

Thomas S. Graham House

c. 1870

15 John Street East

Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

October 2026

Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Municipal Heritage Committee

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 provides an overview of the property based on primary and secondary research and visual inspection of the property. Please note that all visual inspections of the property were taken from the public right of way and no site visits were made. 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 Significance 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 (2024). The conservation of cultural heritage resources is also supported by the County of Simcoe Official Plan, and the 2023 Official Plan for the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury.

Based on the contents of this report, the property located at 15 John Street East meets the criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Property Name	Thomas S. Graham House
Municipal Address	15 John Street East
Legal Description	Part of Lots 1 and 2 on Plan 122A
Property Size	0.080 hectares
Date of Construction	1870
Heritage Recognition	Listed on Municipal List of Heritage Properties
Lead Researcher	Thomas Dysart, MCIP, RPP, CAHP Senior Planner, Town of BWG

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Subject Property	5
Background Research *Design and Physical Value*	6
Background Research *Historical and Associative Value*	7
Background Research *Contextual Value*	10
Evaluation Under O.Reg 9.06	11
Statement of Cultural Heritage Value	12
Sources	13
List of Figures	15

SUBJECT PROPERTY

Location

The subject property is located on the north side of John Street, east of Barrie Street and is legally described as Part of Lots 1 and 2 on Plan 122A and is municipally addressed as 15 John Street East.



Figure 1: Simcoe County GIS (2025)

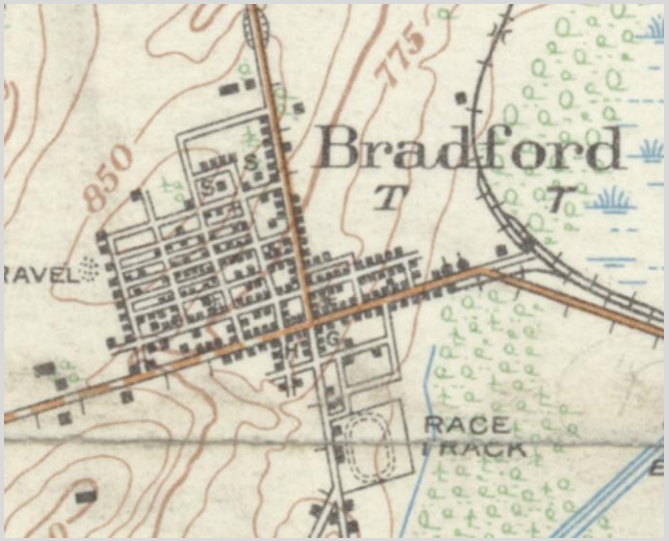


Figure 2: Topographic Map of Bradford, 1928

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Design and Physical Value

The building at the subject property has characteristics of the neoclassical architectural style.

Neoclassical Architecture

Neoclassical architecture is usually proportioned style and buildings are typically rectangular with low pitched gable roofs. Houses are two or two and a half storey with balanced facades. Neoclassical homes feature centered entrances with decorative elements to emphasize the main door. Neoclassical architecture gained in popularity following the War of 1812. Influenced largely by Georgian architecture, neoclassical architecture was more refined, delicate in style and overall a more elegant approach to home-building.

Construction materials may vary, but it can feature either stone or wood construction. Based on the Fire Insurance Map of 1924, it is identified that the primary construction material of the subject property is of stone construction.

The subject property at 15 John Street East is of stone construction, built in the neoclassical architecture style. The overall appearance is that of a symmetrical three-bay facade with a medium slope gable roof. With a front verandah that stretches across the front façade. There are rectangular window openings on the front and sides of the building. The rusticated (textured) brick pattern is not commonly scene in Bradford.



Figure 5: Subject Property

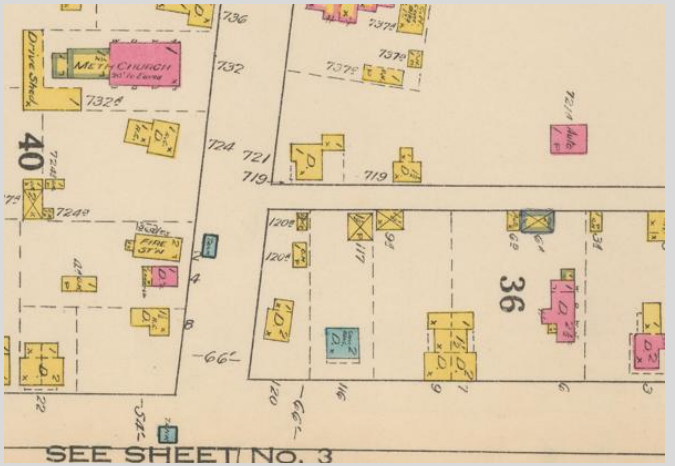


Figure 3: Bradford Fire Insurance Plans



Figure 4: Georgian Architecture has many influences over neoclassical architecture

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

Pre Contact History

The subject property is in the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek Nation, which includes Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi Nation, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy and that the Huron-Wendat, Chippewa and Haudenosaunee Nations have also been associated with lands. The subject lands were part of the Lake Simcoe-Nottawasgaa Treaty No.18 of 1818, where in exchange for 1,592,000 acres, the Chippewas were paid a yearly sum of 1200 pounds.

Land Ownership

The original patent in which the subject property was located was once owned by a Wilson Stoddart; Stoddart purchased all 205 acres in April 1860; Ross then sold the lands to various individuals including the Issac B. Rogers who bought Lots 1-10 on the north side of John Street is 1863. Rogers purchased the lands for $1994.

Issac then presumably granted the lands to his son, George shortly after. Following the Land Registry Documents for Lot 2 on Plan 122A, the lands changed hands multiple times.

Nature of Instrument	Instrument Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
B&S	March 1871	George Rogers	George Haughton (?)	$1000
B&S	March 1871	George Rogers	Thomas S. Graham and Wilson B. Scott	$1134
B&S	May 1873	Thomas Sheridan Graham	William Bruce	
B&S	Dec 1906	George (???)	Albert Moore	
B&S	August 1907	Albert Moore	Robert McGuire	$182.50

Given the construction date of the house (between 1870 and 1890), the property is most likely associated with Thomas Sheridan Graham and William Bruce.



Figure 6: Village of Bradford, c.1878

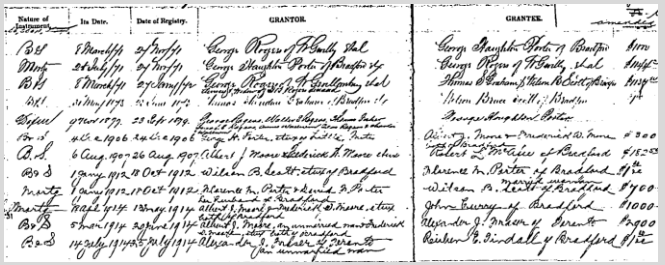


Figure 7: Land Registry Records

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

Thomas S. Graham

Thomas Graham was born in 1837 in Brock, Ontario to parents John Graham and Margaret Holton. Thomas was one of 7 children. Thomas arrived in Bradford in 1854 to apprentice in harness making with Thomas Wallace. By 1868, Thomas married Ann Driffill of Bradford. They went on to have 6 children:

- Edith Maria Graham (b. 1869)
- Alice Clarinda Graham (b.1871)
- Frederick Morwood Graham (b. 1873)
- Harvey Driffill Graham (b. 1875)
- Charles Wilson Graham (b.1880)
- Ernest Victor Graham (b.1883)

In the 1866 Gazetteer for the County of Simcoe, Thomas Graham is listed as being in business with Wilson B. Scott, operating SCOTT & GRAHAM. In the Census listings for Thomas, his occupation in the 1871 and 1881 Census is listed as as Harness Marker. In the 1901 Census, Thomas is listed as Clerk.

Scott and Graham appeared to have been partners in business for nearly 50 years. According Thomas' obituary, Scott and Graham lived under the same roof for many years.

In the Holland Street fire of 1871, Scott and Graham had a loss of about $2,500, and their business was destroyed.

Their business ended in 1891 when *Scott and Graham* were bought out when Mr. E.P. Snow, purchased the business. Shortly after business ended, Graham was appointed to Clerkship of the Second Division Court.

Other information we know about Thomas Graham is that he was of Irish decent and a member of the Methodist faith. Thomas died in 1903 and his obituary lists that Thomas was a Councilor and Reeve in Bradford, a Chairman of the Bradford High School Board and a Justice of the Peace for the County of Simcoe. Thomas Graham is buried at Mount Pleasant Cemetery in Bradford.

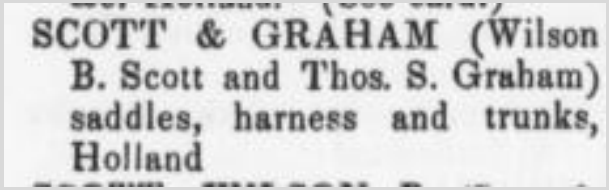

SCOTT & GRAHAM (Wilson B. Scott and Thos. S. Graham) saddles, harness and trunks, Holland

Figure 8: Listing for SCOTT and GRAHAM

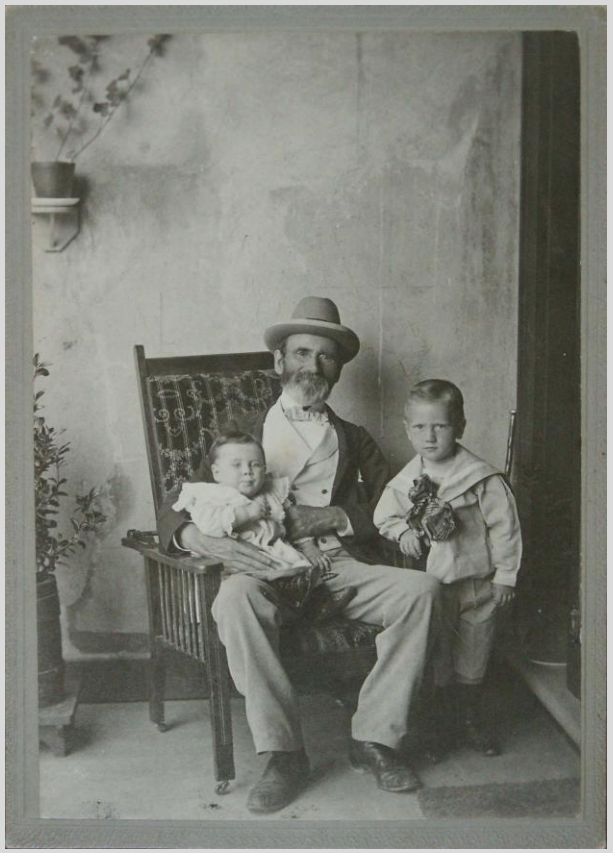


Figure 8: Thomas S. Graham with grandchildren (BWG Public Library)

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

William Bruce

Unfortunately no information was found on William Bruce.



Figure 9: Final resting place of Thomas S. Graham

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Contextual Value

The subject property is located along John Street, north of Holland Street, which is one of the streets that form the original Village of Bradford. The property is an excellent example of an early 19th century residential building set in a growing community. The property is surrounded by architecturally similar properties and contributes to the historic identify of the Downtown Bradford neighborhood.

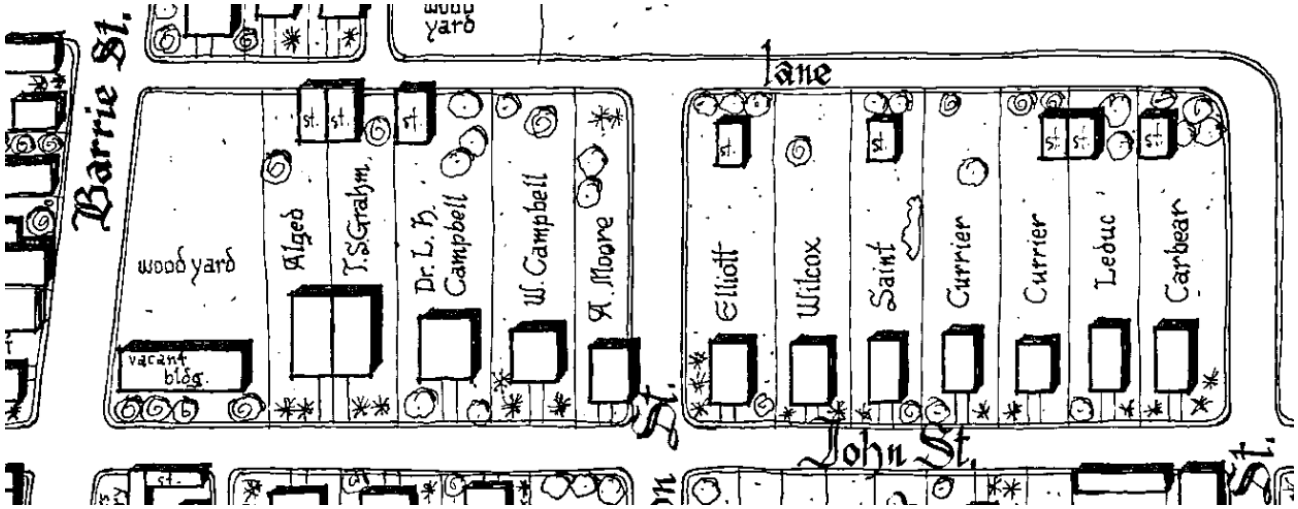


Figure 10: Illustrated Map of Bradford, c. 1900

EVALUATION UNDER ONTARIO REGULATION 9/06

	Ontario Regulation 9/06 Criteria	Evaluation	Criteria met (Y/N)
i	is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method;	The property is an example of an early 19th century residential building designed in the Neoclassical architectural style.	Y
ii	displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit;		N
Iii	demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.		N
iv	has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community;	The property has direct associations with the Thomas S. Graham. Graham was a business owner on Holland Street and contributed to the development of the Town.	Y
v	yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture;		N
vi	demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.		N
vii	is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area;	The property is historically linked to its surrounding area, being on one of the oldest streets in Bradford, adjacent to other similarly aged properties.	N
viii	is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings;		Y
ix	is a landmark.		N

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Thomas S. Graham House c. 1870

The subject property has been researched and evaluated 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. 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. By using these criteria, staff can determine if the property's cultural heritage value or interest merits designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Description of Property

The property at 15 John Street East is located on the north side of John Street. The property contains an Ecelectic Neoclassical, c. 1890 two storey residential dwelling. Due to its association with an early settler family of Bradford, it is known as the Rogers House.
Its legal address is:
15 John Street East

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Design/ Physical Value

The Thomas S. Graham House has design and physical value as representative example of a Neoclassical, c. 1870 property. The house was built around 1870 and has the following characteristics: two storey building with symmetrical façade with full width verandah and a hipped roof.

Historical/ Associative Value

The Thomas S. Graham House has historic/associative value for its direct association with the Thomas S. Graham. Thomas S. Graham were an early settler family who operated a successful business on Holland Street and was involved in the community.

Contextual Value

The Thomas S. Graham has contextual value because it defines and supports and maintains the historic character of the former Village of Bradford.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Key heritage attributes of the Rogers House that exemplify its heritage value as a Neoclassical, c. 1870 house as it relates to the property include:

- Two Story Detached Building
- Symmetrical façade
- Rectangular window openings of varying sizes
- Full width verandah
- Broad hipped roof
- Cement block construction with rusticated brick texture

SOURCES

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We Grew Up In or Live in Bradford West Gwillimbury Facebook Group. Facebook.com

SOURCES

Thomas S. Graham

Gravestone: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/97860123/thomas-s-graham

Family Tree and Census Records:
https://www.familysearch.org/en/tree/person/sources/K23F-YF5

Obituary: http://archives.bradford.library.on.ca/index.php/obituary-for-thomas-s-graham

LIST OF FIGURES

Title Page: T.Dysart, 2026

Figure 1: Retrieved from Simcoe County GIS

Figure 2: Retrieved from https://topomaps.scholarsportal.info/collection/ “Alliston”

Figure 3: Retrieved from Fire Insurance Plan (1924)

Figure 4: Buildings of Canada retrieved from https://www.historicplaces.ca/media/7173/buildingsofcanada.pdf

Figure 5: T. Dysart, 2026

Figure 6: Village of Bradford, 1894 retrieved from https://digital.library.mcgill.ca/countyatlas/searchmapframes.php

Figure 7: Retrieved from Land Registry Records

Figure 8: Retrieved from BWG Public Library Archives

Figure 9: Retrieved from FindaGrave

Figure 10: Retrieved from Village of Bradford Map, 1900