

Brimson-Gummerson House

c. 1885

151 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 151 Church Street meets the criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Property Name	Brimson-Gummerson House
Municipal Address	151 Church
Legal Description	Part of Lots 130 and 131 on Plan 56.
Property Size	0.075 hectares
Date of Construction	1880
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 east side of Church Street, south of Queen Street. The property is municipally addressed as 151 Church Street and the legal description is Part of Lots 130 and 131 on Plan 56.

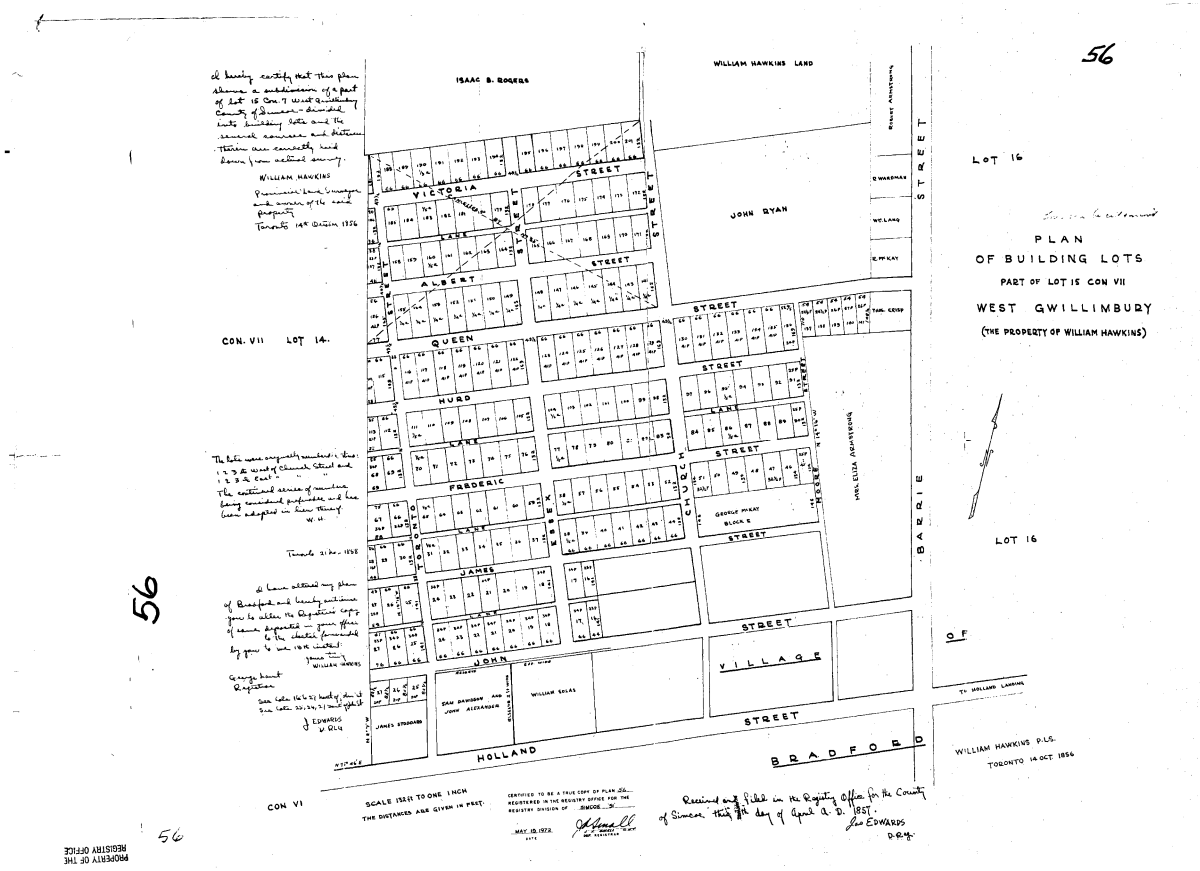


Figure 1: Plan 56



Figure 2: Subject Property

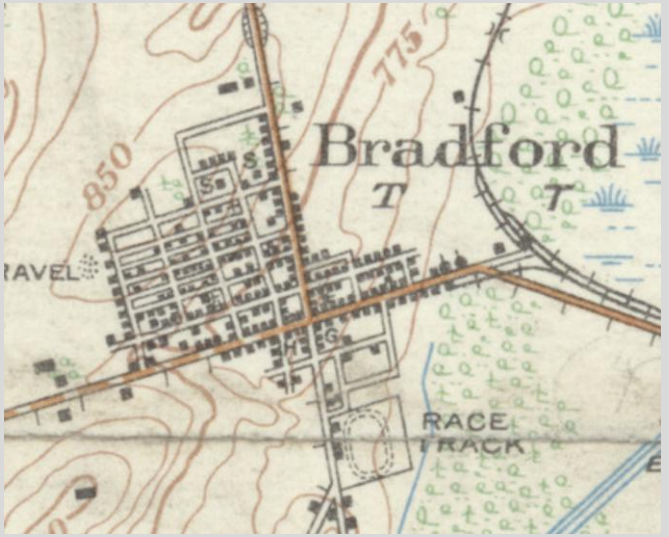


Figure 3: Topographic Map of Bradford

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Design and Physical Value

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

Gothic Revival Architecture

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 residential home that dots Ontario streetscapes.

The home 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. The property may also feature many elements of the Gothic Revival architectural style. Based on the 1924 Fire Insurance Map of Bradford, the construction is wood construction, with a brick veneer.

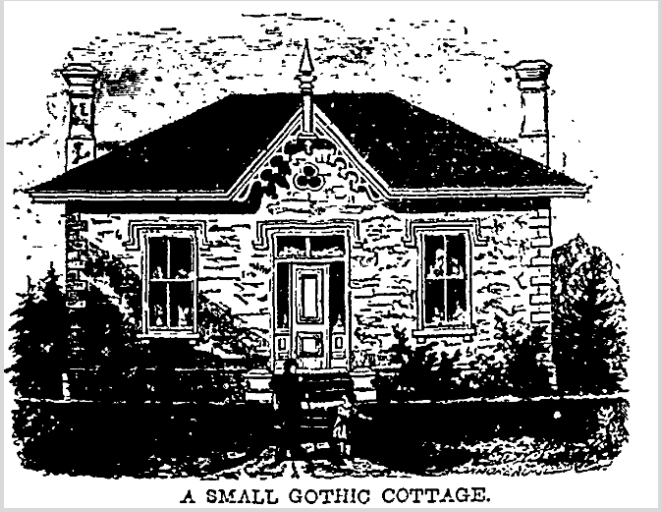


Figure 4: A Small Gothic Cottage

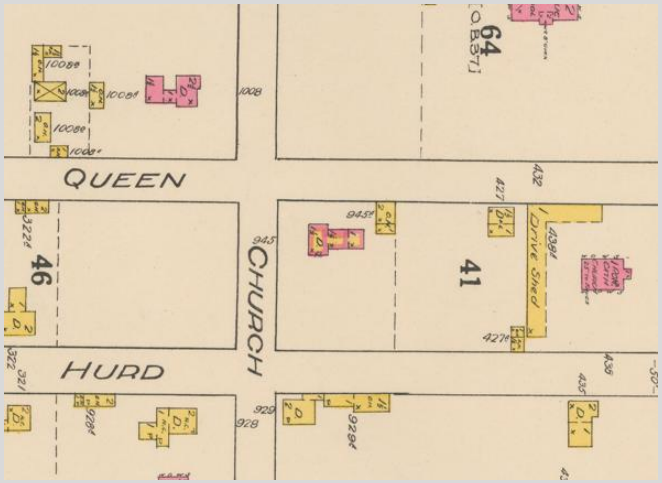


Figure 5: Figure Insurance Plan (1924)

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 1865 and Lot 130 on the south side of Queen Street on Plan 56 transferred between several early residents of BWG:

Nature of Instrument	Instrument Date	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
B&S	March 1865	William Hawkins	Thomas Atkins	$400
B&S	July 1866	Thomas Atkins	William Brimson of Bradford	$200
B&S	November 1884	William Brimson of Toronto	Robert Gummerson	$750
Will & Probate	July 1898	Robert Gummerson	Elizabeth Gummerson	

Given the architecture style. Gothic revival, which was a popular architecture style during the 1860s through to the 1880's the house was likely built while William Brimson had procession of the property.



Figure 6: Subject Property

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

William Brimson

William Brimson was born in England in 1835. Listed in the 1866 Gazateer for the Province of Ontario, William Brimson of Bradford, is a Pianoforte Marker, and by the 1871 Census, he is listed as 36, a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Faith and married to Mary (32). William's occupation is listed as 'Dealer in Musical Instruments.' Though no children are listed, by 1873, William and Mary have a daughter, Florence. By 1881, William left Bradford, appearing in the in the Census for York North/ Newmarket. In the 1881 Census, William (41) is listed with Mary Ann (41) and Florence (7). In 1881, William is still listed as Music Dealer being his occupation. Notably, the Brimson's are a well known family in Newmarket. John Brimson was a noted carriage manufacturer, moving to Canada, from England in 1830. In the 1861 Census, John Brimson (31), is listed with his wife, Jane and children Robert (1) and Mary (12). It is undetermined whether William was a brother, cousin etc. of John Brimson.

By 1891, William (52), Mary (50) and Florence (17) are living in St. Patricks Ward. William appears to be a Piano Teacher. 1891 is the last census the three Brimson family are listed. William and Mary are listed in the Marriage notice for their daughter Florence who is marrying Clarence Lafayette Graff, of New York. And this is the last mention of William Brimson is historical records; an obituary was not found. A grave site for a William Brimson, born 1836 and a wife, Mary Ann Brimson was found in Kensico Cemetery in Westchester County, New York, USA. William died in 1905, with Maryann dying in 1911.



Figure 7: Final resting place of William Brimson

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Historical and Associative Value

Robert Gummerson

Robert Gummerson, born in 1825 was a well-known farmer from West Gwillimbury. In the 1861 Census, Robert is married to Mariah and is a member of the Church of England faith. In the 1861 Census, Robert, with his wife Mariah have six children, but there would go on to have an additional child:

- Mary (born 1845)
- Elizabeth (born 1846)
- Maria (born 1850)
- Johnathon (born 1852)
- Ellen (born 1854)
- Caroline (born 1858)
- George (born 1865)

By the 1901 Census, Robert has moved to the village of Bradford. By 1901, Robert is 75 and a widow, with his wife dying in 1871.Robert is listed as being a retired farmer. Robert lives with his daughter, Elizabeth. Robert died in 1908, citing old age as the cause. His obituary notes that he was of “quiet disposition” and much respected member of the community. Rober is buried at St. Johns Anglican Church Cemetery in Penville (New Tecumseth). Elizabeth (who died in 1940), notes in her obituary that the family moved to Bradford in 1885, and she lived there continuously until her death.



—Mr. Robert Gummerson of Bradford died on Tuesday in the 93rd year of his age. He had been ill for a year or more and the ultimate cause of his death was infirmities incident to old age. He was a man of quiet disposition, much respected and a member of the church of England. He resided in Bradford a number of years his daughter keeping house for him.

Figure 8/9: Final resting place and obituary for Robert Gummerson

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Contextual Value

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

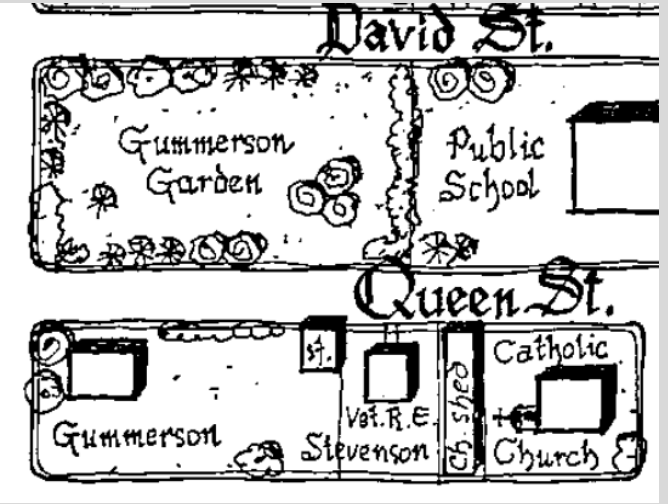


Figure 10: Village of Bradford, c. 1900

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 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 the Brimson and Gummerson Families; early members of the community who 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 surroundings, contributing to the early development of Bradford.	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

Brimson-Gummerson House c. 1880

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 151 Church Street is located on the west side of Church Street. The property contains a Gothic Revival, c. 1880 residential building. Due to its association with an early settler family of West Gwillimbury, it is known as the Brimson-Gummerson House.
Its legal address is:
151 Church Street; Part of Lots 130 and 131, Plan 56

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Design/ Physical Value

The Brimson-Gummerson House has design and physical value as representative example of a Gothic Revival, c. 1880 property. The house was built around 1840 and has the following characteristics: one and a half storey three bay dwelling with a steep pitched dormer and a central gable. The home is of brick construction with dichromatic brickwork.

Historical/ Associative Value

The Brimson-Gummerson House has historic/associative value for its direct association with the William Brimson, Instrument Dealer and Robert Gummerson, Farmer. Both families associated with the property contributed to the growth and development of the Town.

Contextual Value

The Gummerson 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 Gummerson House that exemplify its heritage value as a Gothic Revival, c. 1880 house as it relates to the property include:

- One and a half storey three bay 'cottage'
- Steep pitched dormer in central gable
- Dichromatic brickwork at stylised quoins , patterned belt course and surrounding windows
- Rectangualr window openings
- Rounded window opening in the central dormer

SOURCES

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

SOURCES

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Robert Gummerson:

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https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/134300798/robert-gummerson

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/99374853/elizabeth_jane-gummerson

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Figure 10 Retrieved from Village of Bradford Map, 1900