

34 Jason Road - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: June 4, 2026

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Ward: Ward 1 - Etobicoke North

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 34 Jason Road under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act ("the Act") for its cultural heritage value according to the Statement of Significance which includes a description of heritage attributes found in Attachment 1.

The subject property at 34 Jason Road, known historically as the Elm Bank Piggery, is located on the north side of Jason Road at the intersection of Riverdale Drive within the Thistletown community of Etobicoke. It contains a single-family house form building, constructed c. 1921, featuring an extension c.1926-33. The extension was built atop foundations believed to date to the mid-nineteenth century that once supported a piggery on the Elm Bank property belonging to the Grubb family. The Grubb family (later "Grubbe") were post-colonial settlers within the present-day Thistletown community. In more recent years, the home was owned by the notable photographer Bruce Metcalfe, and his family. The property remains a physical reminder of Thistletown's agricultural past. A location map and current photograph of the heritage property are included in Attachment 2.

The subject property at 34 Jason Road was listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on September 27, 2006.

This property is one of eighteen pre-1870 listed properties citywide which have been identified as candidates for designation through the City's implementation of Bill 23 amendments to the Act and its ongoing prioritization strategy for listed properties. Properties listed on the City's Heritage Register prior to January 1, 2023 will be deemed removed from the Heritage Register unless they are designated by January 1, 2027.

Part of the City's strategy for the review of listed properties on the Heritage Register includes the procurement of qualified heritage consultants to research, evaluate, and prepare heritage evaluation reports for a subset of listed properties prioritized for

designation. City Planning retained the services of Alex Corey Heritage Consulting ("the Consultant") to research and evaluate a citywide group of eighteen pre-1870 listed properties which includes the subject property at 34 Jason Road. The Consultant evaluated the subject property and determined that it meets the provincial criteria. Staff concur with this assessment.

The Consultant's research on the subject property is included as Attachment 3 of this report. The research, analysis, and evaluation contained within Attachment 3 reflect the Consultant's professional expertise and opinion. Staff have independently reviewed the Consultant's research and heritage evaluation and concur with the determination that the property at 34 Jason Road has cultural heritage value and meets four of the Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Act. A property may be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, if it meets two or more of the nine criteria.

Designation enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the property and enforce heritage property standards and maintenance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 34 Jason Road under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance for 34 Jason Road (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1, to the report, June 4, 2026, from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning.
2. If there are no objections to the designation, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bill in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council included the subject property at 34 Jason Road on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on September 27, 2006.

On October 30, 2024, the Planning and Housing Committee received for information item 2024.PH16.9 - Updates on Implementation of Bill 23 Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act regarding phase two of the City's response to Bills 23 and 200. This report outlined the citywide prioritization framework developed to prioritize subsets of listed properties located within areas where growth is anticipated for designation under the Act and described the proactive strategy under development that will be used to monitor the listed properties that are deemed removed from the Register after January 1, 2027. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH16.9>

POLICY AND REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

Provincial Plans and Policies

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, and healthy and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>

Further, the policies and definitions of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) identify the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage evaluation and heritage conservation will be implemented.

[Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 \(ontario.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13)

Ontario Regulation 9/06 sets out the criteria for evaluating properties to be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The criteria are based on an evaluation of design/physical value, historical and associative value and contextual value. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060009>

Official Plan

The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime and provides policies to guide decision making within the City. It contains a number of policies related to properties on the City's Heritage Register and properties adjacent to them, as well as the protection of areas of archaeological potential. The Official Plan should be read as a whole to understand its comprehensive and integrative intent as a policy framework for priority setting and decision making. The Official Plan can be found here:

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act and Bill 200, the Homeowner Protection Act

Through Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 ("Bill 23") and again through Bill 200, the Homeowner Protection Act, 2024 ("Bill 200"), the Province of Ontario made

amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. These amendments have had implications for non-designated ("listed") properties included on the City's Heritage Register. Listed properties may now only remain on the Register for two years. Properties that were listed prior to January 1, 2023, must be either designated or will be deemed removed from the Register by January 1, 2027. Once removed, Council may not relist a property for five years. Further, Council is prohibited from designating a property that is subject to specified Planning Act applications once the Clerk has provided notice that the City has received a complete application.

The City is currently implementing the Bill 23 and Bill 200 changes to the Act and an update on implementation was provided to the Planning and Housing Committee at their October 30, 2024, meeting.

COMMENTS

Evaluation Analysis

The following evaluation analysis is based on the comprehensive research conducted by the Consultant on the property at 34 Jason Road (Attachment 3). The research and heritage evaluation was reviewed by staff, who concur with the Consultant's determinations of cultural heritage value that provides the rationale for the recommendations found in this report.

The property at 34 Jason Road meets the following four out of nine criteria:

- **Criterion 1:** the property has design or physical value because it is a rare example of a material or construction method.
- **Criterion 4:** the property has historical or associative value because it has direct associations with a person that is significant to a community.
- **Criterion 7:** the property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining, or supporting the character of an area.
- **Criterion 8:** the property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

For more detailed explanations of how each criterion is met, see Attachments 1-3 for the Statement of Significance; Location Map and Current Photograph; and Research, Evaluation, and Visual Resources for the property at 34 Jason Road, as these documents are integral to the recommendations made in this staff report.

CONCLUSION

Staff have independently reviewed the research and heritage evaluations prepared by the Consultant and agree with the determination that the property at 34 Jason Road has cultural heritage value and meets four of the nine criteria as outlined by Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section

29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. Therefore, the property merits designation and staff recommend that Council designate this property.

The Statement of Significance: 34 Jason Road (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1 to this report comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Thorne
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)
Attachment 2 – Location Map and Current Photograph
Attachment 3 – Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

The property at 34 Jason Road is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value and meets Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria for municipal designation.

Description

The subject property at 34 Jason Road is located on the north side of Jason Road at the intersection of Riverdale Drive within the Thistletown community of Etobicoke. Constructed c.1921 atop foundations believed to date to the mid-19th century and featuring an extension c.1926-33, the property contains a single-family house form building that incorporates the foundation of a former piggery that was part of the Elm Bank property belonging to the Grubb family, who were some of the earliest post-colonial settlers within the present-day Thistletown community. It was later home to the notable photographer Bruce Metcalfe, and his family.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**Design or Physical Value**

The property at 34 Jason Road has design and physical value as a rare example of the adaptive reuse of an agricultural property for residential purposes. The incorporation of the historic stone foundations of the piggery building that was associated with the Elm Bank farm for the c.1921 house form building was a conscious decision on the part of Dr. Irwin, who is responsible for initiating the twentieth-century residential subdivision of the historic Grubb property. Rather than demolishing the piggery, Dr. Irwin chose to build upon the foundations for what would have been both practical and aesthetic reasons, and as such it is an example of adaptive reuse. The inhabitation of the resultant house for over a century serves as a marker of the viability of such a decision and continues to communicate the design value of the decision to adaptively reuse historic foundations today.

Historical or Associative Value

The property at 34 Jason Road has historical and associative value as it incorporates the foundations of the piggery that was part of the Elm Bank property that was established c.1835 by John Grubb (1783-1850) and was farmed by his descendants. Constructed of the same stone used for the adjacent barn (the foundations of which were incorporated into the house at 32 Jason Road) and the residence at 23 Jason Road, the former piggery was an important component of the working farm, and of agricultural life, in the 19th century. The Grubb family are significant within Etobicoke and the local community for their role in settling Thistletown, located immediately north of 34 Jason Road, and attracting development to the surrounding area.

The property was subsequently subdivided by Dr. Eli Franklin Irwin, who is believed to have constructed the present-day structure atop the foundations of the piggery and whose daughter, Irma, subsequently resided at 34 Jason Road with her husband Bruce Metcalfe and their two children until 1961, during which time the surrounding community evolved from a rural agricultural landscape to a post-war residential subdivision. Dr. Irwin is responsible for transforming the surrounding neighbourhood from a primarily agricultural landscape into a 20th century suburban residential community and registered the plan of subdivision that resulted in the present-day landscape.

The property at 34 Jason Road has historical and associative value as it has direct associations with Cecil Bruce Metcalfe (1891-1962), along with his wife Irma and their two children, who resided at 34 Jason Road from 1926 until 1961. Metcalfe was a prolific musician and musical teacher, a prominent member of the Weston and Thistletown communities, and a celebrated photographer and artist. His appointments included positions with the Romanelli Orchestra, the Hambourg Conservatory and the Weston and Mount Dennis Choral Society. His photography, the majority of which he would have produced while residing at 34 Jason Road, is included in the collections of the Public Archives Canada and the J. Paul Getty Museum Collection, was featured in an exhibition in 1944 at the Royal Ontario Museum, and illustrated Canadian Nature Magazine's handbook publication, Native Ferns. A respected naturalist, his tenure at 34 Jason Road on the banks of the western branch of the Humber River influenced his artistic style and the subject matter he chose to represent.

Contextual Value

Contextually, the property at 34 Jason Road has cultural heritage value as it is visually and historically linked to the adjacent properties at 32 Jason Road, 19 Jason Road, and 23 Jason Road which are remnants of the historic Elm Bank property. Established c.1835 by the Scottish immigrant John Grubb (1783-1850), Elm Bank was a 150-acre farm located on the banks of the Humber River straddling Albion Road within York Township. The single-family house built c.1921 incorporated portions of the foundations of the piggery associated with Elm Bank, built of the same fieldstone used to construct the foundations of the former barn that were incorporated into the neighbouring house at 32 Jason Road, as well as the residence at 23 Jason Road. Collectively, these properties are associated with mid-19th century agricultural settlement within present-day Etobicoke, the pioneering Grubb family, and the development of the Thistletown community.

The property at 34 Jason Road also has contextual value as it maintains and supports the character of the area, and the subdivision established by Dr. Irwin which led to the residential development of the community. The house is situated on a rise of land overlooking parkland to the south and west, with generously landscaped yards and fieldstone retaining walls. The low-rise, one and a half storey house form building constructed atop the historic piggery foundations was one of the first if not the first houses built following the plan of subdivision. The house helped to establish the prevailing low-rise character of this community, which is defined by detached early to mid-20th century houses set on lots with generous landscaping and no sidewalks that contribute to the present-day semi-rural context.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the design and physical value for the property at 34 Jason Road as they support an understanding of the property as an example of the adaptive reuse of a formerly agricultural structure for residential purposes:

- The stone foundations of the former piggery, roughly rectangular in shape and comprising the westerly portion of the present-day structure.
- The “L” extension, including the first-floor stone walls and second half-storey with high pitched gabled roof, which reflect the adaptive reuse of the former piggery for residential purposes.
- The various window openings, the verandah, and the secondary entrance within the crux of the “L,” which permitted the structure’s use for residential purposes.

Historical and Associative Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the historical and associative value of the property at 34 Jason Road as they support the historical association of the property with the Grubb family and the Elm Bank farm complex, as well as its subsequent use as a single-family house inhabited by the Metcalfe family:

- The location of the house form. Building in view of and in proximity to the residential buildings of Elm Bank at 19 and 23 Jason Road, and the former barn at 32 Jason Road.
- The Humber River stone foundation, which was the basis of the piggery associated with the Elm Bank property and its use as a farm complex
- The scale, form and massing of the one and a half story house form building, with a gable roof
- The gable-roofed awning on the south façade extending out from the c.1921 structure and supported atop the stone base, reflective of the conversion of the piggery to a house
- The addition c.1926-33, with stone foundation and walls and gable roof creating the “L” plan of the present-day structure
- The shed dormer window
- The verandah with extended roofline at the crux of the “L”
- The stone cladding of the house, with visible joints and showing variation between the foundation stone and the upper wall stone

Contextual Value

The following heritage attributes contribute to the contextual value of the property at 34 Jason Road as it supports the early to mid-19th century agricultural context alongside the adjacent properties at 32 Jason Road and 19 and 23 Jason Road, and its context as an early to mid-20th century residential subdivision:

- The setback of the house from the street, sitting atop a rise of land with extensive landscaping including dry stone retaining walls leading down to Jason Road and Riverdale Drive
- The one and a half storey form of the house with a gable roof and verandah, and the stone patio on the west façade facing towards the Humber River

34 Jason Road

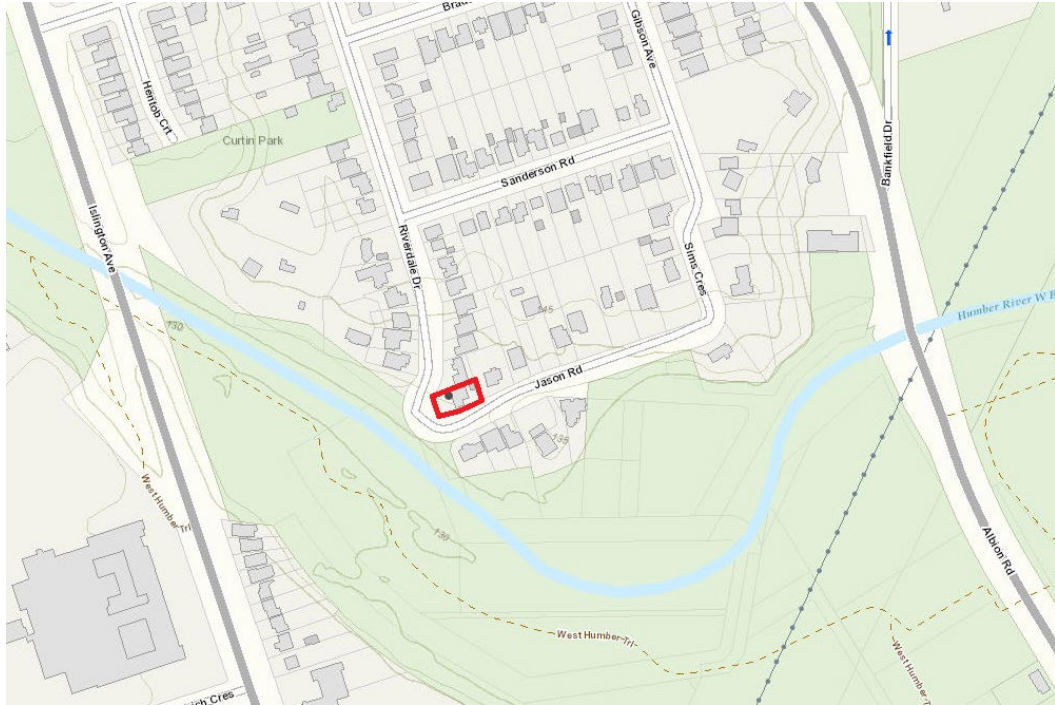


Figure 1. This location map is for information purposes only. The exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The red outline depicts the location of the subject property (City of Toronto iView Mapping, 2026).



Figure 2. 34 Jason Road, southeast façade (Alex Corey, September 2025).

34 Jason Road

In undertaking this research and evaluation, we recognize that the area now known as the City of Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit (1805), and the Williams Treaties (1923) signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.



Figure 3. 34 Jason Road, southeast façade (Alex Corey, September 2025).

1. DESCRIPTION

34 JASON ROAD (GRUBB FARM PIGGERY)	
ADDRESS	34 Jason Road
WARD	1 - Etobicoke North
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Thistletown-Beaumont Heights
CONSTRUCTION DATE	c. 1921 (foundations c. 1834)
ORIGINAL USE	Residential (foundations agricultural)
CURRENT USE* (*This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law	Residential
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Unknown
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	N/A
LISTING DATE	September 27, 2006

2. ONTARIO REGULATION 9/06 CHECKLIST:

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The following checklist identifies the prescribed criteria met by the subject property at 34 Jason Road for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. There are a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act if the property meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

The evaluation table is marked "N/A" if the criterion is "not applicable" to the property or "✓" if it is applicable to the property.

34 Jason Road

1.	The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	✓
2.	The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	N/A
3.	The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	N/A
4.	The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.	✓
5.	The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	N/A
6.	The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	N/A
7.	The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	✓
8.	The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	✓
9.	The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.	N/A

3. RESEARCH

This section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property. Visual resources related to the research are in Section 4 (Visual Resources). Archival and contemporary sources for the research are found in Section 5 (List of Sources).

Indigenous Communities

For time immemorial, Toronto has been home to Indigenous peoples. Ojibway oral histories speak of Ice People, who lived at a time when ice covered the land.¹ Following the retreat of glaciers approximately 13,000 years ago, small groups of Indigenous peoples moved from place to place, hunting and gathering the food they needed according to the seasons. Over millennia, they adapted to dramatically changing environmental conditions, developing and acquiring new technologies as they did so. Waterways and the lake were vital sources of fresh water and nourishment, and shorelines and nearby areas were important sites for gathering, trading, hunting, fishing, and ceremonies. Long-distance trade moved valuable resources across the land.

After maize and squash were introduced to Southern Ontario, by approximately 500 CE, horticulture began to supplement food sources. By 1300 CE, villages focused on growing food became year-round settlements surrounded by crops. These villages were home to ancestors of the Huron-Wendat Nation, who would continue to occupy increasingly larger villages in the Toronto area and beyond. These villages were connected to well-established travel routes which were part of local and long-distance trail networks, including the Carrying Place trails on the Don, Rouge and Humber rivers that connected Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay. Beads made from seashells from the eastern seaboard were found at the Alexandra site in North York, which was a community of 800-1000 people in approximately 1350.

By 1600, the Wendat had formed a confederation of individual nations, and had concentrated most of their villages away from Lake Ontario, in the Georgian Bay area. Following contact with French explorers and missionaries in Southern Ontario in the early 1600s, European diseases decimated First Nations. Competition for furs to trade with Europeans and the desire to replenish numbers through absorption of captives, among other factors,² contributed to the Beaver Wars, which after 1640, saw the Haudenosaunee Confederacy expand into Southern Ontario, dispersing the Wendat. Within the boundaries of today's Toronto, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy then occupied villages on the Carrying Place trails on the Humber and Rouge Rivers from approximately the 1660s to the 1680s.

In the late 1680s, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy chose to leave their village in the Toronto area and returned to their homelands in upstate New York. As evidenced by the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal, the 1701 Nanfan Treaty, and the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, the Haudenosaunee continued to have an interest in the resources of the area.

Anishinaabe people from the Lake Superior region then moved into the Toronto area. While the Wendat and Haudenosaunee people lived in year-round villages surrounded by crops, the Anishinaabe people continued to live primarily by seasonally moving across the land to hunt, fish and gather resources that were available at a specific time, including migrating birds and maple syrup. To the west of Toronto, the Anishinaabe

1 With thanks to Philip Cote for the reference to Benton-Banai, Edward, *The Mishomis book: The voice of the Ojibway* (Indian Country Press, 1985), p. 26.

2 <https://histindigenouspeoples.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/chapter-5-colonial-wars-looking-east>; Gary Warrick, "The Aboriginal Population of Ontario in Late Pre-history," in Munson and Jamieson, eds., *Before Ontario: The Archaeology of a Province* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), p. 72.

people became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit. To the east, they became known as the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama and the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island.³

In 1787, as the British began to prepare for an influx of colonists into the area following the American Revolution, the British Crown negotiated the Toronto Purchase with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to obtain title to the land. The flawed and poorly documented agreement was invalidated, and Treaty 13 was negotiated in 1805 for lands now including much of the City of Toronto. In 1923, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed the Williams Treaties for over 20,000 km², including portions of eastern Toronto, with seven First Nations of the Chippewa of Lake Simcoe (Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama) and the Mississauga of the north shore of Lake Ontario (Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island).

The Mississaugas, Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, or the Wendat did not traditionally regard land as a commodity to be sold. Following the Toronto Purchase, the British government quickly set out to survey the land into lots which were either sold or granted into private ownership of settlers. In 2010, the Government of Canada settled the Toronto Purchase Claim with the Mississaugas of the Credit after agreeing that the Mississaugas were originally unfairly compensated. In 2018, the Williams Treaties First Nations settled litigation about land surrenders and harvesting rights with the Governments of Canada and Ontario.

The City of Toronto remains the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is also covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with seven Mississaugas and Chippewa First Nations.

i. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The following section outlines the history and facts related to the properties which are the basis for determining historical or associative value of Criteria 4, 5 or 6 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

Thistle town

Centered at the intersection of Albion Road and Islington Avenue, the formal community of Thistle town can trace its roots to 1847. Recorded colonial settlement in the area dates to 1800 however when the Conat family built a tavern near the intersection to serve travellers on Albion Road (previously Claireville Road) which connected the communities of Weston and Bolton, and those traversing Islington Avenue (then Middle Road), between the settlements of Islington and Kleinberg.

In 1833 the Scottish settler John Grubb purchased 150 acres of land on either side of Albion Road with frontage along the Humber River.⁴ In 1835 The Grubb family

³ Mississaugas of the Credit, "The History of Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation." n.d.

⁴ Byers, *Rural Roots*, 226.

constructed “Elm Bank” at present-day 19 Jason Road. Soon after the Grubb family built “Brae Burn,” constructed in the 1840’s and rebuilt in 1853 after a fire had destroyed the original structure.⁵ By 1840 it was reported that the Grubb family was cultivating 120 of the 150 acres alongside horses, cattle and sheep.

In 1847 Grubb had a plan of subdivision registered for a new village of St. Andrews, named after the town of his birth in Scotland. The name held until Confederation in 1867; with the name already in-use in New Brunswick the local post office renamed the community Thistletown, after the local doctor William Thistle, whose relative just so happened to be the local postmaster.⁶

Seeking to attract settlers to the village and improve transportation routes to deliver his goods to market, Grubb incorporated the Albion Plank Road Company in 1846 and received authorization to collect tolls from those using the Albion Road. Alongside the Weston Road Company of which Grubb was also a director of, these two toll roads saw some initial success and use by farmers heading to the mills in Weston or further south to markets in Toronto.⁷

Like many rural agricultural communities, Thistletown existed to primarily serve surrounding farmers and homesteads; the routing of the Northern Railway and Toronto Grey and Bruce Railway through the village of Weston on the eastern banks of the Humber River stymied any significant development in Thistletown as a railroad station and commuter hub. Nonetheless, the community was sufficiently sized to provide a public school (1874) and essential services, including hotels, a blacksmith, wagon works and brick kiln. The community was served by St. Phillip’s Anglican Church (1838) to the south and St. Andrew’s Methodist Church (1899) on Islington Avenue.

Thistletown remained a small, rural village through the first half of the 20th century and attracted little development besides sporadic cottages and recreational properties along the Humber River.⁸ Post-WWII saw a wave of residential development in tandem with the rapid expansion of Highways 401 to the south and 400 to the east. The growth of car ownership spurred residential subdivision within Thistletown, capitalizing both on the area’s accessibility by car and the bucolic setting along the banks of the Humber River. The village was incorporated into the Borough of Etobicoke in 1967 and remains a distinct primarily residential community today.

Grubb Farm – Elm Bank

The Grubb family’s extensive history within Etobicoke Township has been well-documented by historians and descendants of the earliest Grubb settlers, who arrived in Etobicoke from Edinburgh, Scotland in 1833. John Grubb (1783-1850) was born in Midlothian, Scotland and was married to Janet Bain (1788-1862), of Edinburgh, in 1806. Grubb was employed as a builder in Edinburgh and is known to have built urban storefronts with apartments, of which the family retained ownership of through much of

5 Ibid., 227.

6 Brown, *Toronto’s Lost Villages*, 54.

7 Ibid., 55.

8 Etobicoke Historical Board, *Villages of Etobicoke*, 99.

the 19th century. In 1833 John Grubb left Scotland for Upper Canada, coinciding with a prolonged period of economic depression in Scotland and England. John and Janet had 11 children born in Scotland,⁹ most of whom survived to adulthood.

An experienced builder, John Grubb erected the impressive Elm Bank house soon after their arrival in 1834. It is commonly believed that the two-storey stone ledgestone house at 23 Jason Road was already on the property at that time.⁹ John's second eldest surviving son, Robert, built Brae Burn on the eastern portion of their land on the southern banks of the western branch of the Humber River east of Albion Road in the 1840's, with Elm Bank going to his eldest son, William, upon John's death in 1850.¹⁰

Elm Bank continued to operate as a farm under the Grubb family following John's death in 1850; the family's financial picture fared poorly, owing to the depreciation in value of their Edinburgh properties and the failure of the Weston and Albion road companies. Elm Bank was sold by William Grubb (1846 – 1934) following his father's death in 1889 to help settle the family's outstanding debts, with the Grubbs and their descendants remaining to reside and farm at Brae Burn until it was sold in 1942.¹¹ In 1963, Brae Burn was sold, dismantled, and re-assembled at Black Creek Pioneer Village.

In 1972, Elm Bank was purchased by Mabel Grubbe (an "e" added to the family name), widow of Talbot Page Grubbe who was a great-grandson of John Grubb. The property remains within the ownership of descendants of John Grubb today.

34 Jason Road

The present-day house at 34 Jason Road is purported to have been constructed upon the stone foundations of the former Grubb piggery, which in the 19th century and into the early 20th was part of the property associated with Elm Bank at 19 Jason Road.¹²

The subject property was subdivided by Dr. E. F. Irwin, who had purchased a large portion of the former Elm Bank farm including the house and outbuildings, in 1921 (Plan M433). The Plan of Subdivision included Lots 107-108 (32 Jason Road); Lot 109 (34 Jason Road); Lot 113 (23 Jason Road) and Lot 128 (19 Jason Road).

A piggery, also known as a hog house, pig sty, or hog pen, is a specialized agricultural building type constructed and used specifically for housing pigs. On a working farm, a piggery would be separate from the barn, with sufficient light to ensure a warm and dry environment. Inside, individual pens would have run the length of the structure, with a central feed aisle between them. A gable-end door would provide access to the feed aisle and for egress. In some examples, separate doors connected the pens to outside stalls or fenced yards.¹³

9 FitzGerald, *The Grubb Pioneers*, 127.

10 Ibid., 34.

11 Ibid., 44.

12 Ibid., 128.

13 Pennsylvania Agricultural History Project, "Hog House". Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Collection. <https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/agriculture/field-guide/hog-house.html>

The property at 34 Jason Road was sold in 1921 by Dr. Irwin to Mary and Matthew Morrison, who resided on the property with their three children and a tenant until 1926. The property was then sold to Bruce Metcalfe and Irma Irwin, daughter of Dr. Irwin. The Metcalfe family lived at 34 Jason Road until 1961. It is believed that the “L” addition to the original structure was built between 1928 and 1933.¹⁴

Cecil Bruce Metcalfe (1891-1962) was an accomplished musician, music teacher, photographer, naturalist and lapidarist, while Irma Lenore Metcalfe (nee Irwin, 1894-1973) was a piano teacher, choir conductor, naturalist, and lapidarist. Bruce began playing the organ at a young age for the Weston Presbyterian Church before joining the Romanelli Orchestra in Toronto. He played regularly with the orchestra at the King Edward Hotel, as well as shows at New York City’s Times Square. In 1928 he joined the faculty of the Hambourg Conservatory’s Parkdale branch, and in 1935 he assumed the directorship of the Weston and Mount Dennis Choral Society. He subsequently taught at Weston Collegiate Institute prior to retirement, after which he was the organist for the Central United Church in Weston.¹⁵

In addition to his musical career, Bruce Metcalfe was a notable photographer, coinciding with his tenure at 34 Jason Road. His photography focused largely on natural history, with his works reflected in the catalogues of the Public Archives Canada and the J. Paul Getty Museum Collection. In 1944 his photography of ferns was exhibited at the Royal Ontario Museum and were subsequently used to illustrate the handbook *Native Ferns*, published by Canadian Nature Magazine.¹⁶

In 1961 the Metcalfe family sold the subject property to John Edward Fawbert and Muriel Jean Fawbert. It subsequently passed through several owners. In 1978 a portion of the property to the north was severed to permit the construction of a single-family detached house on 1 Riverdale Drive. The property remains in private ownership today.

ii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following section provides an architectural description and analysis related to the property which will establish the basis for determining design or physical value of Criteria 1, 2 or 3 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

34 Jason Road contains an “L” shaped one and a half storey residential house form building, constructed on the stone foundations of a piggery associated with neighbouring Elm Bank at 19 and 23 Jason Road. Constructed c.1921, the original rectangular plan was extended c.1926-33.

The house features stone foundations and walls on the first storey; a steeply pitched gable roof contains the half second storey, with board and batten wood cladding on the exposed gable ends. A single shed dormer window punctures the roof facing south, while the roofline extends over a covered verandah at the juncture of the “L” plan. Two

14 Marybeth McTeague, Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report: Elm Bank – 32 and 34 Jason Road (June 2023), 41.

15 Ibid., 42.

16 Ibid., 43.

chimneys rise from the roof ridge on either arm of the “L,” while a gabled awning extends from the south façade supported by decorative metal posts. A variety of window types and sizes are present; those openings on the c.1921 portion feature cast stone sills, while those on the c.1926-31 addition have fieldstone sills. A stone patio/walkway on the north façade is accessed via French doors set within a rectangular opening, while a single door provides access on the west façade to the large stone paved patio and gardens cascading towards the intersection of Jason Road and Riverdale Drive. The primary entrance was relocated from the south façade (below the present-day gabled awning) to the verandah, at the “L” juncture.

The west façade provides the clearest indication of the extent of the original stone foundations, in relation to the c.1921 stone walls (Figure 12). This is corroborated by an undated photograph of 34 Jason Road (Figure 6) which shows the structure after its conversion to a single-family home, with stone foundations and stucco cladding.

iii. CONTEXT

The following section provides contextual information and analysis related to the property which is the basis for determining contextual value of Criteria 7, 8 or 9 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The City of Toronto Property Data Map attached (Attachment 2) shows the site of the property at 34 Jason Road.

The subject property is located within the Thistletown neighbourhood of north Etobicoke, within the City of Toronto. The immediate surrounding context is a post-war suburban residential subdivision, situated between Islington Avenue and Albion Road, with the western branch of the Humber River to the south. The small enclave was part of the original Lots 30 and 31 within Concession B and owned by the Grubb family, before being subdivided by Dr. E. F. Irwin as part of Plan M4333 in 1920. The prevailing residential character is of post-war bungalows, with more recent demolitions replacing these homes with larger, two storey houses.

The topography is heavily influenced by the Humber River, with a pronounced hill south towards the river accentuated by mature trees. Jason Road’s curvature breaks from the grid-pattern established to the north and reflects this distinct riverbank topography. Three historic properties are located within the enclave and reflect varying periods of development. These include:

- 19 Jason Road (Elmbank, c.1834) Designated Part IV #70-2008.
- 23 Jason Road (Elmbank, pre-1820) Designated Part IV #71-2008.
- 32 Jason Road (Elmbank barn foundations, c.1834) Listed.
- 34 Riverdale Drive (Franklin Carmichael Art Centre, 1934, 1971) Listed.

The western branch of the Humber River flows to the west and south of the subject property, set within the West Humber Parkland. The Humber River Recreational Trail passes on the southern banks of the river at this location.

The subject property is located at the intersection of Jason Road and Riverdale Drive. The house sits on an incline overlooking Jason Road and Riverdale Drives, owing to the gradual decline towards the western branch of the Humber River to the south. The property is heavily treed, with gardens supported by dry stacked stone retaining walls.

4. VISUAL RESOURCES



Figure 4: George Tremain, Tremain's Map of the County of York Canada West, compiled and drawn by George R. Tremain from Actual Surveys Toronto. Published by George C. Tremain, 1860 with notations added showing the approximate location of 34 Jason Road.

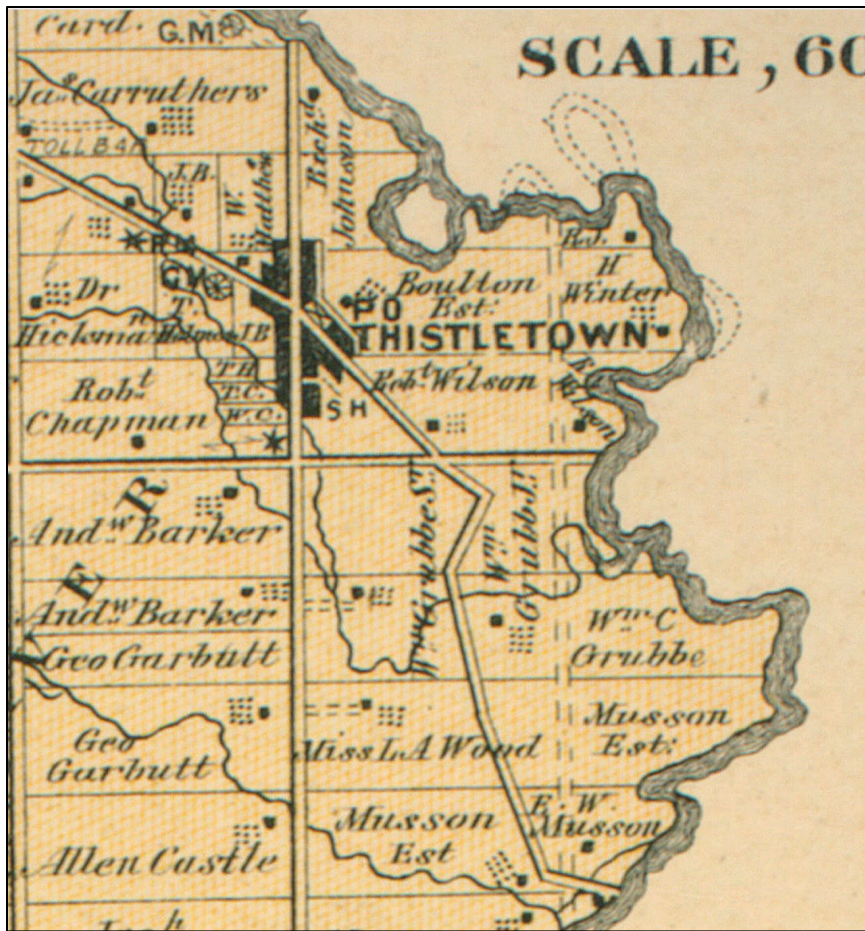


Figure 5: Miles and Co., Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York, 1878. McGill University Library. Excerpt showing the community of Thistle Town, with notation showing the location of 34 Jason Road.



Figure 6: 34 Jason Road, date unknown (pre-1926). Note the stucco cladding, which was subsequently removed. Twitchin, The History of Thistle Town.



Figure 7: Photograph and signature of Bruce Metcalfe, date unknown. Public Archives Canada.



Figure 8: 34 Jason Road, date unknown. Etobicoke Historical Society - Thistleton, item 639.



Figure 9: 34 Jason Road, west façade, date unknown. Etobicoke Inventory of Heritage Properties, Toronto Historical Board.



Figure 10: 34 Jason Road, southeast façade (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 11: 34 Jason Road, south facade, secondary entrance with gabled awning (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 12: 34 Jason Road, west facade, showing three openings with modified opening at centre for access to stone patio (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 13: 34 Jason Road, north facade. "L" addition with French doors is in the foreground with the original structure at the right (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 14: 34 Jason Road, north facade, showing the joint between the c.1921 (right) and c.1926-33 (left) structures (Alex Corey, September 2025).

5. LIST OF SOURCES

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

- City Directories, Toronto Public Library
- Etobicoke Historical Society, Image Library – Thistletown
<https://www.etobicokehistorical.com/thistletown-image-library.html>
- Ontario Land Registry. Plan M433, Lots 107-108 and Lot 109.
<https://www.onland.ca/ui/80/books/search/1?other=M433&page=1>
- Toronto Historical Board Image Library.

SECONDARY SOURCES

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- Byers, Mary, Jan Kennedy and Margaret McBurney. Rural Roots: Pre-Confederation Buildings of the York Region of Ontario. University of Toronto Press, 1976.
- Etobicoke Historical Board. Villages of Etobicoke. Argyle Printing Company, 1985.
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- Twitchin, Joanna. The History of Thistletown. Self-published, 2011.