

John Boddy House

c. 1890

97 Church Street

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 97 Church meets the criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Property Name	John Boddy House
Municipal Address	97 Church Street
Legal Description	Part of Lot 50 and 51 on Plan 56
Property Size	0.084 hectares
Date of Construction	1890
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 at the corner of Church Street and Frederick Street, west of Barrie Street. The property has a municipal address of 97 Church Street.

The legal address of the property is Part of Lot 50 and 51 on Plan 56.



Figure 1: Simcoe County GIS (2025)



Figure 1: Topographic Map of Bradford

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Design and Physical Value

The subject property is designed in the Gothic Revival Architectural Style.



Figure 3: Subject Property

Gothic Revival

The Gothic Revival architectural style (1840-1990) was the pre-eminent Canadian style during the Victorian period. It was influenced by European interests in Medieval Gothic History. It is often described as an “exuberant” or “flamboyant” style, as it reflected the prosperity and growth of many villages and towns during the mid-to-late 1800’s.

Gothic Revival Architectural style is characterized by: steeply pitched gable roofs (typically found with dormers to break up the horizontal lines), elaborately carved gingerbread , such as bargeboard, diocramatic brickwork, wooden porch/verandah, use of brick and different brick accents to highlight door/window surrounds and quoins (corners).

In Ontario, the magazine, Canada Farmer, published plans and elevations for a “small gothic cottage” that lead to the popularity of the architectural style. The plan and elevations appeared in the February 1864 issue.

The subject property is an excellent example of 19th Century gothic revival architecture. The three bay façade with gable end roofs, is very reminiscent of a simply designed farm house that dots Ontario streetscapes.

The home, built of wood according to the Fire Insurance Plan of 1924, has a steep central gable, featuring symmetrical massing, with the front door, centered to the building, flanked by two windows, reinforcing the symmetrical design of the home. The property may also feature many elements of the Gothic Revival architectural style.



Figure 4: Example of a Gothic Revival Home

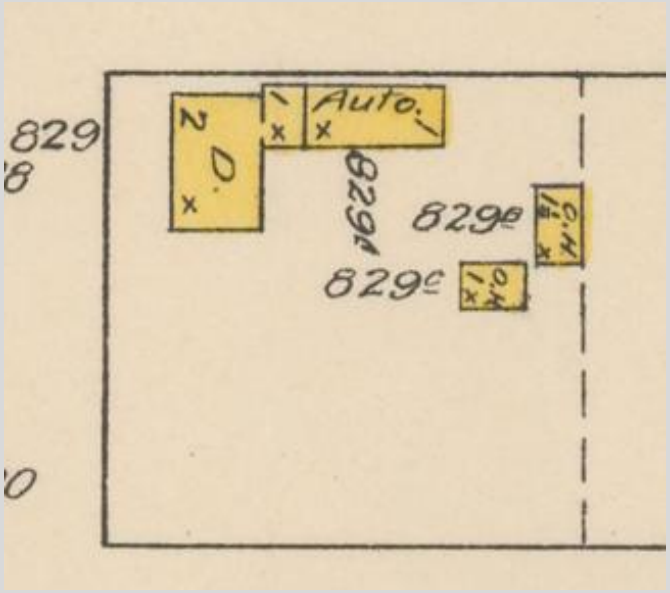


Figure 5: Fire Insurance Map, 1924

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 Robert Ross of Whitchurch; Ross purchased all 200 acres in Mach 1830; Ross then sold the lands to Letitia Magee, a spinster, for $100 a month later in April 1830. Magee then went on to sell off the lands at varying sizes (1/2 acres, 1/4 acre etc.) to various new settlers to Bradford.

William Hawkins acquired the land sometime around 1869 and the Lot 50 on the south side of Frederick on Plan 56 transferred between several early residents of BWG:

Nature of Instrument	Instrument Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
B&S	February 1869	William Hawkins	Robert Stewart(?)	$220
B&S	December 1874	Robert Stewart	William Mc(??)	$1500
B&S	June 1889	???	John Boddy	$1025
B&S	September 1905	John Boddy	Samuel Oldham(?)	$1300

Given the architectural style, the home is likely connected with John Boddy.



Figure 6: John Boddy

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

John Boddy was born in County Letrim, Ireland in 1823 and moved to Canada in 1831 and settled in Lloydtown that year. By 1844, Boddy moved to Bond Head where he ran a hotel and established himself as a merchant. Boddy married Elizabeth Sutherland in 1846. They married in Algoma Township. Elizabeth and John would go on to have 9 children:

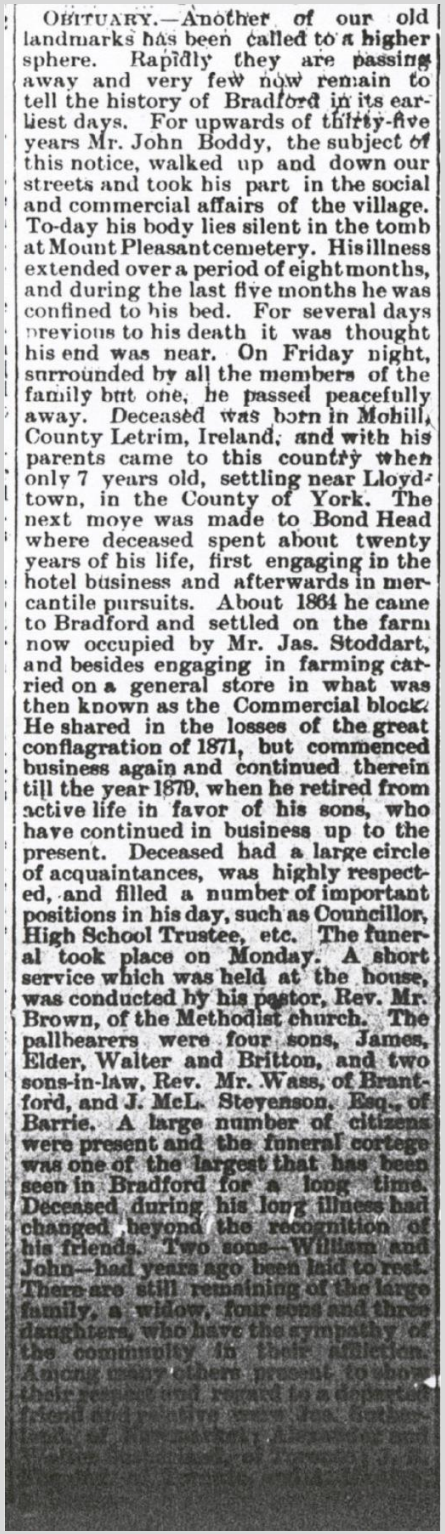
- Belinda (1853) married Jabez Wass
- Ellen (1854) married Jon McLean Stevenson
- James (1855) married Emily Bingham
- John (1858)
- William (1862) married Barbara Sutherland
- Walter (1864) married Gertrude Hawley
- Alexander (1866)
- Laura (1869)

Between 1861 and 1871, Boddy's residence changed from West Gwillimbury (Bond Head) to Bradford. In the 1871 Census, it is confirmed that Boddy identifies as Irish, was born in Ireland and is a member of the Wesleyan Methodist faith. His occupation is listed as Farmer and Hotel(?) Keeper, while in the 1872 County of Simcoe Gazetteer, John Boddy is listed as a general merchant.

While he may have had success as a merchant, in 1871, fire struck downtown Bradford, destroying much of the village core. Witness account of the fire and newspaper articles of the time state that John Boddy's General Store, located on the north side of Holland Street was completely destroyed with the contents also gone. John Boddy's loss was approximately $15,000 (on stock) and $1,800 for the building. The total loss of everything in the fire (for all of Bradford) was estimated to be about $500,000.

While the 1872 Gazateer for the County of Simcoe listing John Boddy as a General Merchant, the Canadian Census of 1881 has him listed a farmer. By 1899, John Boddy died at 74 years old, due to affection of the kidneys. His obituary lists him as being a County Magistrate, an admirer of Sir. John A MacDonald and a staunch conservative and a member of the local party.

Boddy is buried at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in Bradford.



OBITUARY.—Another of our old landmarks has been called to a higher sphere. Rapidly they are passing away and very few now remain to tell the history of Bradford in its earliest days. For upwards of thirty-five years Mr. John Boddy, the subject of this notice, walked up and down our streets and took his part in the social and commercial affairs of the village. To-day his body lies silent in the tomb at Mount Pleasant cemetery. His illness extended over a period of eight months, and during the last five months he was confined to his bed. For several days previous to his death it was thought his end was near. On Friday night, surrounded by all the members of the family but one, he passed peacefully away. Deceased was born in Mohill, County Letrim, Ireland, and with his parents came to this country when only 7 years old, settling near Lloydtown, in the County of York. The next move was made to Bond Head where deceased spent about twenty years of his life, first engaging in the hotel business and afterwards in mercantile pursuits. About 1864 he came to Bradford and settled on the farm now occupied by Mr. Jas. Stoddart, and besides engaging in farming carried on a general store in what was then known as the Commercial block. He shared in the losses of the great conflagration of 1871, but commenced business again and continued therein till the year 1879, when he retired from active life in favor of his sons, who have continued in business up to the present. Deceased had a large circle of acquaintances, was highly respected, and filled a number of important positions in his day, such as Councillor, High School Trustee, etc. The funeral took place on Monday. A short service which was held at the house, was conducted by his pastor, Rev. Mr. Brown, of the Methodist church. The pallbearers were four sons, James, Elder, Walter and Britton, and two sons-in-law, Rev. Mr. Wass, of Brantford, and J. McL. Stevenson, Esq., of Barrie. A large number of citizens were present and the funeral cortege was one of the largest that has been seen in Bradford for a long time. Deceased during his long illness had changed beyond the recognition of his friends. Two sons—William and John—had years ago been laid to rest. There are still remaining of the large family, a widow, four sons and three daughters, who have the sympathy of the community in their affliction. Among many others present to show their respect and regard to a departed friend and worthy citizen [illegible]

Figure 7 (Right): John Boddy Obituary

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Contextual Value

The subject property is located along Church Street, south of Frederick 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.

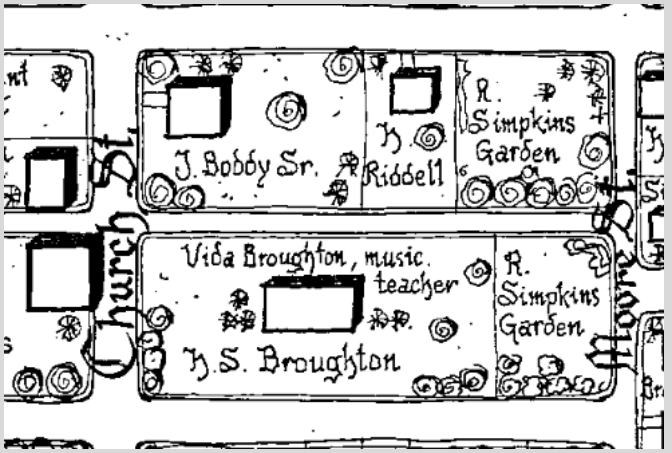


Figure 8: Village of Bradford, 1900

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 19tth century residential building designed in the Gothic Revival 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 John Boddy, a well known merchant who operated a store on Holland Street.	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;		N
viii	is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings;	The property is historically linked to its surrounding area, being on one of the oldest streets in Bradford, adjacent to other similarly aged properties.	Y
ix	is a landmark.		N

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

John Boddy House c. 1885

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 97 Church is located on the east side of Church Street. The property contains a Gothic Revival, c. 1850 residential dwelling. Due to its association with an early settler family of West Gwillimbury, it is known as the John Boddy House.

Its legal address is:
97 Church; Part of Lots 50 and 51, South Side of Frederick on Plan 56

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Design/ Physical Value

The John Boddy House has design and physical value as representative example of a Gothic Revival, c. 1850 property. The house was built around 1850 and has the following characteristics: one and half storey residential building, with side gable roof and a steeply pointed central gable.

Historical/ Associative Value

The John Boddy House has historic/associative value for its direct association with the John Boddy, Merchant and built by Bill Curry, Carpenter. John Boddy was an early families in the Bradford community and described as Merchants, which contributed to the growth and development of the Town.

Contextual Value

The John Boddy House has contextual value because it defines and supports and maintains the urban character of the community.

Description of Heritage Attributes

Key heritage attributes of the John Boddy House that exemplify its heritage value as a Gothic Revival, c. 1885 house as it relates to the property include:

- One and a half story three bay 'cottage'
- Side gable roof with steeply pointed central gable
- Variety of window openings, including Rounded window opening in the central bay
- Double Bay Windows (three sided angled projections and hip roof) on ground floor
- Any underlying brick masonry under vinyl siding and/or stucco coverings
- Decorative gingerbread along eaves

SOURCES

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

SOURCES

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http://archives.bradford.library.on.ca/index.php/boddy-john-obituary-extra

http://archives.bradford.library.on.ca/index.php/1871-bradford-fire-account

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