

APPENDIX B

Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report
The Woodlands
1242 Bronte Road, Oakville, Ontario



East elevation of 1242 Bronte Road, 2024. Source: *Town of Oakville Planning Services Staff*

Town of Oakville
Heritage Planning
Authors: Kristen McLaughlin, Carolyn Van Sligtenhorst
April 2024

1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report, or CHER, is to determine if the subject property merits designation under Part IV, section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA). A Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report (CHER) provides an overview of the property based on primary and secondary research and visual inspection of the property. It also includes an evaluation against the prescribed criteria of Ontario Regulation 9/06, including design/physical value, historical/associative value, and contextual value. This CHER also includes a draft Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and identification of heritage attributes.

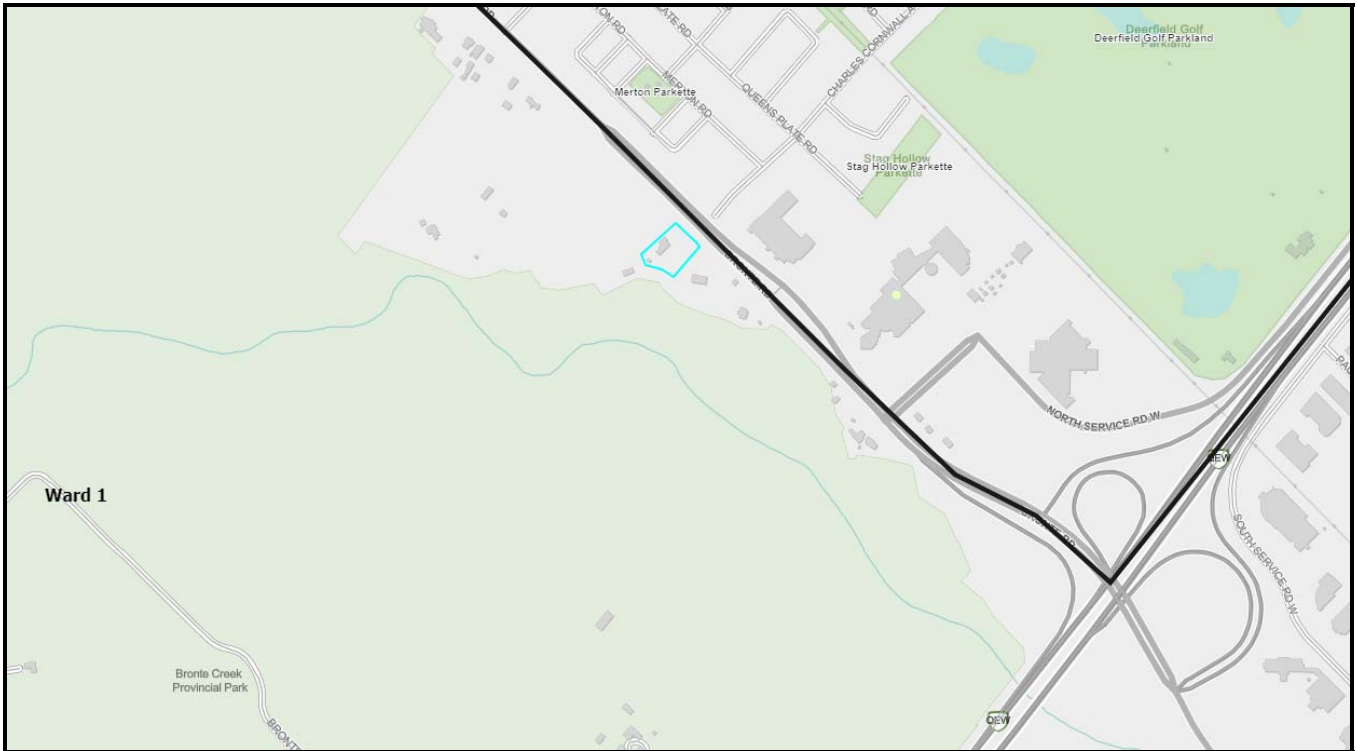
The designation of heritage properties is legislated by the OHA and is supported at a provincial level by the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019). The conservation of cultural heritage resources is also supported by the Region of Halton Official Plan, the Livable Oakville Plan, the North Oakville East Secondary Plan, and the North Oakville West Secondary Plan.

The property at 1242 Bronte Road is located on the west side of Bronte Road between the Queen Elizabeth Way and Upper Middle Road West. The property is located within the territory covered by Treaty 14, which was signed in 1806 between the Mississaugas and the British Crown. The property was added as a 'listed' property to Oakville's *Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest (NOT Designated)* as "The Woodlands - this property has potential cultural heritage value for its historic farmstead, including the c.1865 farmhouse once owned by James White."

This CHER has evaluated the property in accordance with the requirements of the OHA and finds that the property meets four of the criteria of Regulation 9/06. It is therefore recommended that the property be designated under Part IV, section 29 of the OHA.

2. Subject Property

The property at 1242 Bronte Road is located on the west side of Bronte Road between Upper Middle Road West and the Queen Elizabeth Way, on part of Lot 31 in the Second Concession South of Dundas Street (SDS). The property is located within the territory covered by Treaty 14, which was signed in 1806 between the Mississaugas and the British Crown.



Location map: Subject property is outlined in blue. April 2024. Source: Town of Oakville GIS

Legal description: CON 2 SDS PT LOT 31 20R15001 PART 1; TOWN OF OAKVILLE

3. Background Research

Design and Physical Value

The house at 1242 Bronte Road, known as The Woodlands, is a two-and-a-half-storey single detached stone house with stucco cladding.¹ The home has design value as a representative example of an evolved Gothic Revival farmhouse, built between 1864 and 1875.²



Circa 1980s photo of the subject property. Source: Town of Oakville Planning Services Staff

Gothic Revival Architecture (1830-1900)

In Ontario, Gothic Revival style reflects a renewed interest in the building forms and styles of various English Gothic medieval periods, as well as the years preceding the English Renaissance, so a variety of features, forms, and elements from differing Gothic periods are often used simultaneously on one building. Common elements are: decorative vergeboard and a roof trim decorated with curvilinear patterns; numerous dormers and gables, finials, and pinnacles; bay windows; verandahs; and tall chimneys. Gothic Revival houses could also be plainer houses with decorative Gothic elements. Gothic cottages, which could be one or one-and-a-half storeys, were promoted as a cheap country dwelling house in the *Canada Farmer* in 1865, and variations on this, such as the centre-gable and L-shaped design, are common in Ontario.³

¹ 1931 Census of Canada indicates the house is made of stone and worth \$10,300; Town of Oakville planning files, July 19, 1977, state the house was built with “stones from Twelve Mile Creek” and even when it was rebuilt in some places after a 1905 fire it was with “indigenous materials”

² Town of Oakville planning files, “Heritage Structure Report”, 1977; 1861 Census of Canada shows the Whites still living in a frame 1 ½ storey house. 1871 census shows “one house under construction, one uninhabited (same?) and one inhabited. This points to the house being built around this time or at least another structure on the 150-acre lot. 1891 Census shows details of the house (stone, 2 storeys) but the 1881 census does not specify. The 1875 collector’s roll shows a value of Lot 31 of \$1,000 more than the previous year.

³ Mikel, Robert. *Ontario House Styles: The distinctive architecture of the province’s 18th and 19th century homes*, Toronto: James Lorimer & Co., pg. 61

Subject Property Design

The house at 1242 Bronte Road was built as a Gothic Revival farmhouse and retains several representative elements of this architectural style. The house did have a fire in 1905, but the materials used in the rebuild were from the local area and continued a similar, if slightly different from the original, Gothic Revival style of architecture.⁴

The image below shows the original house, prior to the fire. As the house is constructed of stone, the main body of the house was retained after the fire. However, the wood elements, such as the bay windows and the roof, appear to have been reconstructed. The original intersecting gable roof was replaced with a taller hip roof that is flat in the middle of the building. This increased height would have provided additional living space in the third storey. The wood front porch, windows, and trim would have also been replaced at this time.



A 1902 photo of the original house, pre-1905 fire. Source: *Gardens of Canada*



1977 photo showing the same angle with different details, post-1905 fire. Source: *Town of Oakville planning files*

⁴ Town of Oakville planning files; Craig, Martha. *The Gardens of Canada: Burlington, Oakville, and District*, 1902, Oakville Historical Society



East elevation, 2024. Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff

The house was originally in an L-shape with Gothic gables, a common early design for Gothic Revival farmhouses in the mid-1800s.⁵ The house has a truncated hip roof with four gables on the north, east, and south elevations.



Google aerial showing the massing of the house, with the truncated hip roof on the main portion (the “L” on the west elevation is a peaked hip roof) and the further garage extension on the west/south elevation. Source: Google

⁵ See 149 Dunn and other examples from the book *Old Oakville*



North elevation, 2024. Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff



South elevation, 2024. Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff

According to previous research, the house is built with local stone from the Twelve Mile Creek and stuccoed over.⁶ The house has wooden soffit with decorative bargeboard on the gabled sides. This bargeboard was added in the 1905 renovations. The roof trim has boxed cornice returns with frieze and decorative wooden brackets. In the 1902 photo, these are a different design, but a similar idea was incorporated into the post-fire design.



Photo showing the bargeboard and wooden soffit with decorative brackets, 2024. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*



South elevation, 2024. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*

To the rear of the house is an attached garage. It has a saltbox roof shape with a wooden cupola on the top, potentially for ventilation. According to a heritage structure report circa 1990, it was originally a “summer house” (kitchen) that has been modified over the years and now serves as a two-car garage and rear entrance. It

⁶ Town of Oakville, “Heritage Structure Report”, c. 1990

goes on to say that in 1964 an addition was added to enlarge the garage, likely the saltbox portion on the south side which would have provided additional space for cars once it was converted to a garage.



West elevation, 2024. Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff

The large front wraparound porch is an outstanding feature of the house. These types of front porches with the second-storey balcony became more common in Gothic Revival style houses in Ontario from 1830 to the 1850s-1860s.⁷ The porch has large Doric columns. They were originally slimmer but were replaced with the current ones in the 1940s.⁸ The porch has wooden brackets, ceiling, and beams. The brackets are smaller versions of the ones in the roof trim. It also has a second-storey balcony with decorative pickets and posts; these were replaced in the late 20th century and were made to match their historical counterparts.⁹



West elevation, 2024. Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff

⁷ Macrae, Anthony. *The Ancestral Roof: Domestic Architecture of Upper Canada*. Toronto, ON: Clarke, Irwin, & Co., 1963, pg. 239

⁸ Town of Oakville planning files and photography; Town of Oakville, "Oakville heritage community study: historic building record and evaluation", 1977

⁹ Photography comparison

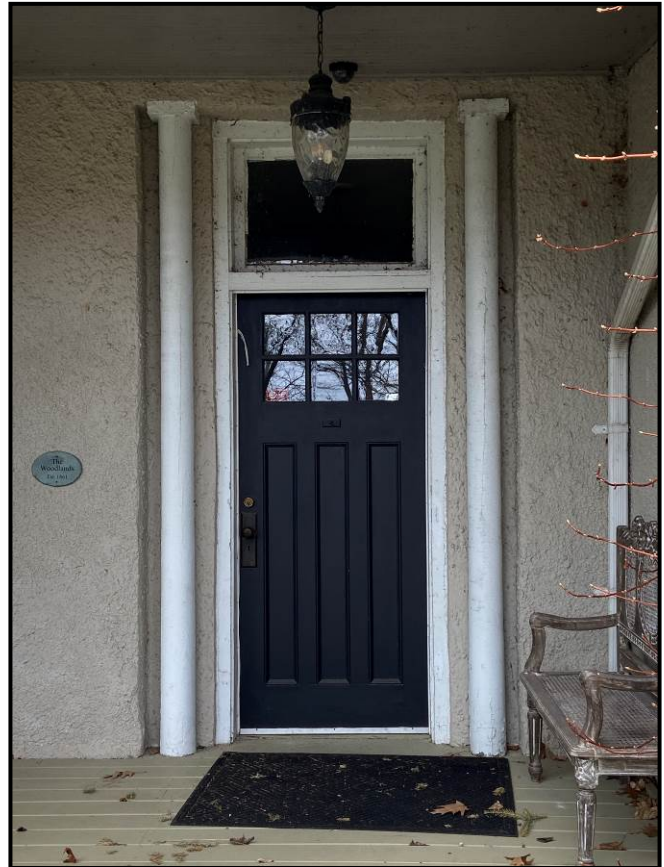


View of the columns with second-storey porch, 2024. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*



Under the porch looking south, 2024. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*

The front entrance has two recessed columns with a large transom window above the door. This is representative of houses from the 1850s and 1860s but was likely constructed after the 1905 fire. The columns match those found on windows on the front and north elevations, which we know were replaced in 1905.¹⁰ The front door is an early 20th century addition.



Front door under the porch with the balcony on top, 2024. Source: *Town of Oakville Planning Staff*

The fenestration on the east elevation (front façade) is characteristic of an L-shaped Gothic Revival farmhouse with some unique features. A small, rounded window sits at the top of the gable face in both front gables. The larger gable contains a 1/1 wooden window with a decorative drip edge above the window, which is visible in the 1902 photo of the house. The windows have wooden louvered shutters and wooden frames and sills. There is a sash window with sidelights on the first storey. Historically, this window was a bay window but after the 1905 fire, it was built flush with the wall. Recessed columns like those at the front door frame the window.

The remainder of the historic windows on the house are wooden 1/1 windows with louvered wooden shutters, trim and sills. In the 1970s photos, some of the windows still have their 2/2 wooden storms over the 1/1 sash windows.

¹⁰ Ibid.



Undated Town photo showing the 2/2 style storm windows over the first storey windows. *Source: Town of Oakville planning files*



Close-up of the sash window with sidelights on the north elevation, which matches another one on the east elevation, 2024. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*

The fenestration on the south elevation includes 1/1 windows with wooden frames, sills, and shutters. No decorative drip edges remain on this elevation. There are also more modern single pane windows and another large window with sidelights on the first storey. This window replaced one with thick wooden muntins and several small panes of square glass, likely added in the mid-20th century.



1977 photo showing the thick wooden muntins and square panes of glass on the first storey windows. *Source: Town of Oakville planning files*



Modern windows have replaced some of the original windows on the south wall, 2024. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*



Photo of the south elevation from 1967. Source: *Town of Oakville planning files*

The north elevation retains some historical window forms, as well as modern replacements. This elevation has a rectangular window under the gable as opposed to the circular ones on the east elevation. However, the drip edge is the same on the second-storey window, and the sash window with sidelights and columns is also the same as the one on the east elevation. This was likely replaced at the same time as the other one around 1905, as they are both bay windows in the 1902 photo and were both damaged in the fire.

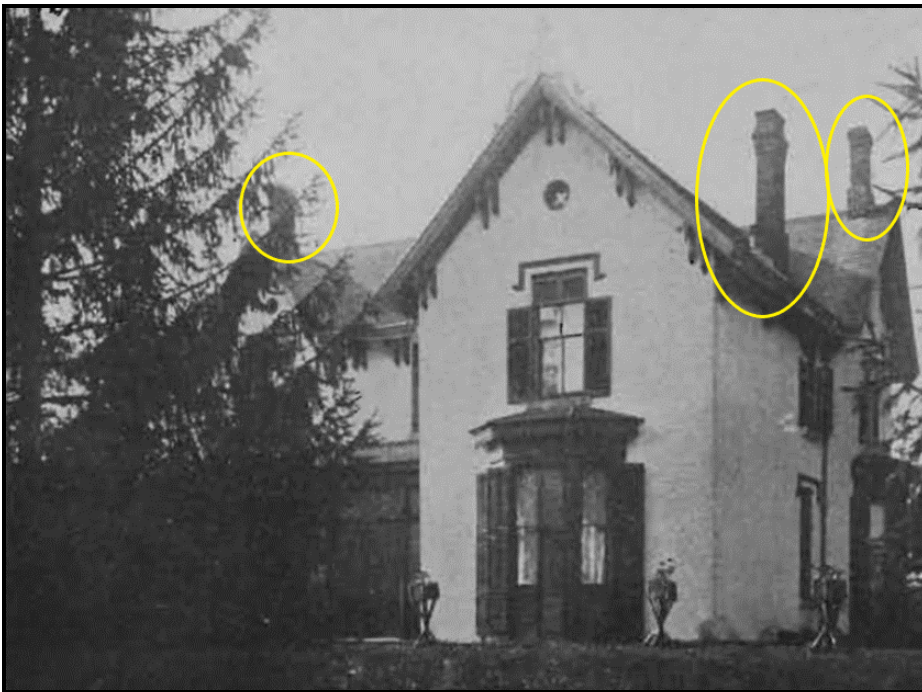


West and north elevations, 2024. Source: *Town of Oakville Planning Staff*



Close up of one of the windows with drip edge on the north elevation, 2024. Note the wood sills and frame. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*

The house appears to have most of its original chimneys. The chimneys on the south and west elevation remain in their historical locations; the one on the north elevation appears to have been shifted back slightly, possibly post-1905 fire given its location in the 1902 photo. However, based on their appearances, they were likely rebuilt, as the dentil details are not present and the one on the south elevation is shorter than its historical counterpart.



1902 photo showing three chimneys looking north. *Source: Gardens of Canada*



The yellow circle indicates a chimney in its known original location; the orange circles indicate chimneys likely moved after the 1905 fire and when the roof was enlarged; the blue chimney is likely in its historical location. *Source: Google, edited*



Left: Three chimneys looking south from north elevation. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*



Right: Chimneys on the west and north elevations, 2024. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*

In addition to the house, the grounds hold other elements of cultural heritage value. First is the lakestone fireplace and chimney that stands in the front yard, a remnant of a worker’s cottage that once stood there, built by George Chew Atkin in the 1920s for farmhands. The house was demolished in the 1980s.¹¹



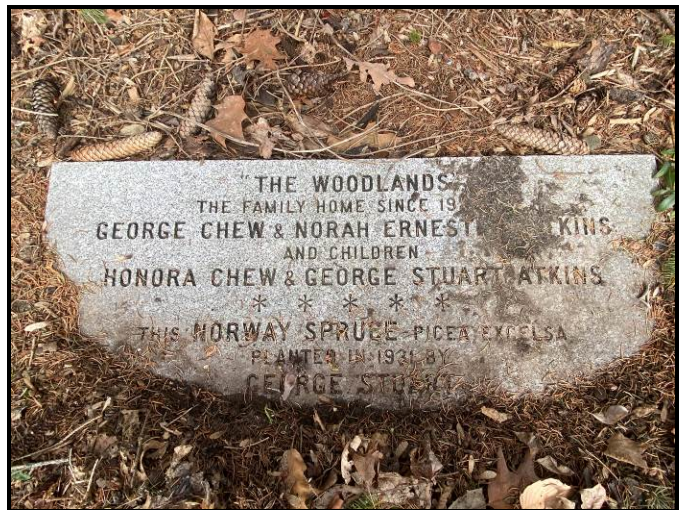
Historic chimney standing near the main house, 2024. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*

The property also contains many historic mature trees, historically a significant part of this property which is underscored by its name “The Woodlands”. Of particular significance is a historic Norway Spruce tree planted in 1931 by George S. Atkins.



Large Norway Spruce tree to the south of the house, along with other large mature trees, 2024. *Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff*

¹¹ Town planning files; Laurie Smith Heritage Consulting, “Inventory report: 1242 Bronte Road, The Woodlands”, 2015



Large Norway Spruce tree and associated plaque, 2024. Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff

The tree is accompanied by a plaque which reads: *“The Woodlands”; the family home since 1921; George Chew and Nora Ernestine Atkins and children Honora Chew and George Stuart Atkins; This Norway Spruce Picea Excelsa planted in 1931 by George Stuart.*

In summary, the house has design value as a Gothic Revival farmhouse with unique characteristics. Notable elements of this style on the subject house include: the massing in an L-shape with gable faces and dormers; wooden soffit and boxed frieze with decorative bargeboards and brackets; stone structure with stucco cladding; front porch and entrance, including recessed columns beside the front door and large transom window; porch with round wooden columns, wooden ceiling, wooden brackets, and wooden beams, with second-storey porch and railings; the fenestration on the south, north, and east elevations, including the drip edges and wooden sills and frames; and also, the stone chimney and fireplace remnants on the property.

The property also has cultural heritage value for its historic stone chimney and fireplace remnants, as well as its almost 100-year-old Norway Spruce tree planted by George S. Atkins.

Historical and Associative Value

The property at 1242 Bronte Road is located on lands that were part of the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. In 1805, the Mississaugas and the British Crown reached an agreement in which the Mississaugas ceded almost 71,000 acres of land. In return they were given £1000 of trade goods, promised the sole right of the fisheries in the Twelve Mile Creek, Sixteen Mile Creek, and the Credit River, and a strip of land on the banks of these waterways. The agreement was formalized with the signing of the Head of the Lake Treaty, No. 14, on September 5, 1806.¹² The subject property is in the territory of Treaty No. 14.¹³ However, portions of the property also fell into Twelve Mile Creek, which was part of the later Treaty 22.¹⁴

The Village of Bronte began at the mouth of the Twelve Mile Creek (now Bronte Creek). From its source in Beverly Swamp near Morriston, Ontario, to its mouth on Lake Ontario, Twelve Mile Creek is almost 51 kilometers (31.5 miles) long. The creek is a waterway in the Lake Ontario watershed, which runs through both Hamilton and Halton Regions. Indigenous names for the creek are Esquisink (last out creek), Eshkwessing, or ishkwessin (that which lies at the end).¹⁵ By 1760, when French surveyors identified the creek on a map of the north shore of Lake Ontario, they called it “Rivière de Gravois”, or gravelly river.¹⁶

Being so close to the Twelve Mile Creek, and once having the creek run through its property, there are known Indigenous archaeological sites in the vicinity of the subject property and on its historical lot, notably lithic debitage and stone tool sites.¹⁷ No known excavations have been performed on the current sectioned property but there is potential for archaeological sites.



Figure 1: Postcard showing Twelve Mile Creek and its flats further south, undated¹⁸

Like other major streams that flow into Lake Ontario, the Bronte Creek watershed offered significant economic potential to early settlers. The land was “generally quite flat and very fertile”, and the surrounding forests yielded “the first exports of the area, lumber and potash”.¹⁹ The banks at the top of the valley have sandy loamy

¹² Debwevin: The Oakville Truth Project, *Treaties 2 & 23, 1820*, pg. 9

¹³ 1806 Wilmot Survey; Mississaugas of the Credit GIS Treaty Map

¹⁴ Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, “Treaty Map”

¹⁵ Wikipedia, “Bronte Creek”, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bronte_Creek

¹⁶ Brimacombe, Philip, *The Story of Bronte Harbour: The Early Days*. Oakville, ON: Oakville Historical Society, 1976

¹⁷ AMICK, “Stage 1 archaeological background study for the Merton tertiary plan”, 2017, pg. 40

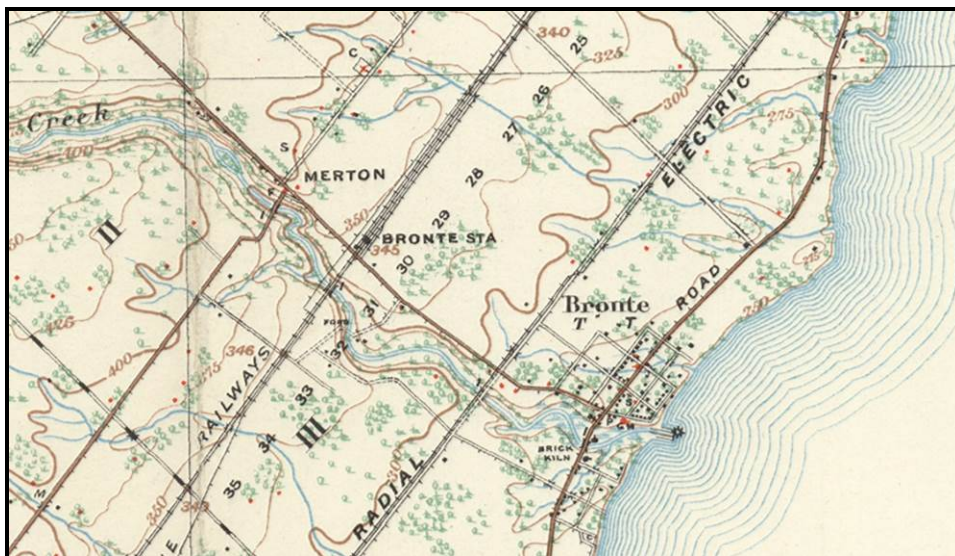
¹⁸ Image courtesy of Bronte Historical Society, via Oakville Images

¹⁹ Ibid.

soil, which was good for farming. The land in the area was forested with oak, maple, and pine, as well as basswood, elm, and ash trees. Great stands of white pine were located on the banks of the creek near the subject property.²⁰ White oak was valued for the construction of schooners on the Great Lakes, and tall trees of pine and oak were used for ship masts.²¹ Logging began in the area in the 1820s, when much of the lumber was used for the construction of the Welland Canal.²² Along the length of the creek were many excellent potential mill site locations. Many of these lots were initially used for lumber by settlers, which was shipped down the river to Bronte, a growing port in the early 1800s.

North of Bronte Village, along the Twelve Mile Creek, another village—the Village of Merton—had formed, the boundaries of which are present day Burloak Drive, Third Line, the Canadian National Railway, and Upper Middle Road. It was first settled around 1810 and its first post office opened in 1852.²³ The intersection of Bronte Road and today’s QEW was the centre of Merton—just south of the subject property. The roads would have been mostly narrow dirt tracks, and the tree canopy would have been thick.²⁴ At its peak there were around 50 buildings in Merton, as well as large orchards and farms.

By the 1840s, Bronte was the main port servicing the area of Merton. The mid-1800s were prosperous not only for the ports but for the inland agricultural areas like Merton. The growth of rail in the later 1800s slowed down the economic activity of Bronte’s port. This was followed by an economic decline in the area in the 1860s and 1870s, when lumber and wheat markets both crashed.²⁵ During this time, many farmers in the area looked to orchard production as a means of filling the gap. Mixed farming became the main agricultural style in the area; farmers would often have orchards, cereal crops, produce, and livestock.²⁶



1923 Department of Military Defence map for Oakville-Burlington, with Merton identified. Source: Ontario Council of University Libraries.

The village of Merton did not grow much, and mostly disappeared with the creation of the QEW in the 1930s.²⁷

²⁰ Town of Oakville planning files, “Bronte Creek Provincial Park”, report, pg. 8

²¹ Ibid., pg. 52

²² Ibid., pg. 53

²³ Trafalgar Township Historical Society, <https://images.ourontario.ca/TrafalgarTownship/59063/data>

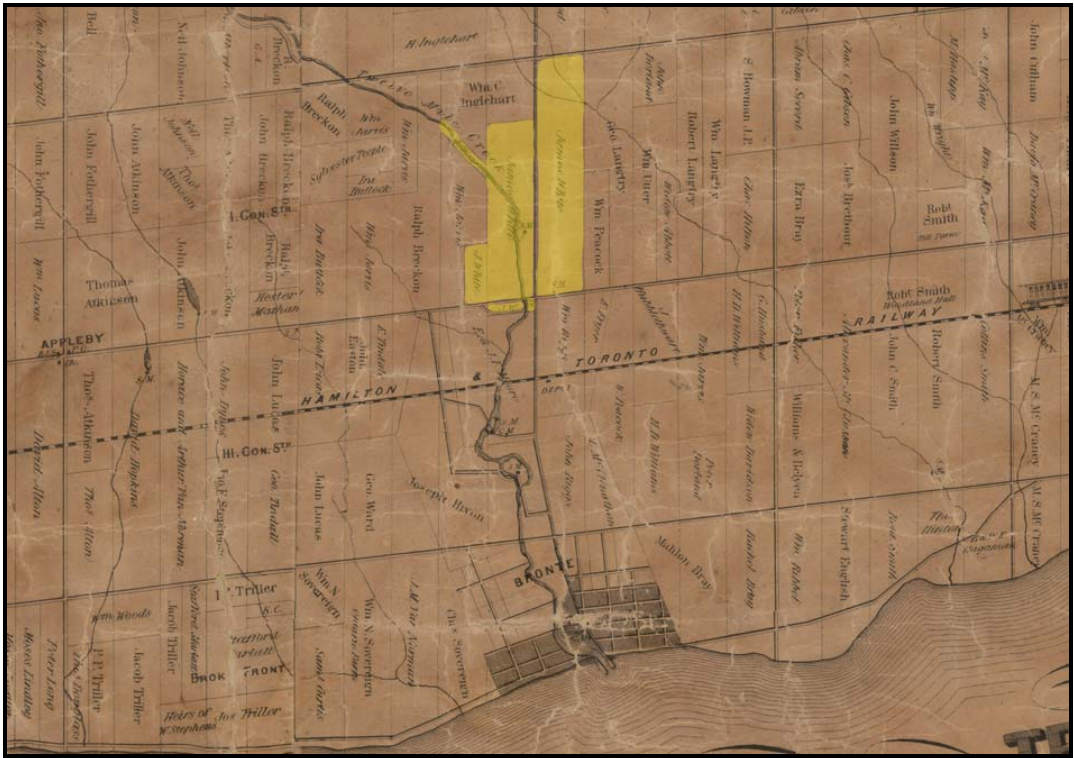
²⁴ *Oakville Beaver*, “History buff gives Oakville residents a glimpse into their past”, March 11, 2016

https://www.insidehalton.com/news/history-buff-gives-oakville-residents-a-glimpse-into-their-past/article_d9fee963-e20f-58e0-bf49-232de3f5d962.html?

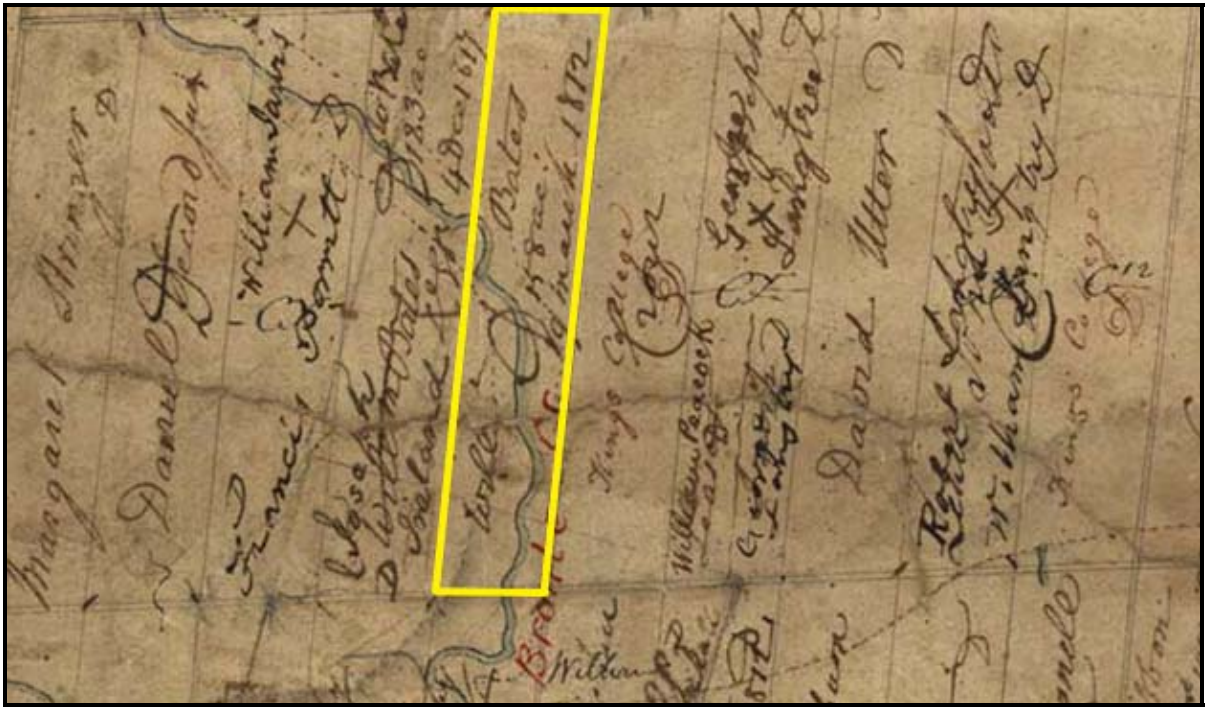
²⁵ Town of Oakville planning files, “Bronte Creek Provincial Park”, report, pg. 30

²⁶ Ibid., pg. 32

²⁷ Turcotte, Dorothy. *Places and People on Bronte Creek*. Guelph, ON: Ampersand Printing, 1993, pg. 7



Historical lots (discussed in detail further) in context with Trafalgar Township and Bronte Village. Source: 1858 Tremaine Map



Wilmot's Trafalgar Township Survey, 1806, edited in 1812, showing Lot 31, Second Concession South of Dundas Street highlighted in yellow. The neighbouring Lot 30, later part of the White Farm, was still owned by King's College. Source: Archives of Ontario

The creek lands were ceded by the Mississaugas in Treaty No. 22, which was signed in February of 1820, when the Mississaugas were experiencing duress due to land encroachment, the depletion of fish stocks, and a population that was in severe decline. Treaty 22 stipulated that in exchange for ceding "about 20,000" acres of

their land to the British Crown, the Mississaugas would receive a 200-acre parcel of land on the Credit River, and the profits from the sale of the remaining lands on the Twelve and Sixteen Mile Creeks.²⁸

In 1825, the Crown granted Lot 31 to William Bates.²⁹ He was operating the sawmill on the property (later noted in various maps) by 1833.³⁰ In the 1830s, Bates and his family cleared land here and began cultivation. Remains of this sawmill race and dam were present into the 1970s. Lumber export from this region was high during the Bates' ownership.

During Bates' ownership, a local legend says that a cave on the historic property of The Woodlands, along Bronte Creek, was where William Lyon Mackenzie hid in his escape during the 1837 Rebellion; however, his papers never mention such a cave and it's mostly viewed as a local legend.³¹ Even still, people were telling the story as far back as the early 1900s; the photo below depicts a field trip for students from Merton School visiting the cave on the subject property. The land is now within Bronte Creek Provincial Park.



Students visiting the cave on subject property where Lyon Mackenzie King supposedly hid during his escape, circa 1915. Source: *Trafalgar Township Historical Society*

Below is a summary of the owners of the subject property from the Crown patent to the current owners. Some owners held the property for relatively short periods of time. In many cases, information about the purchasers was limited to only that contained within the real estate transaction documents. As such, not all owners will be discussed in the CHER. Rather, the focus will be on persons of note, with a focus on the most likely candidate to have built, or commissioned the construction of, the property's building or buildings; on anyone who was significant to the community; or on anyone who lived on the subject property for an extended period.

²⁸ Debwewin: The Oakville Truth Project, *Treaties 22 & 23, 1820*, pg. 10

²⁹ Patent, dated November 12, 1825, between the Crown and William Bates, for 200 acres.

³⁰ Town of Oakville planning files, "Bronte Creek Provincial Park", report, pg. 53

³¹ *Ontario Living*, "The legend of Twelve Mile Creek", November, 1986, pg. 39

Lot 31 (subject lot)

Name of Owner(s)	Acreage or Lot	Years of Ownership
Crown	200 acres	1806-1825
William Bates	Ibid.	1825
Byron (?) Bates	"Part of Lot 31"	1825-1841
John White	"Southerly half"	1841-1849
James White	150 acres, "southerly half"	1849-1877
David Watson Campbell (leased to Celinda White, wife of James White)	150 acres "Southerly part"	1877-1898
Paul Campbell	150 acres, part of Lot 31	1898-1921
George Chew Atkins	150 acres	"south ½ and south ½ of north ½ except 37 12 acres"
Woodlands Orchards Ltd.	150 acres	1923-1932
Norah Atkins	150 acres	1932-1953
George Stuart Atkins	Part Lot 31	1953-2001
Victor Enns	Part Lot 31	2001-2004
Current owners	Part Lot 31	2004-present

Lot 30 (related east lot)

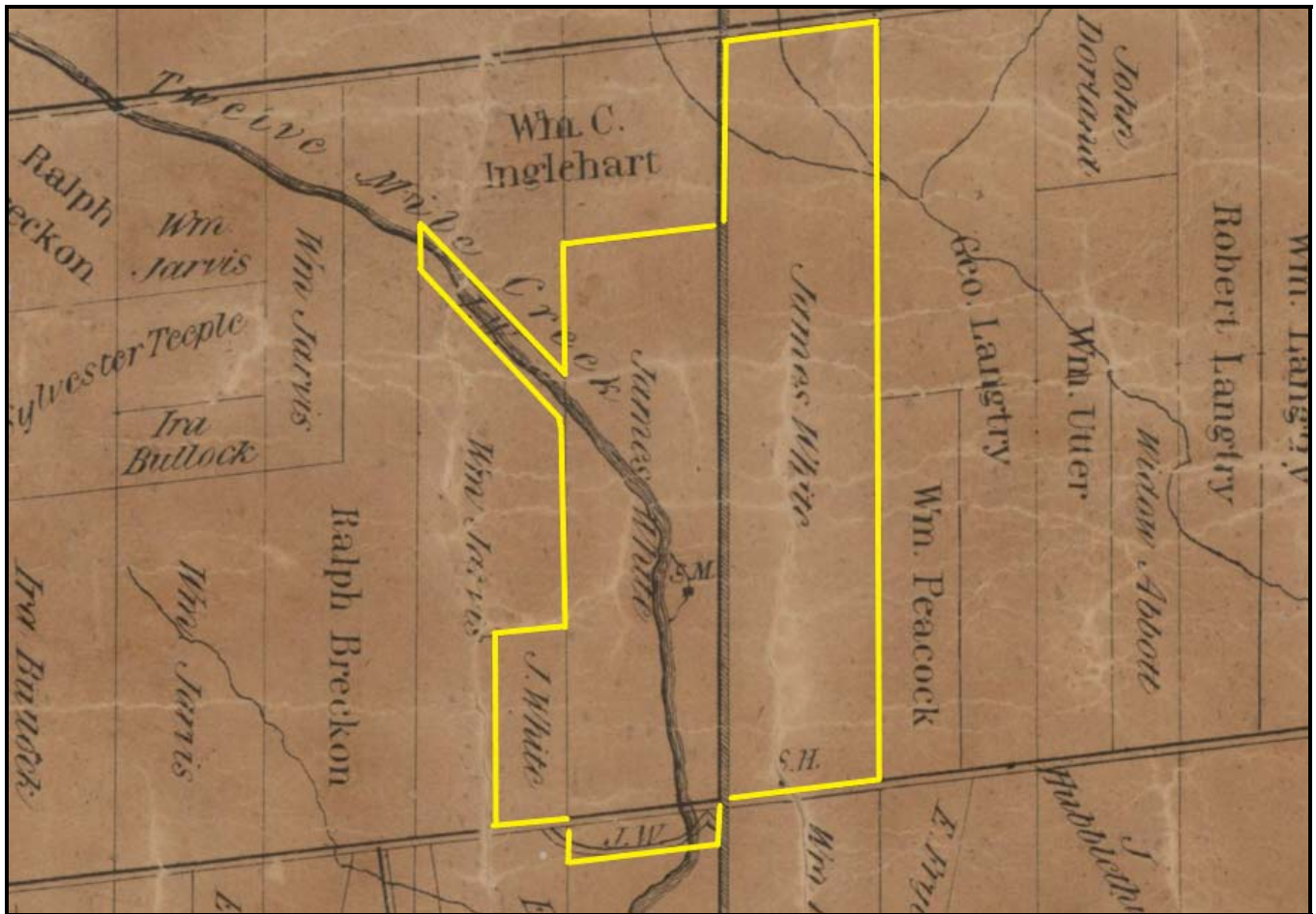
Name of Owner(s)	Acreage or Lot	Years of Ownership
Crown	200 acres	1806-1828
King's College	Ibid.	1828-1870
James White	Ibid	1870-1877
David Watson Campbell	Ibid.	1877-1898
Paul Cambell	Part of Lot 30	1898-1921
George Chew Atkins	Part of Lot 30	1921-1923
Woodlands Orchards Ltd.	Part of Lot 30	1923-1990s Note: unclear how this was later subdivided

Lot 32 (related west lot)

Name of Owner(s)	Acreage or Lot	Years of Ownership
Crown	200 acres	1806-1825
William Bates	100 acres	1825
David Bates	100 acres	1825
Walter Bates	Ibid.	1825-1830
Joseph ???	Ibid.	1830-1848
John White	Ibid.	1848-1860
James White	Part of Lot 32	1860-1877
David Watson Campbell	36 acres	1877-1898
Paul Campbell	Ibid.	1898-1921
George Chew Atkins	Ibid.	1921-1923
Woodlands Orchards Ltd.	Ibid.	1923-1932

Norah Atkins	Ibid.	1932-1960
Honora Chew Atkins	Part of Lot 31 and 32	1960-1971
Maurice Sidney Flint	Ibid.	1971
Halton Region Conservation Authority	Ibid.	1971-present

William Bates was one of the earliest settlers in the area, known as Merton village.³² He was also a farmer in Saltfleet Township (Hamilton). The Bates family owned Lot 31 and part of 32 until they sold the land in 1841 to John White.³³ John White, James White's brother, owned both lots before he sold them to James. However, it is likely the brothers worked on the property together during John and then James' ownership.³⁴ James White is listed as the owner on the 1858 Tremaine map for Lot 30 below, as well, however, it is likely he was leasing it from King's College as he didn't officially purchase it from them until 1870.



George Tremaine's "County of Halton" survey, 1858, with the southern portion of Lot 31 and Lot 30 that were owned by James White highlighted in yellow. We can see a sawmill (S.M.) exists on the property. A portion of Lot 32 was also owned by White, and the road that went over the creek south of the property was also owned by White. Despite the sales happening officially later, it appears White was operating the lands at this time. *Source: University of Toronto*

³² Trafalgar Township Historical Society, <https://images.ourontario.ca/TrafalgarTownship/59063/data>

³³ LRO Instrument 42A(?), being a Bill and Sale, dated February 15, 1841, between Byron (?) Bates and John White, for 100 acres of southerly half; LRO Instrument 194, being a Bill and Sale, dated February 15, 1849, between John White and James White, being the southerly part.

³⁴ John White is later a plaintiff in the selling of James' land in 1877.



John (1811-1897) and James White (1810-1899) were born in Ireland. They moved to Canada as children in 1823, were educated in Toronto, and started a dry goods business.³⁵ They owned various pieces of land and sawmills in the region. John White was active in politics and served as the Liberal MP for Halton in the 1840s, and James was an MPP For Halton Region.³⁶

Photo of John White, undated. No photos of James could be found.
Source: *Find a Grave*

James White purchased Lot 31 in 1848, a portion of Lot 32 in 1860, and Lot 30 in 1870. However, he was likely running the farm on Lot 30, 31, and 32, then owned by his brother. The first house he built on the land—a frame one-and-a-half-storey house—is estimated to be from 1845.³⁷ This house stood until the early 2000s, when it was integrated into a new build at the address of 1200 Bronte Road.³⁸



Left: The 1845 farmhouse standing on the cliff edge of the Bronte Creek valley. The Woodlands house stands farther back on the raised portion to the right of the image. Source: *Trafalgar Township Historical Society*

Right: The same farmhouse still present in 2000; photo taken for a geological report for the new house built in 2003 that incorporated the historic 1845 structure. Source: *Town of Oakville planning files*

James White and his wife, Celinda Buck, were married in 1843. They lived in the small farmhouse pictured above until the 1860s, when they built the subject house and moved in.³⁹

³⁵ Find-A-Grave, “John White”, [John White \(1811-1897\) - Find a Grave Memorial](#)

³⁶ Town of Oakville planning files, “Heritage Structure Report”, c. 1990

³⁷ Town of Oakville planning files, “Bronte Creek Provincial Park”, report; Trafalgar Township Historical Society, <https://images.ourontario.ca/TrafalgarTownship/3650339/data>

³⁸ Town of Oakville planning files

³⁹ Ancestry.ca, “Marriage notices of Ontario, 1813-1854”, notes their marriage on February 8, 1843, in Trafalgar Township

Celinda Buck (1815-1888) was the sister of Dr. Anson Buck, a well-known and respected doctor based out of Palermo. His house is a designated heritage house and stands at 2495 Old Bronte Road. There are many local stories about Anson Buck and his kind-hearted actions; not as many stories seem to exist about his sister, Celinda, however it is important to note her connection to her prominent local family. Their father, Philip Buck, was a Loyalist who was imprisoned by the Americans. His wife and children, along with several other women and children, fled to Canada on horseback.⁴⁰ They are recorded as important early settlers in Trafalgar Township.



The Anson Buck House, photographed here in 1951. Source: *Halton's Loyalist Heritage website*

James White was a prominent local farmer. He was also a lumber merchant, sawmill owner, gentleman farmer, livestock breeder, and winner of the first Queen's Plate horserace. He was well-known in Trafalgar Township. He and John operated several mills, stores, and other properties.⁴¹ His original use of the lots was to cut and ship lumber for ship masts using the mill built on Lot 31 by William Bates.⁴² White's son was known to have said that the trees in the area were some of the finest, and described white and red oak, large white pine trees, beech, sugar and soft maple, black and white ash, basswood, hickory, elm, hemlock, ironwood, chestnut, birch, cedar, and more.⁴³

The Whites were cultivating their land by the 1850s, as seen in the graphic below. Over the next decade, of the 447 acres of land that James White farmed on these lots and on Lot 26, 297 acres are under cultivation. Of these, 53 were cultivated for crops, 241 for grazing, three for orchards, and 150 were woodland.⁴⁴

Besides the farming and lumbering activities of White, there was also listed a Thomas Willoughby, mason, living on the western portion of the property (15 acres), and a Hugh Lunney, sawmill Sawyer.⁴⁵ It is likely that Willoughby operated the brick kiln on the property. Its location was described as "northern edge of the Half Moon Valley at the base of a trail down to the plateau and into the Valley . . . on the plateau are also the foundations of a habitation site."⁴⁶ The kiln was in operation until 1874.⁴⁷ Another industry on the property was the sawmill, which cut white pine and white oak from the area. In 1846, White was mentioned as running the mill, but later he appeared to have given operational control to Lunney. In 1861, the mill employed five sawyers. The mill used a vertical saw and was powered by water. The mill does not appear in the 1877 township map, indicating its likely closure by that time.⁴⁸ White's original small farmhouse looked directly down onto the mill.⁴⁹

⁴⁰ *Oakville Beaver*, "Halton's loyalist heritage", September 14, 1983, via <https://www.beth-website.net/BuckArtifacts.html>

⁴¹ Town of Oakville planning files, "Heritage Structure Report", c. 1990

⁴² AMICK, "Stage 1 archaeological background study for the Merton tertiary plan", 2017, pg. 40

⁴³ Town of Oakville planning files, "Bronte Provincial Park" report, from James Lyall White statement, "Noted Homestead in Halton County", *Weekly Sun*, January 28, 1914, pg. 5

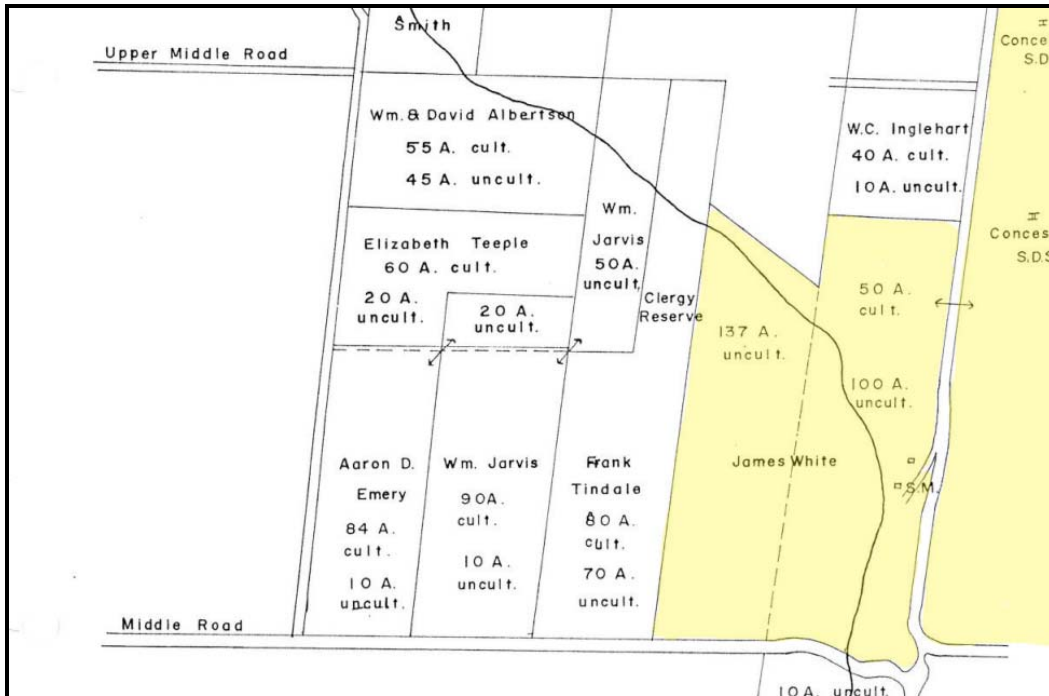
⁴⁴ Town of Oakville planning files, "Bronte Provincial Park" report, pg. 27; AMICK, "Stage 1 archaeological background study for the Merton tertiary plan", 2017, pg. 25

⁴⁵ Town of Oakville planning files, "Bronte Provincial Park" report, pg. 27

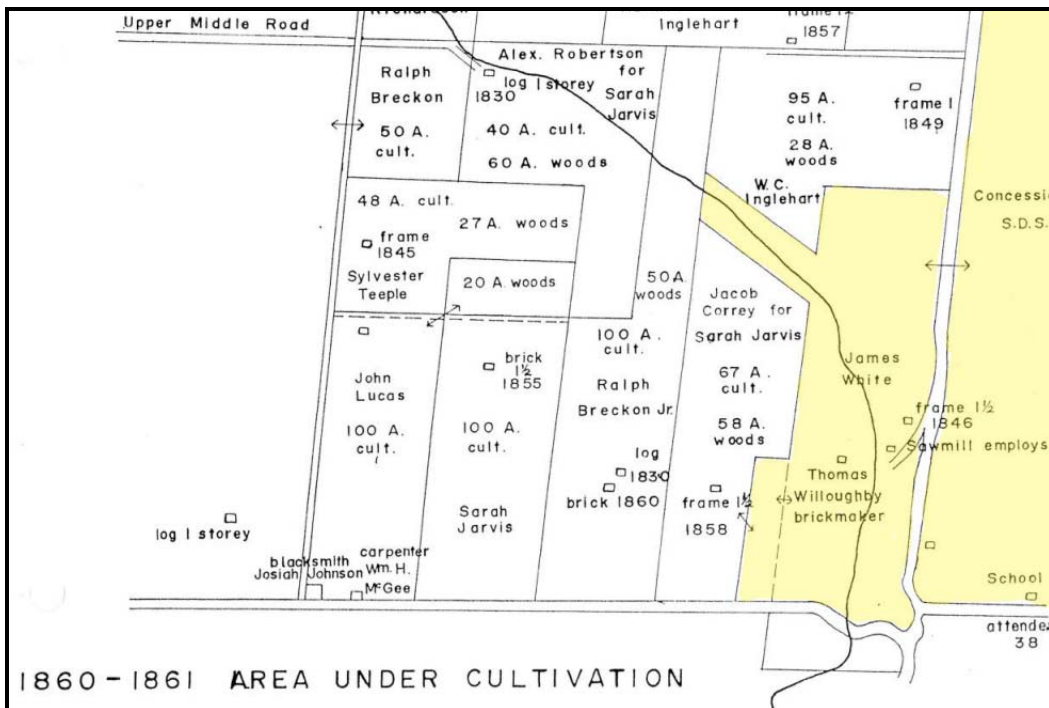
⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pg. 98

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pg. 99



1850 graphic showing White's land and the sawmill and original frame farmhouse. Source: Bronte Provincial Park Report



This map shows the approximate location of the house of Thomas Willoughby and the kiln, as well as White's original house and the sawmill. Source: Bronte Provincial Park Report

Census records from 1861 indicate that James White grew a variety of crop on Lot 30 and 31, including: fall wheat, spring wheat, barley, rye, peas, oats, potatoes, corn, and carrots. James White is also on the census

⁴⁹ Town of Oakville planning files, "Bronte Provincial Park" report, pg. 99

records as owning livestock, including cows and sheep.⁵⁰ The rich sandy loam soil quality of the land produced high quality fruit trees. In 1861, he began planting orchards on the land, which were renowned over the next century.⁵¹

In 1857, a schoolhouse was built in the south portion of Lot 30, which was technically owned by King's College at the time but operated by the Whites.⁵² It was known as Merton S.S. #15. It was reported that the school was made from bricks from the kiln on the west side of White's property.⁵³ The school was active in the local community. Amely Hawk, schoolteacher for Merton School, lived on the White family land. Other tenants in the mid-1800s included Hugh Lunney and John Long who worked at the sawmill; Dennis Shea and William Herd were farm labourers; John McKenzie, blacksmith, had a one-storey log shop.⁵⁴



A c.1930s view looking east on what was the Middle Road, now QEW, after the modern bridge was constructed for the QEW. This bridge still exists today, and was expanded in the 20th century to accommodate more traffic lanes. The historic White Oak tree is visible in the upper left, along with other remnants buildings from Merton Village. *Source: Ashe and Burnell*

James White built a large barn complex on his land east of Bronte Road for him to stable and raise thoroughbred horses.⁵⁵ James White is mentioned on a provincial historical plaque (currently in storage until development across the road is complete) for his racehorses and his historic win as the first winner of the Queen's Plate, which was a stakes race first run in Ontario in 1860 and is the oldest thoroughbred race on the continent.⁵⁶ He also built a racetrack on the grounds. White bred "some of the most famous thoroughbreds that have ever

⁵⁰ Library and Archives Canada, 1861 Census of Canada, Agricultural Schedule

⁵¹ Ashe, David and Joyce Burnell, *Oakville Street Names & Landmarks*, London, ON: Creighton Publishing, 2007, pg. 118

⁵² Town of Oakville planning files, "Bronte Provincial Park" report, pg. 21

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Town of Oakville planning files, "Bronte Provincial Park" report, pg. 22

⁵⁵ Ashe, David and Joyce Burnell, *Oakville Street Names & Landmarks*, London, ON: Creighton Publishing, 2007, pg. 118

⁵⁶ Canadian Encyclopedia, "Queen's plate", <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/queens-plate#:~:text=Queen's%20Plate%2C%20a%20stakes%20race,by%20Queen%20Victoria%20in%201859>; *Globe and Mail*, "plaque for Don Juan", June 22, 1974

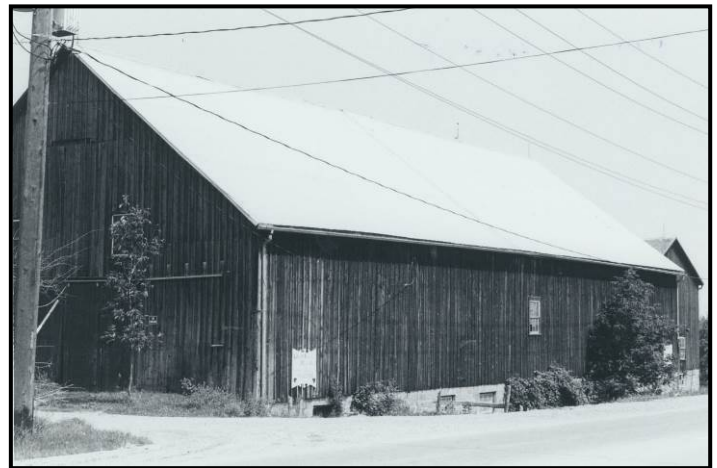
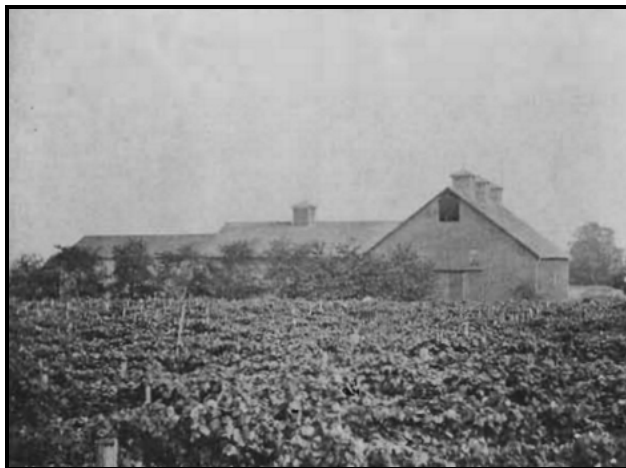
appeared on an American track.”⁵⁷ He appeared numerous times in journals for his racing horses and associated awards.⁵⁸ The associated historic barns burned down in 1983.⁵⁹



After White’s horse Don Juan won the first Queen’s Plate race, White proceeded to win it three more times: in 1864, 1867, and 1868.⁶⁰

Along with the barns and racetrack, White started an orchard on this side of the road circa 1861 and called it Woodlands Orchards.⁶¹ The Trafalgar Township Historical Society’s Winter Newsletter in 2014 noted that James White acted as a bylaw officer in both 1857 and 1858 for various by-law votes. Further, according to the Trafalgar Township Historical Society, the property was called “The Woodlands” due to the large forest that stood on the property.

The Ontario Heritage Trust plaque about James White’s win. *Source: Town of Oakville planning files*



Left: The barns built by White across Bronte Road, 1902. *Source: Gardens of Canada*

Right: An undated photo of the barns later, pre-1983. *Source: Town of Oakville*

As White’s farming and horse racing operation grew, they built the subject house. Accord to Town files and the Trafalgar Township Historical Society, James White built a house in 1864 for his use, however, records also indicate a potential build date up until 1875. The 1871 census describes one structure is being built, one is uninhabited, and one is inhabited. The Whites had employees living on the lot, so it’s possible one or several of these structures housed them, but it could also be the subject house. Then, in 1875, the value of Lot 31 increases \$1,000 more than the previous year despite the acreage remaining the same (150 acres). This indicates something else has increased the value, potentially the house, but it is not recorded. The build date of the house is likely within these 10 years of 1864 to 1875.

⁵⁷ *The Globe*, “A Toronto businessman becomes an apple-grower”, June 10, 1914, pg. 10

⁵⁸ Appears in editions of *American Trotting Register* and *The Canadian Agriculturalist and Journal of the Board of Agriculture*

⁵⁹ Ashe, David and Joyce Burnell, *Oakville Street Names & Landmarks*, London, ON: Creighton Publishing, 2007, pg. 118

⁶⁰ *Oakville Journal-Record*, “Historic property becomes park”, December 28, 1971, pg. 3-4

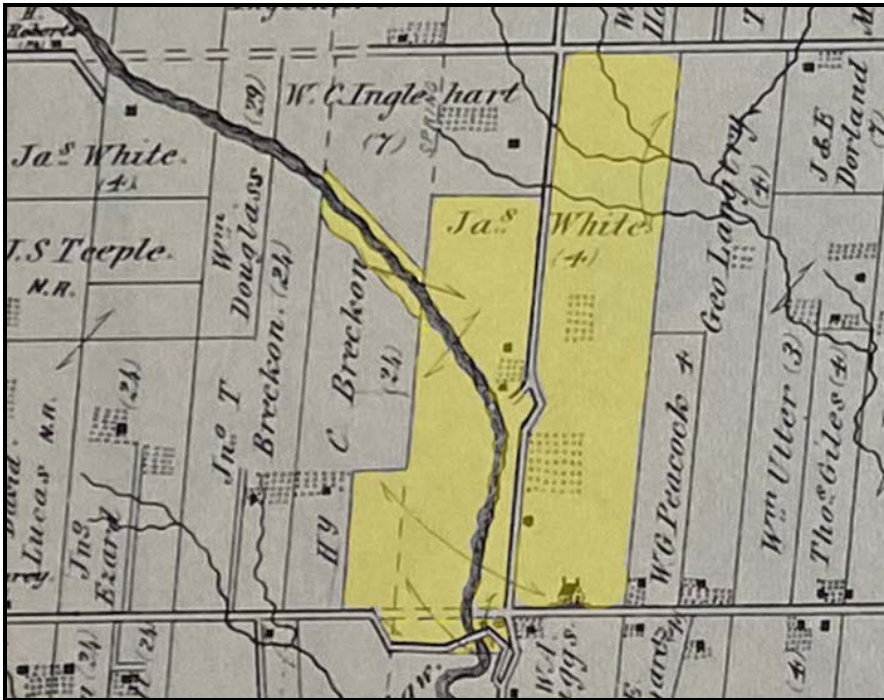
⁶¹ Town of Oakville planning files, “Heritage Structure Report”, c. 1990. It is not known if the name “Woodlands” was for the house(s) or for the orchard first.

James White	31	150	2000						
James White	31	149	3070	184	270				

James White	31	149	3070	184	270				
James White	31	149	3070	184	270				

1874 collector's roll (top) indicating the value of White's 150 acres on Lot 31 as \$2,000 and then 1875 (below) indicating the value of 149 acres of the lot at \$3,070; this large jump indicates something was likely built, considering the value of his other lots remains the same. Source: Town of Oakville Public Library

Farm labourers and sawyers continued to live in the original small farmhouse. There are several articles from the 1850s to 1870s about White's horses and their various wins, as well as his produce and livestock winning at agricultural shows.⁶²



1877 Township of Trafalgar map showing the land owned by James White. We can see the subject house and the original farmhouse on either side of an orchard on Lot 31. The schoolhouse is noted on the southern portion of Lot 30, with orchards. He also owned the land south of what would become the QEW, and there is a structure on it. Source: Town of Oakville planning files

Despite James White's local and regional presence, he was described as a "lunatic" in the 1870s and his large farm was transferred to the ownership of David Watson Campbell, James' son-in-law, in 1877, which was then leased to James' wife, Celinda, until her death.⁶³

⁶² Can be found in the *Globe and Mail* and *Toronto Star* online archives

⁶³ LRO Instrument 1980K, being a Certificate of Decree in Chancery, dated May 17, 1876, between James White "Lunatic", and John White, Paul and Mary Campbell, et al.; LRO Instrument 2252L, being a deed, between William Laidlaw (White's lawyer) and D.W. Campbell, for 150 acres, southerly part of lot 31; LRO Instrument 2255, being a Lease, between D.W. Campbell and Celinda White (Wife of James White): "the dwelling house and parcel of land . . . now in the possession of the said lesee . . . and forming part of Lot 31, for an during the natural life of the said James White" -- this also included the land in Lot 30 and Lot 32

James and Celinda seemed to have continued to live in the house; Celinda died in 1888, and James in 1899 at the age of 90. In one of his obituaries (pictured) it was written that he had been confined to his house for 27 years and his bed for 20 years.⁶⁴ It is not made clear what type of illness White suffered from. However, the farm, orchards, and stables continued to operate in the late 1800s.

In 1899, after White's death, the farm transferred to his son-in-law, Paul Campbell. Paul had married their daughter Mary in 1874.⁶⁵ Campbell had been a businessman in Toronto and worked for John Macdonald and Co., a dry goods company. He worked there from the age of 14 in every department. In 1887, he was made a partner of the firm.⁶⁶

DEATH OF JAMES WHITE, SR.—James White, sr., brother of the late John White, ex-M.P., died at his residence, "Woodlands," near Bronte, last Thursday, in his 90th year. He had been an invalid and confined to his house for 27, and to his bed for 20 years. When he was in his prime he was known throughout the Province as its most prominent and successful breeder of thoroughbred horses. The funeral took place on Saturday, the interment being at Palermo. The chief mourners were James White, jr., of Washington, D.C., the only son of the deceased, and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Campbell, of Woodlands, his son-in-law and daughter. Walter A. Lawrence, nephew of Mrs. White, who died a number of years ago, was also a mourner. The pall-bearers were Edward Sheridan, Wm. Hager, Cyrus Inglehart, Wm. Riggs, P. J. Inglehart and J. E. Inglehart.

White's obituary, 1899. Source: *Canadian Champion*



Paul retired from the company after 30 years and took over the farm in 1902.⁶⁷ It says in an article about his retirement: "Mr. Campbell, who is one of the best-known dry goods men in the Dominion of Canada, has for a year past been suffering from a severe illness . . . so much has he been incapacitated that he has been in attendance at the office hardly more than an hour a day."⁶⁸ He retired to the farm and focused particularly on the orchards. The Woodlands orchards became very respected under Campbell's tenure and one of the area's best orchards, especially for its "extra fancy" Northern Spy apples.⁶⁹

Campbell introduced modern methods of treating the apple orchard and was considered an orchard pioneer.⁷⁰ He "dispensed of the middleman" by picking, packing, and marketing his own fruit. He was said to be farming, "without haste, but without rest" and improved the farm buildings, livestock, and the farm in general.⁷¹

Drawing of Paul, likely taken from a photograph, in 1895. Source: *Toronto Evening Star*, April 23, 1895

Even in 1914, the farm was called "an historic farm site."⁷² Campbell was called "one of the best-known fruit growers in the Dominion", a remarkable feat as he had just started 12 years prior in 1902; however, it should be noted White began the planting of the orchards in 1861. Campbell cared for the 10 acres of spy trees on the east side of Bronte Road, with another 15 acres of orchards on the same side.⁷³ They were described as "the finest

⁶⁴ *Canadian Champion*, "Death of James White, Sr", January 26, 1899

⁶⁵ *Canadian Champion*, "Golden Wedding," February 28, 1924, pg. 3

⁶⁶ *The Globe*, "John Macdonald & Co.," December 31, 1895

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Laurie Smith Heritage Consulting, "Inventory report: 1242 Bronte Road, The Woodlands", 2015

⁷⁰ *The Globe*, "The art and science of agriculture", June 10, 1914

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *The Globe*, "A Toronto businessman becomes an apple-grower", June 10, 1914, pg. 10

⁷³ *Ibid.*

Spy apple orchard in the Dominion of Canada.”⁷⁴ Campbell would produce 6,000-8,000 boxes of apples a year. On the west side were pear and cherry trees.⁷⁵

**A TORONTO BUSINESS MAN
BECOMES AN APPLE-GROWER**

And Applies Business Principles to His New Profession

**HAS TEN ACRES OF
NORTHERN SPY TREES**

**Bronte Orchardist Has Made
a Reputation in Twelve
Years**



VERANDAH OF IDEAL COUNTRY HOUSE.
How many city dwellers will envy the cool luxury of the rural home of Mr. Paul Campbell?

No self-respecting magazine nowadays considers itself quite up to the

Campbell’s farming was of great interest in Toronto, where several articles profiled him and his work at The Woodlands. Above is a headline from a 1914 edition of the *Globe*. Source: *Globe and Mail Archives*

A visiting journalist in 1914 noted that Campbell was tending his orchard differently than many others; he would not trim the branches, for example, which was apparently a shock at the time. One of his main successes was his marketing and boxing of the apples; unlike others who used barrels, Campbell had staff packing the apples into boxes with labels specific to each region they were headed to.⁷⁶ Three men lived on his farm year round: “in the admirable community of interest existing between Mr. Campbell and his men is an invaluable bond of union that for years has meant satisfaction and happiness to employer and employed.”⁷⁷

Campbell also took over the portion of the farm that had cattle, which meant some 60 cows were under his ownership. The barns are described as “a huge, well-preserved structure of enormous size, that actually includes five separate and distinct barns. The huge basement affords splendid stable accommodation, with a very large room remaining that may be used as a packing and storage house.”⁷⁸

THE WOODLANDS, MERTON,
Residence of Paul Campbell, Esq.

Situated half a mile north of Bronte station, and two miles distant from Lake Ontario, embracing over 300 acres of land, formerly owned by Mr. James White and now owned by Mr. Paul Campbell, lately a member of the wholesale dry goods firm of Messrs. John Macdonald & Co., Toronto, is beautifully situated on a rivulet.

The land is very arable, well adapted for fruit, cereals and dairy.

Mr. Campbell rents about 300 acres, retaining 50 acres of orchard and fruit land. He has probably some of the finest fruit trees in Ontario; especially noticeable is one orchard containing 500 matured Northern Spy trees—cherries, plums, pears, peaches and grapes are cultivated with success, cherries being a specialty.

Campbell’s farm was featured in the 1902 book *Gardens of Canada*. The blurb noted that he had “some of the finest fruit trees in Ontario.” Source: *Gardens of Canada*

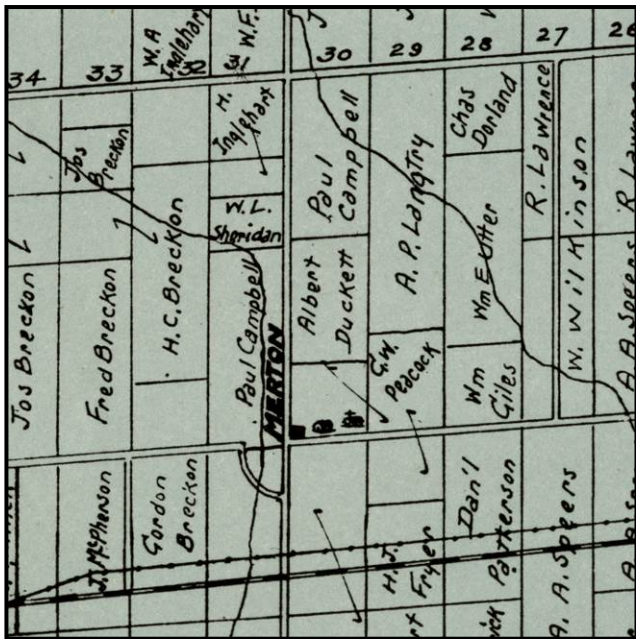
⁷⁴ *The Globe*, “Bronte grower markets all his apples in boxes,” November 4, 1914, pg. 11

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*



Paul Campbell sold the lands to millionaire lawyer George Chew Atkins in 1921.⁷⁹ The Atkins' had visited the farm on several occasions and fell in love with the land. At the time of his purchase it was considered "one of the most charming homesteads in Ontario."⁸⁰ Campbell then retired to Toronto and died at the age of 82 in 1924.⁸¹ When George bought the farm, the house had no electricity and few comforts. Within a few months, Atkins had arranged for one of Ontario's first rural hydro lines to run through the area.⁸²

1917 Guidal Directory Map of Trafalgar Township, Halton County, Province of Ontario. Paul Campbell is shown as the owner, four years before selling the property to George C. Atkins. Source: Toronto Public Library, Baldwin Collection

George Chew Atkins continued the orchard operation, and his company Woodlands Orchards Limited purchased the lands from his family in 1923.⁸³ Employee James Fairbrother oversaw the orchards for over 50 years and was well-known and respected for his work. During this time, the fruit won many awards at local, provincial and national fairs.⁸⁴ George built structures on the property for farmhands and worked the farm. The QEW was expanded during his ownership, and photos document the old Middle Road Bridge (now demolished) that once crossed Bronte Creek.



1935 photo of the ravine into Bronte Creek on The Woodlands property, taken by George S. Atkins. Source: Trafalgar Township Historical Society

⁷⁹ Toronto Daily Star, "New York millionaire buys fine Halton farm", May 16, 1921

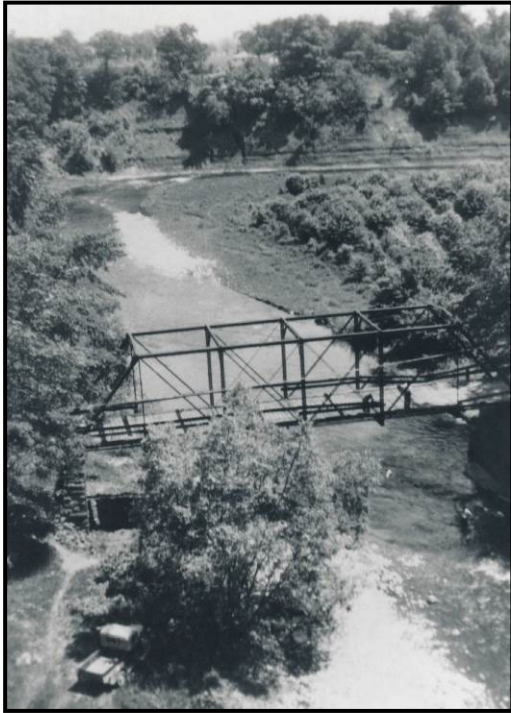
⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ The Canadian Champion, "Death of Paul Campbell", January 15, 1924

⁸² Ontario Living, "The legend of Twelve Mile Creek", November, 1986, pg. 39

⁸³ LRO Instrument 14924, being a Grant, dated November 22, 1923, between George Chew Atkins and wife and Woodlands Orchards Ltd for 150 acres: "South ½ of south ½ of north ½ except 37 ¼ acres" – this also includes Lot 30 and Lot 32

⁸⁴ Ashe, David and Joyce Burnell, Oakville Street Names & Landmarks, London, ON: Creighton Publishing, 2007, pg. 118



George appears to have retired in the 1950s; at this point, the land was transferred to his wife Norah.⁸⁵ Norah divided it between her children, George and Honora, and sold off multiple portions to others as well.⁸⁶ George Stuart inherited approximately 13 acres which included the subject house; Honora and her husband, Maurice, received lands south of the house that included the historic 1845 farmhouse.⁸⁷ In the deed, it is noted that Honora was to allow James Fairbrother to continue living in the farmhouse.⁸⁸ He was still living there in his 80s.⁸⁹ George Chew died in 1963 in his home in Florida.⁹⁰

View south from the new Merton bridge of the old Middle Road Bridge over Bronte Creek, looking south from The Woodlands property, taken by George S. Atkins circa 1939. Source: *Trafalgar Township Historical Society*

George Stuart Atkins (1917-2009) lived at The Woodlands periodically from the age of 2 to 82 years. George Stuart Atkins was a farmer, a Canadian broadcaster, a CBC TV and radio host, and the founder of Farm Radio International. He grew crops, raised cattle and pigs, and tended to The Woodlands orchards. In 1931, when George was only 14 years old, he planted the Norway Spruce tree on the property, described earlier. He was one of Halton's first farmers to harvest grain with a combine in 1938.⁹¹

During his early years of farming, he played a key role in the development of the Ontario Junior Farmers Association and the Halton Region Conservation Authority.⁹² He was recruited by the CBC in 1955, and for 25 years he was the farm commentator for CBC radio and television in Toronto. He married Janet Blackwood in 1941.⁹³ In the late 1970s he founded the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network (Farm Radio International) and managed it for 15 years. In the 1980s it had over 100 million listeners worldwide.⁹⁴

⁸⁵ LRO Instrument 17757, being a Grant, dated April 30, 1932, between Woodlands Orchards Ltd. And Norah Atkins for 150 acres – this also includes Lot 30

⁸⁶ According to land registry documents Norah sells various portions off between 1946 and 1960, approximately 10 sales, two of which were to her son George and daughter Honora.

⁸⁷ LRO Instrument 29206, being a Grant, dated December 21, 1953, between Norah Atkins and George Stuart Atkins for part of Lot 31 and Lot 30; LRO Instrument 121604, being a Grant, dated December 23, 1960, between Norah Atkins and Honora Atkins, for Part of Lots 31 and 32—not 30; *Ontario Living*, "The legend of Twelve Mile Creek", November, 1986, pg. 39 states the 13 acres under G.S. Atkins

⁸⁸ LRO Instrument 121604, pg. 5: "and subject also to the privilege of occupying "the Cottage" on the said lands give not James Fairbrother and his wife, Anne Fairbrother, by letter dated November 1, 1960." This indicates that Norah wanted the Fairbrothers to continue living in the Cottage (the original farmhouse).

⁸⁹ *Oakville Journal-Record*, "Historic property becomes park", December 28, 1971, pg. 3-4

⁹⁰ *Oakville Beaver*, "Deaths", Augst 12, 1963, pg. 10

⁹¹ *Oakville Beaver*, "Oakville Remembered – Dr. George Atkins", February 20, 2000, pg. 8

⁹² *Globe and Mail*, "251-acre park to be created on escarpment", February 22, 1960

⁹³ *Globe and Mail*, "Marriages", January 1, 1942

⁹⁴ *Globe and Mail*, "Broadcaster's potential audience is nearly 100 million", November 24, 1980, pg. B3



The Woodlands in 1959, with the house highlighted in yellow. At the time, the Atkins still owned much of the forested property and the farm across the road. Source: McMaster Aerial Photography Library

Atkins continued to board horses (approximately 50) on the east farm in the White barns.⁹⁵ He earned awards for his more than 50 years of farm radio broadcasting. Because of his work in farm education, he became a Fellow of the Agricultural Institute of Canada and a member of the Order of Canada and received an honorary doctorate from the University of Guelph in 1989. He was inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame in 1994.⁹⁶ He died in 2009, and his wife, Janet, lived to be 100 and died in 2016.⁹⁷



George and Janet, undated. Source: Farm Radio International

In 1971, George Stuart Atkins and Maurice Sidney Flint (Honora's husband) sold approximately 117 acres to the Halton Region Conservation Authority for the creation of Bronte Creek Provincial Park.⁹⁸ During the 1980s, the east part of the farm on Lot 30 was leased out for various purposes, such as a golf course and riding school; and the 10-acre orchard that had been on that side became the Region of Halton's offices.⁹⁹

George and Janet sold their remaining 13 acres to Victor Enns in 2001; it was then subdivided further and the subject house can be seen in the yellow square below, sectioned off from an earlier size (the 13 acres Norah gave to George Stuart).

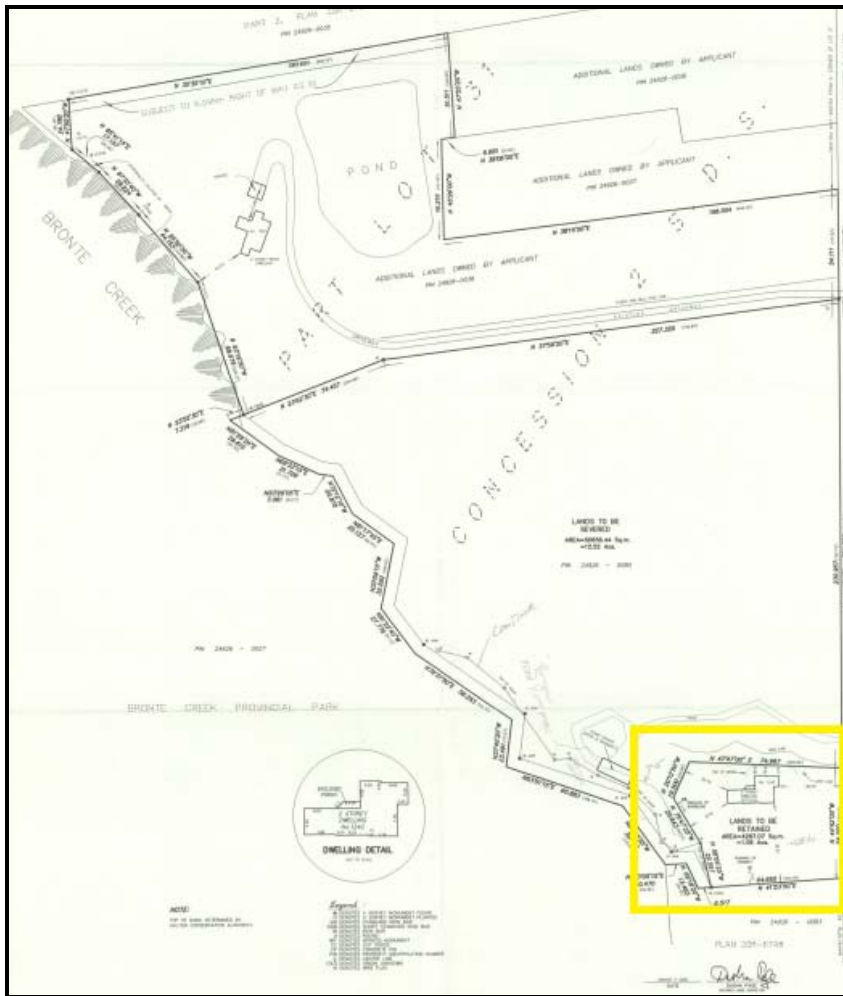
⁹⁵ *Globe and Mail*, "plaque for Don Juan", June 22, 1974

⁹⁶ *Oakville Beaver*, "Broadcaster inducted into agricultural hall of fame," 1994

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ LRO Instrument 326713, being a Quit Claim Deed, dated December 1, 1971, between George Stuart Atkins and Maurice Flint and the Halton Region Conservation Authority, for 117.066 acres

⁹⁹ *Ontario Living*, "The legend of Twelve Mile Creek", November, 1986, pg. 39



2002 survey showing the subject house in its new boundaries from the older version, which George Stuart inherited in 1953. These are its current boundaries. *Source: Town of Oakville planning files*

It is important to note that the heritage-designated Bronte White Oak tree, around 260 years old, was originally on the White farm and was kept standing, despite James White being a lumber merchant who logged the trees on his property.¹⁰⁰ White, Campbell, and then the Atkins family managed the trees on their property and kept the woodlands and the large white oak, which are now enjoyed by the public. George S. Atkins continued to protect the White Oak after selling the property, along with other community members. It is not within the subject property now but it is historically linked to over a century of owners.

There are also various other large pine and spruce trees that have been on the property from before James White farmed it, and those that were planted after. One large spruce tree was planted by the Atkins family and is still standing with a plaque. George S. Atkins in particular was recognized for his actions on forest protection in the area and the creation of the Bronte Creek Provincial Park on the property.¹⁰¹ He devoted his life to the care and preservation of The Woodlands: “his intimate knowledge of The Woodlands is remarkable and his enthusiasm for its protection through careful management is embraced by all who visit” was said of Atkins.¹⁰² The Atkins family owned the land for around 80 years. Because of this long-term protection, a large historic woodlot still stands and the Bronte Creek Provincial Park was formed.

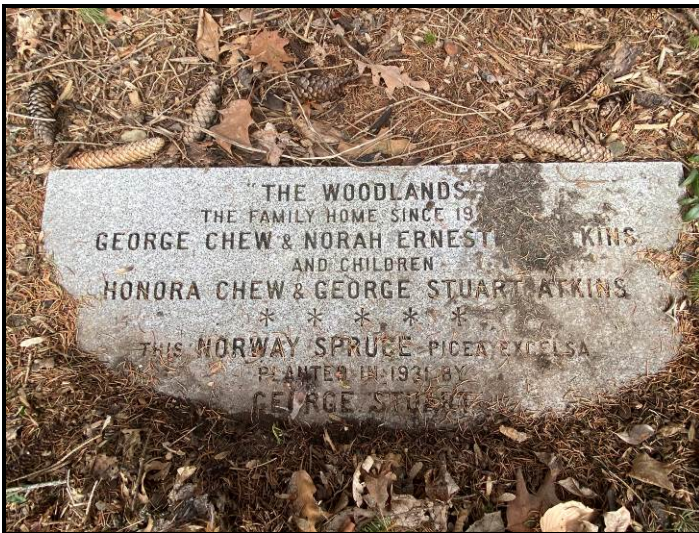
¹⁰⁰ *Oakville Beaver*, “Great White Oak, at 260, is a witness to Canada’s history”, June 30, 2017

¹⁰¹ *Oakville Beaver*, “Atkins ahead of his time on forest care”, June 9, 2002, pg. 2

¹⁰² *Ibid.*



Photo of the designated White Oak. Source: Oakvillegreen



The spruce tree and associated plaque to the south of the house, 2024. Source: Town of Oakville Planning Staff

In summary, the property at 1242 Bronte Road has historical significance to the Bronte area and Trafalgar Township at large. The property is associated with James White, a notable figure in local history, as he was first a major developer of the timber resources in the Twelve Mile Creek (Bronte Creek) Valley, and operated sawmills with his brother John. He also bred some of the finest horses in Ontario, managed a large orchard, farmed crops and livestock, and was MPP for Halton Region. John White was active in politics and served as the liberal MP for Halton in the 1840s. Paul Campbell, the son-in-law of James White, was well-known in Toronto and in Canada as a dry goods businessman, and his work at The Woodlands made the orchard famous within the Dominion of Canada.

The property is also associated with the Atkins family who farmed the property; George Chew continued to run the orchards and the farm and his son, George Stuart Atkins, was a respected farmer, broadcaster, and the creator of Farm Radio International. He also farmed The Woodlands. His influence was also local, as he helped to create the Bronte Creek Provincial Park and worked to protect The Woodlands, notably the White Oak Tree.

Contextual Value

The Woodlands has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings. Built in the 1860s-1870s, the house stands in its original location as the second farmhouse of James White and his family, where they lived while their large farm operated in the surrounding area. The property is linked to over 150 years of farming history on the historic lot.

The house is located in a significant natural setting, defined by Bronte Creek to the west, the adjacent woodlot, the Bronte White Oak Tree across the road and the larger protected natural area to the west of Bronte Road. The Bronte White Oak Tree, a designated heritage tree, was historically on the White family property and was preserved by the White and Atkins families. The presence of the house and its related history helps give context to the natural area and this significant tree.

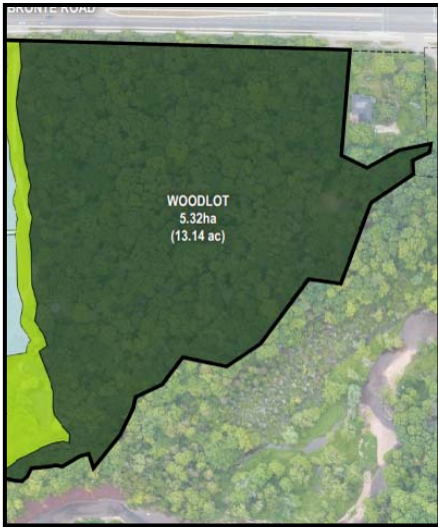
The property, now around one acre compared to its original 350 acres, still has many large trees, particularly pine, which stood in the original large forest in the area. Just north of the house a protected woodlot stands on the property owned by the Whites, Campbells, and Atkins families until 2001. The woodlot is designated in the Town's official plan as natural area and the regional official plan as natural heritage system.

The key natural features associated with the woodlot include:

- Significant habitat for threatened and endangered species
- Significant wetlands within Bronte Creek valley
- Significant valley
- Significant wildlife habitats
- Significant Area of Natural and Scientific Interest
- Fish habitat within Bronte Creek valley



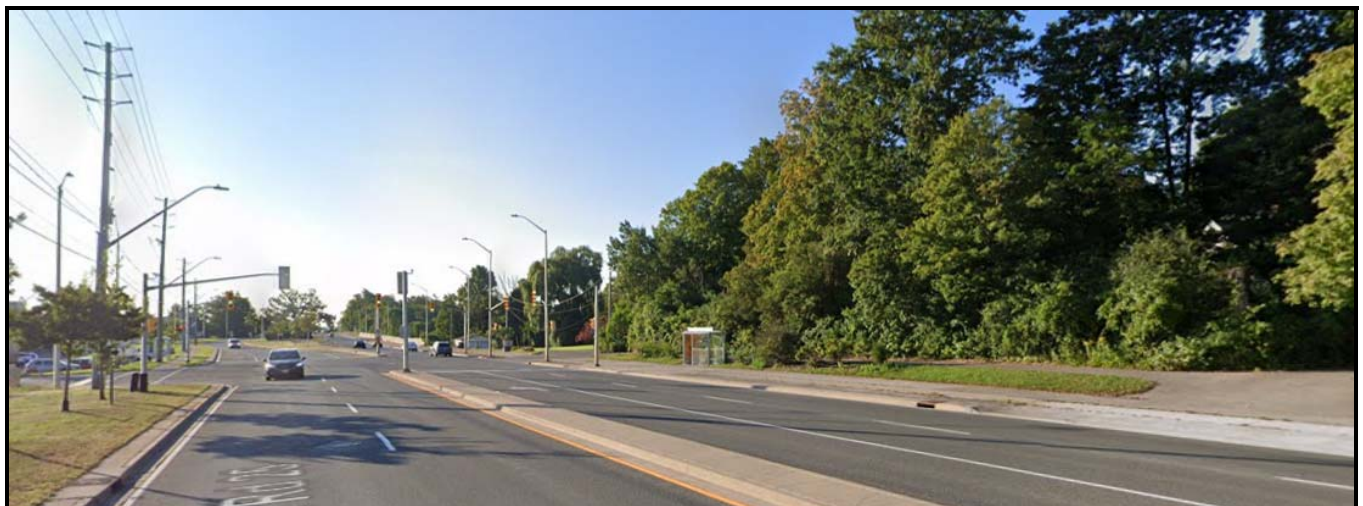
Google aerial showing the house with Bronte Creek behind and the woodlot to the north. Source: Google, edited.



Boundaries of the protected woodlot, with the subject property on the upper right. Source: Bronte River Urban Design Brief, 2023



A view of Bronte Road looking north, with subject property on the left behind the trees. Source: Google Streetview



Bronte Road looking south, with subject property on the right. Source: Town of Oakville Planning Services Staff

4. Evaluation under Ontario Regulation 9/06

Evaluation of the cultural heritage value of the subject property is guided by the criteria outlined in the *Ontario Heritage Act's, Ontario Regulation 9/06: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest*. This Regulation outlines several criteria for determining whether a property is of cultural heritage value or interest. For a property to be designated under section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, it must meet two or more of these criteria, which are outlined below.

Ontario Regulation 9/06 Criteria	Evaluation	Criteria met (Y/N)
1. The property has design value or physical value because it:		
i. is a rare, unique, representative, or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method;	The property is a representative example of an evolved stately Gothic Revival farmhouse.	Y
ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit;	The property does not display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	N
iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	The property does not demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	N
2. The property has historical value or associative value because it:		
i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to a community;	The property is associated with James White, Halton MPP, horse breeder, lumber merchant, and farmer, who built the house and operated a large farm and sawmill; and also with Toronto businessman Paul Campbell, whose work on the orchards made them respected across the country; and with broadcaster George S. Atkins, nationally recognized for his work in farm radio, and who worked to protect the local natural area.	Y
ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture;	The property has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of pre-colonial Indigenous communities, given the number of nearby archaeological sites.	Y
iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist who is significant to a community.	The house does not demonstrate or reflect the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer, or theorist significant to the community.	N
3. The property has contextual value because it:		
i. is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area;	While the property is a historic part of the local streetscape, the character of the area has transitioned from an agricultural and natural setting to one more defined by suburban development.	N
ii. is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings;	The property is physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings. The house stands in its original location. The property is linked to over 150 years of farming history on the historic lot. The Bronte White Oak Tree, a designated heritage tree, was historically on the White property and was preserved by the White and Atkins families. The presence of the house and its related history explains the surrounding natural contexts.	Y
iii. is a landmark.	The property is not a landmark.	N

5. Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The subject property has been researched and evaluated to determine its cultural heritage value or interest according to the criteria outlined in Ontario Regulation 9/06. By using these criteria, staff have determined that the property's cultural heritage value or interest merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Description of Property

The property at 1242 Bronte Road is located on the west side of Bronte Road between Upper Middle Road West and the Queen Elizabeth Way. The property contains a circa 1864-1875 two-and-a-half storey Gothic Revival style farmhouse known as The Woodlands, as well as remnants from a former building and a significant Norway Spruce tree.

Design Value or Physical Value:

The Woodlands has design and physical value as a representative and evolved example of a circa 1860s-1870s Gothic Revival style farmhouse with unique elements adapted to the style around 1905 after a fire. The house includes many historic elements, including its: large, tall two-and-a-half storey massing and form with prominent gables; wooden soffit and boxed frieze with decorative bargeboards and brackets; stone construction with stucco cladding; front entrance, including recessed columns beside the front door and large transom window; wraparound porch with wooden columns, ceiling, brackets, beams and second-storey porch and railings; and fenestration on the south, north, and east elevations, including the drip edges and wooden sills and frames. The property also contains a remnant stone chimney and fireplace from a former building, as well as an almost century-old Norway Spruce tree planted by the Atkins.

Historical Value or Associative Value:

The Woodlands has cultural heritage value for its direct associations with two important families of the area, specifically the White, Campbell and Atkins families. The house has historical significance to the Bronte area and Trafalgar Township at large. James White was a notable figure in local history as an MPP for Halton, lumber merchant, sawmill owner, gentleman farmer, livestock breeder, and the winner of the first Queen's Plate. Paul Campbell, the son-in-law of James White, was well-known in Toronto and in Canada as a dry goods businessman, and his work at The Woodlands made the orchard famous on a national level. The property is also associated with George Stuart Atkins, a respected farmer, broadcaster, and the creator of Farm Radio International who was recognized both locally and nationally. He also farmed the original property, helped to create the Bronte Creek Provincial Park and worked to protect The Woodlands, notably the Bronte White Oak Tree that remains today.

The Woodlands has the potential to yield information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture; the area has many Indigenous archaeological sites given its proximity to Bronte Creek, and no extensive investigative work has been done on the subject property. Future archaeological investigations could provide significant material and evidence for both Indigenous and settler history.

Contextual Value:

The Woodlands has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually, and historically linked to its surroundings. The house and property are linked to over 150 years of farming history on the historic lot. The house is located in a significant natural setting, defined by Bronte Creek to the west, the adjacent woodlot, the Bronte White Oak Tree across the road and the larger protected natural area to the west of Bronte Road. The Bronte White Oak Tree, a designated heritage tree, was historically on the White family property and was preserved by the White and Atkins families. The presence of the house and its related history helps give context to the natural area and this significant tree.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Key heritage attributes of The Woodlands at 1242 Bronte Road that exemplify its cultural heritage value as an evolved example of a Gothic Revival farmhouse, as they relate to the historic two-and-a-half storey house, include:

- Large and tall massing and form of the two-and-a-half-storey building with hipped roof and three gables;
- Stone construction with stucco cladding;
- Wooden soffit and boxed wooden frieze with decorative wooden bargeboard and wooden brackets;
- Wraparound front porch with round wooden columns, wooden frieze with brackets and the presence of low-profile second storey wooden railings;
- Front entrance, including recessed round wooden columns beside the front door and large transom window;
- Fenestration of the circa 1905 windows on the south, north, and east elevations;
- 1/1 historic wooden sash windows with louvered wooden shutters, trim and drip moulds; and
- Its presence on raised ground.

Key heritage attributes of The Woodlands at 1242 Bronte Road that exemplify its cultural heritage value as part of a historic farmstead, as they relate to the grounds, include:

- Stone chimney and fireplace remnants from the farmhand house built by George Chew Atkins in the 1920s; and
- Large spruce tree planted by the Atkins family in the 1930s and associated historical plaque.

6. Conclusion

This property meets four of the criteria of Ontario Regulation 9/06, including design/physical value, historical/associative value, and contextual value. It is therefore recommended that the property be designated under Part IV, section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

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