

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2025)

Waterloo School
10421 Fourth Line, Town of Halton Hills

April 2025

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1.0 Property Description

10421 Fourth Line, Scotch Block	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Regional Municipality of Halton
Legal Description	PT LT 13, CON 5 ESQ, AS IN 722382; S/T 53617 TOWN OF HALTON HILLS
Construction Date	c.1891
Original Use	Institutional
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	John Cameron
Architectural Style	Rural One-room Ontario Schoolhouse with Italianate Influences
Additions/Alterations	Contemporary rear addition
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town’s Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Caylee MacPherson with Laura Loney
Report Date	April 2025

2.0 Background

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 10421 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 – 10421 Fourth Line



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 10421 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 Nation¹.

Early European Settlement

In 1829, the Crown granted the patent for Lot 13, Concession 5 to the Canada Company, a private chartered land development company based in London, England. In 1826, the company was incorporated by Royal Charter, under an act of the British Parliament to colonize Upper Canada. The

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.

Canada Company was founded by John Galt (1779-1839), the company's first superintendent. Galt arrived in Upper Canada in 1826 and founded the City of Guelph in 1827.

The Canada Company owned the property until 1833 when it was deeded to William Dobbie (1805-1859). In 1872, Malcom McPherson (1836-1891) purchased the lands, and in 1877, McPherson sold one acre of land to the Trustees of S.S. No. 5 for \$140.



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. 5 School

Prior to constructing the brick school at Lot 13, Concession 5, Waterloo School initially consisted of a c.1823 log cabin located along 10 Side Road and Fourth Line. School Section No. 5 served more than 100 property owners who paid taxes to the school section.

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, but in each district up to 10 pupils from poor families were 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 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.

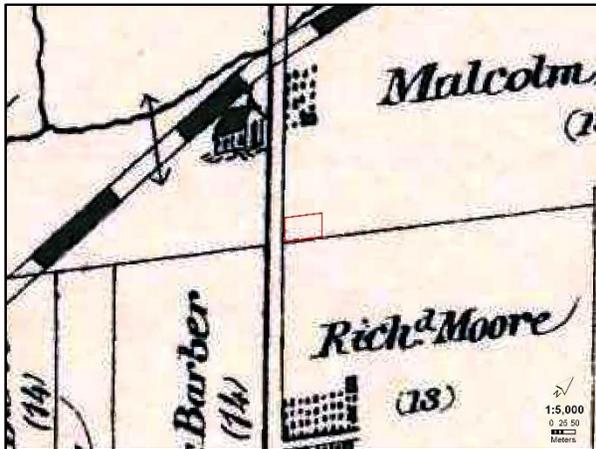


Figure 5: Subject property identified on the 1877 *Illustrated Atlas of the County of Halton*

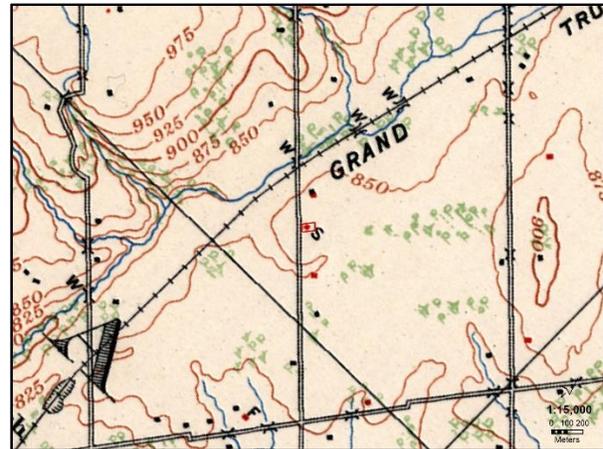


Figure 6: Subject property identified on the 1909 National Topographic Survey

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.

At a meeting in 1876, it was decided that the Trustees would purchase land from Malcom McPherson and move the schoolhouse to the subject property to avoid disruptions caused by the activity from the Hamilton and Northwestern Railway. After purchasing the lands, the Trustees accepted the tender from Jasper Martin for \$180 to move the schoolhouse. The Hamilton and Northwestern Railway paid the Trustees \$350 for the former school site.

In 1890, the Trustees placed a call for tenders to construct a new schoolhouse. The tender went to Messrs Hume & Steel, who were to construct the schoolhouse according to drawings completed by Acton architect John Cameron (1846-1933). During his career, Cameron constructed and designed over 100 buildings throughout Halton Hills and surrounding communities. He also served as a Town Councillor in Acton.

The total cost to build the new schoolhouse was \$1,419, and Cameron was paid \$12 for his drawings. After the new school opened in 1891, the former building was then sold to Mr. Black for \$30 and was then used as a workshop. A cement walkway was added in front of the new school in 1909 by Andrew Murdoch for \$70.

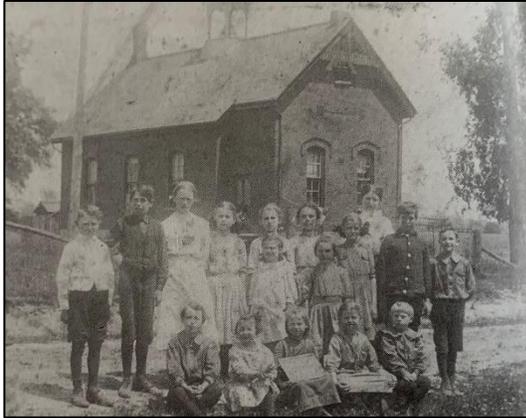


Figure 7: Waterloo School class photograph, c.1913
(*Halton's Scotch Block*, p.80)



Figure 8: S.S. No. 5 Waterloo School class photograph, c.1923
(*Halton's Scotch Block*, p.81)

Many teachers were employed at Waterloo School, such as Robert Little (1835-1885) and Judge Duncan McGibbon (1841-1920). After immigrating to Canada from England in 1852, Little created a reputation as a successful teacher, teaching at Waterloo, Quatre Bras, and Ligny Schools, eventually becoming the Principal of Acton Public School in 1863. Shortly after, Little became the Inspector of Public Schools for the County in 1871. Ligny Schoolhouse alumnus Judge McGibbon began teaching at Waterloo School from 1859-1863. McGibbon was admitted to the bar in 1871 and practiced law in Milton until he was appointed as the Judge of the County Court of Peel in 1894.

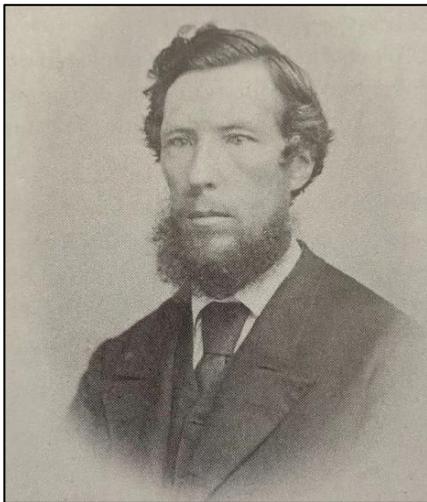


Figure 9: Photograph of Robert Little, n.d.
(*Halton's Scotch Block*)



Figure 10: Waterloo School class photograph, c.1931 (EHS22137)

Many of the pupils that attended Waterloo School were descendants of Scotch Block settlers, such as the Laidlaw, McColl, Ferugson, Moore, Fisher, Hume, and MacPherson families. Many of these students went on to continue their education and became religious leaders, lawyers, and physicians. One of the notable students from Waterloo School was Dr. Marjory Potter (1871-1958) (née MacPherson) who studied medicine at the University of Buffalo, and started her medical practice in Niagara Falls, New York in the early 1900s. In later years Dr. Potter practiced medicine in Kootenai, Idaho, and San Diego, California.

Three of Dr. Potter's brothers, John (1858-1912), James (1861-1936), and William (1866-1926), also attended Waterloo School and later became physicians.



Figure 11: Photograph of the MacPherson siblings, date unknown (Courtesy of Ancestry)

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 12: Waterloo School class photograph, c.1939 (*Halton's Scotch Block*, p.82)



Figure 13: Photograph of Waterloo School, c.1944 (EHS 12490)

In 1945, Waterloo School, along with Lorne, Dublin, Mount Pleasant, and Dufferin Schools formed School Area No. 1, Esquesing Township. Prior to the closing of Waterloo School, two petitions were sent to the Esquesing School Board; one indicating support for closure, and the other requesting that the school remain open. However, the School Board ultimately decided to construct a new consolidated school.



Figure 14: Waterloo School class photograph, c.1949 (*Halton's Scotch Block*, p.83)



Figure 15: Inside of Waterloo School, c.1954 (*Halton's Scotch Block*, p.83)

In 1960, Speyside School was constructed north of Speyside along 17 Side Road and Regional Road 25, offering a new five-room public school for 180 pupils. Following the opening of Speyside School, Dufferin, Lorne, Dublin, Mount Pleasant, and Waterloo Schools were permanently closed.

After the rural schoolhouses closed in Esquesing, many thieves began attempting to steal the remaining school bells. To protect the existing bell at Waterloo School, Town employee Lloyd Fisher and local farmer Chester Early removed the bell from the school and stored it indoors for 22 years. The bell was later restored and moved to the Halton Hill's Civic Centre (Town Hall) in 1989.



Figure 16: Subject property identified on 1952 aerial photography



Figure 17: Subject property identified on 1954 aerial photography

1960s to Present

In 1968, the property was sold to James Brown (1932-2012). During the same year, the property was purchased by David Henry (1905-1986) and May (1910-2010) (nee Davies) Tost. The Tost family continued to own the property until 1972, when they sold the property to Barrie and Joyce Doherty. In 1976, the Doherty's sold the property to the current owner.

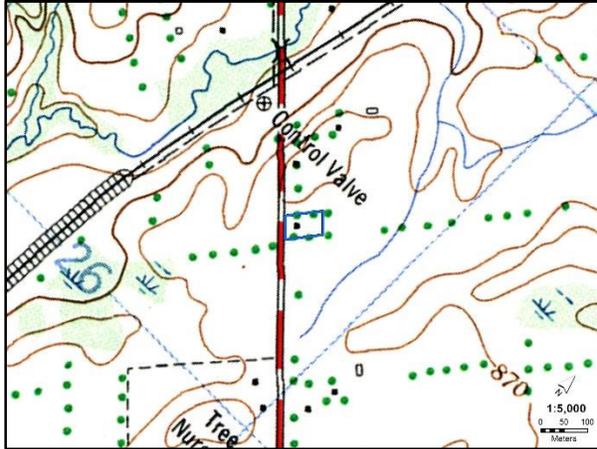


Figure 18: Subject property identified on the 1974 National Topographic Survey



Figure 19: Subject property identified on 1980 aerial photography



Figure 20: Subject property identified on 2007 aerial photography



Figure 21: Subject property identified on 2017 aerial photography

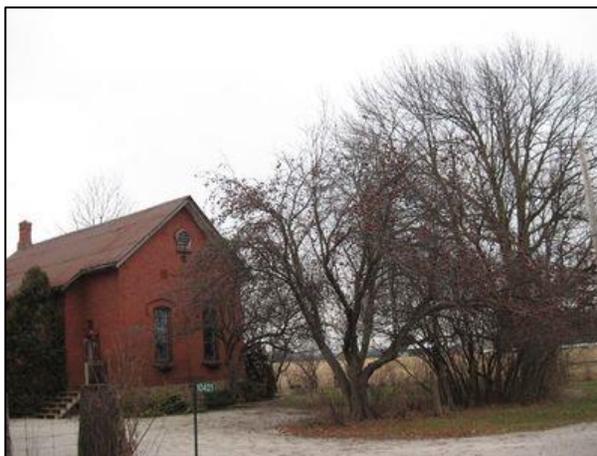


Figure 22: Former Waterloo Schoolhouse, c.2013 (EHS22676)

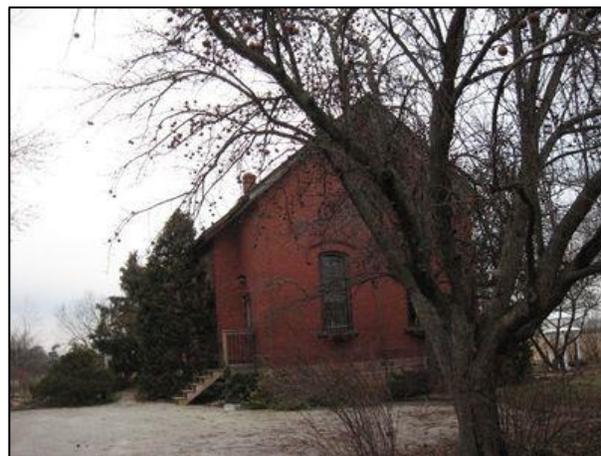


Figure 23: Former Waterloo Schoolhouse, c.2013 (EHS22676)

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The subject property is located along the northeast side of Fourth Line in the community of Scotch Block within the Town of Halton Hills. The property is a rectangular-shaped lot and features a one-and-a-half storey red brick dwelling with a gable roof, a single brick chimney, segmentally arched window openings with projecting hood moulds and stone sills, a projecting plinth, and a stone foundation. The property can be accessed from a gravel driveway via Fourth Line.



Figure 24: Subject property identified on 2023 aerial photography

The front (southwest) elevation consists of two segmentally arched window openings with radiating voussoirs, brick hood molds, and projecting stone sills. Between each window is a carved head, likely resembling a “cherub”, which was meant to represent youth, innocence, and childhood. In biblical contexts, cherubs (otherwise known as cherubim) were angelic beings that served as guardians or protectors of spaces. Directly above both windows are two decorative squares connected by a decorative brick band. Beneath the gable peak is a circular vent opening with a semi-circular voussoir and stone sill.



Figure 25: Front (southwest) elevation of the schoolhouse (Town of Halton Hills 2025)



Figure 26: Front (southwest) elevation of the schoolhouse (Town of Halton Hills 2025)



Figure 27: “Cherub” sculpture along the front (southwest) elevation (Town of Halton Hills 2025)



Figure 28: Brick detailing along the front (southwest) elevation (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

Along the side (northwest) elevation are two bays, one containing a single flatheaded doorway with a soldier course lintel, and the other projecting bay containing three symmetrically placed segmentally arched window openings with brick hood moulds and stone sills. The side (northwest) elevation also features a contemporary flatheaded window opening. The other side (southeast) elevation features an identical layout, with the exception of one window, which has since been altered and converted into a smaller flatheaded window opening.



Figure 29: Side (southeast) elevation of the schoolhouse (Town of Halton Hills 2025)



Figure 30: Side (northwest) elevation of the schoolhouse (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

Towards the rear of the dwelling is a contemporary one-storey addition consisting of vertical wood cladding, and multiple flatheaded window openings. A brick chimney is located directly above the roofline along the rear (northeast) elevation of the original schoolhouse.

A cupola can be found in the side yard along the side (southwest) elevation, which was likely included in the original design of the schoolhouse. However, once the bell was removed, the cupola was likely also removed from the roof. The bell was later moved to the Halton Hills Civic Centre in 1989.



Figure 31: Side (southeast) elevation of the schoolhouse showing the rear addition (Town of Halton Hills 2025)



Figure 32: Former school bell at the Halton Hills Civic Centre (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

2.3 Architectural Style & Comparative Analysis

The existing building at 10421 Fourth Line is a representative example of a late-nineteenth century rural one-room Ontario schoolhouse with Italianate architectural influences. The one-room schoolhouse was designed for sixty-four pupils and was intended to accommodate a small rural village or hamlet. The schoolhouse designs featured in the *Canadian Farmer* and *The School House, its Architecture, External and Internal Arrangements* were often used in rural communities, as they provided building instructions and floorplan layouts. However, since the schoolhouse was designed by local architect, John Cameron, the building differs from many of the designs found in these publications.

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. Students were often tasked with starting and maintaining the stove fire.

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.

Additionally, based on John Blumenson's *Ontario Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building Terms, 1784 to the Present*, buildings constructed in this architectural style typically feature decorative elements such as, but not limited to:

- Frontispiece projection without elaborate corners or gables;

- Tall, narrow windows, frequently arched or rounded;
- Eyebrow-like window cornices and hood moulds;
- Mixed Classical and Gothic Revival decorative elements; and,
- Decorative entryway flanked by transoms and sidelights.

The existing building features many characteristics typical of the one-room rural schoolhouse, such as having a one-and-a-half storey massing, brick construction, gable roof, two segmentally arched window openings along the front elevation, multiple segmentally arched window openings along the side elevations, as well as two entrances for boys and girls. The schoolhouse differs from traditional Ontario rural one-room schoolhouse designs, as there is no central vestibule, and the two separate entrances are located on either side elevation. Waterloo School originally featured a cupola and bell; however, the bell has since been removed and was relocated to the Halton Hills Civic Centre in 1989. Extant features that represent the Italianate architectural style include the segmentally arched window openings, as well as the brick hood moulds.



Figure 33: S.S. No. 8 Woodside School, Erin Township (HouseSigma 2020)



Figure 34: S.S. No. 2 Greenock School, Erin Township, date unknown (Wellington County Museum & Archives, A2001.66/ph 15108)

Throughout Erin Township, there are schoolhouses which feature a similar layout and massing, including Woodside and Greenock Schools. Similar to Waterloo School, both Woodside and Greenock Schools feature one-and-a-half-storey massing, two side entrances, a gable roof, brick chimneys, as well as multiple windows on the front and side elevations. However, in contrast to Waterloo School, both buildings feature dichromatic brick detailing, one-storey vestibules, and datestones. Additionally, both schools exhibit influences from the Gothic Revival architectural style.

3.0 Description of Heritage Attributes and Evaluation Checklist

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

Design or Physical Value	
---------------------------------	--

Is rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method	X
Displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	X
Demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement	N/A

The property at 10421 Fourth Line has physical and design value as a rare and representative example of an Ontario rural one-room schoolhouse in the Italianate architectural style, in the community of Scotch Block, within the Town of Halton Hills. The one-and-a-half storey schoolhouse features design elements such as a gable roof, segmentally arched window openings with limestone sills, voussoirs, and hood moulds, as well as two flatheaded entrances with solid course lintels. The schoolhouse also features decorative brick work, including the brick “cherub” statue along the front elevation, which displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit.

Waterloo School originally featured a cupola and bell; however, the bell has since been removed and was relocated to the Halton Hills Civic Centre in 1989. Additionally, an addition has been added to the rear elevation. However, despite the construction of a rear addition, and the removal of the cupola and bell, the building remains a representative example of an Ontario rural one-room schoolhouse with Italianate influences.

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	X
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 10421 Fourth Line has historical and associative value due to its associations with the early educational system in the community of Scotch Block. The student population began to grow with the establishment of the *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.

Waterloo School is also associated with local builders Messrs Hume & Steel, and Acton-based architect John Cameron, who designed more than 100 buildings in Halton Hills and surrounding communities during his career.

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 10421 Fourth Line has contextual value as it is important in defining, maintaining, and supporting the rural character of the community of Scotch Block. The former Waterloo School is physically, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings as an early schoolhouse that serviced School Section No. 5 for nearly 70 years. 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 10421 Fourth Line 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 10421 Fourth Line are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the schoolhouse along Fourth Line in the community of Scotch Block within the Town of Halton Hills;
- The scale, form, and massing of the c.1891, one-and-a-half storey schoolhouse with a gable roof, single brick chimney, and stone foundation;
- Materials, including red brick and stone;
- Front (southwest) elevation:
 - o Segmentally arched window openings with limestone sills, hood molds, and voussoirs;
 - o Decorative brick banding and squares;
 - o Decorative head carving;
 - o Circular vent opening with semi-circular voussoir and limestone sill;
- Side (southeast and northwest) elevations:
 - o Segmentally arched window openings with limestone sills, hood molds, and voussoirs; and,
 - o Two flatheaded entrances with soldier course lintels.

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

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.

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