into the subject property. Fred Secord subsequently relocated to Orillia to pursue other business ventures, while John remained in Acton to assist his mother with managing her business and properties as she prepared for retirement.

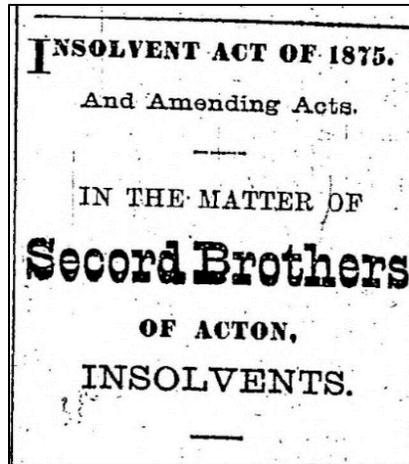


Figure 8: Announcement of insolvency for the Secord Brothers (Acton Free Press, September 20, 1877, p. 2)

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, Sarah Secord continued to expand her influence in Acton, purchasing and developing properties for both commercial and residential purposes. By the 1880s, the Secord Block had become home to some of Acton's most successful businesses. Beyond her commercial endeavors, Sarah was a central figure in the community, contributing to both its economic and social development. Raised in the Church of England, Secord contributed to the establishment of St. Alban's Church in Acton, hosting the first services in her home and later securing a permanent location for worship.

In June 1887, a fire broke out in one of Secord's properties, which housed both her apartment and Andrews & Co., on the south side of Mill Street. *The Acton Free Press* reported: "DESTRUCTIVE FIRE: Mrs. S. A. Secord's Store and Dwelling, and Andrews & Co.'s Stock in Ashes. NARROW ESCAPE OF OTHERS" (*The Acton Free Press*, June 30, 1887, p.1). The fire caused significant damage to both the subject property on the southeastern corner of Main and Mill Streets and the surrounding buildings, though most of the destruction affected the commercial block on the south side of Mill Street. Secord's Mill Street properties faced further challenges that year; on November 3, 1887, *The Acton Free Press* described an "outrageous act" in which Halloween pranksters severely damaged a storeroom that had survived the fire.

The misfortunes of the fires, coupled with her advancing age and declining health, prompted Sarah Secord's retirement. In 1888, she transferred ownership of the property to her son, John Pearson Tanny Secord, and by March 1899, she relocated to her son Fred Secord's home in Orillia. Sarah died on May 7, 1906, at the age of 85, from "congestion of the lungs." Her legacy as a businesswoman and community leader in Acton endured long after her death.

During John Secord's ownership of the subject property at the turn of the century, 2 Mill Street East featured a two-story, L-shaped structure clad in board and batten siding, topped with a gabled roof. The ground floor boasted wide plate glass display windows flanked by awnings, accommodating two retail establishments, while the upper level housed both residential and office spaces. The six upper-floor windows along Mill Street were double-hung sashes with embellished casings. Access to the second floor was provided by a single-story block attached to the easternmost part of the building at street level, leading to an open balcony. By 1919, this balcony had been covered with its own gabled roof.



Figure 9: The intersection of Mill and Main c.1905. The subject property is on the right. (EHS 25848)



Figure 10: The intersection of Mill and Main c.1900. The subject property is on the right. (EHS 25849)



Figure 11: A 1919 aerial photograph of the subject property before the Starkman renovations. (EHS 00151)

Several businesses operated within the subject property at 2 Mill Street East during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From 1881 to 1883, it housed Hughes & Griffin's Millinery and Dry Goods. After their partnership dissolved, C.B. Griffin took full ownership and reopened as Griffin's Dry Goods, which operated from 1883 to 1886. By the time of the fire, the property was occupied by Jermyn's Dry Goods, which remained in business from 1886 to 1893. In the winter of 1893, Durno & Co. purchased Jermyn's remaining stock and opened a dry goods and apparel shop, advertising themselves as "the successor to R.B. Jermyn." However, Durno & Co. declared insolvency in 1895 and was bought out by Duncan Ferguson of Stratford, who briefly ran Duncan Ferguson's Hats, Caps, and Millinery from 1895 to 1896.

From 1896 to 1899, the Symon Brothers operated The Symon Bros' Departmental Store, which later became Symon and Campbell's Hardware and Jeweler. They relocated in 1899, and the space was briefly occupied by Rafelman and Kopman's Union General Dry Goods from 1899 to 1901. From 1901 to 1909, William White successfully ran a jewelry business in the property before retiring. Finally, from 1910 to 1921, the property housed Woodhall & McKay's Bakery.

THIS WEEK
GREAT CLEARING SALE

Hughes & Griffin's Clearing Sale

SUMMER DRY GOODS

AND BOOTS and SHOES.

Figure 12: An advertisement for Hughes and Griffin's Millinery (1881-1883) (Acton Free Press, September 29, 1881, p. 3)

Halton Dry Goods House
ACTON.

SUMMER IMPORTATIONS JUST TO HAND.

New Dress Goods for This Season.
CHECK AND PLAIN SATINS, NUN'S VEILING, WOOL BUSTINGS AND CASHMERE, IN MYRTLE GREEN, BROWN, GREY, STONE, NAVY BLUE, CREAM & BLUE, WITH NEW SHADES, AND 50 OTHER DIFFERENT KINDS OF FABRICS, SATIN BROCADES, OTTOMAN CORDS AND SPOTS. TRIMMINGS:—BRAIDS, TABLATA BRAIDS, IN NEW COLORS, PASSEMENTRE TRIMMINGS IN GREAT VARIETY, MANTLE LOOPS, FROGS AND ORNAMENTS IN ALL THE NEW PATTERNS.

A GREAT DRIVE.
We are in receipt of 40 pieces of Cashmère, in Blue Black, Jet Black, Brown Black and Dull black. Every person able to purchase a dress should not lose this opportunity to secure a Cashmère at least 30 per cent less than regular value.

STAPLE GOODS.
We are filling up again. White cottons are down, and purchasers will find an examination of our Cottons, Ducks, Denims, Shirtings, Cottonades, and (Linton) Cassimeres, special lines) that our prices are the lowest. We are the only house in Acton that handles these goods, which are scarce on account of the increasing demand since their value has become known. We open two cases of these goods this week—(don't fail to see them.)

Figure 13: An advertisement for Griffin's Halton Dry Goods House (1883-1886) (Acton Free Press, May 24, 1883, p. 3)

R. B. JERMYN'S
FOR NOBBY GOODS AT LOWEST CASH PRICES

I am offering for the June trade SPECIAL DISCOUNTS. Housekeepers and others requiring anything in the lines mentioned below can rest assured that they can buy from me at more reasonable prices than any other store in Acton, and as cheap as any outside of Toronto. I have given the staff particular instructions not to misrepresent goods, and customers will find goods exactly as we represent them to be. I sell for Cash or Trade, and consequently have no bad debts, so an intelligent public can see at a glance that it is not necessary for Cash Stores to pile on big profits in order to live (as Credit Stores have to do), or, in other words, make the prompt-paying customer pay for the one that never intends to pay.

The following lines I have reduced fully TWENTY-FIVE PER CENT, and over in some cases, with the exception of Groceries, which I will sell as cheap as the cheapest—

DRESS GOODS, in Nun's Cloth, Jersey Cloth, Canvas cloth, black and colored all-wool Cashmère, black and colored Lustres, Silk Grenadines, Pongee Silks, black and colored Gros Grain Silks, black and colored Satin, black Satin Meryellous, black and colored Velvets, Velveteens, and Craps Cloths.

Hosiery, all makes and prices. Gloves to suit everybody; don't fail to see our Misses' Lace Gloves at 15c. Corsets, Hoop Skirts, Bustles, and Ladies' Underwear.

PRINTS.—No house in Canada has ever shown a nicer range than we have now on our counters. Beautiful designs in Calypso Prints, a good cloth, fast colors, splendid pattern, for 10c, well worth 12c. Gingham and Muslins to please everybody. Gray Cottons, White Cottons, Shirtings, Ducks, Denims, Towels, Towelling (great value), Brown Holland, Table Damask, etc., etc.

HOUSE FURNISHINGS.—Carpets, in Tapestry, Union and Hemp, Floor and Stair Oil-cloth. Curtains of nearly every style. Ask to see the Modern Madras at 25c per yard; it makes lovely curtains, and warranted to wash well. Turkish Rugs, from \$3 up.

MILLINERY.—Although it is getting late in the season, I am still adding novelties in this department, and customers will find correct styles and a competent lady in charge.

Boots and Shoes, Wall Papers and Groceries, all at prices to suit the times.

Remember the place—Griffin's Old Stand, the Halton Dry Goods House, Acton.

Figure 14: The announcement for R.B. Jermyn's Dry Goods grand opening (Acton Free Press, July 15, 1886, p. 2)

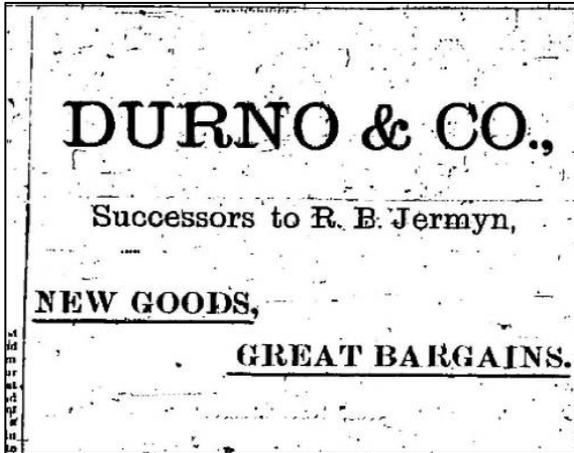


Figure 15: An advertisement for Durno & Co (1893-1895) (Acton Free Press, September 14, 1893, p. 3)



Figure 16: An advertisement for Symon Bros Departmental Store (1896-1899) (Acton Free Press, December 10, 1896, p. 2)

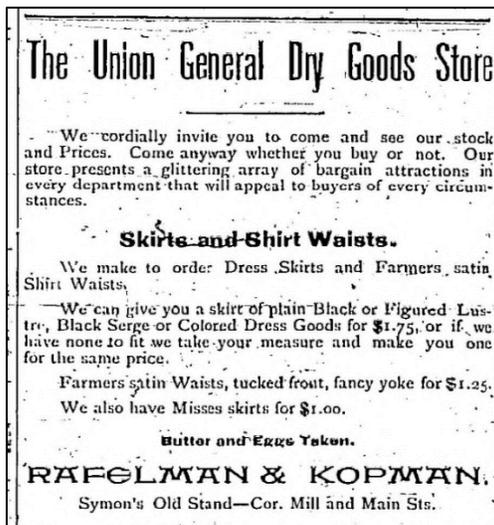


Figure 17: Advertisement for The Union General Dry Goods Store (1899-1901) (Acton Free Press, March 22, 1900, p. 2)

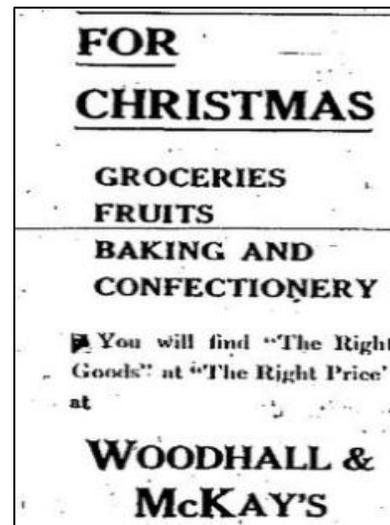


Figure 18: Advertisement for Woodhall & McKay's Bakery (1910-1921) (Acton Free Press, December 15, 1910, p. 6)



Figure 19: Aerial Photograph of Acton looking east (1919). At the centre is the intersection of Mill and Main Streets. The subject property is on the top right corner of the intersection. (National Archives of Canada PA30418; NEG#05.03.08&09)

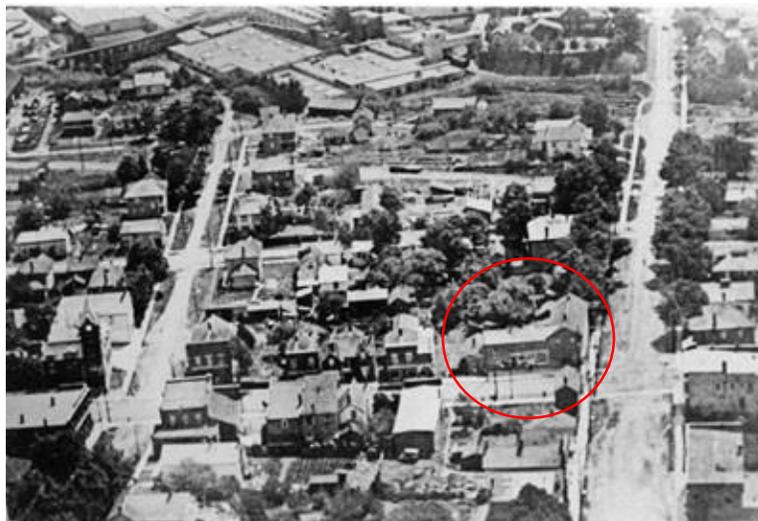


Figure 20: Aerial photograph looking south towards the Beardmore Tannery (1919). The right intersection is Mill Street and Main Street. The subject property is on the upper left corner of the intersection. (EHS 00151)

Following John Secord's death in 1920, the property was transferred to his wife, Sarah Jane Secord (née Wright), on July 26 of that year. Shortly thereafter, Sarah Jane Secord sold the inherited Secord properties. In July 1920, John Boyd Mackenzie assumed ownership of the property, and in June 1922, Mackenzie and his wife sold the subject property to Abraham "Louis" Starkman.

The Starkman Block

Louis Starkman (1876-1959) was born into a Jewish family in Poland in 1876. He and his wife, Sarah Starkman (1879-1967), emigrated to Canada between 1906 and 1915, eventually settling in Halton County. While living in Acton, they raised six children: Ida (1896-1990), Rosa (1899-1968), Ethel (1903-1992), Esther (1906-1998), Max (1908-1988), and Maurice "Morry" Starkman (1910-1975). Louis was a successful entrepreneur specializing in real estate and small-scale commerce. Between 1915 and 1931,

he and Sarah operated a popular apparel shop in Acton. Louis expanded their business ventures to include general goods, cattle feed, furniture, and real estate. In 1922, he acquired several properties in Acton, including 2 Mill Street East. The *Acton Free Press* (December 7, 1922) records his purchase of two stores from Lawrence Williams and two additional stores from John B. Mackenzie, marking a significant expansion of his business interests in the area.

Immediately after purchasing the subject property in June 1922, Louis Starkman began extensive renovations to accommodate both commercial and residential units. The rear of the building was extended, enclosing the original L-configuration into a rectangular plan. Portions of the east wall and the entire north and west walls facing Mill and Main Streets were clad in brick, while sections of the south wall retained their original board and batten exterior. The newly enclosed area was constructed with poured concrete, which has since been clad with vinyl siding. The building was transformed into a predominantly rectangular structure, except for the beveled corner at the intersection of Mill and Main Streets. The gable roof was removed, and the second floor was raised, now featuring a flat roof with a castellated cornice. The facade along Mill Street was divided into two distinct sections, each with two elongated windows on the upper floor, framed by limestone lintels and sills. Access to the second floor was relocated to the rear of the building.



Figure 21: A 1996 photograph of the date stone installed in 1922. (EHS 23572)



Figure 22: A 1996 photograph of Parapets on Starkman Block constructed in 1922. (EHS 23573)



Figure 23: A 1996 photograph showcasing details of the second floor of the Starkman Block constructed in 1922. (EHS 23571)



Figure 24: The right elevation of the Starkman block shows the architectural features of the Starkman renovation from 1922. (EHS 23574)

The construction of the new facade progressed rapidly. The August 10, 1922 edition of *The Acton Free Press* reported, "The bricklayers have nearly completed their work on the Starkman Block. This building is an ornament to the Mill and Main Street corner" (*The Acton Free Press*, August 10, 1922. P. 3). The work on the building was completed by October, and the date stone, inscribed "STARKMAN BLOCK 1922," was placed. The date stone was originally intended to be a gravestone, however due to a mistake made by the stonecutter in the lettering, it was sold to Starkman at a discounted price. The original incorrect lettering was then positioned facing the interior of the building.

The 1934 Fire Insurance Map indicates that the property housed two store fronts in a two-story wood frame structure with a brick façade. In 1934 three additional timber-framed structures were extant on the rear lot that were likely used for storage (since demolished).

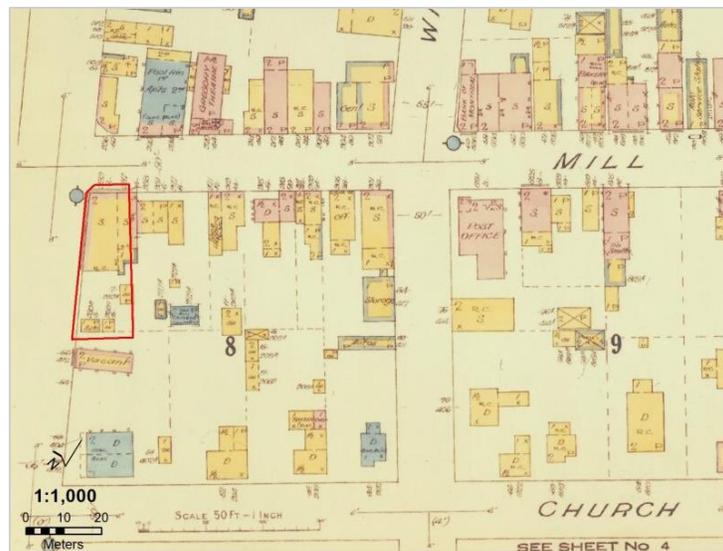


Figure 25: Subject property identified in the 1934 Fire Insurance Plan

The renovation of Starkman's Block in 1922 coincided with a similar project undertaken by Jack Leishman across the street at the northeastern corner of Mill and Main Streets, the site of Sarah Augusta Secord's second shop and renowned fruit and vegetable garden. These simultaneous projects significantly transformed the physical landscape of Acton's commercial center.

In 1925, *The Acton Free Press* reported the "continuous improvements [being] made on Mill Street in renovating and bringing up-to-date the storefronts, repairing buildings, and installing new fronts with constant regularity until our main business street has one of the finest appearances of any town of similar size" (*The Acton Free Press*, October 8, 1925. P.1). Starkman was commended for his significant contributions to the enhancement of Mill Street. These improvements not only modernized the physical appearance of Acton's main commercial area but also contributed to the economic vitality of the town. *The Acton Free Press* reported that the enhanced infrastructure and updated storefronts would attract more businesses and customers, bolstering the local economy.

The first business to establish itself in the post-renovation Starkman Block was W.D. Talbot's hardware store, which was moved from Main Street in 1923. It remained at 2 Mill Street East until 1937 when Talbot moved west across Mill Street. From 1937 to 1941, Starkman ran a furniture shop from the unit. The rooms above were rented out as both residences and office space, and in the 1930s, the "committee room" on the second floor hosted the Acton Liberal's progressive association.

In June 1936, Louis Starkman lodged a formal complaint with the local council regarding frequent flooding of his building at 2 Mill Street East, citing substantial property damage caused by inadequate drainage systems unable to manage stormwater runoff. This was one of many complaints Starkman had made about water damage to his Acton properties. However, the council informed him that it was the responsibility of property owners to address such risks. In response, Starkman elevated the shop floors and installed concrete steps at the storefront entrances to mitigate the issue. Despite his efforts, persistent water damage to shops along Mill Street eventually prompted the town to improve its water management infrastructure.

In 1939 Louis Starkman sold the subject property to his son, Maurice Starkman, a Toronto-based barrister. The property was then sold to the Gregory Theater Company and Odeon Theatres in 1947. In 1949, Daisy Kingshott purchased the subject property and leased it to numerous businesses between 1949 and 1980. Robert Caldwell and Fred Matthews leased the shop from 1949 to 1958, running the Acton Family Billiards Snack Bar and Barber Shop. Thomas Mullen purchased this business and renewed the lease from 1959 to 1964 before relocating to the former Rainbow Room in the Roxy theatre building in May of 1964. G. Alec Johnson's real estate firm, established in 1964, operated out of 2 Mill Street East until 1985. George Alec Johnson purchased the subject property in 1983 and owned it until his death in 1988, at which time, George's son, Ian Johnson, inherited the property. From 1985 to 2014, it was home to Remax Leathertown, founded by Barbara and Alex Glenn. In 2014, Royal LePage established their business here.



Figure 26: A pen and ink sketch of Acton's Main and Mill Street. The subject property is on the right. c. 1960-1970 (EHS 22722)



Figure 27: A 1975 photograph of G. Alec Johnson Real Estate LTD and Robertson's Flower Shoppe

Despite hosting several prominent businesses over the years, the physical structure remained largely unchanged following Starkman's renovations until 2003, when weathering necessitated the removal of the crenellations and date stone. The date stone was gifted by Ian Johnson to the daughter of Benny Rachlin, former Mayor of Acton, whose mother was Ethel Starkman. The decorative elements were not reinstalled following their removal. The subject property was purchased by its current owner in 2023.

The parking lot is fronted by a single dwelling and has been named Second Lane after Sarah Augusta Secord and the Secord brothers.



Figure 28: A 1971 photograph of an L&PS rail car being transported through Acton on its way to the Halton County Radial Museum. The subject property is on the right. (Halton County Radial Railway Museum)



Figure 29: A 1973 photograph of the Mill and Main intersection looking east down Mill Street. (Jim Turnbull Collection)



Figure 30: A 1992 photograph of Rene's flowers at 4 Mill Street East (EHS 23571)



Figure 31: A 1992 photograph of Re-Max at 2 Mill Street East (EHS 23574)

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The subject property is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Mill Street and Main Street within the community of Acton in the Town of Halton Hills. The property is a fairly rectangular lot, and the existing building features an entrance that is oriented west towards the existing intersection. The rear property line backs on to Secord Lane which is accessed from Main Street South.



Figure 32: Looking northwest along the Main Street S elevation of the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 33: Looking southeast along the Main St S elevation of the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 34: Looking southwest along Mill St E towards the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The existing two-storey building features a flat roof and is almost rectangular apart from a notch at the northeast corner of the building, accessed from within the rear parking lot.

The first storey of the northwest elevation facing Mill Street East is painted brick with unpainted brick at the second storey. The first storey features a traditional storefront composition, with a large storefront window and recessed entrance with transom window beneath a wooden cornice extending above the first storey. This elevation also features another large storefront window towards the west corner. This elevation is divided into two bays with capped brick pilasters extending between the first and second storeys. Within each bay are paired single window openings with stone sills and lintels connecting the openings. The parapet above appears to have been parged and painted.

The corner entrance (facing west) features a single flatheaded contemporary entrance with sidelights at the first storey and is recessed within the corner. A single flatheaded window opening with stone sill and lintel is centered within the façade above. The corner is defined by the brick pilasters on either side elevation. Unpainted brick is extant within the parged and painted parapet above the stone capping at the roofline.



Figure 35: Northwest elevation of the existing building within the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 36: West corner of the existing building within the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The side (southwest) elevation is divided into three bays. Pilasters extend at either corner and towards the corner entrance of the building, and a chimney extends in place of a pilaster defining the third bay on the elevation. The existing foundation has been parged and features flatheaded openings at grade. The first storey features three small flatheaded window openings within the first two bays, and a larger single flatheaded window opening within the rearmost bay featuring a stone sill and lintel. Three single flatheaded window openings are extant within the second storey. There are no additional entrances along this elevation.



Figure 37: Southwest elevation of the existing building within the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The rear (southeast) elevation faces the rear parking lot and is visible from Main Street South. The visible rear is clad with siding and features some smaller, contemporary window openings. The rear addition is accessed via a wooden deck. The northeast elevation is somewhat visible from Mill Street East and has been stuccoed beyond the first pilaster on the elevation. This elevation features two smaller window openings on the second storey.



Figure 38: Southeast elevation of the existing building from within the rear parking lot at the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 39: Looking along the northeast elevation of the existing building within the subject property from Mill Street East (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

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	N/A
Demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement	N/A

The property at 2 Mill Street East possesses significant physical and design value, serving as a representative example of an early twentieth-century vernacular commercial architecture within the community of Acton, particularly on Mill Street, the heart of Acton's commercial center. The property retains key features from the c.1920s Starkman renovations, particularly on the north-west and south-west elevations. These include the original brickwork, stone sills and lintels, flat roof, decorative parapets, and storefront configurations. The building exemplifies the design principles of its era, demonstrating both historical continuity and the aesthetic qualities associated with late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century commercial structures. The building at 2 Mill Street East serves as a physical reminder of Acton's early commercial development and character.

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 2 Mill Street East holds significant historical and associative value, reflecting the early settlement and subsequent growth of the Acton community during the mid-nineteenth century. Its continuous use and association with key figures in Acton's history further emphasize its importance in the town's commercial and economic development. Originally constructed by Sarah Secord, a prominent early settler of Acton, the building was later acquired and renovated by Abraham Louis Starkman, one of the most influential businessmen and community leaders of the twentieth century. Although the facade underwent substantial renovation in 1922, altering its original appearance, the property's function has remained consistent for nearly 150 years. This continuity, particularly its century-long service in its current form, demonstrates the building's enduring role in supporting local businesses and the community from the 1880s through the 1920s and into the present day.

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 2 Mill Street East holds significant contextual value as it plays a crucial role in defining and maintaining the character of the area along Mill Street East in Acton. Situated at its original location on the corner of Main Street and Mill Street, the building is intrinsically connected to its surroundings—physically, functionally, visually, and historically—as a commercial structure. Architecturally, it aligns with the styles of other contemporary commercial buildings along Mill Street, such as the Leishman Block at 3 Mill Street East, and the structures at 8, 10, 25 (Warren Block), 27, and 29 Mill Street East, several of which were also renovated by Starkman. As a prominent landmark, the building anchors the corner of the busiest intersection in Acton, contributing significantly to the fabric of early twentieth-century commercial architecture that characterizes the town’s downtown core.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 2 Mill Street East 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 2 Mill Street East are identified as follows:

- The setback, placement, and orientation of the two-storey, mid-19th century commercial building at the historic intersection of Main Street and Mill Street in Acton;
- The scale, form, and massing of the two-storey building with flat roof, red brick exterior and the existence of a brick parapet;
- The materials, including red brick exterior and detailing throughout;
- The front (northwest) elevation, including:
 - The two-bay composition defined with brick pilasters;
 - At the first storey, the recessed storefront entrance with flatheaded opening and transom window, and storefront windows beneath the projecting wooden cornice;
 - At the second storey, the paired single window openings with stone sills and lintels connecting the openings;
 - Brick parapet;
- The west corner, including:
 - Brick pilasters defining the corner;
 - Recessed entrance at the first storey and single flatheaded window opening with stone sill and lintel at the second storey;
- The side (southwest) elevation, including:
 - Three-bay composition defined by brick pilasters and a brick chimney;
 - At the first storey, three small flatheaded window openings within the first two bays, and a larger single flatheaded window opening within the rearmost bay featuring a stone sill and lintel; and,

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- At the second storey, the three single flatheaded window openings with stone sills and lintels.

The rear elevation and interiors have not been identified as heritage attributes as part of this report. There is a significant opportunity to restore the original brick parapet of this building with available photographic evidence.

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