

**50: 1475 Lakeshore Road East, Ryrie Estate**

**1. Description of Property**

<b>Municipal Address</b>	<b>1475 Lakeshore Road East</b>
<b>Name (if applicable)</b>	Ryrie Estate
<b>Legal Description</b>	PT LT 6, CON 3 TRAFALGAR, SOUTH OF DUNDAS STREET , AS IN 300863 ; OAKVILLE/TRAFALGAR
<b>Location of Property</b>	Located on the north side of Lakeshore Road East, west of Caulder Drive.
<b>Ownership</b>	Private
<b>Access</b>	Access not granted. Photos and notes from the road, Sept. 2015 (AB)
<b>Current Use</b>	Residential
<b>Existing Designation</b>	Designated under Part IV of the OHA (by-law 1991-048) as a property of historical, architectural and contextual value and interest. The reasons for designation are attached as Schedule "A", which is reproduced here as Appendix A.
<b>General Description</b>	The Ryrie Estate is the remnant of an estate property assembled in the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century by James Ryrie, a very successful Toronto jeweller. It includes a Georgian-style house, a broad sweeping drive and a number of mature trees and landscape features that may date to the late 19 <sup>th</sup> and early 20 <sup>th</sup> centuries. The house is a former inn and stagecoach stop on the Lakeshore Road, built c.1830 by Barnett Griggs and moved back from the road by Ryrie c.1918. The property may include remnants of a farm and orchards operated by Ryrie's sons Harry and Grant in the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century. Ryrie built his summer estate, Edgemere, on the opposite side of the road at the same time he acquired this property.
<b>Priority Level</b>	Medium



Figure 1: 1475 Lakeshore Road East, February 2009. (Town of Oakville)



Corporation of the  
Town of Oakville  
1225 Trafalgar Rd  
Oakville, ON  
L6H 0H3

1475 Lakeshore Rd. E.  
Cultural Heritage Landscape  
Inventory Map

LEGEND

-  Assessment Boundary
-  Building
-  CHL Study Area
-  Heritage District
-  Heritage Trail
-  Parkland
-  Park Trail
-  Road
-  Site Structures
-  Vegetation
-  Watercourse
-  Cemetery

Drawing not to scale



## 2. Key Recommendations

Priority = Medium

Rationale for priority level:

- All existing built and natural cultural heritage resources may not have been identified or included in current designation.

Recommendations for future action:

- Prepare a full evaluation report to document the site and its history and confirm and/or update the Town’s understanding of the cultural heritage value or interest and heritage attributes of the property, including landscape elements; and
- Amend the designation by-law to update the address and clarify or correct the statement of cultural heritage value or interest of the property and description of heritage attributes.

## 3. Documentation and Inventory of Built Form

List of Built Features:

- Georgian-style house and former stagecoach inn built in the 1830s, with a five-bay façade and symmetrically placed openings. A Neoclassical front entrance was added at a later point.
- Detached, double garage;
- Tennis court;
- Gazebo; and
- Paved lane-way with turning circle.

## 4. Documentation and Inventory of Natural Form

List of Natural Features:

- Three clipped Yew in the front turning circle;
- A massive Walnut on the front lawn;
- A ravine along the west property line, with a Walnut grove;
- Spruce, Sugar Maple, Cypress, Cedar, Hemlock/Cedar in a clump at the road; and
- A small putting green with two sand traps.

## 5. Design (Typology)

'X' all that apply	Categories of Cultural Heritage Landscape	Description
X	Designed Landscape	“...clearly defined landscape designed and created intentionally by man.”
X	Organically Evolved Landscape	“...results from an initial social, economic, administrative, and/or religious imperative and has developed in its present form in response to its natural environment”
	Relict Landscape (Evolved Landscape)	“...in which an evolutionary process came to an end at some time in the past.”

'X' all that apply	Categories of Cultural Heritage Landscape	Description
X	Continuing Landscape (Evolved Landscape)	“...retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and which the evolutionary process is still in progress.”
	<b>Associative Cultural Landscape</b>	“...justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic, or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent.”

## 6. Historical and Thematic Associations

The Crown patent for Lot 6, Concession III SDS was issued to John Bradley Sr. in 1806. He sold it to Barnett Griggs, who arrived with his wife and brother George from New Jersey. Hazel Chisholm Mathews writes: “when the states of Michigan and Illinois were being settled, many migrating families from New York passed this way and found a night’s lodging with Barnett Griggs”.<sup>1</sup> Griggs was eventually persuaded to enlarge his house to become an inn. In 1828 he was assessed as having a one-storey frame house with a fireplace. A few years later he was assessed for a two-storey house with three fireplaces. Shortly afterwards, he was listed as an innkeeper. Grigg’s inn was called “Halfway House”, as it was almost exactly halfway between Toronto and Hamilton on the Lakeshore Road. The road was a stage coach route: travellers stopped at Grigg’s Halfway House for refreshment and carriages often stopped to obtain fresh teams of horses.

Griggs sold the Lot 6 to Thompson Smith, who later sold it to Griggs’ grandson, Barnett Griggs Moore. The 1877 Map of Trafalgar Township shows B.G.Moore as owner of a 150-acre parcel on the north side of Lakeshore Road in Lot 6, Concession III SDS, with two buildings and extensive orchards.

James Ryrie purchased one-third of Lot 6 in 1906 and the remaining two-thirds in 1911. His sons Harry (Lt. Harry Sherwood Ryrie) and Grant (J. Grant Ryrie) planted a fruit orchard on the property and became known for their high-quality fruit. After the First World War, Ryrie moved the former inn some distance back from the road.<sup>2</sup> The current parcel is likely significantly smaller than the parcel owned by the Ryrie’s, but the history of the property since 1918 is not known.

James Ryrie (b. 1854) was a very successful Toronto jeweller whose business, Ryrie Bros., merged with Henry Birks Jewellers of Montreal in 1905. The business continued to operate a Toronto store called “Diamond Hall” at Yonge and Temperance in Toronto until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, first as Ryrie Bros. Ltd., after 1924 as “Ryrie-Birks Limited” and after 1942 as “Birks-Ellis-Ryrie”.<sup>3</sup> James Ryrie purchased property on the south side of Lakeshore Road in 1907 and built a large summer residence there in 1909, calling it “Edgemere”.<sup>4</sup> Although the Edgemere house is not extant, some features of the grounds survive at 1502 Lakeshore Road East.

## 7. Contextual Associations

Both the Ryrie Estate and the former Edgemere Estate were owned by James Ryrie at the turn of the century. As a former inn and stagecoach stop, the house at the Ryrie Estate is linked to Lakeshore Road East itself. However, the house has been moved back from the road, and the character of the road itself has been changed.

<sup>1</sup> Hazel Chisholm Mathews, *Oakville and the Sixteen: The History of an Ontario Port*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1953) as cited in By-law 1991-48.

<sup>2</sup> Frances Robin Ahern, *Oakville: A Small Town, 1900-1930* (Oakville: Oakville Historical Society, 1981) as cited in By-law 1991-48.

<sup>3</sup> In 1905, Ryrie Jewellers of Toronto merged with Henry Birks Jewellers to create Ryrie Bros. Limited with James Ryrie as president, W.M. Birks as vice-president and Harry Ryrie, secretary-treasurer. They operated from five-storey premises at 132-138 Yonge Street, Toronto.

<sup>4</sup> Town of Oakville, “Joshua’s Creek Information Station” at [www.oakville.ca/culturerec/is-joshua.html](http://www.oakville.ca/culturerec/is-joshua.html).

## 8. Evaluation (O. Reg 9/06)

O.Reg.9/06 Criteria	Criteria Potentially Met (Y/N)	Potential Justification
<i>1. The property has design value or physical value because it,</i>		
i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material, or construction method,	Y	The house may be a representative example of a Georgian-style house of the 1830s, and a rare example of an inn and stagecoach stop from the 1830s. The cultural landscape of the inn has been altered by its set back from the road.
ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or	N	Not shown.
iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	N	Not shown.
<i>2. The property has historical value or associative value because it,</i>		
i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community,	Y	The house is associated with Barnett Grigg and his <i>Halfway House</i> inn and stagecoach stop.  The property is associated with wealthy Toronto jeweller James Ryrie, of Ryrie Bros. Ltd., who owned the property and relocated the house but likely never lived there, and Ryrie's sons Harry and Grant, who farmed and maintained an orchard there. Some of the mature landscape features may date to the Ryrie ownership period.
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or		Not known.
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	N	Not known.
<i>3. The property has contextual value because it,</i>		
i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,	Y	The Ryrie estate may be important in defining the character of this section of Lakeshore Road, as it is one of the earlier estate homes. The property includes a number of mature trees and well-established natural features.
ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or	N	The property may be linked to Edgemere at 1502 Lakeshore Rd. E., as both were owned by James Ryrie in the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century.
iii. is a landmark.	N	Not shown.

## 9. Photographic Documentation



Figure 3: View of approach to 1475 Lakeshore Road East, from street. (AB, 2015)

## 10. Analysis & Recommendations

### Potential Heritage Value:

The house may be a representative example of a Georgian-style house of the 1830s, and a rare example of a former inn and stagecoach stop from the 1830s. The cultural landscape of the inn was altered when it was moved back from the road c.1918. The house is also associated with Barnett Grigg and his “Halfway House” inn and stagecoach stop.

The property is associated with Toronto jeweller James Ryrie, who owned the property and relocated the house, and his sons Harry and Grant, who farmed and maintained an orchard there. Some of the mature trees and landscape features may date from the Ryrie ownership period.

The Ryrie estate may be important in defining the character of this section of Lakeshore Road East, because of the cultural landscape first established by the Ryries, including the house well set back from the road, and the mature trees and landscaping. The property may have historical links to Edgemere at 1502 Lakeshore Road East, as both were owned by James Ryrie in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Actions:

The property at 1475 Lakeshore Road East is designated under Part IV of the OHA (By-law 1991-048). The reasons for designation are attached as Appendix A. The existing by-law protects the property and refers to some of property’s key features. However, it could be improved to conform to post-2005 requirements for designation by-laws by providing a

statement of value and a description of heritage attributes. A full evaluation of the property would provide the information necessary to write an appropriate statement of cultural heritage value in keeping with the current requirements of the OHA. It might also offer the opportunity to document features of the landscape including built components, natural features and topography, especially those that might date to the Ryrie's ownership period.

Because the property is already protected by the existing by-law, these improvements are not urgent, but would clarify the heritage value of the property for permitting purposes. Section 30.1 OHA provides that municipal council may amend a designation by-law without going through the designation process again, if the purpose of the amendment is to clarify or correct the statement explaining the property's cultural heritage value or interest of the description of the property's heritage attributes.

A 'medium' priority level is recommended for the following reason:

- All existing built and natural cultural heritage resources may not have been identified or included in current designation.

## 11. Sources

Town of Oakville, "By-law 1991-048: A by-law to designate 1475 Lakeshore Road East as a property of historical, architectural and contextual value and interest." 1991.

Town of Oakville, "Joshua's Creek Information Station" at [www.oakville.ca/culture/rec/is-joshua.html](http://www.oakville.ca/culture/rec/is-joshua.html)

## 12. Appendix A

### **SCHEDULE "A" TO BY-LAW 1991-48**

#### HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The land which is known as 1475 Lakeshore Road East was patented in 1806 by John Bradley Sr. Mr. Bradley then sold it to Barnett Griggs. Mr. Griggs came to Oakville with his wife and his brother, George, from New Jersey. He then settled on Lot 6 of Third Concession SDS. In the book Oakville and the Sixteen it states that "when the States of Michigan and Illinois were being settled, many migrating families from New York passed this way (through Oakville) and found a night's lodging with Barnett Griggs." Word soon spread that one could find a night's accommodation at Barnett Griggs' house, this persuaded him to enlarge his house into an inn. In 1828 he was assessed as having a one-storey frame house with a fireplace. A few short years later Griggs was assessed for a two storey house with three fireplaces, and shortly after that Barnett Griggs was listed as an innkeeper. One of the main reasons why Barnett Griggs' Inn did so well was that it was almost exactly halfway between Toronto and Hamilton. This is the reason for the name Halfway House. The Lakeshore Road was well travelled by many stage coaches; these carriages sometimes stopped at Barnett Griggs Halfway House where there were fresh teams of horses available.

Barnett Griggs sold this property to Thompson Smith and in 1866 Thompson Smith sold it to Barnett Griggs Moore (grandson of Barnett Griggs). James Ryrie, a jeweler from Toronto, purchased one-third of this property in 1906 and the remaining two-thirds in 1911. It states in the book Oakville: A Small Town that "After the first World War Mr. Ryrie moved Halfway House some distance back from the road". It was then occupied by his newly married son, Harry. Harry and his brother Grant then began to grow fruit on the property and they became well-known for the excellent fruit which came from their orchards.

#### ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

This house, which was built in the 1830's, exhibits some of the classic characteristics of the Georgian style of architecture. Some of the strong Georgian features are the large amount of wall space between windows, the steep roof, the multi-paned

windows, the symmetrical placement of the windows between storeys, and the chimneys at either end of the house. This house has some Neoclassical features as well, for instance the entrance way is a Neoclassical style entablature.

There have been many changes in the appearance of the house since Barnett Griggs owned it in the 1830's. Some of the changes include the tearing down of the Georgian style front verandah and putting up a Neoclassical entablature. There have been shutters placed on all the windows. The curvature at the top of the windows has been squared off. Finally, the window above the entrance was reduced to half its original size. However, even through all the changes, this house still exhibits classic Georgian characteristics and closely resembles the Halfway House Barnett Griggs owned in the 1830's.

#### **CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE**

1475 Lakeshore Road East is set back far from Lakeshore Road. There is very mature vegetation within the lot, especially facing Lakeshore Road East.