

Research and Evaluation Report



(Town of Halton Hills 2025)

Williams Edge Tool Factory

508 Main Street, Glen Williams, Town of Halton Hills

September 2025

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1.0 Property Description

Williams Edge Tool Factory	
Municipality	Glen Williams, Town of Halton Hills
County or Region	Region of Halton
Legal Description	LT 52, RCP 1556; HALTON HILLS PIN: 250580213
Construction Date	c.1848
Original Use	Industrial
Current Use	Residential
Architect/Building/Designer	Built for Isaac Williams
Architectural Style	Georgian
Additions/Alterations	Rear additions
Heritage Status	Listed on the Town’s Heritage Register
Recorder(s)	Laura Loney
Report Date	September 2025

2.0 Background

This research and evaluation report describes the history, context, and physical characteristics of the property at 508 Main Street in the community of Glen Williams in the Town of 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*.

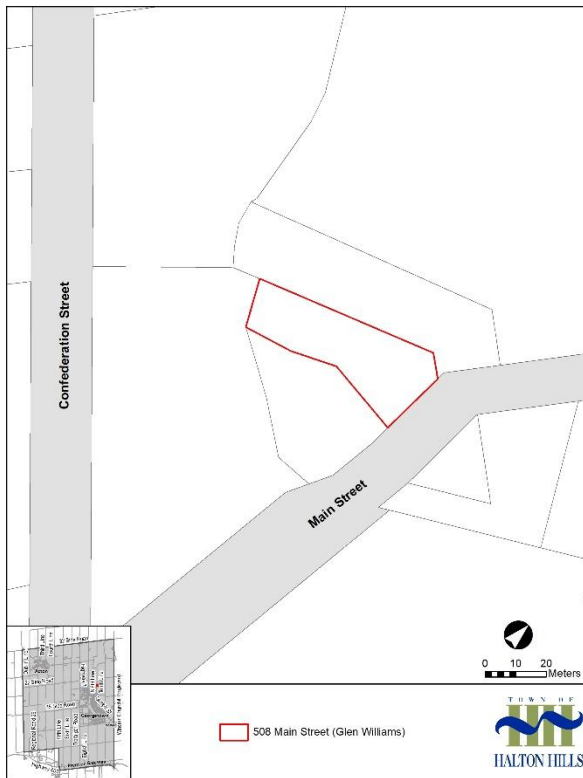


Figure 1: Location Map – 508 Main Street



Figure 2: Aerial Photograph – 508 Main Street

2.1 Historical Background

Indigenous History Background

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 permanently¹.

European Settlement & the Williams Family

In 1818, the Crown granted Lot 21, Concession 10 in Esquesing Township to Loyalist descendant John Butler Muirhead (1796-1824). He completed his settlement duties on his 200 acres on June 13, 1823, and married Ann Dockstader (1804-1837) the following year in May 1824. The Crown Patent for the land was issued to Muirhead on September 25, 1824, however he died suddenly on November 29 of that same year. Muirhead’s heirs inherited the property and promptly sold it to Benajah Williams in 1825.

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 1819 Patent Plan

On October 12, 1824, clothier Benajah Williams (1765-1851) listed his mill property and Grimsby Township property for sale in the *Niagara Gleaner*. He then moved to Esquesing Township in the spring of 1825 with his third wife, Elizabeth Kennedy (1788-1842), and nine of his fifteen children: John Richard (1792-1858), Joel (1803-1871), Lydia (1809-1876), Charles (1811-1889), George (1813-1836), Jacob (1816-1853), Ira (1818-1833), Isaac (1820-1911), and David (1827-1902).

Williams purchased Lot 21, Concession 10, Esquesing Township from the heirs of John Butler Muirhead on November 9, 1825, although they had been on the property since 1824. At 60 years old, Benajah established a sawmill on Lot 21, working with his sons to dig a mill raceway, create a dam, and construct the mill within their first year on the land. After the sawmill's completion, the Williams family built a wooden grist flour mill along the Credit River.

The success of his milling industries enabled Benajah to purchase an adjoining 200 acres of land within Lot 21, Concession 9 in 1833, where he built a crossroad to allow for more accessible transportation to the area. In the years following, Williams surveyed and severed small parcels of his land for his family. Benajah formally divided his Williamsburg (later known as Glen Williams) property between his second and third sons. Charles received the south-easterly 106 acres on February 4, 1842, while Jacob received the north-westerly ninety-four acres on July 24, 1843, which included the woollen mill he had established in 1839 (below what is now Mountain Street). Charles Williams established a general store, and Joel Williams began farming Lot 21, Concession 10 in 1830. Following the division of the property, the brothers had a village plan drafted. The settlement quickly attracted several industries. Besides Charles Williams' saw and flour mills, the woollen mills, and the tannery, there were cabinet makers, pump makers, shingle makers, Joseph Tweedle's and Archibald Cooper's sawmills, and Leslie's brickyards.

Isaac Williams and Family

Benajah and Elizabeth Williams' seventh child, Isaac Albert Williams (1820-1911), married Sarah (also "Sara") Mariah Ackert (1824-1897) in 1842. The pair had several sons, including George, John, Peter, Isaac, and James Williams. Isaac Williams had many different roles within the village, including cabinetmaker, tanner, shingle-maker, and pump maker. Isaac Williams is also identified in Philo Dayfoot's account books between 1850 and 1852.

In 1848, Isaac Williams bought village lots 61 and 62 within Lot 21 from his brother Charles Williams. It was likely this year that the existing building at 508 Main Street was constructed as an edge tool factory and pump manufacturing facility. Isaac Williams then built a dam at the back of the subject property to power a cabinet and chair factory next to the edge tool factory building which he then built sometime between 1852 and 1854. This building, known now as the Williams-Holt building at 504 Main Street, was constructed in triple-wythe brick by Williams, perhaps in anticipation of his success at the time, as a mortgage was shortly thereafter placed on the property at £1028. Figure 4 identifies the two buildings in a collection of industrial buildings to the east of the Credit River at the entrance to the Glen Williams community.

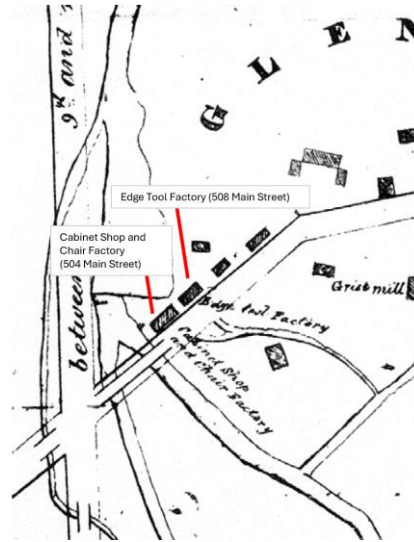


Figure 4: David Reesor's Survey of Part of the Village of Glen Williams, c.1854, annotated (Reesor & McPhillips)

Sometime following 1851, Isaac Williams entered into a partnership with pump maker and shingle manufacturer John Holt. In 1855, the partners mortgaged village lots 61 and 62 for £300. However, Williams' partnership with Holt was officially dissolved according to the *Halton Journal* in December 1856. By 1857, Williams had sold the edge tool factory within the subject property to Silas Beebe, and then sold the shingle mill to Moffit Forster. By 1857, the village directory notes Beebe as the owner in the edge tool factory (508 Main), Robert Brown as the pump maker at the neighbouring property (504 Main) and Moffit Forster as shingle miller in the village.

By 1861, Isaac Williams was living in Eramosa Township, Wellington County, and was later a travelling patent medicine salesman in Michigan.

Mid-Nineteenth-Century Ownership to Present

In 1866, a Robert Hunt purchased the subject property. It is likely that the former factory was converted to a residence at this time. Four few years later, Hunt sold the property to Hugh Morrison Melville (b.~1821) and Sarah Melville (née Tyson) (b.~1820) in 1870.

A carpenter by trade who had emigrated from Scotland to Canada by 1848, the 1851 census identifies Hugh M. Melville as then living in Hamilton, working as a carpenter and living with another family. The 1861 census identifies Morrison, then 40, with his first wife, Mary Ann Melville, then 24, and two



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

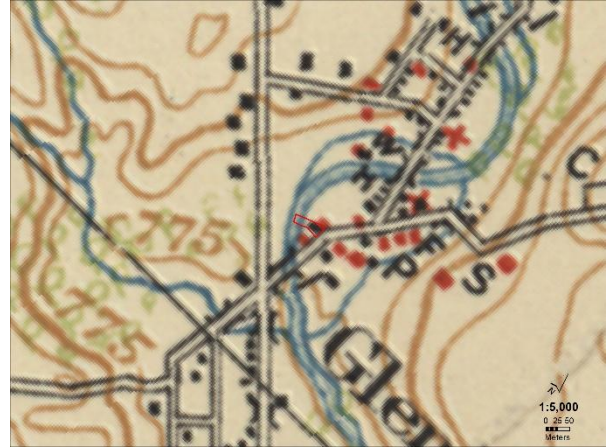


Figure 10: Subject property identified on the 1915 National Topographic Map

In 1924, the property was transferred from Susan Phoebe Williams' estate to Elizabeth and George Glover, who the next month sold the property to Lily Cole Moody.

In November 1930, the property was transferred by quit claim to widow Sarah Hume. Sarah (née Costain) (1885-1971) was the widow of Archibald "Archie" George Hume (1888-1918), who died at the age of 29.

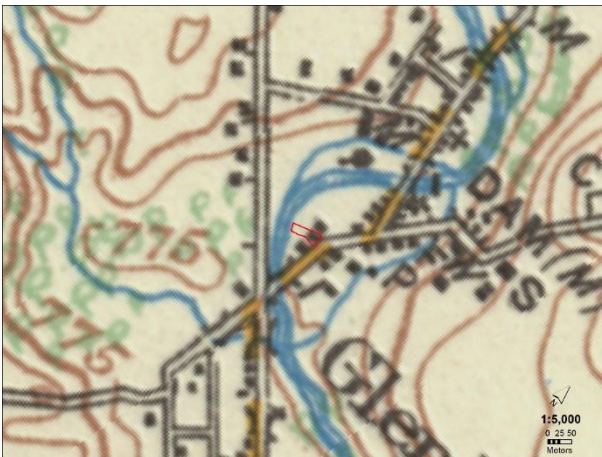


Figure 11: Subject property identified on the 1938 National Topographic Map

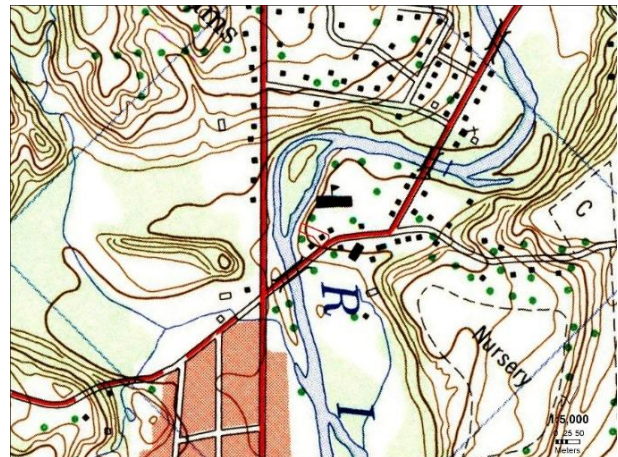


Figure 12: Subject property identified on the 1974 National Topographic Map

In 1957, the property was transferred to Marie and John Moody for \$10,000, who would own the property until August 2009, after which it changed hands a few more times. The property was purchased by its current owners in 2018.



Figure 13: Subject property identified in 1960 aerial photography



Figure 14: Subject property identified in 1977 aerial photography



Figure 15: Subject property identified in 1999 aerial photography



Figure 16: 508 Main Street, c.1990 (EHS 00940)



Figure 17: 508 Main Street, c.1990 (EHS 10796)



Figure 18: 508 Main Street, c.2017 (HouseSigma)

2.2 Property & Architectural Description



Figure 19: Subject property identified in 2023 aerial photograph

The subject property is an irregularly-shaped parcel located along the west side of Main Street and to the northeast of the Credit River. The property features a two-storey frame building with rear one-storey additions. The original two-storey structure features a gable roof and one-storey porch which stretches along the front (east) elevation and is clad in contemporary siding. The rear of the property abuts the Credit River and mature trees are located at the rear and side property lines. A one-storey detached garage is located at the rear of the existing residence in addition to some smaller outbuildings.

The front (east) elevation is symmetrical in appearance. The main flatheaded entrance is centered on the elevation at the first storey and features a contemporary surround. Two symmetrically placed, paired flatheaded window openings are extant on either side of the central entrance. At the second storey, five flatheaded window openings are symmetrically placed along the elevation, with the central window opening modified with a smaller window insert. Contemporary shutters are extant on the paired window openings on either side of the central window opening.



Figure 20: Front (east) elevation of the existing building at 504 Main Street (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

The side (south) elevation of the original two-storey building features no existing openings. The front porch wraps around this elevation and terminates at the rear of this elevation where it intersects with the rear one-storey addition. The side gable roof features returning eaves on this elevation.

The side (north) elevation mirrors the south elevation with no extant openings. An additional one-storey rear elevation is extant beyond this elevation.



Figure 21: Side (south) elevation of the existing building at 508 Main Street (Town of Halton Hills 2025)



Figure 22: Side (north) elevation of the existing building at 508 Main Street (Town of Halton Hills 2025)

The rear elevation and interiors of the existing building were not investigated as part of this report.

2.3 Architectural Style and Analysis

The Georgian architectural style was brought to Upper Canada by the English and United Empire Loyalists from the 1780s to 1870s. Often, settlers first constructed log houses, which were then replaced

with stone, brick, or clapboard buildings as soon as possible. According to Shannon Kyles of Ontario Architecture, the Georgian architectural style features characteristics such as one-and-a-half and two storey massing, multi-bay symmetrical facades, dual chimneys, hipped-gable or gable roofs, transom and sidelights flanking the doorway, flatheaded window openings, as well as stone, clapboard, or brick cladding.

According to John Blumenson’s *Ontario Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building Terms, 1784 to the Present*, typical features characteristic of the Georgian style in Ontario include:

- Symmetrical Facades: The front elevation is highly symmetrical, often centered around a prominent entrance with neo-classical detailing;
- Hipped or Gabled Roofs: Georgian homes typically feature hipped roofs, though gabled roofs are also common;
- Graduated Fenestration: Windows are symmetrically arranged, with larger windows on the ground floor and smaller ones above, often featuring multi-paned sash windows;
- Brick or Stone Construction: Georgian homes are commonly constructed of brick or stone, with bricks often laid in a Flemish bond pattern;
- Classical Detailing: Features such as modillions under the eaves, limestone lintels above windows and doors, cornice with modillion blocks, moulded window surrounds, pedimented porticos; and,
- Chimneys: Symmetrically placed chimneys are a hallmark of Georgian architecture, often located at the center of side elevations.

The existing building at 508 Main Street in Glen Williams is a representative example of a mid-19th century industrial building with Georgian influences in the Town of Halton Hills. Built originally as an edge tool factory, the building has retained its symmetrical façade, gable roof, and graduated fenestration as a residential building with limited architectural detailing, and remains a landmark along Main Street in the community.

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

The Williams Edge Tool Factory Building has physical and design value as a representative mid-nineteenth-century Georgian industrial-form building within the community of Glen Williams in the Town of Halton Hills. The existing two-storey frame building has retained its scale, form, and massing, its gable roof, symmetrical façade and graduated fenestration, with little ornamental elements or architectural design features which reflect its original use as an industrial building. A one-storey porch

added to the front elevation of the former industrial building reflects its long use, since the 1860s, as a residential building.

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

The Williams Edge Tool Factory Building has significant historical and associative value due to its ties to the founding Williams family and to the early industrial development and entrepreneurial spirit of the area. Built for founder Benajah Williams' son Isaac, the existing building was constructed as part of Williams' industrial complex in 1848 as an edge tool factory and pump manufacturing facility; the construction of this frame building allowed Williams to construct the more costly triple-wythe brick building next door at 504 Main Street as a cabinet and chair factory.

Although the two-storey building at 508 Main Street was used for industrial purposes for only a short time, its long use as a residential building within the community of Glen Williams, and long-term ownership by members of the Williams family, cements its deep roots within the community of Glen Williams and within its industrial past.

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

The Williams Edge Tool Factory Building at 508 Main Street in Glen Williams has significant contextual value. In its original location to the west of the Credit River, adjacent to Williams' second industrial building at 504 Main Street at the gateway to the community of Glen Williams, the existing building and property are physically, visually, and historically linked to the surroundings. Although originally constructed for industrial use, the building has significant links to its historical use as a residential building since the mid-to-late 19th century. Along with the other mid-19th century buildings along Main Street in this area, the Williams Edge Tool Factory Building is identified as a landmark within the community.

4.0 Summary

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 508 Main Street 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 508 Main Street that contribute to its physical and design value are identified as follows:

- The setback, location, and orientation of the existing Georgian industrial-form building along Main Street in the community of Glen Williams;

- The scale, form, and massing of the two-storey frame building with side gable roof featuring returning eaves;
- The front (east) elevation, including:
 - o At the first storey, the flatheaded entrance centered on the front elevation, and two symmetrically placed, paired flatheaded window openings on either side;
 - o At the second storey, five flatheaded window openings symmetrically placed along the elevation;
- The side (north and south) elevations featuring no openings or fenestration.

The heritage attribute of the property at 508 Main Street that contributes to its historical and associative value is identified as follows:

- The legibility of the existing building within the property as a mid-19th century, industrial-form Georgian building adaptively-reused for residential use within the community of Glen Williams in the Town of Halton Hills.

The heritage attribute of the property at 508 Main Street that contributes to its contextual value is identified as follows:

- The legibility of the existing landmark building within the property as a mid-19th century, industrial-form Georgian building adaptively-reused for residential use within the community of Glen Williams in the Town of Halton Hills.

The rear additions, rear elevation of the original two-storey building, and interiors 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.

5.0 Sources

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