



Town of Oakville

Heritage Update

2025 edition

Greetings from the Chair of Heritage Oakville

In this edition of Heritage Update – our first since 2021 – you will find interesting information on many of the activities undertaken by the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee, Heritage Planning staff and community volunteers. I want to highlight just two.

The first is the project to clarify the status of so-called “listed” properties. These properties are identified as being of interest, but are not designated. A change to the *Ontario Heritage Act* required municipalities to either designate or de-list these properties. It was always the town’s intention to assess listed properties for designation, but resources were not always available to do this. Given the new provincial mandate, Council stepped up to the plate and provided the supporting staff to get the job done. So far approximately 80 properties have been protected through designation by-laws and heritage easement agreements, and the job is almost complete.

The second project to highlight is the development of a new Plan and Guidelines for the Old Oakville Heritage Conservation District. The current plan is almost forty years old and badly in need of updating. This is an enormous undertaking and has not only involved staff and consultants, but many community members who have given unstintingly of their time and knowledge to make this a success. The Oakville Historical Society and the Oakville Lakeside Residents’ Association have been especially involved.

Thank you all for your support in preserving our rich heritage which helps to make Oakville such a special place to live, and a special thanks to all the staff, members of the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee and other community volunteers who help to make it all work.

Keep well.



Drew Bucknall
Chair, Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee

2023–2025 Heritage Designation Project

In November 2022, the Government of Ontario passed Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act*. The bill included several changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act*, including a two-year time limit for listed properties to remain on municipal heritage registers. Listed properties are properties that have been identified as having cultural heritage value but have not yet been designated. Designation ensures that heritage properties are managed for future generations and that important buildings and landscapes are protected.

In Oakville, this provincial change meant that the 294 listed properties would be removed from Oakville's heritage register as of January 1, 2025. To protect the town's cultural heritage, the town had a goal of designating approximately 80 priority listed properties from this list before 2025. This provincial deadline has since been extended to January 1, 2027.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, Heritage Planning staff produced Cultural Heritage Evaluation Reports (CHERs) for dozens of the town's listed properties. These documents provided an overview of the property and an evaluation of its cultural heritage value to determine if it met the heritage designation criteria of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. These were reviewed at monthly Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee meetings and Planning and Development Council meetings.

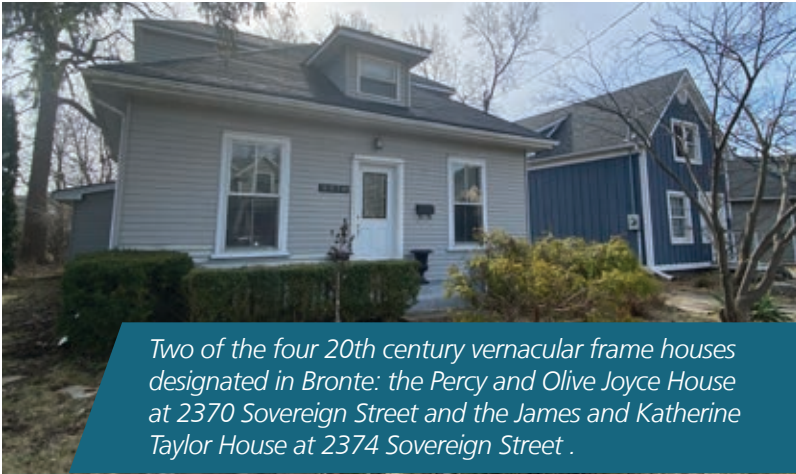
Since the spring of 2023, staff has protected over 80 properties, with more still in progress. A few examples of these newly designated properties are highlighted on these pages. A huge thank-you goes out to Members of Council, town staff, Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee members, historical society volunteers and of course, property owners. The community's overwhelming support for its cultural heritage has been evident throughout the project and helped make the program a tremendous success. ♦



The Robertson House at 330 Watson Avenue, a unique Arts and Crafts home in the Brantwood neighbourhood built in 1922. The house maintains its original features and has been lovingly restored.



The Woodlands, a Gothic Revival farmhouse built between the 1860s and 1870s, located at 1242 Bronte Road. The designation also includes the large Norway Spruce tree planted next to the home in 1931.



Two of the four 20th century vernacular frame houses designated in Bronte: the Percy and Olive Joyce House at 2370 Sovereign Street and the James and Katherine Taylor House at 2374 Sovereign Street .



Early 20th century vernacular homes at 137, 135, and 131 Chisholm Street in the historically working-class neighbourhood west of Oakville harbour.



Then: 1897



Now: 2023

The Westwood House, now the Tanglewood School at 1072 Tanglewood Court, built in the late 1800s for Claude and Ellen Heaven.



Then: 1895



Now: 2023

The Dr. John A. Johnstone House at 3048 Trafalgar Road, an important reminder of the former village of Post's Corners. The goal will be to restore the building to its historic appearance through future development.

Update to the Old Oakville Heritage Conservation District Plan

Established in 1981, the Old Oakville Heritage Conservation District is Oakville's first designated district, and one of the first in Ontario. This historically significant area extends south of Robinson Street to the lakefront from the Sixteen Mile Creek in the west to Allan Street in the east. The intimate atmosphere of the district provides two picturesque waterfront parks, Dingle Park and Lakeside Park, as well as Oakville Museum at Erchless Estate.

The district features early vernacular homes, nineteenth-century lakeside cottages, turn-of-the-century luxury houses and churches. Architectural styles are diverse and include 19th-century Georgian, Neo-Classical, Victorian and Classical Revival, many of which are a vernacular interpretation of the style. "Vernacular" architecture is a style of regional or local building that uses conventional supplies and resources from the region in which the building is situated.

The Old Oakville Heritage Conservation District Plan has served the community well for 40 years and has been instrumental in protecting the character of the area. With changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 2005 and 2021, the district required updating to meet the requirements of current legislation. This is accomplished in two phases: a heritage conservation district study to document and analyze existing built and natural resources; and a heritage conservation district plan to guide and manage change in the area.

The Old Oakville Heritage Conservation District Study was undertaken in 2021 and was approved by Town Council in early 2024. The study uses a Character Area framework that acknowledges distinct features in different parts of the district through the historic, streetscape and landscape analysis of Old Oakville's evolving urban fabric. These Character Areas have been carried over into

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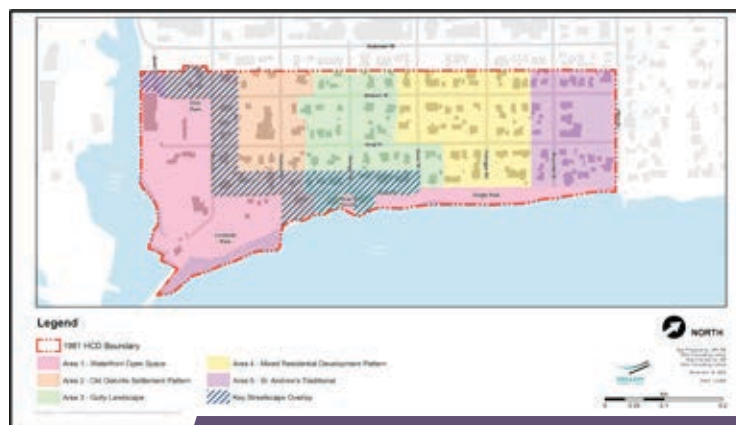


Looking northeast along Navy Street in the Old Oakville Heritage Conservation District.

the new District Plan and Guidelines to ensure that proposed changes to properties maintain the unique heritage attributes of the district.

The new District Plan and Guidelines was reviewed by Town Council at a public meeting in early February 2025. Heritage Planning staff is working on the final touches to incorporate community feedback into the final draft, which should be presented to Town Council in early spring 2025.

The process to update the Old Oakville Heritage Conservation District has been very community-driven, with research, information and support provided by individuals, as well as the Oakville Historical Society and the Oakville Lakeside Residents' Association. Heritage Planning staff thanks everyone for their efforts, including Oakville Town Council and the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee, in the process to update this significant and well-loved heritage conservation district. ♦



Map showing the Character Areas of the updated heritage conservation district.



Map showing the periods of built development in Old Oakville.



*Aerial view showing Old Oakville east of the harbour, 1948.
Source: Oakville Historical Society*

Oakville's Commitment to Indigenous Partnership and Reconciliation

The Planning and Development Department, along with the Town of Oakville as a whole, is continuing to take steps forward in the town's journey toward reconciliation and strengthening community bonds with our Indigenous partners. Oakville's approach to reconciliation is woven into its broader commitment to Inclusivity, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA). In aligning with the IDEA framework, the town seeks to create an environment where all residents feel respected and valued. This commitment includes recognizing the historical truths faced by Indigenous Peoples and working to create systems and practices that promote equality and accessibility for all.

Strengthening Indigenous Partnerships

By collaborating with local Indigenous leaders and groups, the town aims to create policies that resonate with the values of respect, reciprocity, and shared stewardship. Heritage Planning staff, along with the rest of the Planning and Development Department, is increasing engagement with our Indigenous government partners through our planning application process, making sure they have a seat at the table in the early stages of development projects. And we're continuing our collaboration on projects related to commemoration, archaeology, historical research, and the naming of streets and places. We're hoping to foster long-term partnerships that are mutually beneficial and honour the unique knowledge and experiences of Indigenous communities.

To reinforce these partnerships, Heritage Planner Susan Schappert, along with other Planning and Development staff, attended the reopening of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation's historic Council House in October 2024. They participated in a traditional drumming ceremony and shared a meal with members of the First Nation community to celebrate the renovations. Staff received a tour of the restored Council House and were able to dialogue meaningfully with members of Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

In November 2024, Policy Planning and Heritage staff attended the "Truth with Reconciliation" conference held by local Indigenous organization Grandmother's Voice here in Oakville.

Grandmother's Voice has been a leader in Halton Region for Indigenous community empowerment, unity, and healing from colonial harms. Staff heard from residential school survivors, trauma healers, and elders, and reaffirmed the town's commitment to truth and reconciliation efforts.

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A Dewegun (drum) on display at the Truth with Reconciliation conference promoting "The 101 Deweguns... A Living Hearts Legacy Project", a project devoted to engaging and supporting the creative talent of 101 Indigenous artists and allies.



Panelists at the Truth with Reconciliation conference.

A Path Forward

The efforts that the town has made to build relationships with its Indigenous partners is just the beginning. Oakville is determined to maintain momentum by setting goals, fostering continuous dialogue and embedding reconciliation into everyday governance. We are grateful to the Indigenous advisors helping to guide us in this work and look forward to sharing updates on more engagement events and projects in the future. ♦



Drummers participating at the Truth with Reconciliation conference.

Restoring a Family Heirloom

Those who have travelled along Lakeshore Road west of Fourth Line over the years are likely familiar with a brown shingled cottage with a large green roof, sitting on an angle to the road. Located at 1110 Lakeshore Road West, the house was accompanied for many years by a small 'gnome house' in a tree stump and a carved wood bear standing sentry outside the house. What many people may not know is that this unassuming building was once the farm manager's home and gatehouse to the historic Lisonally Farm.

Lisonally Farm was a summer estate purchased by financier and industrialist Sir Frank Baillie and his wife Lady Edith Baillie in 1917. In 1921, after Sir Frank's death, Lady Edith redeveloped the estate to be a fully functioning farm. She hired Toronto architecture firm Page & Warrington to design several new buildings, including the Farm Manager's Cottage, finished in 1926. Structures were constructed out of stone and wood in the Arts & Crafts tradition using natural and local materials. The Arts & Crafts style was developed as a reaction to the mechanization and dehumanization of the Industrial Age, and attempted to reconnect people to nature and handcrafted elements. This aesthetic and lifestyle was exactly what Lady Edith was promoting at Lisonally Farm.

The Farm Manager's Cottage is a humble yet eloquent example of the Arts & Crafts style. It was constructed using local, natural materials including stained wood shingles and Credit Valley stone taken from the nearby ravine. The low-sloped roof, tapered stone piers on the corners and natural wood windows and trim work connect the building to its natural surroundings. The cottage displays early 20th century craftsmanship that is visible in the stone piers, stone chimneys and hand-built wood windows.

A well-respected philanthropist, Lady Edith's approach was to grow produce and raise livestock that could provide food and income for local hospitals, institutions and charities. The farm had stables, a dairy, piggery, poultry house and numerous orchards and gardens. She and her farm manager, Mr. Petrie, also started a reforestation plantation, growing hundreds of native trees such as spruce, maple, birch, hemlock and elm.

The estate remained in the Baillie family, but it was subdivided in the 1970s and most of the original buildings were torn down. The cottage remained on a separate parcel and was listed on the Oakville Heritage Register in 2009. In 2020, the family decided to sell this remaining

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Then: 1920s



View of the Baillie Estate, with the cottage on the far left.
Source: Oakville Historical Society

Then: 2009



View of the cottage with its well-known 'gnome house' and bear sculpture.

Now: 2025



After restoration and renovation work.
Source: Jennifer Kravis

parcel, and many assumed the building would be demolished. Luckily for this historic gem, the property had some heritage protection through the town, and through its new owner – Jennifer Kravis, the great-granddaughter of Sir Frank and Lady Baillie. Jennifer and her husband Nils decided the building was too important to lose and embarked on a four-year journey to restore the building and construct a new addition.

The renovations are now complete and the original cottage, which once faced inwards towards the original laneway of the farm, now sits with its front door facing Lakeshore Road. New cedar shingle cladding has been installed and the historic stone pillars and chimneys have been renewed. The original wood windows and front door were even restored by owner Nils who took a heritage restoration course to undertake the work. New wings to the side of the original building accommodate additional living space and an attached garage. The building has been lovingly restored and rehabilitated so that it has another century of life ahead. ♦



Historic doors restored and ready for reinstallation. Source: Jennifer Kravis



Historic windows restored and refitted.

One of the Oldest Structures in Oakville Hidden inside a Palermo House

Located at 2460 Old Bronte Road in the former village of Palermo, the Smith House is a prominent white house on the west side of the road that locals have been familiar with for years. The main portion of the house is believed to have been built in the 1850s and then expanded and renovated in the 1870s. Its Gothic Revival style is evident in the structure's steep roof, prominent centre gable, decorative bargeboard, and round and lancet windows in the gables. The front portico, also likely built during the 1870s renovations, was designed in the Italianate style. The flat roof with projecting eaves, heavily bracketed cornice and square and rectangular windows with rounded edges are all indicative of the style. The original wood windows on the portico are both tinted and etched with late 19th century patterns, adding decorative detail and privacy.

But most locals and passers-by have never seen the oldest part of the house, hidden for many decades within later additions. At the rear of the main house is a circa 1813 timber-frame structure, dating back to the very early settler days of Trafalgar Township, right after the War of 1812. It would have originally been a stand-alone building constructed by early settlers as a first home. Many historic buildings in Trafalgar Township began as small frame or log cabins and as settlers had more time, resources and money, they constructed

larger two-storey homes. Often the original one-storey structure was retained as a rear wing of the house, typically used as a 'summer kitchen'. Most have been demolished through later renovations so it's rare to find this kind of hidden gem. The structure's framing features hand-sawn and rough-sawn wood, post and beam notching, wooden pins, mortise and tenon joints and wide ceiling and roof boards. The structure is a rare and early example of its kind in Oakville.

In 2019, Zancor Homes began developing the site for two new condo buildings, with the plan to retain the historic house and relocate it slightly north to sit next to another historic Palermo house. The house was picked up and moved and placed on a new foundation. Non-historic exterior elements like the aluminum cladding and windows were removed; the original wood siding and detailed trimwork was restored and new historically appropriate windows were installed. At the rear of the house, the 1813 frame structure was conserved within a larger glass rear addition. The goal was to expose the original skeleton of the structure to display its fine timber frame craftsmanship. It's now a unique element that not only provides character in the new space, but also allows future owners, tenants and visitors to better understand the history of Palermo village, and experience centuries-old timber frame construction up close and personal.

The Smith House is important in defining the area as a former historic rural village. Palermo was a significant stop along Dundas Street, the main route between Toronto and Hamilton, and the larger rural community depended on the village for its stagecoach stop, post office, inn, stores, schools and churches. The Smith family owned the property for almost 90 years, building the original structure and expanding it throughout the 19th century. Today the house continues to maintain its presence along Old Bronte Road and acts as a physical reminder of Palermo's early days. ♦



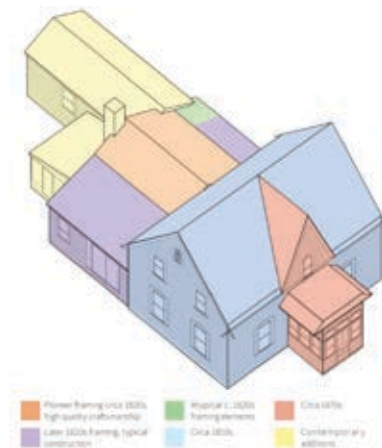
Now: 2025



Streetview of the Smith House on the left with the new addition to the rear.



View of the 1813 structure being conserved inside the new rear addition.



Evolution of the house's construction.
Source: ERA Architects Inc.



Rear view of the house with the 1813 wing during the relocation process.

Then: 2022



Restoration of the original wood siding and trimwork.

Incorporating the Old into the New

Now: 2025



A reinstated stained-glass window in the house.



After reconstruction within the new development.

Then: 2020



Prior to reconstruction.

The Wettlaufer House, a red brick two-storey historic residence at 2467 Old Bronte Road, is a long-standing part of the rich history of Palermo village. Constructed in 1909 by John Marshall, this Edwardian residence has been witness to the evolution of Palermo, and Oakville as a whole, over the past century.

Situated on the treaty lands and ancestral territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Wettlaufer House is a remnant of European settlement history. Treaty 14, known as the Head of the Lake Treaty, was signed in 1806, and Palermo Village was founded shortly thereafter. Palermo predates the European settlements of Oakville and Bronte by approximately 20 years. Despite substantial changes, particularly after World War II with road widenings and modern developments, Palermo has retained its historic charm, with recent efforts focusing on integrating the remaining historic buildings into new developments.

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Heritage Plaque Program

You've probably seen both these types of plaques around town, but have you ever wondered what they mean?

Many historic houses around downtown Oakville have a wood white plaque with black lettering, usually showing who built the house and in what year. These signs are commissioned by the owners and made by the Oakville Historical Society. While they provide information on the history of the home, these plaques do not indicate if the property is designated under the *Ontario Heritage Act*. If you are interested in one for your home, contact the Oakville Historical Society at oakvillehistory.org.

The small oval bronze plaques you can see throughout Oakville are placed on individually designated buildings. These plaques are provided by the town and indicate that the property has been designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Because of the large number of heritage designations in the last two years, the town has recently placed a large order for more plaques and will be distributing these to newly designated properties in the coming months. Properties designated in previous years may also still need a plaque. If your property is individually designated and you do not have a bronze plaque, let Heritage Planning staff know and they can provide one to you. ♦



The Wettlaufer House is named for its association with the Wettlaufer family, who called it home for an impressive 90 years. George Wettlaufer, who settled in the district around 1901, retired to the house in 1926 with his widowed daughters and son, Eckhardt. Over the years, Eckhardt and his wife, Ethel Irene Giles, became deeply involved in local village life. Ethel's role as a teacher at the Palermo School and the family's active participation in the Palermo United Church contributed to the social fabric of the community.

In 2016, the descendants of George Wettlaufer made the decision to sell the property to One Urban, a residential developer. The developer worked with the Town of Oakville to conserve the cultural heritage value of the Wettlaufer House through the meticulous de-construction of the house in 2021, carefully salvaging its historic bricks and woodwork. The Wettlaufer House has now been reconstructed as a focal point in a new

residential development, incorporating a portion of the original structure as an entrance feature and community space within the new building. A new generation of Palermo residents can now appreciate the history of the settlers of Palermo village throughout the coming decades. ♦



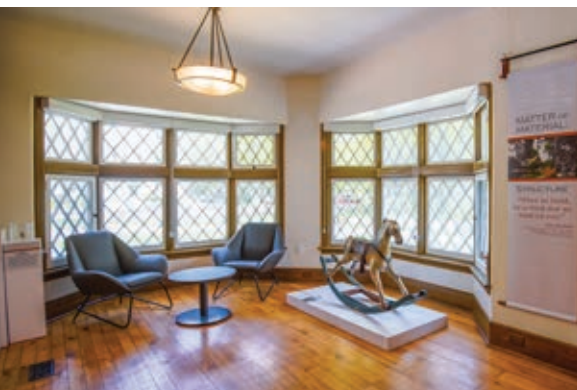
The Wettlaufer family in the 1940s.
Source: Trafalgar Township Historical Society

New Life for the Erchless Estate Coach House

Now: 2023



Photos from top to bottom: Aerial view of the newly restored building; New exhibit space in the original gardener's cottage; Horse images etched into the glass on the new exterior doors referencing the building's original use as a stable and coach house. Source: BEMOCON Contracting Ltd.



The historic Coach House at Erchless Estate originally served as the Chisholm family's coach storage, stables and gardener's cottage. The building had many uses over the years and was adapted to hold cars instead of horses, and was even used as a doctor's office when Dr. Juliet Chisholm opened a pediatric medical practice. In more recent decades, under the town's ownership, the building was used for storage, keeping this picturesque building underused and unopened to the public.



Built in 1899, the Coach House was designed by Toronto-based architectural firm Dick and Watson in the 'Shingle Style', an architectural style that was popular during the Arts & Crafts era, particularly in New England. The building exhibits this style through its wood shingle cladding, dominant roof with multiple dormers and overhangs, variety of windows shapes and styles and emphasis on horizontality. The Arts & Crafts era was focused on natural local materials and the craftsmanship of hand-made architectural elements, as can be seen in the detailed diamond-patterned wood windows and decorative stone pillars and walls of the Coach House.

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In 2016, the town began preparation to renovate the building as a gathering space for cultural and community programming. Work began in 2021 with the grand opening held in May of 2022. Upgrades to the exterior included new wood shingles on both the roof and the walls, new lead-coated copper eaves, the restoration of all wood windows and repointing of stone elements. On the south side of the building, where the original stable doors were once located but removed decades ago, new accordion glass doors were installed, etched with outlines of horses as a cheeky nod to the building's original use.

The building's original gardener's cottage is now an installation space on the main floor with office space available on the second floor in the original bedrooms and bathroom. The horse stables and tack room are now kitchenettes, bathrooms and workspaces, with original stable partitions exposed, complete with teeth marks. The original coach storage is now an open meeting space with a beautiful open view onto the grounds of Erchless Estate through the new glass doors.

The renovations not only restored the significant historic elements of the building, they also breathed new life into an old structure with contemporary treatments. The building is now barrier-free with upgraded insulation, electrical and HVAC components to ensure its long-term viability. The new space is available to rent for meetings and small social events for up to 35 people, with seasonal use of the outdoor terrace.

For all rental inquiries, contact oakvillemuseum@oakville.ca or visit oakville.ca/museum. ♦

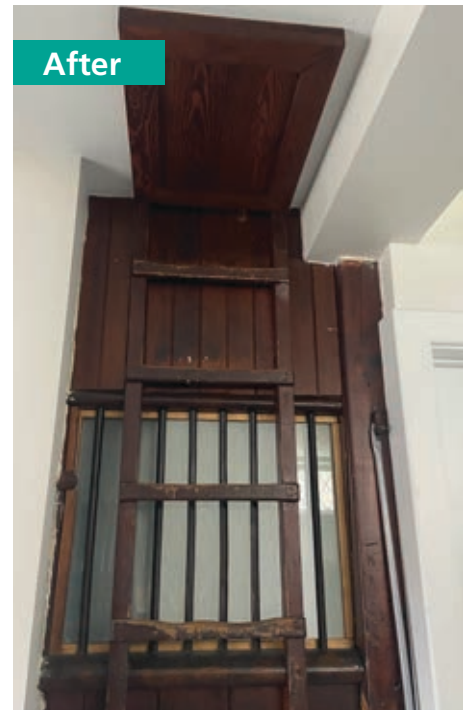


Then: 2021

Replacement of the wood shingles.



Before



After

Left: Original hay loft ladder and hatch after removal of 1997 materials, 2021; Right: Ladder and faux hatch after restoration, 2022.



Before



After

Left: Historic horse stalls after the removal of 1997 materials, 2021; Right: Horse stall partitions retained and incorporated into a new kitchenette, 2022.

Rehabilitating an Old Oakville Landmark

The James McDonald House at 176 Front Street is a well-known landmark in Old Oakville, with residents and visitors walking past it every day on their journey along Front Street between Lakeside Park and Dingle Park. Built in 1837, it's one of the oldest houses in Oakville and was built by Scottish carpenter James McDonald. The two-storey house was built in the Georgian Revival style with Neoclassical detailing. The house has a symmetrical façade with a Neoclassical central entrance flanked by multipaned wood windows. The house was originally clad in horizontal wood siding but was covered in stucco by the early 20th century, a common practice in Oakville when original wood cladding was left untreated and deteriorated over time, especially when exposed to the elements on the lake.

From 2021 to 2024, new owners undertook a major project to restore this significant building while also upgrading it for long-term viability. The house was temporarily lifted up on cribs while a new foundation was constructed underneath

it; the existing crawlspace, sand and loose stone that had been holding up the house was in dire need of reinforcement. Wood framing was salvaged from this work and later used for new bookshelves inside the house. The 20th century additions were removed and replaced with new additions built to the side and rear of the house. These additions have green roofs and are clad in a white-washed brick, designed to appear as garden walls flanking the historic house.

On the exterior, the stucco cladding was removed after large sections of it fell off when the shrubs that were holding it up were removed. Vines that were discovered behind the stucco had been pulling the material off the wall for decades. Underneath the stucco, the original deteriorated wood siding was revealed. The owners removed the cladding material, new insulation was installed and a heritage plasterer applied new traditional three-coat stucco with a historical roughcast finish. The old wood siding was salvaged and later used as an interior wall treatment.

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Front view of the home after restoration

The historic wood windows on the house were taken off-site and restored by traditional millwork specialists. Wavy glass was sourced to replace glass that was cracked or had previously been replaced. New wood awning storm windows were made to replace the previous aluminum storms. New louvered wood shutters were produced to replace ones that were deteriorated, complete with historically appropriate cast iron hinges and shutter dogs, the hardware that holds the shutters in place. Wood trim was restored and replaced where needed with new material to match.

The lengthy rehabilitation process has updated the interior of the home to today's standards while still maintaining the building's architectural value and historical presence on the street. New stone garden walls complement the historic gardens that have been retained, including the old hand pump in the backyard. Original elements have been restored by heritage tradespeople and the new additions are subordinate to the historic house which continues to stand proudly on its little hill. At almost 200 years old, this grand lady should proudly stand for another two centuries. ♦



A view underneath the house when it was up on cribs to build a new foundation.



The rear wall of the house after the stucco and rear additions were removed.



West wall of the house with new garage addition.



The new addition's brick wall and new stone landscaping wall juxtaposed against the historic stucco house.

Turning a Corner in Downtown Oakville

Located at 158 Randall Street in downtown Oakville, the Charles and Mary Davis House is a c.1850 one-and-a-half storey frame house built in the Oakville vernacular style. The house has a symmetrical façade with a central doorway flanked by two small windows. Originally clad in narrow weatherboard, the house was covered in stucco around the turn of the 20th century. The house has a gable roof with a steeply pitched central gable on the front façade accompanied by an arched window.

The house was constructed by Charles Davis around 1850. One of the first shoemakers in Oakville, Davis lived in the house with his wife Mary. In 1850, Charles purchased the Forman Inn, which still exists today at 140 Trafalgar Road. He continued the hotel as the Oakville Temperance House, but ran into trouble when for selling “spirituous liquors” in the establishment and had to sell the business. Charles went back to shoemaking until his death in 1880.

The house was owned by numerous other local families over the next 170 years, including the Florios, Buckles, and Wilsons. In 2017, new owners began the work of repairing and restoring the home for future use as part of a new condominium development. Originally, the house faced Randall Street; as part of the development, the house was moved east to the corner of the block to face Thomas Street. In its new location, the house sits comfortably next to the c.1843 John Brown House.

The new condominium building attached behind the house was designed with darker colours with each storey stepping back away from the heritage house, providing visual distinction and ‘breathing room’ between the heritage house and the new structure. The project is an example of a development where new residential units and contemporary architecture can be accommodated while conserving the town’s built heritage and low-scale streetscape. ♦

Then: 2017



Prior to restoration.

Now: 2023



House in its new streetscape.

Now: 2023

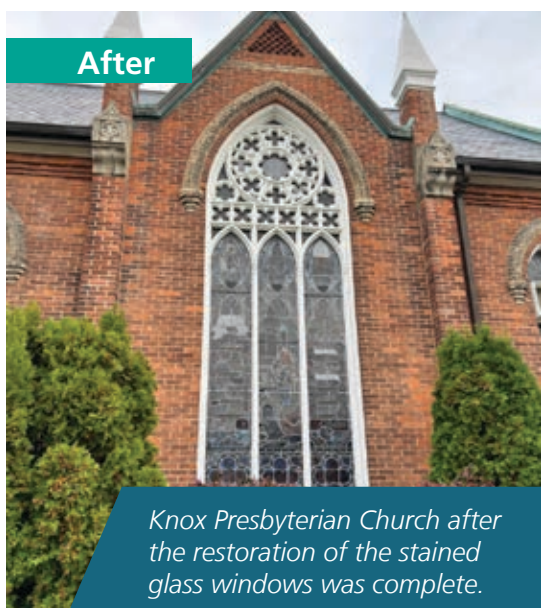


After relocation and restoration.

Heritage Grant Program

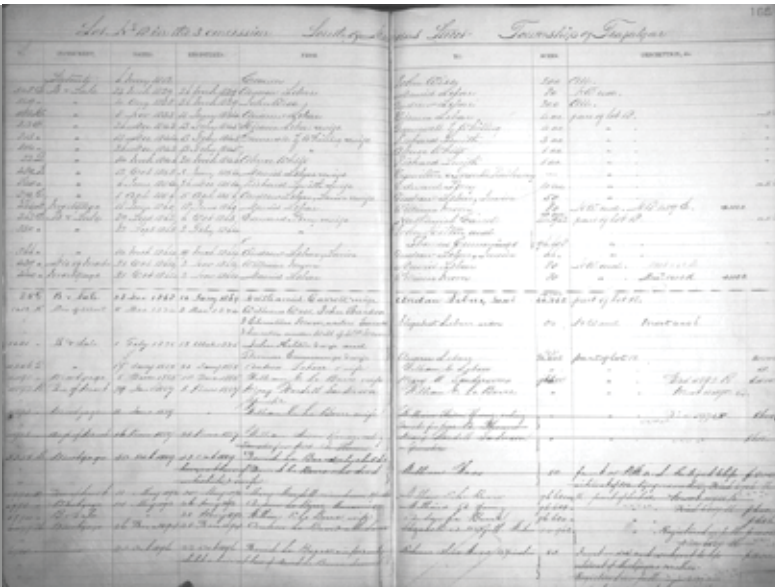
Every year, the Town of Oakville awards grants to owners of heritage properties for improvements to their heritage buildings and properties. Since the program's inception in 2014, approximately \$535,000 has been awarded to assist with over 105 restoration and conservation projects worth more than \$2.5 million. Thanks to the support of Oakville Town Council and the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee, this successful program continues in 2025 with its largest budget yet.

Below are just a few of the projects that received grant money in the past few years. ♦



How we research homes and how you can too!

When analyzing the history of a built heritage asset in Oakville, Heritage Planning staff conducts a thorough assessment on the building: its architectural features, its land transaction history, home ownership history, and more. Here's a quick look at our process, in case you want to give it a try for your own home!



Handwritten land registry abstract for Lot 18 in the Third Concession South of Dundas Street.

Ownership trail

The first thing to do when conducting historical research on a property is to trace the legal ownership of the house. This requires using the Ontario Land Registry website at onland.ca.

Once you input the region of your choice (i.e. "Halton"), you can look up the historical location of the home and trace the ownership that way. It can be tricky to confirm which historical concession and lot your home may have originally stood on; check an old map like the 1858 Tremaine Map or the 1877 Township of Trafalgar map. Once you've got that information, you can begin tracking ownership using the names and dates listed in the abstract (look for "B and S" or "grant"). Sometimes this has notes detailing the size of the land sold; however, you can also order the actual instrument (the number shown on the far left of the abstract) to get more detail.

Build date

Once you've confirmed your ownership trail, the next best stop is the Oakville Public Library's local history room, located at the Central Branch location. This room has microfilm rolls of tax assessment records. These records were taken each year to confirm ownership and value of property. These can be irregular depending on what you're looking for—for example, the Town of Oakville has sporadic records in the 1860s, and the Township of Trafalgar rolls are missing from 1900–1909. But they are incredibly helpful in narrowing down a build date year for the house, and if the owners actually lived in it or rented it out—a common practice in early Oakville.

There are a few tricks to using the machine, so make sure to book it through the library and ask the librarians for help. And remember, not all buildings are necessarily going to be your specific structure—for example, farms would often have a smaller house before they built a second or even third larger house. Discretion is important when conducting research.

Fire insurance maps are also very helpful tools if your house is located within the larger downtown Oakville area. These maps were made by fire insurance companies in the first half of the 20th century and show the footprint of each building and its construction material. Maps from 1910, 1913, 1924, 1932, 1949 and 1967 are available at the Oakville Public Library, the Oakville Historical Society and McMaster University Library.

Information on owners and builders

Once you've pinpointed your build date or range, then comes the fun part: researching the history of those who owned and lived in the house, and if you're lucky, the architect. There is a variety of resources for this step. Ancestry (ancestry.ca) has

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specific census data that can be very helpful for confirming family members, occupations, ages, etc. There are also records like marriage, death, and birth certificates, family trees and more.

You can also check out websites and online archives like:

OurOntario — ourontario.ca

Oakville Images — oakvilleimages.ca

Canadiana — canadiana.ca

The Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada — dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org

In-person archives such as the Archives of Ontario and even the Toronto Archives can be helpful in some cases. Another great resource is the Toronto Star and Globe archives through the Toronto Public Library or the Brampton Public Library.

Oakville is also lucky to have three active and knowledgeable historical societies that hold archives with numerous resources, including photos, books, fire insurance maps, family records and more. Volunteers are always happy to assist by email, over the phone and in person on specific days.

Oakville Historical Society — oakvillehistory.org

Trafalgar Township Historical Society — tths.ca

Bronte Historical Society — brontehistoricalsociety.ca

Another great resource is books. *Oakville and the Sixteen* by Hazel Mathews is a great resource for pre-1900 information; *Oakville: A Small Town* by Frances Robin Ahern is useful for post-1900 information, and *Places and People on Bronte Creek* by Dorothy Turcotte covers the history of the Bronte area.

Putting it all together

If you're interested in putting all the information together, why not write your own history report? One key thing to remember is to cite all your sources, even if it's just a note at the bottom of your page noting where specific information comes from. This is important, so that in the future when you share your report you'll remember the source of dates, names, etc. Staff has come across several instances where well-shared stories were proven incorrect after researching.

It's a good idea to start your report with the Indigenous history of the Oakville area, and more specifically, where the structure is located; there are two treaties with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, Treaty 14 and Treaty 22, that exist within Oakville's boundaries, and it is vital to understand these and their history in your neighbourhood. ♦



The Oakville Public Library's local history room with microfilm scanner.

NAME OF THE PROPERTY				ASSESSMENT OF PROPERTY			
Lot	Owner	Area	Value	Assessment	Rate	Total	Notes
26	James H. Oakville	62	F. Reine	Block 2	1.14	5	
7	James H. Oakville	62	F. Reine				
9	Chamberlain Street	18	F. Chamberlain				
9	James T. D. J.	53	F. Chamberlain	Brantwood Annex			
20	Judge J. J.	23	F. Manager			1.2	
2	Brantwood	24	F. Chamberlain			3.4	
3	James H. Oakville	76	F. Reine			5.6	
4	Chamberlain Street		F. Chamberlain			7.8	
5	W. J. J. J.		F. Chamberlain			9.0	
6	Chamberlain Street		F. Chamberlain			11.2	

A 1918 Town of Oakville assessment roll for the Brantwood neighbourhood.



Janet Godber, Oakville Historical Society volunteer, researching a property for the town's heritage designation project.



An original architectural blueprint that was still held by the owner.

Outreach and training

As professional planners and heritage experts, the town's Heritage Planning staff has an obligation to continue their own education within the heritage planning field, as well as to share their knowledge with others. Here is a few of the outreach and educational activities that staff participated in last year.

Designation By-law Workshop, 2024

In June of last year, the town's Heritage Planning staff organized and held a Designation By-law Workshop for Ontario's municipal heritage planners. Over 40 people attended in person and dozens more participated through virtual materials. Presentations were made by heritage planners from the City of Markham, the City of Kitchener and the Town of Oakville. Carolyn Van Sligtenhorst presented for Oakville and discussed best practices on evaluating properties for individual designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* and on drafting designation by-laws. The event was a great way for heritage planners across Ontario to share their best practices, and many have requested that Oakville host similar workshops in the future.

Bronte Historical Society Culture Days

Heritage Planner Susan Schappert presented to the Bronte Historical Society (BHS) in September 2024 as part of the BHS Culture Days events. The 'Heritage Planning 101' session discussed how heritage designations work under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, how heritage permits manage change and what cultural heritage landscape designation means. The presentation was a prelude to the Great Bronte Heritage Sites Scavenger Hunt, which had participants identify historic architectural elements around Bronte Village.

The Crossing

In 2023, the idea for a community heritage day was developed to draw attention to the history of Knox 16 Presbyterian Church and the vanished village of Proudfoot Hollow. Heritage Planner Susan Schappert worked with Knox 16 and the Region of Halton Heritage Services to plan the event to coincide with Ontario Culture Days. An invitation was extended to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, which was enthusiastically accepted, leading to the formation of 'The Crossing' as a larger event. Initially, this term referred to the physical crossing of a river, but it soon expanded to symbolize a meeting place where people from diverse backgrounds could exchange ideas and learn from one another.

Taking place on the last Saturday of September in both 2023 and 2024, The Crossing event has included tours of the historic Knox 16 Church, the cemetery and the lost village site in Lion's Valley Park. Many exhibitors, including Conservation Halton, Bronte Historical Society, Oakville Historical Society, Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton and Halton Regional Police have set up in the park to share information and build important connections with the community.



The Crossing exhibitors, Mississauga of the Credit First Nation and Halton Regional Police, 2023.



Visitors crossing the bridge in Lion's Valley Park

continued ►



Staff presenting at the Ontario Heritage Conference in Gravenhurst.

Ontario Heritage Conference, 2024

The annual Ontario conference for heritage conservation was held in Gravenhurst last year, with a theme of 'Community Embracing Heritage'. Heritage Planning staff Elaine Eigl, Kristen McLaughlin and Carolyn Van Sligtenhorst attended. Carolyn delivered a session presentation about the impacts of the Province's Bill 23 on the Town of Oakville's cultural heritage program. The presentation provided an overview of the town's Heritage Designation Project and offered guidance on how to collaborate and communicate with owners, complete thorough historical research and produce solid and effective designation by-laws.

National Trust for Canada – Association for Preservation Technology Joint Conference, 2024

Each year the National Trust for Canada and the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals (CAHP) holds a national heritage conference in Canada. This year, the American Association for Preservation Technology (APT) joined the conference in Montreal, bringing almost 1,200 delegates together. Heritage Planner Carolyn Van Sligtenhorst was invited to represent as a CAHP member at the conference and moderated a session on the recent changes to provincial heritage legislation in Ontario. This year's theme was 'Building Bridges' and focused on connecting places, cultures and practices to bridge the knowledge gap and gain new insights into the ongoing challenges in heritage conservation, climate resiliency and social equity. ♦

Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee

The mandate of the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee is to advise Council on the identification, conservation and promotion of heritage resources in Oakville. The committee reviews and makes recommendations on planning and development applications for heritage properties, including alterations, removal, and demolition. The committee also promotes heritage conservation through the support of heritage designations, heritage policy matters, and public awareness of Oakville's history and heritage resources.

The committee is currently made up of the following members:

Drew Bucknall, Chair	George Gordon
Geri Tino, Vice-Chair	Susan Hobson
Russell Buckland	Jason Judson
Kerry Colborne	Bob Laughlin
Emma Dowling	Councillor Jonathan McNeice
Councillor Dave Gittings	

Heritage Planning Staff

This newsletter was developed by the town's Heritage Planning staff, in collaboration with other town staff and members of the Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee. For more information on any of these articles, please contact:

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Heritage Planning Online

For more information on Heritage Planning in Oakville, visit our website at oakville.ca and search "heritage planning" to find information on the following:

Heritage Districts and Properties

Outline of the different types of heritage properties, including the Heritage Property Index with a status for each heritage property

Heritage Permits

Information and application forms for heritage permits

Heritage Grant Program

Information on how to apply for a heritage grant

Heritage Oakville Advisory Committee

Overview of the committee, its members and meeting information

Heritage Mapping

Link to heritage layers in GIS mapping system

Heritage Notices

Link to heritage-related notices on the town's News and Notices page



Children skating in the yard across from the James McDonald House, 1935.
Source: Oakville Historical Society

Photos are sourced from Town of Oakville staff, unless otherwise noted.