

West-McKay House

c. 1860

3951 Line 5

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 2243 Sideroad 10 meets the criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Property Name	McKay- West House
Municipal Address	3951 Lot 5
Legal Description	Lot 4, Concession 4
Property Size	40.51 hectares
Date of Construction	1860
Heritage Recognition	Listed on Municipal List of Heritage Properties
Lead Researcher	Thomas Dysart, MCIP, RPP, CAHP Senior Planner, Town of BWG

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SUBJECT PROPERTY

The subject property is located on the south side of Line 5, between County Road 27 and Sideroad 5.

The property is in Lot 4, Concession 4 and is municipally addressed as 3951 Line 5.



Figure 1: Subject Property (2025)



Figure 2: Topographic Map of property (1928)

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Design and Physical Value

The subject property is believed to be built around in 1860 and has many characteristics of a home designed in the Georgian Architecture Style.

Georgian Architecture

Georgian Architecture refers to the years during which the three King George's ruled England (1750-1820). Georgian architecture is known for balanced facades, muted ornaments and minimal details. Georgian architecture can be summarized as simple and symmetrical.

Georgian architecture was brought to Upper Canada (Ontario), by those loyal to the Crown during the American Revolution. These Loyalists, wanted a sturdy house that reflected simple dignity. Many Georgian houses were first built of log, and later replaced by solid stone, brick or clapboard. Typical Georgian homes are two and a half story's and well proportioned homes. Most Georgian homes have a medium pitched gable or rip roof, with end chimneys. Facades are symmetrical and typically found with three, five or seven bay facades. Windows and doors are rectangular openings and walls are squared off with quoins at the corner. Entrances are central to the façade.

The subject property features many of the typical Georgian architecture characteristics. The property features a symmetrical three bay façade with a central door. The two storey home feature a medium-pitched gable roof. Inside end chimneys which can be viewed from the street line. home has rectangular window and door openings.

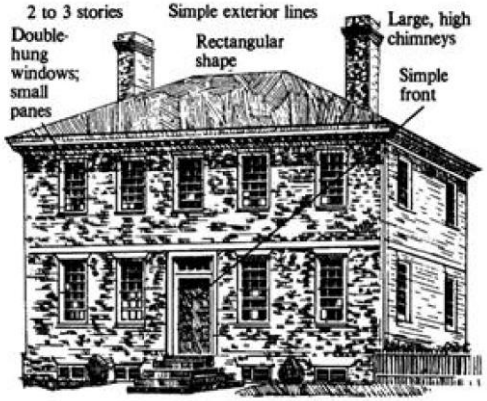


Figure 3: Elements of a home designed in the Georgian Architectural Style





Figure 4/5: Subject Property

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 Thomas Sherwood who purchased the lands from the Crown in 1834, cost unknown. The lands then transferred to a number of West Gwillimbury settlers.

Nature of Instrument	Instrument Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
Patent	May 1834	Crown	Thomas Sherwood	N/W ¼ 50 Acres
B&S	Nov 1834	Thomas Sherwood of West Gwillimbury	Henry Robins	$100
B&S	Nov 1835	Henry Robins of West Gwillimbury	Thomas West Jr	$100
B&S	October 1841	Thomas West Jr of West Gwillimbury	Robert Smith	$250
B&S	March 1869	Names Unknown	Henry McKay	$4063

Given the age of the home, the home is largely connected with either Thomas West, Robert Smith and Henry McKay.

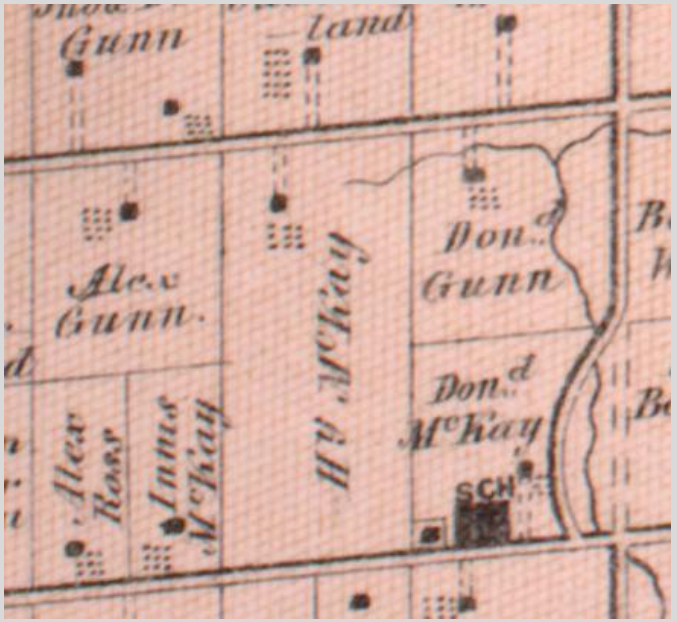


Figure 6: Map of West Gwillimbury (1860)

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

Thomas West

Thomas and his wife Mary “Polly” (Davis) were among the first settlers in East Gwillimbury, before moving to West Gwillimbury and becoming the first settlers in West Gwillimbury arriving in 1820. They had 10 children, but eventually moved to Wisconsin. Their son, Thomas Jr., purchased Lot 4, Concession 4 in 1835, but he and his wife Hannah, sold the lands in the 1840s and moved to Wisconsin.

Thomas and Hannah appear to have divorced in 1864, and Thomas married Diademia. Thomas West is buried in Black Hawk County Iowa. His father, Thomas, and mother Mary “Polly” are buried in Wisconsin.

Robert Smith

The only information found on Robert Smith was from the 1861 Census. In the Census, it shows that Robert (61) is married to Ann (50) They have no children. Both were born in Scotland. Robert is listed as being a Farmer and they are listed as living in a one and half brick dwelling. No information was found on the family.

Henry McKay

Henry was born in 1815 in Scotland to parent Innes and Isabella. His brother, Dondald, immigrated to Canada from Caithness County Scotland in 1846, and Henry and the rest of the family came shortly after.

Innis and Isabel had 7 children: George, Donald, Henry, William, Isabel, Margaret and David. They came to Canada after 1846. They did not purchase a farm and likely lived with their children. The children to settle in West Gwillimbury were: Donald, Henry, Isabel, Margaret and David.

The McKay Family (also sometimes spelt as MacKay) were some of the first settler families in West Gwillimbury.



Figure 7: Final resting place of Thomas West (Senior)



Figure 8: Final resting place of Thomas West (Junior)

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

Henry met Ellen Sutherland and they married and had 10 children:

- Johannah b. 1849
- Isabella b.1850
- Elizabeth b. 1852
- Angus b. 1853
- Alexander b. 1858
- Innis b. 1859
- William b. 1859
- Donald b. 1862
- Elizabeth b.1862
- Henry b. 1865

In the 1861 Census, Henry (49) is listed as a being a farmer. No other person in the household is listed as having a job, and their home is listed as being a frame home, though likely not the subject property as the northwest quarter of Lot 4, Concession 4 did not come into the procession of Henry McKay until 1869. Though, according to the 1866 Gazateer for the County of Simcoe, Henry McKay does own both Lot 3 and Lot 4, Concession 4.

The 1871 Census shows that Henry (56) is listed as a Farmer. In the 1881 Census, Henry (66) is still listed as being a Farmer. The 1881 Census is the last census Henry appears in, as he died in 1894. Henry is buried, with his wife, at Auld Kirk Cemetery.

Governor Simcoe Slept Here, tells us that Henry purchased the northwest quarter of Lot 4, Concession 4 in 1869, and later willed the property to his son youngest song James (Henry). James sold the land in 1910 to William Jeffrey for $8250.

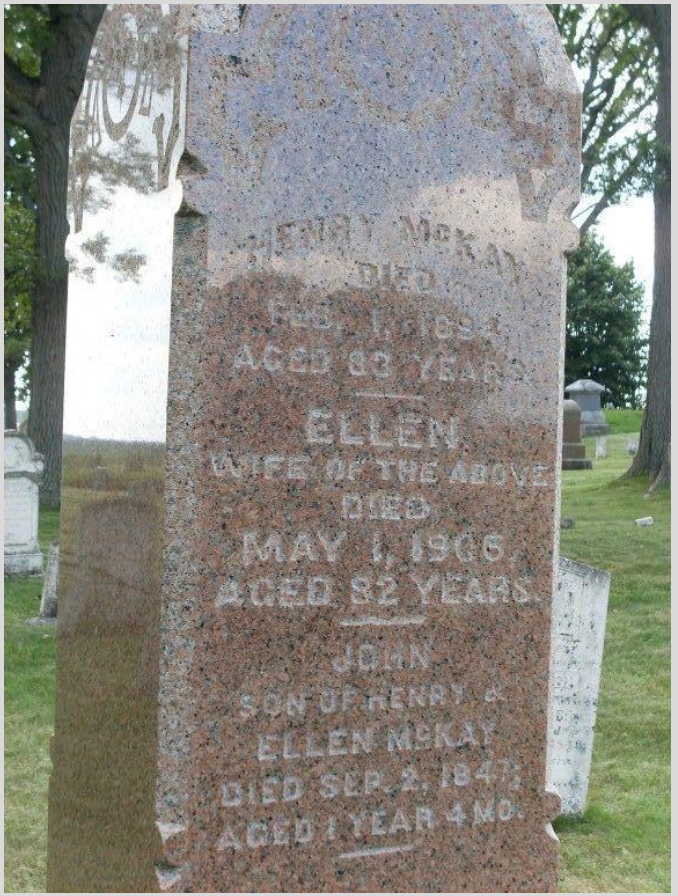


Figure 9: Final resting place of Henry McKay



BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Contextual Value

The subject property is situated in a rural area of the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury. The property is an excellent example of an early 19th century Ontario farmstead. The property remains linked to its surroundings physically, visually and historically. The property is linked to a number of historic West Gwillimbury families that have contributed to the development of Bradford West Gwillimbury

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 Georgian 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 several early settler families including the West, Smith and McKay Families	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 a 19th century rural property and supporting the agrarian routes of the community	Y
viii	is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings;		N
ix	is a landmark.		N

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

West- McKay House c. 1860

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 3951 Line 5 is located on the south side of Line 5. The property contains a Georgian c. 1869 residential property. Due to its association with an early settler family of West Gwillimbury, it is known as the McKay- West House

Its legal address is:

3951 Line 5; Lot 4, Concession 4

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Design/ Physical Value

The McKay- West House has design and physical value as representative example of a Georgian c. 1869 property. The house was built around 1869 and has the following characteristics: Two storey with three bays, red brick cladding side gable roof symmetrical façade with rectangular windows and door openings

Historical/ Associative Value

The McKay- West House has historic/associative value for its direct association with the Henry McKay, Selkirk Settler and Thomas West. Both the McKay and West Family were early settler families in the Bradford/West Gwillimbury community. The families were farmers, which contributed to the growth and development of the Town.

Contextual Value

The McKay- West House has contextual value because it defines and supports and maintains the character of the agricultural routes of the community.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Key heritage attributes of the McKay- West House that exemplify its heritage value as a Georgian c. 1869 house as it relates to the property include:

- Two storey home
- Red brick cladding
- Side gable roof
- Symmetrical façade with three bays
- Rectangular windows and door openings

SOURCES

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

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Figure 10: Hoggs Map of Simcoe County (1871)