

Heritage Research Report



**129 Douglas Avenue
Oakville, ON**

May 2016

HERITAGE RESEARCH REPORT STATUS SHEET

Street Address: 129 Douglas Avenue
Roll Number: 2401040030031000000
Short Legal Description: PLAN 113 PT LOTS 126,127,128
Heritage Type: Built Structure
Heritage Status: Listed Heritage Property
Research Report Completion Date: May 2016
Heritage Committee Meeting Date: May 24, 2016
Designation Brief Completed by: Susan Schappert,
Heritage Planner

Sources Consulted:

- Ancestry.ca –
 - 1911 Census
 - 1921 Census
 - Ontario Marriages Index
 - Canada, City and Area Directories
 - Canada, Soldiers of the First World War, 1914-1918
 - Obituaries
- Chain of Title for 129 Douglas Avenue, including Grants, Deeds, Mortgages, Wills, Transfers
- Origins of Brantwood, Oakville Historical Society
- Brantwood, Cumberland Land Company
- Heritage Research Report: 66 Howard Avenue, Town of Oakville, 2014
- TTHS digital collections, Family of Ed and Minnie Saunders
- Halton Images
- Oakville Images: C.V. Hillmer
- WikiTree: George and Ada Cornwall

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The subject property has been researched and evaluated in order to determine its cultural heritage significance according to Ontario Regulation 9/06. This Regulation, defined in the *Ontario Heritage Act*, outlines several criteria for determining whether a property is of cultural heritage value or interest. In order for a property to be designated under section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* it must meet one or more of these criteria, which are outlined below. By using these criteria, staff can determine if the property's cultural heritage value or interest merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

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 subject house is a modified representative example of a vernacular Four Square style residence built in the early 20th century.

ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit

The house displays a standard degree of craftsmanship typical of the era.

iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement

There are no technical or scientific achievements associated with this property.

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 subject property does not have any direct associations with significant persons, themes or organizations in Oakville.

ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or

The property yields some information about the early 20th century Brantwood community of Oakville.

iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.

The subject property does not reflect works or ideas significant to the community.

3. The property has contextual value because it,

i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,

The property generally maintains and supports the remaining historic character of the Brantwood area.

ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or

The subject property is historically, visually and physically linked to its surroundings.

iii. is a landmark.

The property is not a landmark.

A summary of the alterations to the dwelling include:

- The stucco cladding on the second storey was added circa 1956 and slightly overhangs the horizontal wood siding on the first storey.
- The front stoop (and possibly the portico overhang) were replaced circa 1956. The stoop has been replaced again several times since then.
- Removal of the one storey rear addition in the late 1950s (which still existed on the 1949 Fire Insurance Plans).
- Windows have been replaced on the second storey of the south and east elevations (see figure 2). All storm windows have been replaced with aluminum storms.
- The two storey sunroom on the south elevation of the residence was likely added between 1930 and 1949 (seen in Figure 3). The addition required the removal of several original windows and the floors of the sunroom do not line up with the interior of the house. The sunroom windows have been altered since the early 1960s.
- The original garage was demolished and replaced with the current structure, which was originally a sales trailer for a new subdivision. The owners towed it to the property and altered it to meet their needs.



Figure 2 – Northwest corner view



Figure 3 – Southeast corner view



Figure 4 – Southwest corner view



Figure 5 – Photo circa 1961 (courtesy of owner)

Original features remaining on the residence include:

- Original sash windows on the west and north elevations and the ground floor of the east elevation, covered with aluminum storms.
- The horizontal wood cladding on the first storey is likely original, although it may be a replacement of earlier wood cladding.



Figure 6 – West/rear elevation view



Figure 7 –Interior, brick foundation

The brick foundation of the house is slightly atypical, but not uncommon. While concrete blocks or poured concrete were more commonly used for residences of this period, brick may have been used due to its availability or cost effectiveness.

The residence is a vernacular interpretation of a simple Four Square house, constructed using locally available materials. The overall design is not noteworthy and the alterations have diminished the integrity of the structure as a representative of its period and architectural style.

Historical and Associative Value

History of Brantwood

The area that became the Brantwood subdivision was originally part of the farm estate of Cyrus Anderson, which was bounded by Lakeshore Road to the south, Gloucester Avenue to the east, Spruce Street to the north and Allan Street to the west. The Anderson Estate house, known as “The Anchorage” faced Lakeshore Road; the farm manager’s house was located at what is now 213 Allan Street.

Anderson was the owner of a private bank located in Oakville’s downtown from 1887 to 1902 when it was discovered that the bank had a shortage due to misappropriation of funds by one of Anderson’s sons to cover gambling debts.¹ The bank failed and the Bank of Hamilton acquired title to the Anderson farm by foreclosure of the mortgage.²

¹ “Origins of Brantwood”, Oakville Historical Society

² “Origins of Brantwood”, Oakville Historical Society

In 1907, Cameron Bartlett of the Bank of Hamilton sold the most of the farmland to the Cumberland Land Company Limited, which was a syndicate specifically developed to divide and sell off the 200 acres of the Anderson Farm. Three hundred and eighty one 50 foot lots were created, and W. S. Davis, a well-known local real estate agent, was appointed sales manager in 1910.³ The subject property was originally Lot 126 of the Brantwood Survey, but now consists of parts of lots 126, 127 and 128.

History of Subject Property

In the case of the subject property, the MPAC construction date suggested is 1903, but there is nothing else in the historic record or physical structure of the house to confirm that date. It appears more likely that the house was constructed between 1910 and 1917 during the ownership of Olive Alice O'Reilly, who took out a \$2000 mortgage on Lot 126.⁴ When she purchased the lot in 1910, Olive Alice O'Reilly was a widow living in Hamilton. In the 1911 Census, she is recorded as living in Oakville with her three children: Elsie, Gerald and Elizabeth, likely at the subject residence.⁵ In 1915, Olive married John H. Stead, a local physician.⁶



Figure 8 – Brantwood Survey, 1907

Allan A. Busby purchased the property from Olive in 1917 but only owned it for several months before selling it to John McIntyre Murphy. Both men assumed, in turn, the \$2000 mortgage during their respective ownerships. John Murphy was a local carpenter who had emigrated from Scotland in 1905 and settled in Halton.⁷ He and his wife, Mary, likely occupied the home themselves for two years before selling and moving to Toronto, where they were living on Gladstone Avenue during the 1921 Census.⁸

Charles Hillmer, the owner of the property for less than 24 hours and certainly never an occupant of the house, was the owner of the local Ford dealership and served as Mayor of Oakville in 1947 and 1948. His association with the subject property is extremely short term

³ "Origins of Brantwood", Oakville Historical Society

⁴ Deed of Land, Cameron Bartlett to Olive Alice O'Reilly, 1910, Instrument #4989

⁵ 1911 Census of Canada, Olive O'Reilly

⁶ Ontario, Canada, Marriage Index, Olive O'Reilly and John H. Stead, ancestry.ca

⁷ 1921 Census of Canada, John McIntyre Murphy

⁸ 1921 Census of Canada, John McIntyre Murphy

and therefore the significance is very limited. He immediately sold the property to Ada Louise Cornwall, wife of George A. Cornwall and who was likely a relative of Hillmer's wife, Margaret Cornwall. Ada had just sold their previous property at 66 Howard Avenue.⁹ She owned the subject property from 1919 to 1926. The 1921 Census that states that Ada and George, were living at the subject residence on Douglas Avenue, along with their son Leonard, daughter Emilie MacCausland (nee Cornwall) and her son, Charles. George worked as a tinsmith and later a hardware merchant.

In 1926, George Edward Saunders purchased the property from the Cornwalls' and assumes their \$2000 mortgage as well. Saunders, a widowed gentleman, transferred the subject property to Edward M. Sproule of Toronto, also a gentleman, in 1930. In 1935, Sproule, who had been living in Oakville, sold the property back to Saunders, who was now a retired farmer and assumed the \$5000 mortgage on the property. At Saunders' death in 1943, his heirs/executors sold the property to King Paving Company Limited for \$4000.

The King Paving Company held the property for one year before selling it to Lesley A. Macdonald for \$6000. The property flipped several more times over the next decade before being sold to Frank Vathy. The Vathy family owned and occupied the property until very recently. They were responsible for many of the alterations to the house as they updated and modernized the house in the late 1950s and 60s.

Below is a summary of the owners of the property:

Name of Owner(s)	Years of Ownership
C. Bartlett	1907-1910
Olive Alice O'Reilly	1910-1917
Allan A. Busby	1917
John McIntyre Murphy	1917-1919
Charles Hillmer	1919
Ada Louise Cornwall	1919-1926
George Edward Saunders	1926-1930
Edward Maxwell Sproule	1930-1935
George Edward Saunders	1935-1943
King Paving Company Ltd	1943-1944
Lesley A. MacDonald	1944-1948
Harold George Patchett	1948-1954
George Barrett	1954-1956
Hubert and Florence Purdy	1956
Frank Vathy	1956-2015

⁹ Heritage Research Report, 66 Howard Avenue, Town of Oakville, 2014.

Contextual Value

Contextually, the surrounding area remains primarily residential, although the age of housing in the area is varied. Some of the original Brantwood homes still exist to the south and north, but much of the historic housing stock has been demolished for new residences. Immediately to the west of the subject property is a seven storey apartment building constructed in the 1960s.

The subject property is the largest residential lot on its block, with the house located in the midpoint of the western frontage along Douglas Avenue. The current lot configuration has changed from the original Brantwood Survey, which originally had lot 126 fronting onto Randall Street. The change in the lot orientation has disrupted the original Brantwood survey as the property is now parts of the original lots 126, 127 and 128.

The driveway access is at the north of the house and runs to a modern garage. Immediately behind the house, the property slopes downwards to a very large rear yard. A number of mature trees are located on the property and throughout the neighbourhood. A narrow sidewalk runs along the houses fronting on the east side of the street. While the subject property generally maintains the historic residential character of the neighbourhood, it is not a landmark in the area.

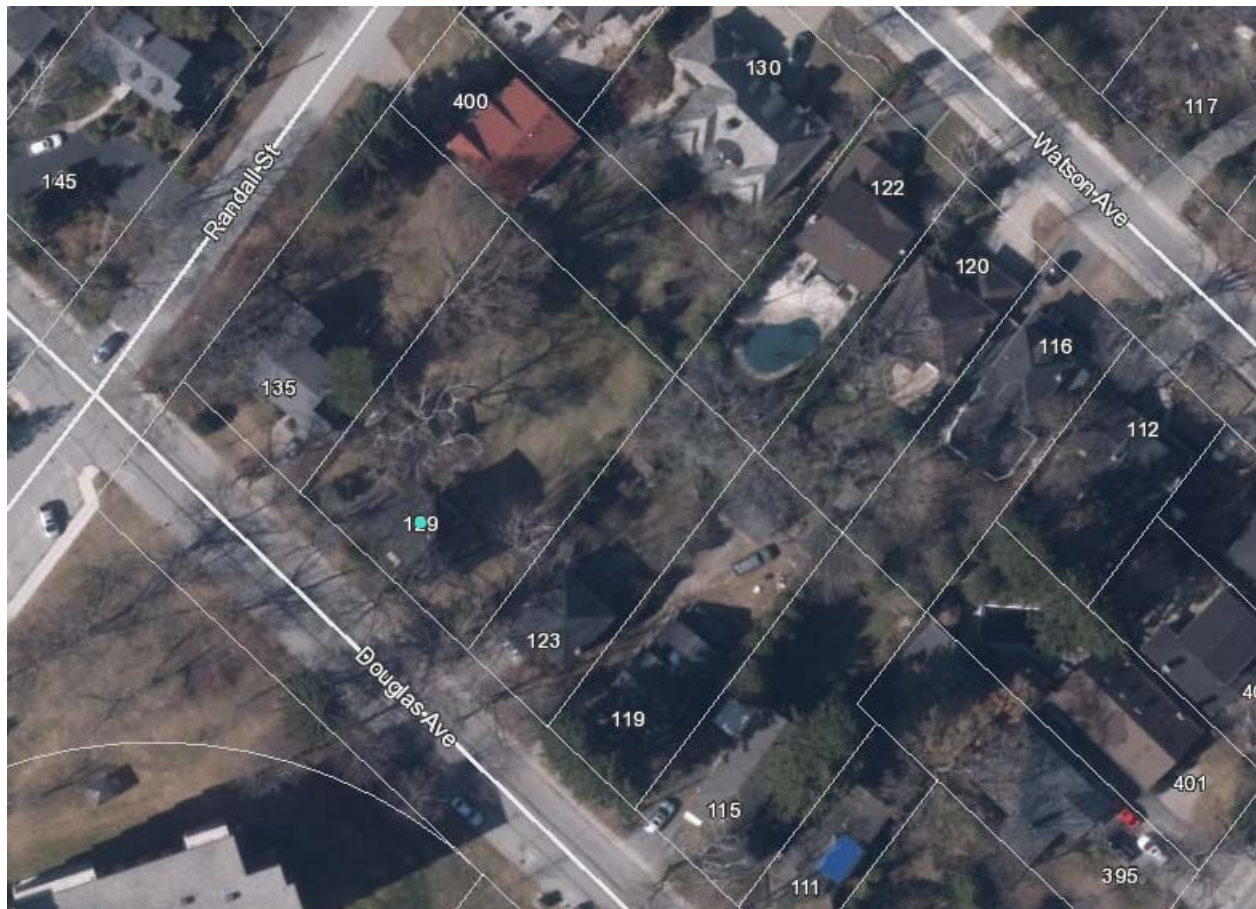


Figure 9 – Aerial map, Town of Oakville 2016.

SUMMARY OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

Key exterior attributes of the house which embody its physical and historical character include:

- Form of the original 2 storey house;
- Medium pitch hipped roof
- Exterior walls, excluding the modern stucco cladding;
- Remaining wood windows;
- Painted brick foundation;
- Single stack brick chimney.