# **Research and Evaluation Report**



(Google Streetview 2022)

# Bannockburn School

13420 Fourth Line, Acton, Town of Halton Hills

May 2025

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13420 Fourth Line, Acton		
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills	
County or Region	Regional Municipality of Halton	
Legal Description	PT LT 28, CON 4 ESQ, AS IN 829220; HALTON HILLS/ESQUESING	
Construction Date	c.1870	
Original Use	Institutional	
Current Use	Residential	
Architect/Building/Designer	N/A	
Architectural Style	Ontario Rural One-room Schoolhouse	
Additions/Alterations	Stuccoed façade; Dormers; Altered window openings	
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town's Heritage Register	
Recorder(s)	Caylee MacPherson with Laura Loney	
Report Date	May 2025	

## 2.0 Background

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 13420 Fourth Line, 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*.

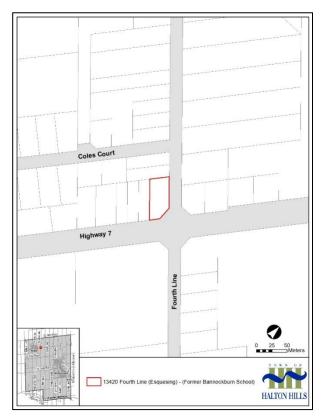




Figure 1: Location Map – 13420 Fourth Line

Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 13420 Fourth Line

## 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<sup>1</sup>.

## Early European Settlement

The Crown granted the Patent for Lot 28, Concession 4 to John Andrew Stevenson in 1823. In 1824, Stevenson sold the property to John Ross, who maintained ownership until selling the property to William Joyce in 1842. A year later, in 1843, the property was sold to Donald Mann (1784-1848). Mann sold 100 acres to his two sons, Peter (1815-1898) and Hugh (1818-1911) Mann, in 1844. Peter and Hugh

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> 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.

distributed the land amongst themselves, each receiving 50 acres of land. In July 1868, the Trustees of School Section No. 13 purchased 0.6 acres of land from Peter Mann.



Figure 3: Subject property identified on the 1819 Patent Plan Figure 4: Subject property identified on the 1822 Patent Plan

### Trustees of S.S. No. 13 Bannock School

The first school open in Bannockburn was located a mile east of Acton and was located in a small log building that was also used as a carpenter shop. The first teacher employed for the school section was Mr. Charles Duncan. During this team, each pupil paid \$1.50 per month to attend school. By 1840, a log schoolhouse was constructed and was replaced by a frame schoolhouse in 1852. In 1870, the frame building was demolished, and the materials were split between the John Gordon homestead at Lot 28, Concession 5, and a farm near Georgetown.

Many townships, including Esquesing Township, were divided into school sections that were typically 5-8 square kilometres. Every pupil was to pay a monthly fee of 25 cents, however the initial fee for Bannockburn was much higher. In each district, up to 10 pupils from poor families were typically provided free education. During this time, attendance in public schools was not mandatory. Barriers including school fees, problems of transportation and travel, and the necessity of children's sharing chores in a rural wilderness made consistent and regular attendance in school challenging.

The 1846 *Common School Act* regulated the election of trustees, rates levied to support schools, the construction of new schools, teacher examination and licensing, curriculum, and government grants. School trustees were responsible for various administrative duties, including collecting fees, hiring teachers, and maintaining the school buildings. Trustee meetings were held semi-regularly at local homes, the post office, the schoolhouse, and various shops. 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 through provincial and municipal funds.

Around the late-nineteenth century, many schoolhouses saw growth in school populations due to the introduction of the 1871 *Ontario School Act* (the "Act"), championed by Egerton Ryerson. Ryerson strongly believed that taxes should support schools and increase 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 wasn't 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.





Figure 5: Subject property identified on Tremaine's 1858 Map of the County of Halton, Canada West

Figure 6: Subject property identified on the 1877 *Illustrated Atlas of the County of Halton* 

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*, additional one- and two-room schoolhouses were required to accommodate the growing student populations. In response, many communities took advantage of these government grants to build and operate new schools.

Following the demolition of the former frame schoolhouse, the brick schoolhouse was constructed along Fourth Line in 1870. The first teacher employed at the new Bannockburn School was Mr. Younge.





Figure 7: Bannockburn School class photograph, c.1903 (EHS 10226)

Figure 8: Subject property identified on 1930 aerial photography

To supply water to the schoolhouse, a well was dug nearby. The well was later altered in 1896 to improve water quality. However, the water quality remained poor, and was not addressed until 1936, when a new well was drilled. The washrooms were located outside up until 1939, when they were relocated into a new woodshed connected to the schoolhouse. The schoolhouse was heated using a box stove in the

centre of the floor, which separated the lower grades from the higher grades. An oil furnace later replaced the box stove in the 1950s.

During the late 1940s, there were frequent discussions on building consolidated schools to accommodate students from multiple schoolhouses. With the "baby boom" population following WWII, many rural schoolhouses began to experience overcrowding. The dramatic increase in the school-aged population led to increased investment in public education, constructing larger consolidated schools, and hiring more teachers. Additionally, since many families began to move into cities, and buses and personal vehicles were gaining popularity, many students no longer walked to the local schools in their districts.

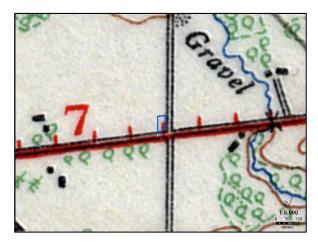




Figure 9: Subject property identified on the 1935 National Topographic Survey

Figure 10: Teacher and pupils outside of Bannockburn Schoolhouse, c.1940 (EHS 11389)

Beyond Bannockburn School, a number of students continued their education and went on to pursue various careers. Many students went on to become teachers, such as R.N. Shortill, E.E. Shortill, Jim Shortill, Nellie Yemen, Bessie Yemen, Sadie Yemen, M. Campbell, A. Shortill, and Rowena Campbell. Other students went on to become physicians, such as Dr. W. McDonald, Dr. McNichol, and Dr. Wylie. The students at Bannockburn School were also successful in winning two shields from the Esquesing Rural Schools Fair.



Figure 11: Photograph of Bannockburn School, c.1945 (EHS 11519)



Figure 12: Subject property identified on 1954 aerial photography

Similar to other schoolhouses in Esquesing, many of the teachers employed at the school were unmarried women. In 1883, the *Canada School Journal* featured a report from Robert Little, the County

Inspector of Schools in Esquesing, explaining that it was difficult to find married teachers for rural sections, as it was difficult for them to secure housing. Many of the married teachers either taught in towns or incorporated villages or already had homes near their respective schoolhouse. This was an issue as it was difficult to hire teachers and made turnover quite frequent. More than 40 teachers were employed in the Bannockburn School Section.

In June 1962, Bannockburn School closed its doors, and the 45 students enrolled were sent off to the new consolidated Limehouse School, along with students from Blue Mountain and Gibraltar Schools.

1960s to Present



Figure 13: Photograph of Bannockburn School after its closure, c.1962 (EHS 26152)



Figure 14: Photograph of the former Bannockburn School after it was modified, c.1988 (EHS 10699)

In 1964, James (1916-1998) and Eva (nee Vyse) (1914-1983) Willaughan purchased the property. By 1971, the property was sold to Douglas and Jean Vaughan, who maintained ownership until 1984, when it was sold to Marie and Frederick McNiven. The property was then purchased by Mary and Stuart Kynoch in 1988. The Kynoch family owned the property for a few years before selling the house to Karen and Roger Dagenais. The property exchanged ownership a few times before being purchased by the current owners in 2011.



Figure 15: Photograph of the former Bannockburn School after it was modified, c.1988 (EHS 10698)



Figure 16: Photograph of the former schoolyard of Bannockburn School, c.1995 (EHS 12507)



Figure 17: Subject property identified on 1999 aerial photography



Figure 18: Subject property identified on 2002 aerial photography



Figure 19: Front (southeast) elevation of the former Bannockburn School (HouseSigma 2005)



Figure 20: Front (southeast) elevation of the former Bannockburn School (HouseSigma 2011)



Figure 21: Subject property identified on 2015 aerial photography



Figure 22: Subject property identified on 2017 aerial photography

## 2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The subject property is located along the west corner of Fourth Line and Highway 7 in the community of Acton within the Town of Halton Hills. The property is an irregular-shaped lot and features a one-and-a-half storey stucco dwelling with a gable roof, front vestibule, stucco cladding, flatheaded window openings, and contemporary dormers. The property can be accessed from a gravel driveway via Fourth Line.





Figure 23: Subject property identified on 2015 aerial photography

Figure 24: Front (southeast) and partial side (southwest) elevations shown from Highway 7 (Google Streetview 2022)

The front (southeast) elevation consists of a one-storey central vestibule with flatheaded window openings and a flatheaded entryway. To the right of the vestibule is a contemporary covered porch. The front elevation also features flatheaded window openings at the first and second storeys. Above the roofline are three contemporary dormers.



Figure 25: Partial front (southeast) elevation shown from Fourth Line, obscured by vegetation (Google Streetview 2014)



Figure 26: View of the front (southeast) elevation from Fourth Line (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

Both side (northeast and southwest) elevations feature a contemporary chimney which extends from the first storey and above the roofline. The side (northeast and southwest) elevations also feature flatheaded window openings.

Along the rear (northwest) elevation is a one-storey rear addition with three contemporary dormers above the roofline. A contemporary accessory structure is extant at the corner of the property abutting Fourth Line and Highway 7.



Figure 27: Side (northeast) elevation of the subject dwelling (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

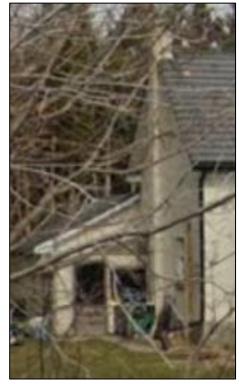


Figure 28: Side (Southwest) elevation of the subject dwelling (Google Streetview 2022)



Figure 29: Partial side (northeast) and rear (northwest) elevations of the subject dwelling (Town of Halton Hills 2025)



Figure 30: Accessory structure located at the corner of Fourth Line and Highway 7 (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

## 2.3 Architectural Style & Comparative Analysis

The one-room schoolhouse within the subject property 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.

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;
- One or two entrances;
- Gable roof with a cupola and bell;
- Two windows along the front elevations, with multiple windows along the side elevations; and,
- Date stone indicating the date of construction.

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, and front vestibule. However, the schoolhouse has been significantly modified over time. Initially, the schoolhouse was designed with Gothic Revival architectural influences, such as dichromatic brick detailing with quoining, lintels, hoodmoulds. The building also featured flatheaded window openings spanning the height of the first storey, and brick chimneys. To date, the façade has been stuccoed, concealing the dichromatic brick construction. The original window openings have been modified, and the brick chimneys have since been replaced. Additionally, dormers have been added to both the front and rear elevations.

Due to the modified façade, and removal of original schoolhouse features and Gothic Revival elements, the building no longer serves as a representative example of an Ontario rural one-room schoolhouse.

## 3.0 Description of Heritage Attributes and Evaluation Checklist

The following evaluation checklist applies to Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the *Ontario Heritage Act*: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The criteria are prescribed for municipal designation of Heritage Properties under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The evaluation tables utilize an 'X' to signify applicable criteria and 'N/A' to signify criteria that are not applicable for this property.

Design or Physical Value	
Is rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method	
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 13420 Fourth Line does not possess any design or physical value, as the property has been modified significantly, removing the defining features of Ontario rural one-room schoolhouses and the Gothic Revival architectural style. Over time, original Gothic Revival elements, such as the dichromatic brick detailing with quoining, lintels, hoodmoulds have been altered or removed. The building also once featured single flatheaded window openings spanning the height of the first storey, which have since been modified. To date, the façade has been stuccoed, concealing the dichromatic brick construction, and the brick chimneys have since been replaced. Additionally, multiple dormers have been added to both the front and rear elevations.

Due to the modified façade, and removal of original schoolhouse features and Gothic Revival elements, the building no longer represents an Ontario rural one-room schoolhouse.

Historical or Associative Value	
Has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or	
institution that is significant to a community	
Yields, or has potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a	N/A
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 13420 Fourth Line has historical and associative value due to its associations with the early educational system in the community of Acton. 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.

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

The property at 13420 Fourth Line does not possess any contextual value as the immediate residential area surrounding the schoolhouse no longer represents the original rural character northeast of Acton.

Additionally, due to the vegetation obstructing the front elevation of the schoolhouse, the property has not been identified as a landmark.

## 4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 13420 Fourth Line has some historical and associative value but does not meet Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest.

Please note, this Research and Evaluation Report reflects the most up to date findings relating to its cultural heritage value as identified by staff. This report may be updated in future to reflect future findings as required.

### 5.0 Sources

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