

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2025)

Tracey House

32 Stewarttown Road, Stewarttown, Town of Halton Hills

May 2025

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1.0 Property Description

32 Stewarttown Road	
Municipality	Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Region of Halton
Legal Description	PT LTS 7 & 8 SWM, PL 1550; BEING PLAN OF STEWARTTOWN, AS IN 855807; FORMERLY; PT LT 16, CON 7 ESQ; HALTON HILLS PIN: 250160044
Construction Date	c.1848
Original Use	Residential
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	Unknown
Architectural Style	Georgian with Neo-classical Influences
Additions/Alterations	Various exterior additions
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town's Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	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 32 Stewarttown Road 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*.

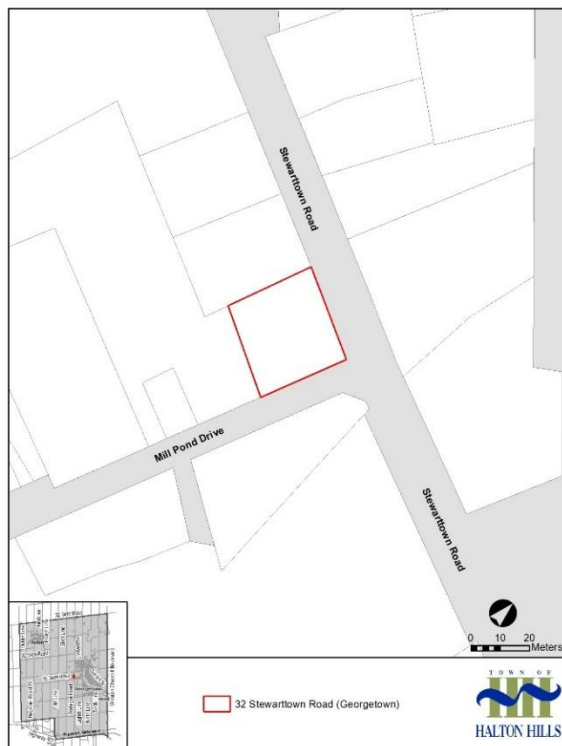


Figure 1: Location Map – 32 Stewarttown Road



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 32 Stewarttown 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 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.

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 3: Subject property identified on the 1822 Patent Plan

John and Duncan Stewart are identified on the 1822 Patent Plan (Figure 3). The east half of Lot 16, Concession 7 was granted to John Stewart by the Crown in 1846. In 1848, the subject property was sold by brothers John and Duncan Stewart and their wives to Richard Tracey, who constructed a residence the same year.

Municipal Government and Richard Tracey

According to the 1877 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Halton*, the first record of a meeting for Esquesing Township was on New Year's Day in 1821 in the home of Joseph Standish (1770-1868), and in various other homes and taverns in subsequent years; at that time the townships were governed by the Justices in Session, and later the Gore District Council. The *Municipal Act* of 1849 (also known as the *Baldwin Act*) established municipal institutions in Ontario, and the first Municipal Council in Esquesing was composed of John McNaughton, Niman Lindsay, James Young, and William Thompson, with Richard Tracey holding the office of Clerk.

Richard Tracey (1815-1855), born in Limerick, Ireland, was the first Clerk and Treasurer of the Township of Esquesing. In December 1844, Tracey married Flora Ann McNabb (1821-1908), and they had four children together.

Tracey was the postmaster and merchant in Stewarttown, and in 1853 he purchased the building which is now known as the Frazier Shop in Glen Williams. Tracey converted the building into a grocery store and hired Timothy Eaton, the future founder of the T. Eaton empire, as his clerk and bookkeeper.



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

John Murray and Connections with John Henry Shepherd

Following Richard Tracey's death in 1856, his widow Flora, daughter of prominent local Captain Alexander McNabb, married Lieutenant Colonel John Murray, with whom she had two children (one of whom died in infancy). John Murray (1832-1892) was born in Ireland and emigrated to Canada in 1848. Murray was business partners with Richard Tracey and following Tracey's death he became the Township Clerk. The 1861 Census identifies John Murray as a merchant, living in a brick, one-and-a-half storey house with Flora Murray, Rebecca Tracey, Mary Jane Tracey, John A. Tracey, and Flora J. Tracey. Murray served in the military for several years, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in 1881. Murray held many public positions in the community and was a devout member of the Church of England and St. John's Anglican Church in Stewarttown, a supporter of the Liberal Conservatives, and was a member of the Imperial Federation League.

The Murray family had a significant connection to John Henry Shepherd (1859-1948), whose mother kept house for Colonel Murray on his farm following her escape with her son through the Underground Railroad into Canada. Following his mother's death, John Shepherd remained at the farm and was raised by Colonel Murray, working as a farm hand. John Shepherd would later marry Sarah Hartley, who had been sent as a British Home Child to Canada in 1886 and who had been assigned to work at the Murray's farm as an indentured servant.

Ten years later, Murray is identified in the 1896 Census as a farmer. Living with the Murray family at that time was John Shepherd.

John Alexander Tracey and Township Offices

Following Murray's role as Township Clerk, George H. Kennedy held the office, and then was succeeded by Richard Tracey's son, John. John Alexander Tracey (1852-1925), like his father, served as the Clerk of Georgetown for many years.

In 1879, the Township rented the building owned by the Tracey family, originally constructed by David Cross and Nevin Jones as a store, on the property across from the subject property (now Stewarttown Road and Mill Pond Drive) to use as a township hall. The south side of the building served as the council chamber, while the other side was used as a store with a residence behind. The upper storey became a

community hall. The Township of Esquesing Council would meet in Stewarttown between 1851 and 1963, until a new building was constructed in 1962.

In April 1889, John A. Tracey was promoted to captain of the 20th Halton Battalion, No. 2 Company in Stewarttown. The 1901 Census identified John as the head of the household, living with wife Annie, and working as a Clerk. The 1911 and 1921 Censuses also identify John as the Township Clerk.



Figure 6: Broadsheet advertising Esquesing Township meeting, March 10, 1849 (EHS 13602)



TOWN HALL, STEWARTTOWN.

Two good Stairs on the First Floor and a large Hall on the Second.

Figure 7: A sketch of the "Town Hall", built in 1849, from Tremaine's 1858 Map of the County of Halton, Canada West (EHS 00113)

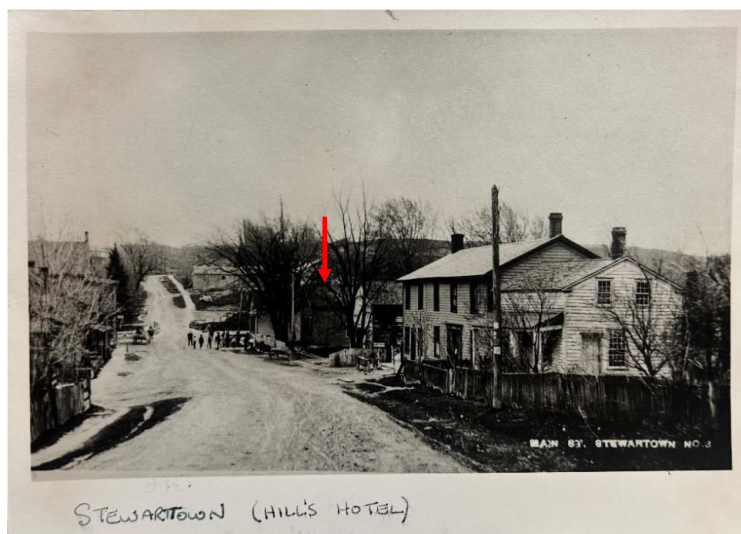


Figure 8: Looking south down Main Street from Bunker's Hill. On the right are Mary Barley's house, Hill's Hotel, which burned on 5 October 1909; the blacksmith shop and Tracey's house before the creek, c.1908 (EHS 00471)



Figure 9: Township Hall showing second-storey veranda and staircase, c.1908 (EHS 00465)



Figure 10: Walter Lawson and Carl Thurston with team - store (Township Hall) in background. Council Chambers on Tracey's Corner (EHS 00466)



Figure 11: Former Township Hall with the verandah dismantled c.1947 (EHS 00467)



Figure 12: The new Community Hall in 1948 after the removal of the upper storey by Walter Lawson. It was destroyed by fire (EHS 00469)



Figure 13: The Old Esquesing Council Chamber at the corner of John St. and Main St. (Tracey's corner) 1879-1924. It was moved in 1926 to the site of the former hotel. c.1900 (EHS 00470)

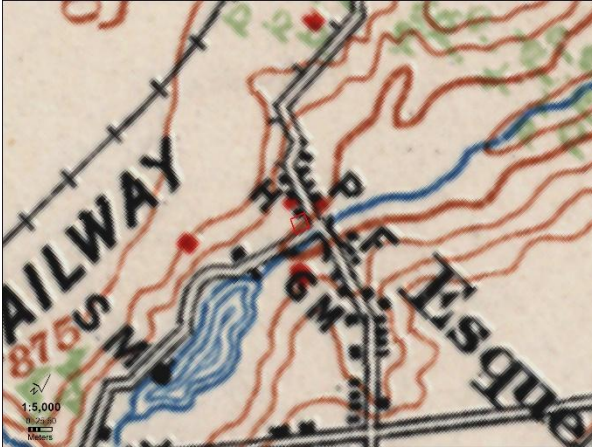


Figure 14: Subject property identified on the 1909 *National Topographic Map*

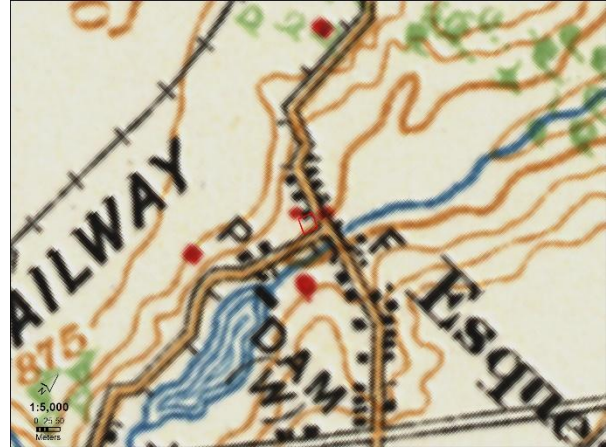


Figure 15: Subject property identified on the 1922 *National Topographic Map*

In 1938, Annie Tracey sold the subject property to Joseph C. Standish, the great-grandson of Joseph Standish (1770-1868) whose home was the site of the first recorded meeting for Esquesing Township in 1821.

In 1934, Joseph C. Standish (1905-1987) married Florence Jean (nee Thompson) (1902-1961); the pair lived in Norval before moving to Stewarttown. Florence worked in the Assessment Department for the Esquesing Township's municipal office, was a member of St. John's Church and the Ladies Guild. Joseph C. Standish served overseas in the Canadian Army as a Sapper in the Royal Canadian Engineers during WWII.

Joseph Standish and his wife owned the subject property until 1954.

Mid-Twentieth Century Ownership to Present

In 1954, the property was sold to Lillian Lawson.



Figure 16: Subject property identified in 1952 aerial photography



Figure 17: Subject property identified in 1960 aerial photography

In 1969, Lillian Lawson sold the subject property to Robert Frederick Kidd and Ruth Ann Kidd, who sold the property a few years later to Joseph Wiliam Mulleray and Dorothy Mulleray, who owned the property until 1989. The property has had several owners since that time, with the most recent owners having purchased the property in 2023.

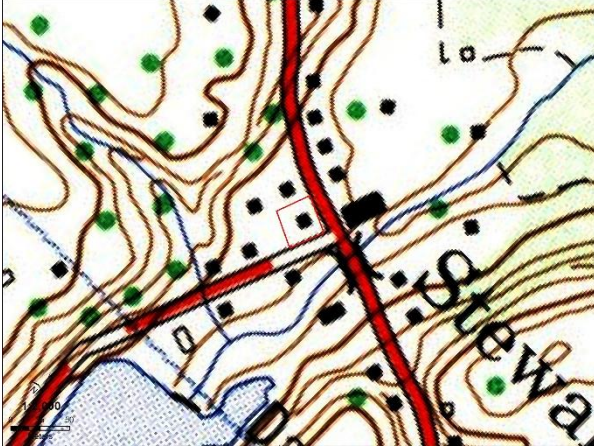


Figure 18: Subject property identified on the 1974 *National Topographic Map*



Figure 19: Subject property identified in 1977 aerial photography

2.2 Property & Architectural Description

The subject property is located at the intersection of Stewarttown Road and Mill Pond Drive in the community of Stewarttown in the Town of Halton Hills. The property contains a single detached, one-and-a-half storey dwelling with rear accessory structure accessed from Mill Pond Drive. Several mature trees are located in the side yard which is fenced along the lot line. Staff photographs have been supplemented with those available online due to the dense vegetation at the time of site visit.



Figure 20: Detail of the front (northeast) elevation of the existing building at 32 Stewarttown Road (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 21: Obscured front (northeast) elevation of existing building at 32 Stewarttown Road (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

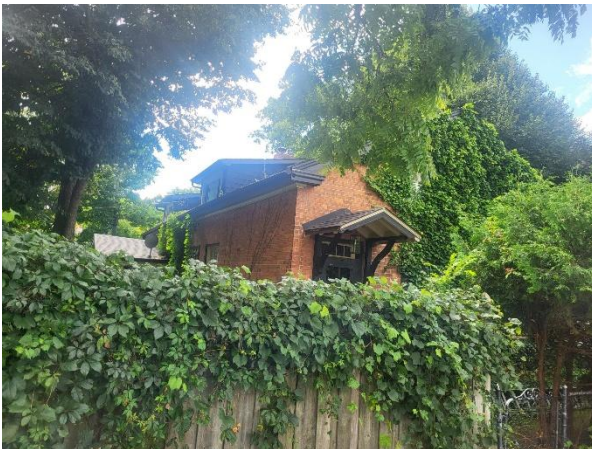


Figure 22: Looking towards the northeast corner of the existing building at 32 Stewarttown Road (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 23: Looking towards the northwest elevation of the existing building at 32 Stewarttown Road (Town of Halton Hills 2024)

The exterior of the original building features brick laid in Flemish Bond (alternating brick headers and stretchers in each course). The front (northeast) elevation of the existing building features a single flatheaded entrance with brick jack arch and divided glass transom above. Two flatheaded window openings with brick voussoirs above are extant at the first storey, with a single flatheaded window

opening with brick voussoirs beneath the gable peak at the upper storey. A gable roof projects over the main entrance supported by wooden brackets.



Figure 24: Front (northeast) elevation of the existing building at 32 Stewarttown Road (HouseSigma 2022)



Figure 25: Side (southeast) elevation of the existing building at 32 Stewarttown Road (HouseSigma 2022)

The side (southeast) elevation is partially obscured with a one-storey woodframe addition; the southeast wall has been modified with horizontal cladding towards the rear of the house and above the one-storey addition. A contemporary patio door opening is located adjacent to two single flatheaded window openings with brick voussoirs above. A shed roofed dormer is located on the roof above this elevation with a low brick chimney beside. The rear (southwest) elevation features two flatheaded window openings with brick voussoirs above at the first storey, and an additional flatheaded window with brick voussoirs above beneath the gable peak at the upper storey. The symmetry of this elevation has been modified with the side addition along the southeast elevation.



Figure 26: Detail of the Side (southeast) elevation of the existing building at 32 Stewarttown Road (HouseSigma 2022)



Figure 27: Looking towards the southeast corner of the existing building (HouseSigma 2022)

The side (northeast) elevation features a flatheaded window opening with brick voussoirs above, and a small one-storey addition towards the rear of the house. Like the southeast elevation, a shed-roofed dormer projects above the roofline along this elevation.

32 Stewarttown Road | PT LTS 7 & 8 SWM, PL 1550; BEING PLAN OF STEWARTTOWN, AS IN 855807; FORMERLY; PT LT 16, CON
7 ESQ; HALTON HILLS



Figure 28: Side (northwest) elevation of the existing building at 32 Stewarttown Road (Town of Halton Hills 2024)



Figure 29: Looking towards the southwest corner of the existing building at 32 Stewarttown Road (HouseSigma 2022)



Figure 30: Subject property identified in 2023 aerial photography

2.3 Architectural Style & Analysis

The existing residential building at 32 Stewarttown Road was constructed c.1848 in the community of Stewarttown.

Georgian architecture was popular in Ontario between 1750 and 1850 and was brought to Upper Canada by United Empire Loyalists. The style featured characteristics including symmetry, rectangular plans, medium-pitched gable roofs, brick exteriors, and simple facades. This home has been previously identified as an early example of a Neo-Classical dwelling. Similar to Georgian architecture, and falling within the same time period, Neo-Classical style was predominant in Ontario between 1810 and 1850. A more refined and elegant interpretation of the traditional Georgian plan, Neo-classical buildings emphasized classical detailing as decoration.

The existing building can be best described as a Georgian building with Neo-classical influences. Constructed prior to Confederation in 1867, the one-and-a-half storey brick home has been somewhat modified with one-storey additions, however the scale, form, and massing of the building is legible despite these alterations. The building features a refined brick exterior, symmetry along the front and rear elevations, returning eaves at either end of the front gable roof, a bracketed wooden gable roof over the front entrance, and a small transom window above. As a result, this classical detailing serves to decorate what would be a more simplistic Georgian style.

Throughout the Town, there are a small number of buildings remaining that were constructed pre-Confederation. Few buildings described as Georgian Revival, vernacular with Georgian influences, or Neo-Classical are extant within the community. The existing home at the subject property in the community of Stewarttown is unique in its design in the area and is unique within the broader Town of Halton Hills in its interpretation of the Georgian style as a small, one-and-a-half storey brick residential structure with Neo-Classical influences. Comparative analysis of those properties included on the Town's Heritage Register reveals that this is a rare example of this style within the Town.



Figure 31: 9111 Third Line (Andrew Laidlaw Farmhouse) – Georgian/Neo-Classical, c.2022 (Town Files)



Figure 32: 4 Stewarttown Road (Harrison-Brown House) - Vernacular with Georgian Influences (Town Files)



Figure 33: 11508 Trafalgar Road (Devereaux House) – Classical Revival (Town Files)



Figure 34: 9722 Third Line (Craiglea) – Georgian/Neo-Classical (Town Files)

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

Tracey House, located at 32 Stewarttown Road, has physical and design value as a unique example of a one-and-a-half storey, pre-Confederation, Georgian residential building with Neo-Classical influences within the community of Stewarttown in the Town of Halton Hills. Built c.1848, the Georgian-era, one-and-a-half storey building features classical detailing, including a refined brick exterior, with brick laid in

Flemish Bond, symmetry along the front and rear elevations, returning eaves at either end of the front gable roof, a bracketed wooden gable roof over the front entrance, and a small transom window above.

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	N/A

The property at 32 Stewarttown Road has historical and associative value, with direct associations with Richard Tracey, the first Clerk and Treasurer of the Township of Esquesing, and his family, including his wife, Flora McNabb. Richard Tracey, a postmaster and merchant in Stewarttown, was also a significant figure in Glen Williams, hiring Timothy Eaton, future founder of the T. Eaton empire, as his clerk and bookkeeper for his store in that community.

In 1879 the Township rented the building across from the subject property, owned by the Tracey family, to serve as a Township Hall; the Township of Esquesing Council would meet here between 1851 and 1963.

Following Richard Tracey's death, his widow Flora McNabb would marry Lieutenant Colonel John Murray, a notable public figure who had significant connections to John Henry Shepherd. Shepherd had escaped with his mother through the Underground Railroad into Canada, going on to work and live with the Murray family in following years.

Tracey House was also home to Richard Tracey's son, John Alexander Tracey, who like his father served as Clerk for many years, and in the 1930s was home to Joseph C. Standish, great-grandson of Joseph Standish, whose home was the site of the first recorded meeting of Esquesing Township in 1821.

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 32 Stewarttown Road has contextual value as it serves to define, maintain, and support the character of the surrounding area within the community of Stewarttown. The property remains physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surrounding along Stewarttown Road, however due to its size and setback from the right of way 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 32 Stewarttown 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 32 Stewarttown Road that contribute to its design and physical value are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the existing building along Stewarttown Road in the community of Stewarttown in the Town of Halton Hills;
- The scale, form, and massing of the original one-and-a-half storey brick building with gable roof featuring returning eaves and stone foundation;
- The materials, including brick facades laid in Flemish bond, brick detailing, and wooden architectural detailing throughout;
- At the front (northeast) elevation:
 - The asymmetrically located single flatheaded entrance with glass transom above;
 - The bracketed wooden gable roof above the entrance
 - Flatheaded window openings at the first and second storeys with sills;
- Along the side (southeast) elevation:
 - The flatheaded window opening with sill below and brick voussoirs above;
 - The rear wood frame summer kitchen addition;
- At the rear (southwest) elevation, the two symmetrically placed flatheaded window openings at the first storey with sills below and brick voussoirs above, and the flatheaded window opening at the upper storey beneath the gable peak featuring sill and brick voussoirs above;
- Along the side (northwest) elevation, the single flatheaded window opening with brick voussoirs above.

The heritage attribute of the property at 32 Stewarttown Road that contributes to its historical and associative value includes:

- The legibility of the existing house as a mid-nineteenth century Georgian building with Neo-Classical influences along Stewarttown Road within the community of Stewarttown in the Town of Halton Hills.

The heritage attributes of the property at 32 Stewarttown Road that contribute to its contextual value include:

- The legibility of the existing house as a mid-nineteenth century Georgian building with Neo-Classical influences along Stewarttown Road within the community of Stewarttown in the Town of Halton Hills;
- The setback, location, and orientation of the existing building along Stewarttown Road in the community of Stewarttown in the Town of Halton Hills; and,
- The scale, form, and massing of the original one-and-a-half storey brick building with gable roof featuring returning eaves and stone foundation.

Contemporary window and door openings, the side (northwest) one storey addition, roof dormers, and interiors have not been identified as heritage attributes 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.

5.0 Sources

Primary Sources

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