Research and Evaluation Report



(Courtesy of the Property Owner)

Blue Mountain School

13802 Trafalgar Road, Town of Halton Hills

February 2025

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13802 Trafalgar Road, Ballinafad	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Regional Municipality of Halton
Legal Description	PT LT 29, CON 7 ESQ, PART 1, 20R1811; HALTON HILLS/ESQUESING
Construction Date	c.1871
Original Use	Institutional
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	Trustees of S.S. No. 14
Architectural Style	Ontario Rural One-room Schoolhouse in the Gothic Revival Style
Additions/Alterations	Introduction of Two Entryways on the Rear Elevation
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town's Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Caylee MacPherson with Laura Loney
Report Date	February 2025

1.0 Property Description

2.0 Background

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 13802 Trafalgar Road, 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*.

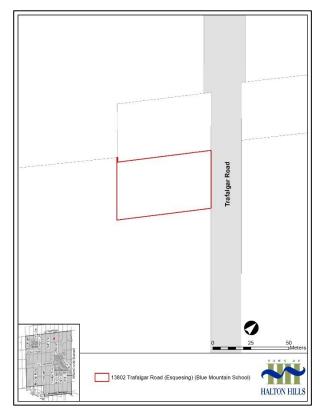




Figure 1: Location Map – 13802 Trafalgar Road

Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 13802 Trafalgar Road

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 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 Nation.¹

Early European Settlement

In 1826, the Crown granted the Patent for 100 acres of land to William Beamer, who maintained ownership until 1850. The 100 acres were then sold to Henry Cole, who later sold a ¼ acre to the Trustees of School Section No. 14 in 1867. Shortly after purchasing the lands, the Trustees constructed

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.

Blue Mountain School in 1871. Additionally, in 1879, the School Trustees of S.S. No. 14 purchased adjoining lands at Lot 30, Concession 7 from William McEnery.





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

Trustees of S.S. No. 14 School

School Section No. 14 was first established in 1842 by Esquesing Council, and Blue Mountain School was later constructed at Lot 29, Concession 8 on the farm of David Cook in 1844. The log schoolhouse was located on the east side of Trafalgar and was later replaced by another frame school in 1852. In 1861, the ratepayers decided to move the schoolhouse to Lot 26, Concession 7, in the village of Silvercreek. After the building was demolished, it is rumoured that the old logs were used for John Snow's driving shed. Some of Ballinafad's original settler families, such as the Cooks, Lindsays, and Campbells lived within the vicinity of the schoolhouse, and had their children attend the earlier log schoolhouse.

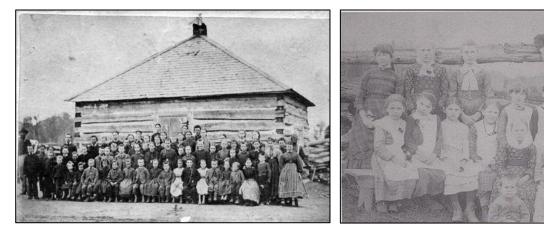


Figure 5: Ballinafad class standing in front of the former log school, c.1860 (EHS00267)

Figure 6: Ballinafad class photograph taken before the present brick school was constructed, c.1860 (EHS05900)

Many townships, such as Esquesing, were divided into school sections, which were typically 5-8 square kilometres. School Section No. 14 covered 3,500 acres, and included Lots 27 to 32 West Concession 9, and Lots 28 to 33 East Concession 8. Every pupil was to pay a monthly fee of 25 cents, however, 10 or

fewer pupils from poorer families were provided free education in each district. During this time, attendance in public schools was not mandatory. Barriers including school fees, problems of transportation and travel, and the necessity of children sharing chores in a rural wilderness made consistent and regular attendance in school difficult. The *Common School Act* introduced in 1846 regulated the election of trustees, rates levied to support schools, the construction of new schools, teacher examination and licensing, curriculum and government grants. By 1850, the *Common School Act* was amended to expand the school levy to all properties and further supported the principle of tuition-free education for all children. The *Common School Act* also allowed for schools to be solely paid for by provincial and municipal funds.

Around the time that Blue Mountain Schoolhouse was constructed, many schoolhouses saw growth in school populations due to the introduction of the *Ontario School Act* (the "Act"). Introduced in 1871, the Act was championed by Egerton Ryerson, who strongly believed in the idea of taxes supporting schools and increasing their accessibility to more children. The *Act* abolished the former fees for public schools and made attendance compulsory for children ages 7 to 12. Children within this age range had to attend school for a minimum of four months annually. However, it was not until 1891 that parents or guardians received penalties for not sending children between the ages of 8 and 14 to attend school; in 1919, the age was extended to 16.

In addition to these changes, each county was assigned a superintendent to oversee the school systems, each school became fully public, and a structured curriculum was introduced. With the changes made by the *Act*, there was a need to construct new one- and two-room schoolhouses to accommodate the growing student populations. In response, many communities took advantage of these government grants to build and operate new schools. Like many other schoolhouses, Blue Mountain School was heated using an old wood box stove. Students were paid 5-10 cents each morning to light the stove and heat the building. Additionally, pupils brought their own school materials, such as slates, pencils, and other supplies. Students were able to access fresh water from a nearby well.

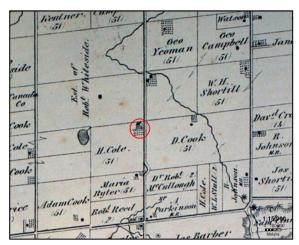




Figure 7: Subject property identified on the 1877 Halton County Atlas

Figure 8: Photograph of children piled in the stagecoach of the "Ballinafad Stage" outside of the Ballinafad General Store, c.1905 (Wellington County Archives A1978.22.2)

Many students walked to Blue Mountain School, but others often had to take the "Ballinafad Stage" to school, which was locally known as the horse drawn wagon owned by Robert Armstrong, used to

transport mail and supplies from Georgetown to Ballinafad. Students would pile into the stagecoach until they arrived at school.

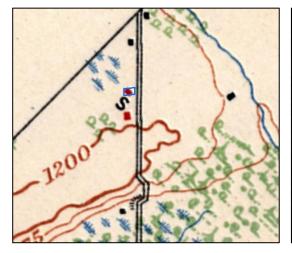


Figure 9: Subject property identified on the 1909 National Topographic Survey



Figure 10: Blue Mountain School class photograph, c.1910 (EHS00594)

From 1910 to 1915, Blue Mountain experienced significant crowding, as pupils from Erin Township and Ballinafad were enrolled. As a result, children from Erin were expected to either pay 50 cents a month to attend Blue Mountain, or attend their school, S.S. No. 4 Peacock in Erin. Attendance levels subsided and returned to normal after this action. It was not until the 1950s where the student population reached a high of 52 pupils. It was later decided that older pupils could no longer attend Blue Mountain and would be transported to the 2-room school in Stewarttown.

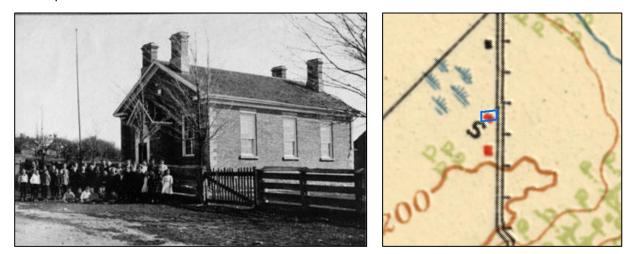


Figure 11: Blue Mountain School, c.1910 (EHS00647)

Figure 12: Subject property identified on the 1918 National Topographic Survey

On the exterior of the school, the Trustees worked diligently to maintain the property. In the 1900s, trees were planted at the front and rear of the property. A wooden shed was maintained for storage but was later converted to provide more sanitary facilities. New gates and hedges were also added to the exterior. The Trustees maintained the school until the School Area took over management in 1945. Prior

to this change, the Trustees were Fred Shortill, Henry Hilts, and James Kirkwood. By 1947, the school was wired for electricity, and eight large light fixtures were installed.



Figure 13: Subject property identified on the 1929 National Topographic Survey



Figure 14: Subject property identified on the 1942 National Topographic Survey

In 1850, when Ontario first adopted official standards for qualifying teachers, candidates were expected to read, spell, write, and to have some knowledge of geography and the basic rules of grammar. School teachers were typically unmarried young women, which was a provincial requirement for many years. Teachers boarded with local families and often began teaching with limited training. There were no limits for the number of pupils a teacher could oversee, provided there was space available for the students.



Figure 15: Photograph of Robert Little, date unknown (Halton's Scotch Block)

Figure 16: Class photograph at Blue Mountain School, c.1952 (*Acton Free Press,* January 22, 1975, p.17).

The first teacher recorded at the new Blue Mountain School was Miss Elizabeth Clark, who remained at the school for a year before Mr. William Cook (1850-1914) took over the role in 1872. William started with a salary of \$250.00, and later moved to teach in Alma and Guelph, before transitioning into civil service and working as an inland revenue officer in Toronto until his death in 1914.

The first inspector recorded was Mr. Robert Little (1835-1885) (shown in Figure 15), who taught at Quatre Bras, Waterloo, and Ligny Schools, before eventually becoming the Principal of Acton Public School. By 1871, Robert Little became the Inspector of Public Schools for the County until his death in 1885.

Many notable community members attended Blue Mountain School, such as John Roszel, who was a descendant of one of the original settlers, Nathaniel Roszel, who fought alongside General Brock in the War of 1812. John was born in Erin Township and attended Blue Mountain and Peacock Schools. During WWI, John was a member of the army and maintained the family farm until moving to Georgetown in 1919 to work for the electric radial company, the Toronto Suburban Railway. John operated his own cartage company, and worked at Abitibi Provincial Paper, Greenwood Cemetery, and J.B. Mackenzie & Son lumber company. John was also a member of the Knox Presbyterian Church.





Figure 17: Blue Mountain School reunion, c.1962 (EHS09003)

Figure 18: Youngest and Oldest Pupil; Susan Jamieson and Mrs. Isaac Bennett at the Blue Mountain School Reunion (EHS09007)

By 1962, Blue Mountain School was closed, and students were transported to the new Limehouse Public School, which featured six classrooms, and hosted students from other schoolhouses such as Gibraltar, Stone, and Bannockburn Schools. To commemorate the school closing, a School Reunion was held in July 1962, which welcomed 318 visitors. Most of the former teachers were present and were awarded for their contributions. Prizes were also given out to the youngest and oldest former pupils.

1960s to Present

After Blue Mountain School closed in 1962, the property was sold the following year to Stewart Gordon Bennett (1892-1982), who was the owner of the nearby Scotsdale Farm at 13807 Trafalgar Road, and a number of other adjacent properties in Ballinafad. Stewart was initially born in Toronto and attended the University of Toronto, earning a Bachelor of Applied Science in Engineering Science. Stewart later went on to study political economy at Oxford University. During WWI, Stewart served with the Royal Engineers, later being awarded the Military Cross. After returning home from overseas, Stewart returned to the University of Toronto as a lecturer and was on the Board of Governors at the University of Guelph for 8 years. Eventually, Stewart left Toronto and moved to Acton in 1925 to join Beardmore & Co, later becoming the President of the company in 1944. In 1946, Stewart joined Canada Packers Inc. as vice-president, where he stayed until his retirement. Stewart was also on the Board of Directors of Dominion Stores Ltd. for 41 years, the Board of the Toronto Art Gallery, and was the chairmen of the tariff committee of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. The Bennett family moved to the Scotsdale Farm in 1940 and remained there for 42 years. Stewart and his wife, Violet (1901-1982) were active members of the community, and were heavily involved with St. Alban's Church.





Figure 19: Mr. S.G. Bennett at the Scotsdale Farm (Electric Scotland)

Figure 20: Mrs. Violet Bennett skiing (Electric Scotland)

Following Stewart and Violet's passing in 1982, Scotsdale Farm was donated to the Ontario Heritage Trust, and \$300,000 was granted to St. Alban's Church. The subject property was also included in the estate of Stewart and Violet and was granted to Emerson Clarke in 1984. During the same year, Emerson granted the property to Valerie Kirton. In 1991, the property was transferred to William Roy Galligan and Manon Dulude. In the early 2000s, the property was purchased by the present owner. The present owner has continued to preserve and maintain the subject property, and acts as steward for the Blue Mountain School, and the surrounding area. Throughout their time in Ballinafad, the owner has completed research and studies on the area and has also interviewed local residents to continue preserving the history of the community.

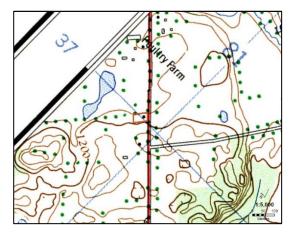


Figure 21: Subject property identified on the 1974 National Topographic Survey



Figure 22: Real Estate listing for the Blue Mountain Schoolhouse (*Georgetown Gemini*, 1996, p.1)



Figure 23: Subject property identified on 2015 aerial photography



Figure 24: Subject property identified on 2017 aerial photography

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The subject property is located along the southwest side of Trafalgar Road in the community of Ballinafad within the Town of Halton Hills. The property is a rectangular-shaped lot and features a oneand-a-half storey brick dwelling with dichromatic brickwork, a gable roof, two double stack brick chimneys, flatheaded window openings with soldier course lintels, and a front vestibule. Throughout most elevations, graffiti from former pupils can be found in the brickwork. The property can be accessed by an asphalt driveway via Trafalgar Road.



Figure 25: Subject property identified on 2023 aerial photography



Figure 26: Front (northeast) elevation of the subject dwelling (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 27: Datestone inscribed "School Section No. 14, A.D. 1871" (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The front (northeast) elevation consists of a front vestibule which features buff brick quoins and a doorway flanked by sidelights. Above the doorway is a semi-circular transom, surrounded by a radiating buff brick voussoir. Over time, the voussoir has been altered, as the entrance opening was once converted into a flatheaded entryway. However, these changes have since been reversed. On either side of the front vestibule are flatheaded window openings with buff brick soldier course lintels and stone sills. Directly above the front vestibule is a datestone, inscribed "School Section No. 14, A.D. 1871", which is surrounded by a buff brick square border and lozenge. Along the roofline are two dichromatic brick double stacked chimneys. The buff brick quoins are present on each elevation.



Figure 28: Side (southeast) elevation of the dwelling (Town of Halton Hills 2025)



Figure 29: Side (northwest) elevation of the dwelling (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

Both side (northwest and southeast) elevations feature three flatheaded window openings with buff brick soldier course lintels and stone sills. Along the side (southeast) elevation, a window opening has been converted into a doorway. However, the upper portion of the window remains, and serves as a transom. Throughout the other side (northwest) elevation, there are graffiti markings from former pupils in the brickwork.

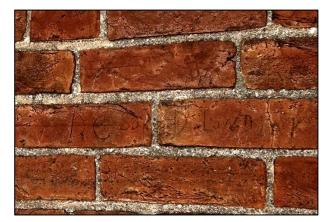




Figure 30: Student graffiti in the brickwork (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

Figure 31: Student graffiti in the brickwork (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

The rear (southwest) elevation features a contemporary doorway at both the first and second storeys. The property also features two accessory structures located behind the dwelling and towards the rear of the property.



Figure 32: Rear elevation of the subject dwelling (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

Figure 33: Accessory building towards the rear of the subject property (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

2.3 Architectural Style & Comparative Analysis

The existing building at 13802 Trafalgar Road is a representative example of a late-nineteenth century rural one-room Ontario schoolhouse with Gothic Revival architectural influences. The one-room

schoolhouse was designed for sixty-four pupils and was intended to accommodate a small rural village or hamlet. Many of these designs were based on publications such as the *"The School House; Its Architecture, External and Internal Arrangements"* published by the Department of Public Instruction for Upper Canada in 1857, or *"Cheap Country School Houses"* published by the *Canadian Farmer* in 1866.

These resources provided architectural plans for grammar, intermediate, and primary schools, along with recommendations for school site layouts and construction methods. Rural schoolhouse designs often featured a gable roof, semi-circular window openings, a central semi-circular door opening with transom, date stone, as well as a cupola and bell directly above the gable peak. Materials recommended included brick, frame, and stone.

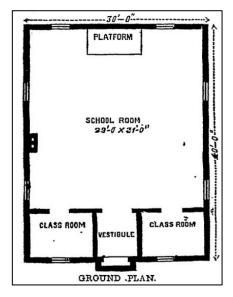


Figure 34: Prospective one-room schoolhouse floorplan (*The Canada Farmer*, Vol. 3, no. 12, p.189)



Figure 35: Prospective one-room schoolhouse design (*The School House, Its Architecture, External and Internal Arrangements*, p. 44)

One-room schoolhouses were first made of logs, but gradually transitioned to materials such as brick, frame and occasionally stone. These schoolhouses were built as needed as the number of students increased in each school district. Typically, the interior consisted of an open room with all desks facing a platform and blackboard, with book closets on either side of the teacher's desk. To provide warmth, a stove was often placed inside, either located at the front or middle of the room.

Based on analysis from Shannon Kyles of *Ontario Architecture,* Ontario one-room rural schoolhouses often feature architectural characteristics, such as, but not limited to:

- One-and-a-half storey massing featuring brick, stone, or frame construction;
- One-room floorplan layout;
- Gable roof with a cupola and bell;
- Central entrance with a transom, along with a vestibule;
- Two windows along the front elevations, with multiple windows along the side elevations; and,
- Date stone indicating the date of construction.

Additionally, based on John Blumenson's publication, *Ontario Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building terms, 1784 to the Present,* buildings in the Gothic Revival architectural style often feature elements, including:

- A steep, gabled roof with decorative wooden bargeboard;
- One-and-a-half to two-storeys in massing;
- Central door flanked by transoms and sidelights; and,
- Dichromatic or polychromatic brick patterns.

The existing building features many characteristics typical of the one-room rural schoolhouse, such as having a one-and-a-half storey massing, gable roof, central vestibule with an entrance and transom, two windows along the front elevation with multiple windows along the side elevations, and a date stone inscribed "School Section No. 14, C.1871". Additionally, the building design reflects influences from the Gothic Revival architectural style, including the central entrance flanked by sidelights and a transom, dichromatic brick patterns, one-and-a-half storey massing, and a gabled roof.



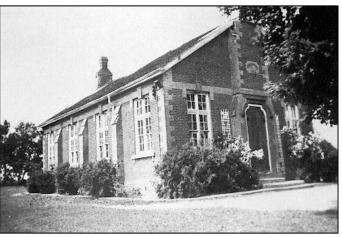


Figure 36: Lorne Schoolhouse, S.S. No. 12 (Town of Halton Hills)

Figure 37: Hornby School, S.S. No. 2, c.1951 (EHS011555)

Similar examples are extant throughout Halton Hills, such as the former Lorne Schoolhouse (Figure 41), which is a representative example of an Ontario rural one-room schoolhouse in the Gothic Revival architectural style, featuring dichromatic brickwork, lancet window openings, buff brick dripmoulds, a gable roof, and central vestibule entrance. While more ornate, Hornby Schoolhouse (Figure 42) also displays similar details such as dichromatic brickwork, flatheaded window openings, a gable roof, and buff brick quoins.

The Blue Mountain Schoolhouse features architectural elements displayed by both Lorne and Hornby Schools and remains a rare example of a one-room schoolhouse in the Gothic Revival architectural style, and is one of the few remaining examples in the Town of Halton Hills.

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	Х
construction method	
Displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	Х
Demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement	N/A

The property at 13802 Trafalgar Road has physical and design value as a rare and representative example of an Ontario rural one-room schoolhouse in the Gothic Revival architectural style, in the community of Ballinafad, within the Town of Halton Hills. The one-and-a-half storey schoolhouse features design elements such as dichromatic brickwork, a gable roof, central vestibule with an entrance and transom, two windows along the front elevation with multiple windows along the side elevations, two double stack chimneys, and a date stone inscribed "School Section No. 14, A.D. 1871". The building's design features influence from the Gothic Revival architectural style, as well as *The School House; Its Architecture, External and Internal Arrangements* and the *Canadian Farmer*, which published architectural plans and construction methods for grammar, intermediate, and primary schools in Canada.

The use of dichromatic brickwork, such as the buff brick quoins, lintels, and brick patterns on the front elevation, displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit.

Historical or Associative Value	
Has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or	X
institution that is significant to a community	
Yields, or has potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a	X
community or culture	
Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or	N/A
theorist who is significant to a community	

The property at 13802 Trafalgar Road has historical and associative value due to its associations with the early educational system in the community of Ballinafad. The student population began to grow with the establishment of *Common School Act* and the *Ontario School Act*, which introduced rates levied to support and construct new schools and later abolished the former fees for public schools and made attendance compulsory for children ages 7 to 12. These legislative changes provided government funds to construct and operate more schools for the growing school populations.

The property also has associations with Stewart Bennett, who attended the University of Toronto, obtaining a Bachelor of Applied Science in Engineering Science, and served during WWI with the Royal Engineers. After returning home from overseas, Stewart returned to the University of Toronto as a lecturer and was on the Board of Governors at the University of Guelph for 8 years. Eventually, Stewart left Toronto and moved to Acton in 1925 to join Beardmore & Co, later becoming the President of the company in 1944. In 1946, Stewart joined Canada Packers Inc. as vice-president, where he stayed until his retirement. Stewart also on the Board of Directors of Dominion Stores Ltd. for 41 years, the Board of the Toronto Art Gallery, and was the chairmen of the tariff committee of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. The Bennett family moved to the Scotsdale Farm in 1940 and remained there for 42 years. Stewart and his wife, Violet (1901-1982) were active members of the community, and were heavily

involved with St. Alban's Church. Following Stewart and Violet's passing in 1982, Scotsdale Farm was donated to the Ontario Heritage Trust, and still provides public trails for the community.

Contextual Value	
Is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area	Х
Is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings	Х
Is a landmark	N/A

The property at 13802 Trafalgar Road has contextual value as it is important in defining, maintaining, and supporting the rural character of the community of Ballinafad. The former Blue Mountain Schoolhouse is physically, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings as an early schoolhouse that serviced School Section No. 14 in Ballinafad for more than 80 years.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 13802 Trafalgar Road 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 13802 Trafalgar Road are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the schoolhouse along Trafalgar Road in the community of Ballinafad within the Town of Halton Hills;
- The scale, form, and massing of the c.1871 one-storey stone schoolhouse with gable roof, twin double stack chimneys, and dichromatic brick detailing;
- Materials including red and buff brick, and stone;
- Front (northeast) elevation:
 - Buff brick quoins;
 - Flatheaded window openings with stone sills and buff brick soldier course lintels;
 - Front vestibule with buff brick quoins, semi-circular transom, radiating buff brick voussoir, and sidelights;
 - Date stone inscribed "School Section No. 14 A.D. 1871", surrounded by a buff brick square border and decorative brick lozenge pattern; and,
- Side (southeast and northwest) elevations:
 - Multiple flatheaded window openings with buff brick soldier course lintels and stone sills.

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

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