

DESIGNATION REPORT

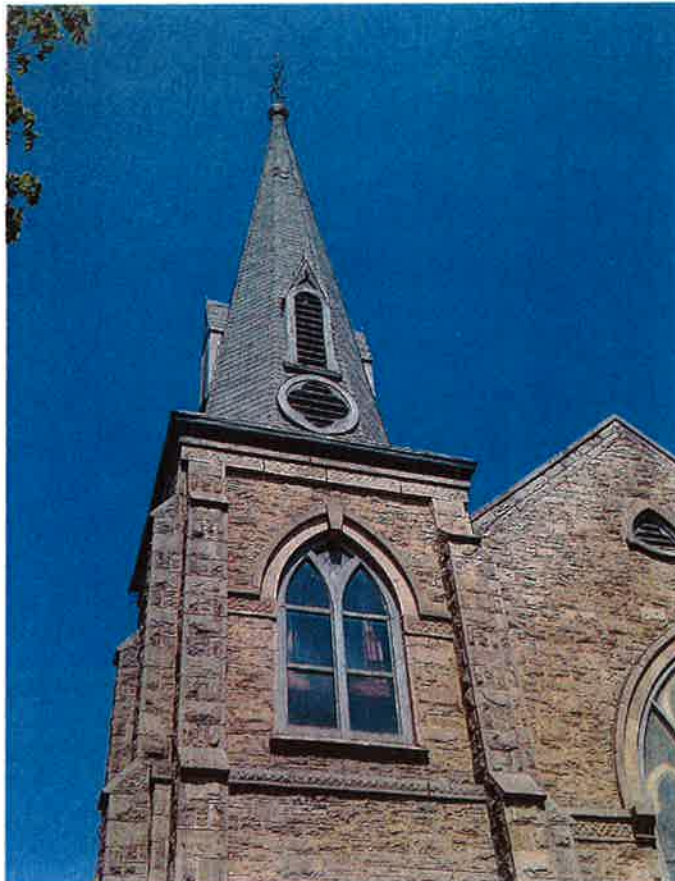
HALTON HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE AND LIBRARY, GEORGETOWN

FORMERLY THE GEORGETOWN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND

IN THE INTERVENING YEARS UNTIL THE 1970'S ALSO FORMERLY

KNOWN AS THE GEORGETOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

9 Church Street, Georgetown, Ontario



PREPARED FOR HERITAGE HALTON HILLS BY BRIAN KENNEDY , JUNE 18TH, 2012

Property Name: HALTON HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE AND LIBRARY (originally the GEORGETOWN CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH and in the intervening years until the 1970's, known as the GEORGETOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY)

Street Address: 9 Church Street, Georgetown, Ontario.

Municipality: Town of Halton Hills

County or Region: Regional Municipality of Halton

Legal Description: Lots 42, 43, and 44 on the North Part of Plan of Georgetown (formerly part Lot 18, Concession 8, Twp. Of Esquesing)

Past Owners: Congregational Church Trustees
Town of Halton Hills

Construction Date: 1877

Protection Designation: Municipal Designation (Part IV of The Ontario Heritage Act)

Date Of Ontario Heritage Designation: August 7, 1979 as No. 1979-0067

Reasons In Brief For Designation: Former Georgetown Congregational Church constructed in 1877 of limestone is a very good example of an architectural style known as Neo Gothic. It has long

been a major centre of Georgetown activity, first as a place of worship and later as a library, cultural centre, theatre and art gallery.

Below is an extract from Walker & Miles 1877 Illustrated Historical Atlas of Halton County showing lots 42, 43 and 44 at the corner of Church and Market Streets:



INTRODUCTION

Georgetown is situated in the north easterly part of the Township of Esquesing with the Credit River and its branches running through the settlement. Mr. George Kennedy and his family were the earliest settlers in the vicinity, having come to the area in 1820. William, James, Joseph Jr. and Robert Barber arrived in Upper Canada with their parents and a sister from Ireland in 1822. After working for others for a number of years, the brothers combined their savings and in 1837 purchased George Kennedy's woolen mill and foundry. During the following decades the Barbers became prominent manufacturers and influential citizens.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HISTORY IN CANADA

Congregationalism in Canada originated with the acceptance of the offer made by the British Government which promised free land to New Englanders who would relocate to Nova Scotia. In 1759, several hundred immigrants founded new towns and gathered churches; the first at Chester, Nova Scotia and in 1761 the church at Liverpool was formed. In 1801 the British Congregationalists sent a missionary to organize a church in Quebec. That beginning led to the formation of the Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec.

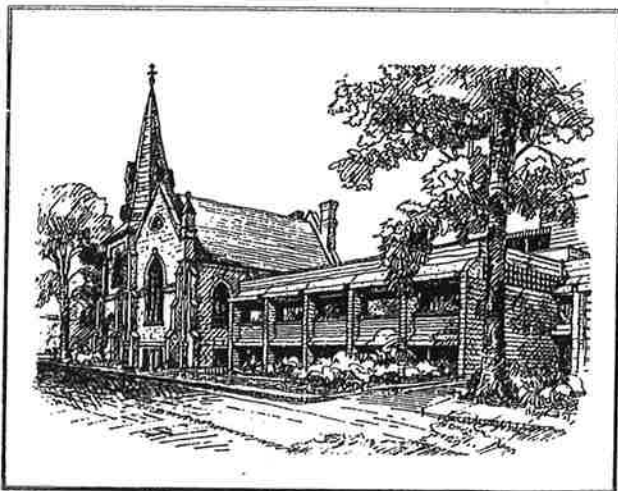
Congregationalists in Upper Canada spoke with British rather than with American accents since British immigrants formed the bulk of their numbers. Like Baptists, they were evangelical in tone and tended to be Calvinists. They were more protective of the autonomy of their local churches. Congregationalists tended to be wealthier and entrepreneurial rather than labouring "workers" and they were quicker to affirm the claims of the intellect and to foster educational academies.

The United Church of Canada is the largest Protestant denomination in Canada. It was inaugurated on June 10th, 1925 in Toronto, Ontario when the Methodist Church in Canada, the Congregational Union of Canada, and 70% of the Presbyterian Church in Canada entered into a union. After the union, the Congregational Church ceased to exist in Canada as a separate Protestant denomination.

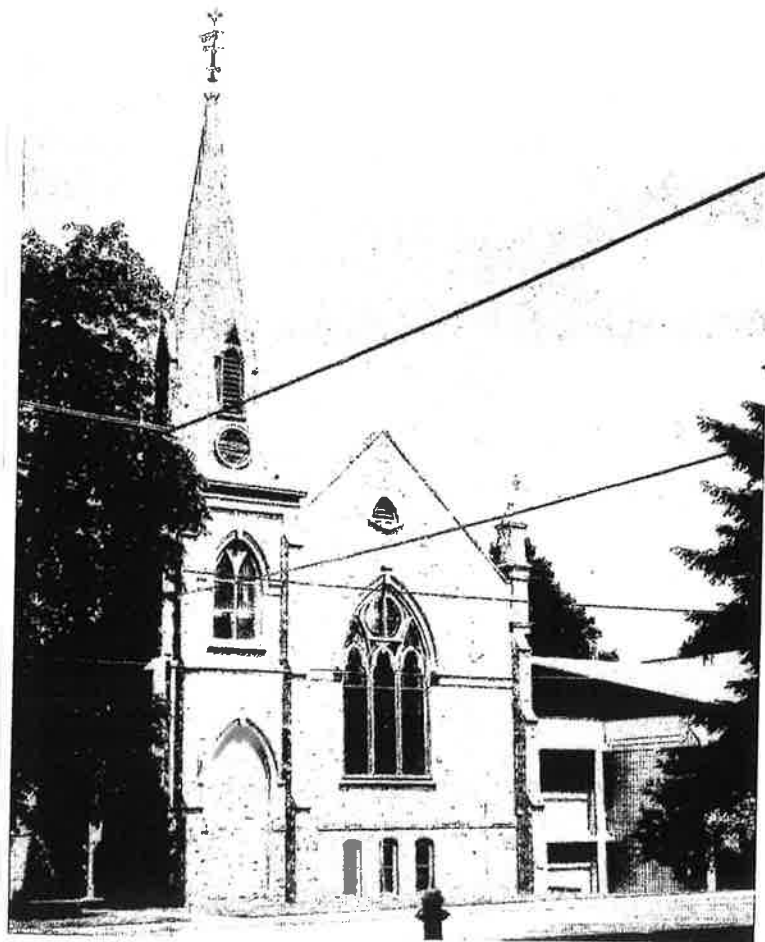
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH HISTORY IN GEORGETOWN

In the early 1840's, the Reverend Stephen King (1813-1894) assembled a small congregation in the growing town of Georgetown. In the beginning the Congregational Church members gathered in the local school house and later met in the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. The Wesleyan Methodists had built their own church in 1840. The Congregationalists, shortly thereafter in 1845, erected their own modest frame structure. It was located at the corner of Park and Church Streets which was close to the eventual later location of the current building at Church and Market Streets.

One of Reverend King's most influential members of his church was the paper manufacturer and mill owner James Barber. The Barber brothers owed their religious upbringing to their Presbyterian mother, and in the absence at the time of a minister of that denomination, James was attracted into King's fold rather than into the existing Methodist Church. James became a deacon of the Church and also became a principal benefactor both during his lifetime and indeed after his death as well. His estate provided \$100. per year to the incumbent Congregational minister.

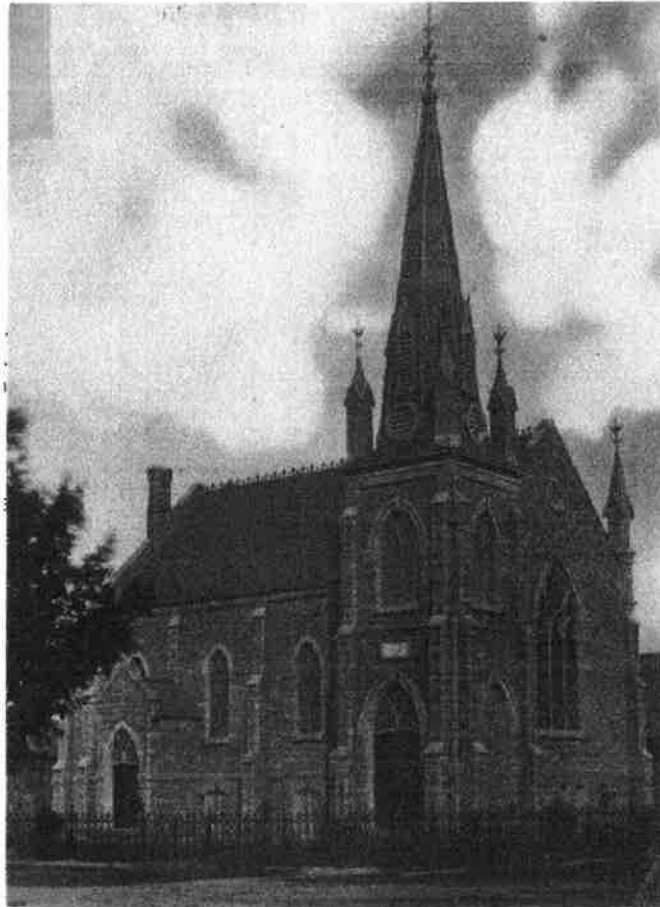


Halton Hills Library and Cultural Centre.



The former Congregational Church at Church and Market Street has served as the library from 1895. In 1981 an addition expanded the library along Market Street, freeing the former sanctuary for use as an art gallery. EHS p12082

By the late 1870's the Congregational frame church was in a state of disrepair and in 1877 it was deemed unsafe to handle a funeral service. Designs and plans for a Neo Gothic stone building were drawn. Family member Joseph Barber laid the cornerstone for the new church located at Church and Market Streets. Joseph donated a third of the cost of the building and at its opening offered a further \$500. on condition that the remaining debt was cleared by others by the following night. The handsome Neo (Victorian) Gothic stone structure included a spire and bell tower. The impressive bronze church bell was manufactured in 1878 in Troy, New York by the Meneely & Kimberly Foundry. The south end of the building was dominated by a stunning stained glass window in memory of Maria Barber who died in 1876. The north end contained a smaller but equally beautiful window as well.



The mid-eighties were active with a growing membership and those years were the most prosperous years in the Church's history. However five years later (1892) the congregation fell from 102 to 80 and enthusiasm waned. In 1909 the Church closed for the summer and soon thereafter the congregation at Georgetown quietly ceased to meet.

As time went on and support softened, it was decided to donate the Church building and property to the Town. It was decided formally to the Town of Georgetown in 1912. The members of the congregation then gradually associated themselves with one of the other churches in town. Most of the members joined the Presbyterian congregation next door, likely in anticipation of the union being discussed among the Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists. As it turned out, Knox Presbyterian Church in Georgetown was among the 30% of Presbyterian congregations in Canada that voted against the merger in 1925 that resulted in the United Church of Canada.

The old Church entrance ceased to be used and the building itself became the Town Library. In 1981 a new addition was constructed and this gave the building a new lease on life. The Library expanded, and a 267 seat John Elliott Theatre was added. The former Church sanctuary became an art gallery, and it gave Georgetown and many artists in the area their first public venue. The theatre was named for local businessman, politician and community supporter, John Alwyn Elliott. The theatre became the home of the Georgetown Little Theatre group and of Globe Productions. The bell from the old Church tower was placed in a prominent position on the lawn in front of the building.

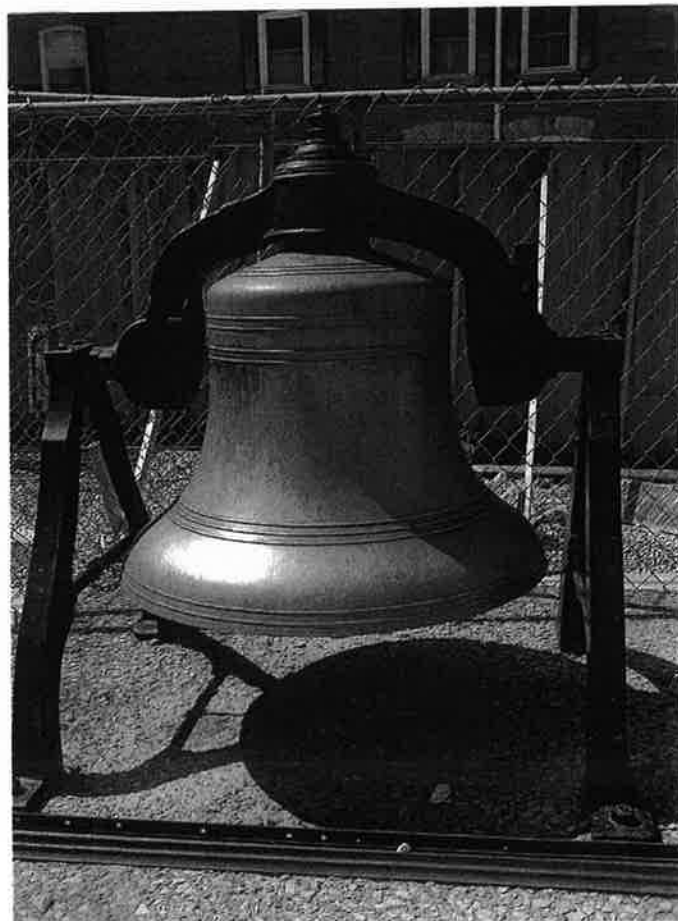




Photo April, 2012

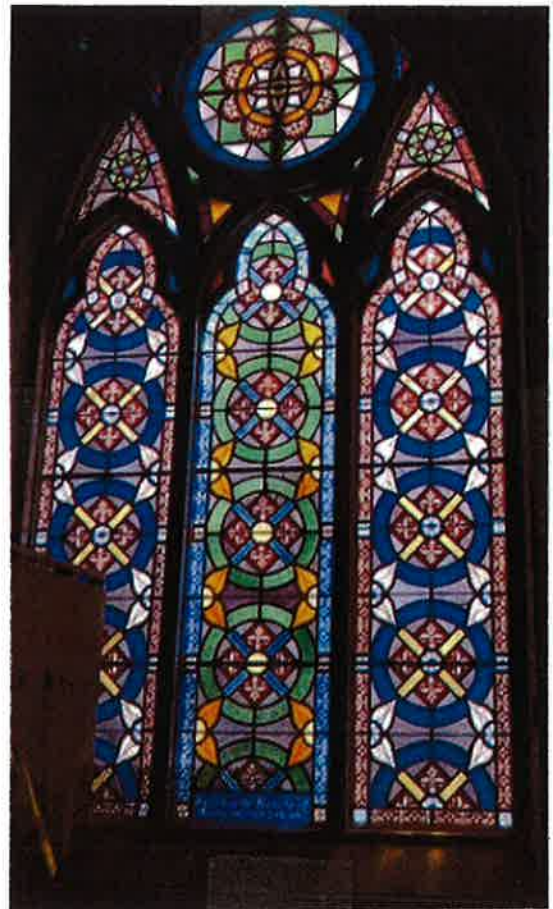
REASONS FOR DESIGNATION:

DESIGN VALUE:

The former Georgetown Congregational Church, which became the Georgetown Public Library and which is now the Halton Hills Cultural Centre And Library, is a very good example of Victorian-era Neo Gothic architecture.

Gothic architecture is a unique form that is rooted in Romanesque architecture. Gothic architecture originated in the 12th century and lasted well into the 16th century. Some of the more prominent Gothic architectural characteristics are pointed arches, flying buttresses, and ribbed vaults.

There was a revival of this form of architecture in the early 1800's. In Britain in the mid 19th century this revival was sometimes termed Victorian Gothic and elsewhere called simply Neo Gothic. As well as having often the traditional Gothic features of pointed arches, buttresses and ribbed vaults, Neo Gothic architecture displayed overtones of spiral work and steeples, extravagant ceilings, leaded windows, gargoyles, arched pointed windows and doorways, ornamented stonework and/or decorated tracery around the windows and steep pointed roof designs. Preferred building materials in England and Canada were limestone and sandstone with marble features added when available. Many of these Neo Gothic features are displayed in the subject building and should be preserved. The following pictures depict the highlights:



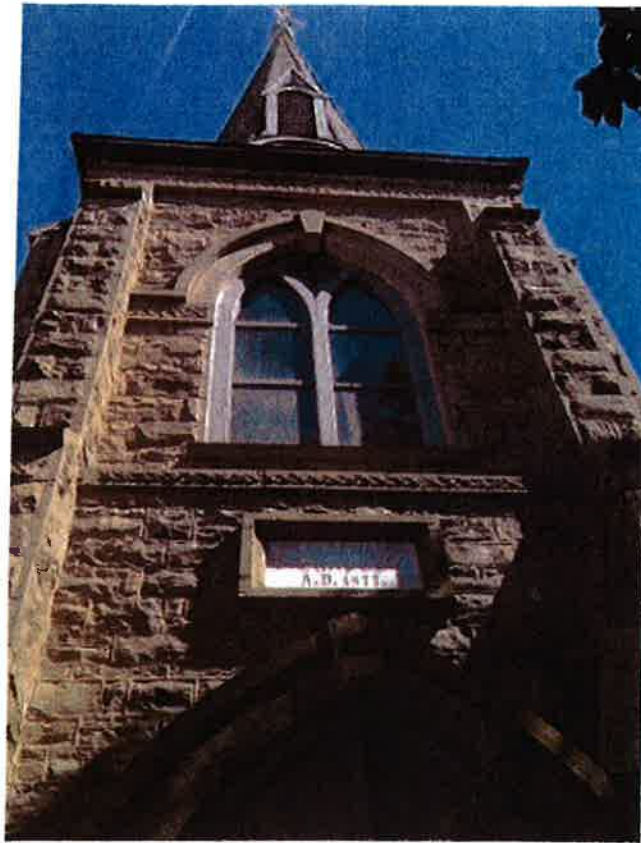
Stained Glass Windows at north and south ends



Leaded Glass



Arched pointed window



Stonework and Craftsmanship; Decorative Tracery Under Arched Window; 1877 Construction Date



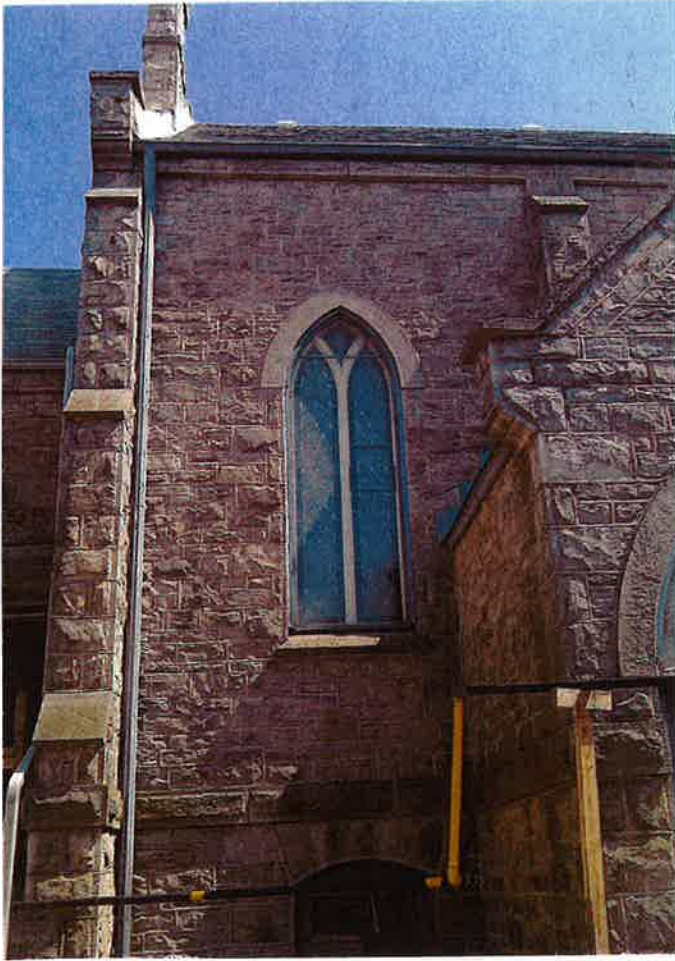
Not gargoyles but decorative tracery and stonework



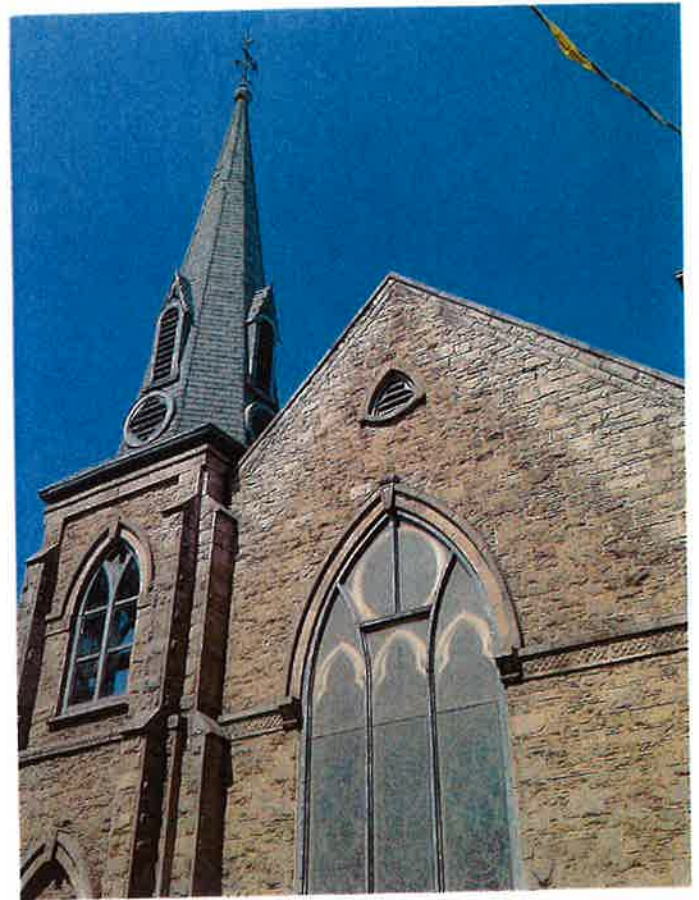
Dedicated Window



Typical Wall Buttress (not a flying buttress)



Note: Buttresses on left



Typical Neo Gothic Steeple

Additional Comments re: architecture and design value:

Note the typical Neo Gothic spires in the images of the building on pages 6 and 8. As well the decorative high ceiling in the sanctuary is one worth preserving. The steep pointed gabled roof designs are also features seen in Neo Gothic architecture. Ed. all pictures in colour were taken in April, May and June 2012.

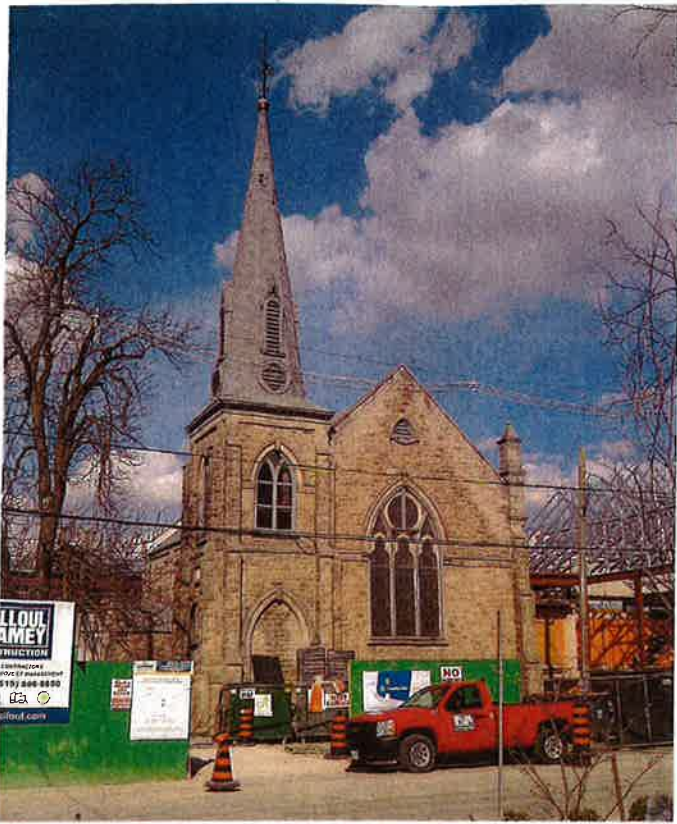
HISTORICAL OR ASSOCIATIVE VALUE

The existence of a purpose built religious building with its exterior in close to original condition, makes this building historically significant to the residents of the Town of Halton Hills and also to those in the surrounding areas. The large number of descendants of many families who were members or adherents of the Georgetown Congregational Church will still have a connection to the building even though they may have since associated themselves with other Churches. There are likely very few people in the Town and surrounding area who have not in one way or another maintained a connection to the building, either as members of the Halton Hills Public Library or as visitors to the Cultural Centre, the John Elliott Theatre and the Art Gallery. Also the connection to the Congregational Church by members of prominent Georgetown families such as the Barbers of paper mill renown, is also of significance.

CONTEXTUAL VALUE:

The building has been a landmark at the corner of Church and Market Streets since 1877. It is an integral part of the early cultural and religious life of Georgetown. It continues to be an essential participant in the culture of the area and continues to increase its contribution as evidenced by this year's current new addition and construction project.

ADDED PHOTOS BELOW WERE TAKEN IN MAY, 2012 OF CURRENT CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ADDITION





**IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT
1974, S.O. CHAPTER 122**

**AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AND
PREMISES AT THE FOLLOWING MUNICIPAL AD-
DRESS IN THE TOWN OF HALTON HILLS IN THE
PROVINCE OF ONTARIO**

NOTICE OF PASSING OF BY-LAW

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Council of the Cor-
poration of the Town of Halton Hills has passed By-Law
Number 79 67 to designate property including lands and
buildings known as Georgetown Public Library, 9 Church
Street (Georgetown) as being of architectural and
historical value under Part IV of The Ontario Heritage
Act, 1974, S.O. Chapter 122.

**DATED AT THE TOWN OF HALTON HILLS THIS 15th
DAY OF AUGUST, 1979.**

**K.R. RICHARDSON, A.M.C.T.
CLERK ADMINISTRATOR
THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN
OF HALTON HILLS
36 MAIN STREET SOUTH
GEORGETOWN, ONTARIO
L7G 4X1**

SOURCES AND REFERENCE MATERIAL

1. The Walker & Miles 1877 Illustrated Historical Atlas of Halton County
2. United Church of Canada Archives
3. Religious Development in Esquesing Township 1819-1900 by Richard Ruggle 1990 Doctoral Thesis : Doctor of Theology
4. Halton Co. Early Church Histories, Location of Records and Resources Vol.1 Esquesing Township compiled by Trudy Mann, 1983
5. The Story of Georgetown by John Mark Benbow Rowe 1992
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7. Georgetown History 1792-1921 by David Warren (12 yrs of age) 1965 school project
8. Peek Back Into Georgetown's Past by students at Centennial school, Georgetown, 1971
9. Ever faithful: A History Of St. John's United Church 1832-2007 Oakville by Joyce A Stephenson 2007
10. Halton Sketches Revisited: Historical Tales of People and Events in North Halton by John McDonald 1996