

Jeff House

c. 1870

4085 County Road 88

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 4085 County Road 88 meets the criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Property Name	Edward Jeffs House
Municipal Address	4085 County Road 88
Legal Description	Part of Lot 2 and 3, Concession 6
Property Size	1.615 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

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SUBJECT PROPERTY

The subject property is located on the south side of County Road 88, east of the village of Bond Head. The property is legally described as Part of Lot 2 and 3, Concession 6 and is municipally addressed as 4085 County Road 88.



Figure 1: Subject Property (2025)

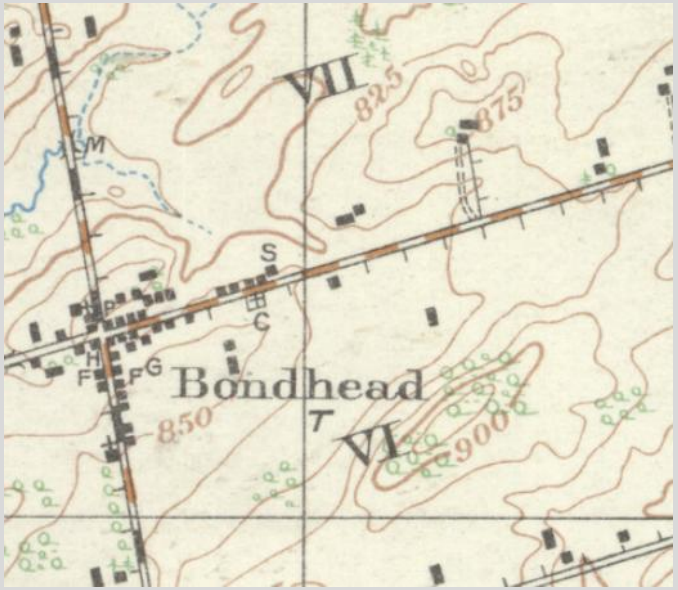


Figure 2: Topographic Map of property (1928)

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Design and Physical Value

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.

Ontario Vernacular

The Vernacular architectural styles makes use of local forms and material. The vernacular style can very from region to region. The Ontario Vernacular style is known for its largely conservative and simple rectangular design. Most of the Ontario Vernacular homes are either one to one and half or two stories, constructed of either rubble, brick or stucco. The architectural style is also known for gable roofs and end chimney designs with irregular window placement. Ontario Vernacular architectural styles can also borrow from other architectural styles, particularly the Georgian or Gothic Revival Architectural style.

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 the Ontario streetscapes.

The subject property has a steep gable, with symmetrical massing, with the front door, centered to the building, flanked by two windows, reinforcing the symmetrical design of the home.



Figure 3: A small gothic cottage

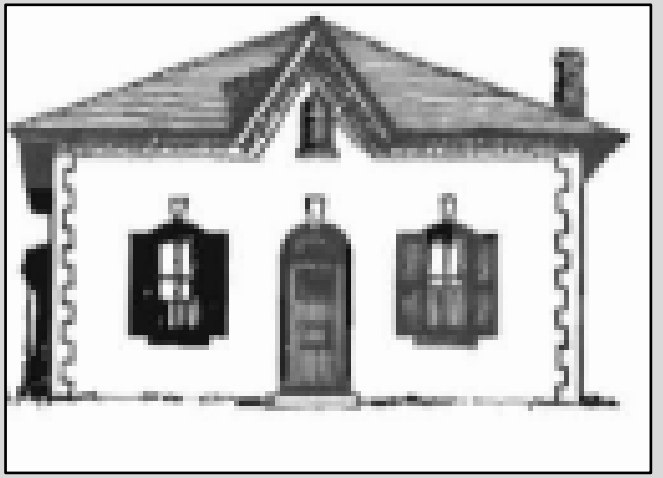


Figure4: Ontario Vernacular

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 is located was owned by Edward Jeffs, who purchased the lands from the Crown, price unknown.

Nature of Instrument	Instrument Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
Patent	April 1837	Crown	Edward Jeffs	All 200 Acres
B&S	April 1867	Edward Jeffs (the Elder) of W. Gwillimbury	Edward Jeffs (the Younger) of W. Gwillimbury	$1000 - N ½

Based on the year of construction and the name at time of ownership, the home is likely connected with the Jeffs Family and more specifically Edward Jeff Junior.

The Jeff Family

Robert Jeff and wife, Anne Compton Jeffs emigrated to Canada with their three children, Hannah, Robert and Edward after selling their farm in County Armagh in Ireland. They originally moved to Holland Landing, before settling in Penetanguishene. Being a retired solider of the British Army, Robert gravitated towards military towns.

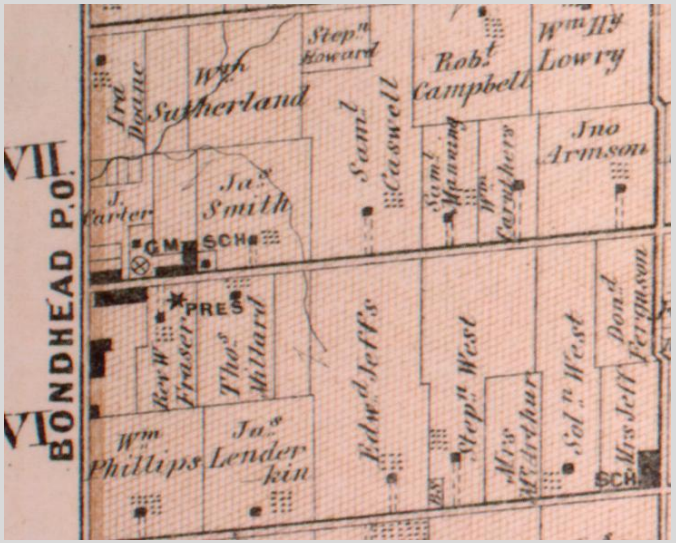


Figure 5: Map of West Gwillimbury (1860)



Figure 6: Map of West Gwillimbury (1871)

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

Edward Jeffs Senior

Edward, born in Ireland, moved to Canada with siblings. He later married Hannah Rogers, daughter of Issac Rogers and Olive Barker. Edward and Hannah went on to have five children:

- Eliza Jeffs b. 1829
- Phoebe Jeffs b. 1830
- Hannah b. 1833
- Edward b. 1837
- Olive b. 1840

Edward and Hannah purchased Lot 3, Concession 6 and built their first home, a Georgian three bay façade farmhouse, which they termed “Stoneleigh”- the house remains standing today.

It is presumed that Edward Jeffs Senior spend much of his life as a Farmer. Edward died in 1869 at the age of 70 and is buried at Christ Church Anglican Cemetery.





Figure 7 (Top, Right): The Jeff residence on Line 6
Figure 8 (Bottom, Right): Final resting place of Edward Jeffs senior

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

Edward Jeffs Junior

Edward Jeffs Junior was born in 1837 in Bond Head and was one of 5 children, as explained above. Edward Jeffs (24) married Mary Driffill (26), daughter of Thomas Driffil, in 1861. The marriage notes that they married at Thomas Driffil's residence in Bradford, however the exact location is unknown.



Figure 9: Edward Jeff (junior)

Edward and Mary went on to have 9 children:

- Florence b.1862
- Herbert b. 1864
- Eva b. 1867
- Hannah b. 1868
- Joseph b.1869
- Edward b.1872
- Irene b. 1874
- Thomas b. 1877
- Oliver b. 1877

Research shows that Edward and Mary lived at Stoneleigh, until such time Edward Jr. purchased the North Half of the lot and built the house that is the subject of this evaluation.

The 1871 and 1881 Census describe Edward as a farmer, along with his son Herbert. Jeffs daughter, Florence (18) is listed as being a school teacher. In 1891, his obituary notes he was appointed Deputy-Reeve of West Gwillimbury Township. By the 1901 Census, it is just Edward, Mary and Florence living together and Edward (64) is listed as being a retired farmer. By the 1911 Census, Mary has died and Edward, whom is still listed as a retired is living with his daughter, Florence. The 1911 Census will be Edwards last appearance in the census as he died in 1912. His cause of death was cited as "Spirit of Exhaustion." Edward is buried Newton Robinson United Church Cemetery.

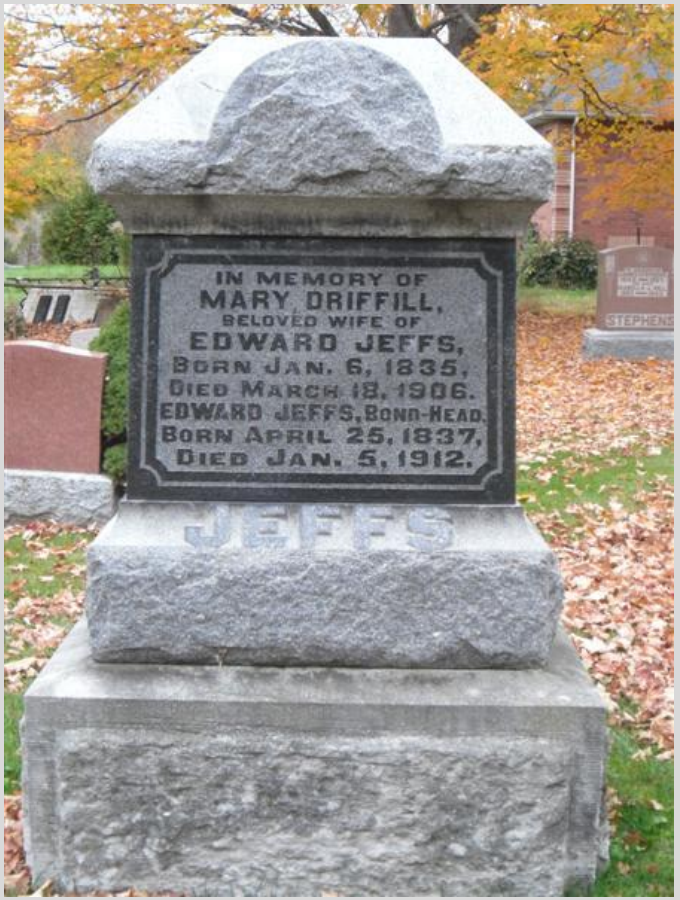


Figure 10: Final resting place of Edward Jeffs

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Contextual Value

The subject property is situated in a rural area of the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury just outside the Village of Bond Head. The property is an excellent example of an early 19th century Ontario home in a village setting. The property remains linked to its surroundings, physically, visually and historically. The property contributes to the village street streetscape.

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 a representative example of a 19th century Ontario farmhouse. The farmhouse is a representative example of 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 the Jeffs Family. The Jeffs Family was an early settler family who settled in Bond Head.	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 maintains a historical connection to nearby buildings in Bond Head.	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

Jeffs House c. 1900

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 4085 County Road 88 is located on the south side of County Road 88. The property contains a Gothic Reival two storey residential house. Due to its association with an early settler family of West Gwillimbury, it is known as the Jeffs House
Its legal address is:
4085 County Road 88; Lot 3, Concession 6

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Design/ Physical Value

The Jeffs House has design and physical value as representative example of a Gothic Reival property. The house was built around 1860 and has the following characteristics: Two story with three bays, gable roof with central gable peak, Rectangular door and window openings

Historical/ Associative Value

The Jeffs House has historic/associative value for its direct association with the Edward Jeffs, Farmer. The Jeffs were an early settler family in the West Gwillimbury community. The family were farmers and well known stock-breeders, which contributed to the growth and development of the Town.

Contextual Value

The Jeffs 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 Jeffs House that exemplify its heritage value as a Gothic Revival house as it relates to the property include:

- Two story with three bays
- Gable roof with central gable peak
- Rectangular door and window openings

SOURCES

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

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http://archives.bradford.library.on.ca/index.php/jeffs-mary

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https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/97861921/edward-jeffs

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