

# 932 Highway 7, Geographic Township of Mariposa (Mariposa School Section #12)

## Heritage Designation Evaluation

Geographic Township of Mariposa

PT N1/2 LT 16 CON 8 MARIPOSA AS IN R168934, PT 1 & 2 57R4153 EXCEPT 3-5  
57R4258; KAWARTHA LAKES  
2023



## Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The subject property has been researched and evaluated in order to determine its cultural heritage significance under Ontario Regulation 9/06 of the Ontario Heritage Act R.S.O. 1990. A property is eligible for designation if it has physical, historical, associative or contextual value and meets any two of the nine criteria set out under Regulation 9/06 of the Act. A heritage evaluation of the property has determined that 932 Highway 7, Geographic Township of Mariposa has cultural heritage value or interest and merits designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.

### 1. The property has design value or physical value because it:

#### 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 Beaux-Arts educational architecture in Mariposa Township and Kawartha Lakes more broadly. Constructed in 1913 and opened in early 1914, the former school demonstrates key characteristics of Beaux-Arts educational design including large banks of windows and strong Classical details such as rounded windows and lintels. It is notable for its Classical entrance porch and hexagonal belfry which are unique amongst surviving former schools in Mariposa Township.

It is also demonstrative of trends in educational architecture which developed and matured in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emphasizing new ideas regarding hygiene, ventilation and safety as incorporated into architectural design.

#### ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit:

The property displays a high degree of craftsmanship in its high quality and sophisticated use of the Beaux-Arts style, particularly for a small village school. The high quality design of this building was recognized when it was opened and is documented.

#### iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement:

There are no specific technical or scientific achievements associated with this property.

### 2. The property has historical or associative value because it:

#### i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization, or institution that is significant to the community:

The property has direct associations with the history of education in the community of Oakwood and in Mariposa Township more generally as the former local school. The school opened in 1914 to replace an older nineteenth century school and remained in operation in the community until 1985.

ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture:

The property yields information regarding the history of education in Oakwood and the community's strong educational traditions, dating to the first half of the nineteenth century.

iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to the community:

The property was designed by Allandale architect William B. Taylor who also designed the Oakwood Methodist (United) Church in 1912. However, Taylor does not have specific significance to the community.

### 3. The property has contextual value because it:

i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area:

The property helps maintain the rural hamlet character of the community of Oakwood as one of its key historic institutional structures. The former school is located in a prominent position in the community which is comprised largely of nineteenth and early twentieth century structures and reinforces the character of the area as a local population centre in the rural township.

ii. is physically, functionally, visually, or historically linked to its surroundings:

The property is historically linked to its surroundings as part of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century development of Oakwood. The property is surrounded by commercial, residential and institutional properties of a similar age and in a range of late nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural styles.

iii. is a landmark.

The property is a landmark as the former Oakwood School and later as the local public library. It is a well-known and used institutional building which is also located in a prominent position in the village along the Highway 7 corridor.

## Design and Physical Value

932 Highway 7 has design and physical value as a unique example of Beaux-Arts educational architecture in Oakwood and in Kawartha Lakes. The building, which was constructed in 1913 as the local school, demonstrates key characteristics of Beaux-Arts educational design including large banks of windows and strong Classical details such as rounded windows and lintels. It is notable for its Classical entrance porch and hexagonal belfry which are unique amongst surviving former schools in Mariposa Township, and demonstrate a high degree of craftsmanship. The former school is also demonstrative of trends in educational architecture which developed and matured in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries emphasizing new ideas regarding hygiene, ventilation and safety as incorporated into architectural design.

The first purpose built school was constructed in Oakwood on Albert Street in 1849. Although little is known about this structure, it served as the first iteration of school house design in the community and was likely of a basic frame construction; it is believed that a log building served this purpose at some location in the hamlet prior to this date. By 1857, it was replaced by a larger frame structure on Elgin Street which also served as a grammar and continuation school beginning in 1858. By 1874, a new brick high school had been constructed next door and the public school continued to operate out of the older frame building. This school was replaced by the subject property in 1913.

Early schools across Kawartha Lake, and Ontario generally, often had little in the way of architectural detail and were primarily utilitarian structures built using frame, or even log, construction. This was likely the case for both the first and second frame school erected to serve Oakwood's students throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, school architecture was changing across the province, as communities became more established and financially secure. With additional resources and security, communities began to build schools in accordance with contemporary building trend and styles.

The shift from utilitarian to more architectural design was assisted by two factors: the increasing number of architects in nineteenth century Ontario and the proliferation of pattern books across the province. On one hand, the increasing number of architects in the province in the second half of the nineteenth century, both those who immigrated to the province and those born there, meant that professional design expertise was increasingly available for school design and communities and local school boards hired architects to design their schools in the latest styles. This was particularly the case in urban areas where more architects were located and where the new schools being constructed in the second half of the nineteenth century were larger than their rural counterparts which were usually one room.

The growing availability of pattern books also allowed communities and schools to build in popular styles, often without hiring an architect and simply relying on local builders. For remote and rural communities, pattern books were a significant boon in school construction as it allowed them to have a school in an up-to-date architectural fashion with various amenities and features without having to find and pay for an architect. The importance of pattern books for the development of school architecture in Ontario was much the same as for domestic and institutional architecture, where booms in pattern book availability also assisted in the wide spread of popular nineteenth century architectural styles across the province, including areas where professional architectural expertise was not always available.

Unlike other building types, books regarding architectural design for schools were increasingly available directly from the government, as opposed to from private sources, although books authored privately by architects were still common in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Ontario's Department of Education was formed in 1876 out of the earlier Department of Public Instruction and, as the government body in charge of education across the province, was active in providing and promoting school design. As the education system across the province became more regularized, so too did the variety of rules, regulations and guidance provided to schools and school boards across Ontario, including regarding architecture. While local schools were not obligated to use the designs provided by the government, they were increasingly required to conform to a variety of regulations regarding school construction and safety and the pattern provided in these texts adhered to the standards set by the Department. These texts generally included a range of guidelines on different aspects of school, as well as example school designs and architectural details that local schools could incorporate into new construction.

In addition to architectural details, government design books put a significant emphasis on the comfort and safety of students, particularly through the provision of appropriate heating, ventilation and light, which were often lacking in earlier nineteenth century schools. Children's safety was an important part of design for the government and certainly top of mind for parents as well. Particularly in the wake of the 1908 Collinwood Ohio school fire where 172 children were killed due, in large part, to the architectural design of the building, safety became a more and more central aspect of design, even as aesthetics continued to be prioritized. Fire safety took on an increasing important role in design prioritizes in the early twentieth century and translated into very specific architectural features to allow children to quickly and safely exit a building in the case of a fire, as well as, for rural schools particularly, a move away from using wood stoves in the middle of the classroom and towards central heating.

While fire safety through the provision of wide hallways and multiple exits, particularly in large urban schools, was a key concern for government education officials, so was the provision of adequate heating and ventilation, which were also seen as important health and safety issues. The late nineteenth century saw the rise of the social reform movement which looked to the health of children as one of its primary challenges; the primary point of reference for this movement was urban slums where children lived in poor health and often dirty and cold conditions as a result of abject poverty, but the need for an emphasis on children's health was seen as a universal concern. Reformers of this period saw physical infrastructure as an important indicator and promotor of health through the provision of clean air and comfortable temperatures. Children who lived in warm homes with good air circulation had better health and would grow up into better and more productive members of society. So too it was with schools where comfortable temperatures in both winter and summer and fresh air circulating throughout the buildings was seen to translate into a better atmosphere for learning and increased educational attainment. The extension of this emphasis on health was on increased sanitation through the provision of clean, preferably indoor, bathrooms and running water. Light was also a factor to increase the ability of students to see and read well and to promote good ocular health. This new emphasis on health-related matters translated directly into architectural design choices, such as large windows, bigger classrooms, and provisions for central heating and plumbing.

Two publications which demonstrate the direction taken by government school design books and the backdrop on which the Oakwood school was built are J. George Hodgins' 1886 text *Hints and Suggestions on School House Architecture and Hygiene* and a 1909 text published by the Department of Education with no credited author, *Plans for Rural School Houses*. Hodgins was a protégé of Egerton Ryerson in the early years of public education in Ontario and later served as the deputy minister from the foundation of the Department until 1890 and his text is one of the formative publications on school design in Ontario.

Hodgins' text was predicated on the assumption that the majority of schools in Ontario were poorly designed, overcrowded, and unsafe. He places significant emphasis on the provision of good ventilation and high ceilings for airflow, appropriate heating systems for comfort, and well-constructed bathrooms for sanitation, consistent with the prevailing thought patterns of the day. For Hodgins, these issues, not architectural style, are the primary foci for school design. However, he also advocates for schools to be constructed in such a way that they are pleasant and attractive places to be, and includes a number of designs in his book, all of which demonstrate characteristics of the pervasive Victorian architectural style.



By 1909, the significant emphasis on the health and safety related aspects of school design had not gone away and the text issued by the Department regarding the design and construction of rural schools put this issues at the fore of its discussion. They are, however, discussed in a substantially more succinct manner, indicating that these concerns were now common and recognized design considerations in school design. It is assumed that the inclusion of features such as central heating, large windows and sanitary bathrooms is not in question when it comes to design, although there is still an assumption that rural schools will have outdoor bathrooms in a separate building from the main school. Where greater emphasis is placed is on stylistic design. For example, the text notes:

Of the public buildings in the community, the school building is the most important. If we are to cultivate the taste of the pupils and of the rest of the community, both it and its surrounding must be an example of taste, simplicity and dignity in form and design.<sup>1</sup>

In keeping with this emphasis on form and design, the book provides 36 different school designs, in a range of sizes and layouts. Most of the are similar in their characteristics, employing a simplified version of the Beaux-Arts style. This style, which originated in France in the early nineteenth century, used an eclectic mix of exaggerated Classical forms on generally symmetrically massed structures to create a dynamic, expressive architectural form. While European examples of this style tended to be highly decorative, the adaption of the Beaux Arts in North America, where it enjoyed a period of popularity from about 1880 to 1920, was more subdued and focused instead on the use of a range of eclectically combined Classical stylistic motifs, heavy masonry and subtle polychromy. This style was used almost exclusively on public buildings, including government buildings, certain types of commercial buildings such as banks, and schools.

The use of this style for rural schools was highly simplified, stripping away most of the decoration to focus on the core elements of the style. This can be seen in the 1909 text where a range of Classical features are employed to add decorative detail to buildings which are essentially rectangles. There are a number of common features which appear across most of the designs: Classically-inspired entrance porches incorporating features such as columns, entablatures, pediments and rounded arches; ornate belfries; large banks of windows with lintels and lug sills; and rounded arches. Other Classical features can be seen employed sporadically throughout the designs: rusticated quoins and foundations; return eaves; rounded windows; and towers. The result is a collection of model designs with a highly consistent aesthetic that both speaks

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario Department of Education, *Plans for Rural School Buildings*, 5.

to the popularity of Classical architecture for public buildings in the early twentieth century and responds to the various health and safety concerns which still dominated conversations regarding school design and construction. The impact of this consistency can be seen in early twentieth century rural school houses across Ontario which are easily recognizable by their stylistic features and consistently similar in design.

With this as its conceptual backdrop, the Oakwood school was erected in 1913, opening in early 1914 to much fanfare. The building was designed by Barrie-area architect William B. Taylor. Very little is known about Taylor's practice, but it is clear from the Oakwood school that he had a full understanding of and adhered to the general principles espoused by the Department and that were widely used in school design in both Canada and the United States with regard to health and safety and aesthetic matters. The exact design employed by Taylor does not appear in one of the department's pattern books, but it clearly draws from these and other, similar sources.

The opening of the school was reported on in the January 8, 1914 edition of the *Lindsay Watchman-Warder*. It was written that the driving force behind the school was School Inspector W.H. Stevens whose ideas included improvements to heating and ventilation, in alignment with current ideas on school construction. Among the discussion of the range of speakers and dignitaries who attended the opening, the newspaper noted:

President T.A. Kirkconnell of the Collegiate Institute gave a pleasing address, in which he started that as Mariposa was evidently the banner township, with magnificent houses and splendid barns and outbuildings, it was but in keeping to have the best in the matter of schools. The fine new school was but a further evidence of the intelligence and the prosperity of the people. ... The new school is one of the best village schools in the Province, there being two large, well lighted and ventilated rooms in the main section, as well as a large room for the girls and another for the boys in the basement.<sup>2</sup>

There was no discussion regarding the school's architectural style, only its high quality craftsmanship and adherence to contemporary health and safety standards. The lack of discussion regarding the architectural style is likely due to the fact that the school was constructed within the standard design idiom for rural and small town school houses at the turn of the century.

The school exhibits a number of key architectural features that are representative of this stylistic trend in school architecture. As with most

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<sup>2</sup> *Lindsay Watchman-Warder*, January 8, 1914, 8.



Beaux-Arts inspired schoolhouses, the Oakwood school is constructed on a basic rectangular plan embellished with Classical details. These include: the use of red brick combined with buff window and door surrounds to give a polychromatic aesthetic; projecting entrances on the north and south elevation of the building with rounded arches and ox-eye windows; rounded windows with buff radiating voussoirs and lug sills; gables with shingles and decorative bargeboard; decorative brackets; a jerkinhead roof; and a belfry at the front entrance of the school. The overall Classical aesthetic of the building as expressed in these features, both separately and together, represent the contemporary trends in school design from the early decades of the twentieth century. It also includes features which speak to the safety-centric approach which was also the norm in school design at this time. This includes large entrances – and more than one of them – substantial windows, including in the basement, banks of windows on the east and west elevations, and two chimneys which form part of the internal heating and cooling system.

However, the school is also unique amongst other schools in Mariposa Township both for its size and the attention to detail evident in its construction. Unlike most other schools in the township constructed around the same time, the school was two rooms, not one, as befitted its role as the school in the township's main settlement. This had also been the case for the earlier school that the 1913 building replaced which was a larger structure than most of its contemporaries because it was in town and serving a larger and more concentrated population than in the surrounding rural areas.

The school also possessed a number of unique architectural details, not found in most other schoolhouses in the township, although there were and remain, a number of other late nineteenth and early twentieth century schools in Mariposa Township which contain their own unique and distinctive architectural features. The most unique feature of the Oakwood school is its hexagonal belfry. While many schools contained belfries, the one contained on the subject property is unique in its hexagonal design, which included rounded arches on each side. The building is also unique for its retention of high quality architectural details, which is not always found on schoolhouses from this era; these features include: decorative bargeboard, shingled gables, and paired brackets.

When viewed in light of the trends in school architecture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Oakwood school is clearly representative of a small town school of this type. It includes, and retains, a range of Classical architectural details which are typical of this style and also includes the safety-centric features which are also found in this type of architecture. Its high level of craftsmanship is evident through its surviving features, such as its unique hexagonal belfry, and were recognized at its time of construction.

## Historical and Associative Value

932 Highway 7 has historical and associative value as the former school for the hamlet of Oakwood. It was constructed to serve Mariposa School Section 12, which included the community, in 1913 and, as a surviving historic school in the township, yields information regarding the history of education in both Oakwood and Mariposa Township more generally. It operated as a school from 1914 to 1985 and has direct associations with the history and development of education in the community as a settlement area serving a wider rural agricultural area.

Formal education in Ontario, then Upper Canada, reached back to the late eighteenth century with the passage of the Schools Act in 1799 which established the ability create schools and requirements for teacher certification. In this early period, most schools were fee-paying or associated with religious organizations, or both, meaning that education was very much not universally accessible to children across the province. The first tuition free, non-denominational school, known as a common school, opened in Niagara in 1804, but the requirement to pay tuition for schooling remained for much of the first half of the nineteenth century, and participation in education remained low because of it. Most students in the early century were from upper and upper middle class background, located in urban areas and attending fee-paying schools.

Nevertheless, the provincial government increasingly took interest in ensuring that education was provided to communities across the province. The early eighteenth century saw a significant growth in population in the province, including more families, in part due to the influx of United Empire Loyalists in the late eighteenth century, in combination with migration from Britain and Ireland. By 1816, the Common Schools Act had been passed which created school boards and enabled local communities to build schools and hire teachers through local trustee, effectively enabling the development of local, municipally-led education efforts with rules and standards enforced by the province. 1841 saw the passage of the Education Act which created a provincial superintendent to oversee education across Ontario and to allow municipalities to collect taxes from the parents of school aged children to help support schools, in addition to both government grants and tuition. In 1846, a new version of the Common Schools Act was passed which allowed municipalities to tax their entire tax base to fund school and, crucially, to make schools free, although fees were still allowed to be charged. By 1871, the School Act was passed, mandating universal free education and, by extension, compulsory attendance now that fees were no longer an issue.

By the middle of the century, access to education was vastly improved across the province, including in rural areas as a result of these changes made at the provincial level and the growing recognition that the education of children

across the province was an important area of concern for the provincial government. While, in general, urban students had greater access to educational opportunities, and particularly secondary schooling and higher education, the government recognized that the majority of Ontario's population was located in its rural hinterlands and the standards, regulations and funding structures in place in urban areas were also in place in rural areas.

Despite these advances, providing schooling in rural areas was not easy. The reality of the rural agricultural economy meant that children were needed to assist their parents with farming, particularly at certain times of years and their attendance was not guaranteed. Large areas with low population density made for school sections with very large catchment areas where getting to school could be challenging for many students. Teachers were not always willing to come to rural areas, although the ability to attract teachers increased as local children came up through the system and some trained to become teachers themselves. Rural schools also generally combined all grades into one or at most two classes due to the small number of children who attended them, giving rise to the ubiquitous one room school house associated with nineteenth century schooling and making the experience of going to school very different for urban and rural children. Nevertheless, rural education developed and grew throughout the nineteenth century, and by the early 1900s, the majority of children were attending public schools in or near to their own communities.

The school in Oakwood developed against this background. Educational instruction began in Mariposa Township soon after the settlement of the township. The township was surveyed in 1820 with the first settlers arriving in the late 1820s. Larger migrations to the township, comprised primarily of Scottish and second generation Canadians from more southerly townships, occurred throughout the 1830s and it was during this time that small settlements began forming, including Oakwood which grew up around James Tiff's property from 1833 onward. Early schools were soon established; most of these were informal instruction occurring in people's homes and very little is known about them or how they operated. It is believed that the earliest informal schools were operated in Oakwood and at Taylor's Corners. In accordance with provincial direction, school sections in Mariposa Township were established by the District of Colborne Council in 1842; powers regarding education would later be transferred to Victoria County, after its creation as the United Counties of Peterborough and Victoria in 1854, and the local township council and the Local Superintendent of Schools in Mariposa. School sections were gradually formed throughout the 1840s and 1850s, but periodically rearranged throughout the following decades in response to changing demographic patterns throughout the township. In these early years, attendance was very low with only 21 of 429 children between the ages of five

and 16 attending school in 1842; by 1850, enrollment had grown with just under 40% of children regularly attending school and by the 1860s, average school attendance in Mariposa ranged anywhere from 21% to 45% of the school aged population, depending on the school section. Enrollment rose throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, with the growth in educational services provided throughout the township, with the requirement for compulsory attendance after 1871, and an increasing population throughout the township, peaking at just over 5,300 residents in 1871.

School Section 12, which included Oakwood, was formed in 1849, although a school existed in the community prior to that date. Oakwood had grown from the 1830s into one of the three major settlements in Mariposa Township, alongside Manilla and Little Britain. By the late 1850s, the community had grown to 80 residents, and included a steam saw mill, a hotel and a variety of stores and businesses, serving both the community itself and the surrounding rural agricultural areas; the creation of a new school section centred on the community made demographic sense. A log school is believed to have been constructed in the community prior to 1849, but, soon after the creation of the new school section, a one-room frame building was built to serve as a common school with an initial attendance of 61 students. With the growth of the community over the next decade, the school rapidly became too small and a larger building was required.

Given Oakwood's position as one of the township's major settlements and the lack of continuing education locally, the community advocated for the creation of a grammar school and, in 1857, a new two-storey school was constructed on the east side of Elgin Street with the intention of accommodating the common school on the lower storey and the grammar school on the upper. The grammar school opened in 1858 and provided higher level classes for residents of Oakwood and the surrounding area who were able to travel into the hamlet for classes.

The common and grammar schools continued to operate in this way until 1875. Throughout the 1860s and early 1870s, enrolment increased to such an extent that both schools experienced overcrowding. At the same time, with the increasing standards for grammar and continuation schools enacted by the province in 1871, the Oakwood Grammar School was identified as a school in need of improvement. A new brick high school was built in 1875 and the schools separated, with the common, now known as public, school remaining in the older building.

The high school closed in 1889 and Oakwood lost its secondary education facilities; students were now required to travel to Lindsay or to the continuation school in Little Britain. The public school, however, remained and continued to grow. It also continued to occupy the 1857 school building. By the

early twentieth century, local school inspector W.H. Stevens was agitating the local trustees to build a new school, which resulted in a messy standoff between the trustees and local taxpayers. The population in Oakwood had grown to around 200 by 1910, more than double the population when the original school was constructed. In 1911, the trustees had approved the construction of a new school, but this was rejected by local taxpayers the following year and the trustees resigned. In order to force the taxpayers' hands, Stevens arranged for government funding to be cut off from the Oakwood school and, by 1913, the taxpayers had agreed to funding the new school. This school, the subject property, was constructed in 1913.

The building was designed by Barrie-area architect William B. Taylor who also designed the Oakwood Methodist, later United Church, the previous year. Taylor's career began as a carpenter and builder in the 1870s, before transitioning to building design by the early twentieth century. The full scope of Taylor's work is not known, but by the early 1910s, he was recognized as an architect who specialized in institutional design, building primarily churches and schools across central Ontario. An article in *The Lindsay Watchman-Warder* regarding the opening the school noted that, as of early 1914, he was the designer of at least eight schools and twenty-six churches across various rural and urban locations. The full extent of what these buildings actually are is not known, although two other Methodist churches in Lakefield and Brookville have been attributed to him. The rationale for commissioning Taylor to design this particular building is not known, but it is possible that his design of the Methodist church in 1912 introduced him to the local area and made him a known candidate to design the new school.

The new school, unlike many schools in Mariposa Township, was two rooms, as opposed to one, and this is reflected in its size and two entrances on the front and rear sides of the building. The construction of a larger school for one of the township's main settlement areas at the time made sense and is reflective of larger schools built in Little Britain and Manilla, the township's other main centres. By the early twentieth century, the educational landscape of the township reflected its demographic, with a range of one room school sections throughout the rural area, larger public schools in Oakwood and Manilla, and a combined public and continuation school in Little Britain.

The school continued to operated throughout the twentieth century as an elementary school. Older students continued to have to travel to either Lindsay or Little Britain for continuing education for much of the twentieth century, with all high school students going to Lindsay with the closure of the Little Britain Continuation School in 1953. Through these years, increasing numbers of students attended both this school and schools in general, with attendance becoming mandatory by 1920, resulting in a large influx of students across the province from the combined factors of population growth

and mandatory attendance. Despite this, the Oakwood school remained an appropriate size for the community due, in a large part, to the substantial rural exodus occurring across Ontario in the interwar period. While all local children were compelled to attend school, there were fewer of them which can be evidenced in the census data: the population of Mariposa Township as a whole fell from 3,472 in 1921 to 3,181 in 1931, down from its highs in the 1870s of over 5,300.

Where the school and others like it faced significant challenges, however, was offering up to date modern instruction and facilities because of the size of the school and the student body. Updates to the curriculum and the expectations as to what types and varieties of learning schools would provide meant that small one and two room schools teaching multiple grades in the same room could not provide the modern education that was demanded by the 1920s and 1930s. This was particularly the case for technical subjects, science and physical education which were being added to the curriculum at this time and required additional facilities and equipment outside of the regular classroom setting. While plans to consolidate schools were proposed, these remained extremely unpopular in rural areas where children would have had to be bussed to larger schools, and so schools such as that in Oakwood remained.

The 1950s, 1960s and 1970s brought major changes for rural education across Ontario. The combination of an increased school aged population as a result of the baby boom and infrastructure funding in the postwar period resulted in substantial consolidation of schools throughout the province but particularly in rural areas. It was during this period that most one and two room rural schools closed in favour of larger, centralized facilities where there were no longer multi-grade classrooms and where up to date facilities were available; in addition to being able to provide a more comprehensive education, it was also recognized that many older school buildings, particularly those which had not been updated since the late nineteenth century, were not conducive learning environments.

Like other boards across the province, the Mariposa Township School Board, established in 1965, and later the Victoria County School Board, which took over the area in 1969, began the process of closing schools and divesting itself of its building stock through this period as new consolidated schools were constructed to serve larger rural and urban areas in the county. In Mariposa Township, six schools were closed in 1966 and the other eleven closed in 1972 with the construction of the new Mariposa Elementary School, to the south of Oakwood on Eldon Road. The board sold the now-closed schools, with the exception of two: School Section 7 near Taylor's Corners which was converted into a maintenance building and the Oakwood school which the board continued to operate as a school for children with developmental disabilities who had long been excluded from the regular school system. The education of

students with special needs separately from other students was the norm at this time.

The school finally closed in 1985 as schools across Ontario began to change their approach to special education and integrate students with disabilities into the regular classroom or into separate classrooms within the main school building and students at the Oakwood school were transferred to Mariposa Elementary School. Declared surplus from the school board, the building transferred to the Township of Mariposa which operated a municipal administrative building at this location until its amalgamation into the City of Kawartha Lakes in 2001. The hamlet's library, which had been previously located at a 1950s structure, was relocated to the former school as the Oakwood Branch of the Kawartha Lakes Public Library in 2002.

When examined in light of this context, the school demonstrates and reflects a number of important trends in education in Mariposa Township and rural Ontario more generally throughout the twentieth century in particular. The school demonstrates the progress of rural education in Ontario through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as one of a series of schools serving the community. It is also demonstrative through its size and design of the role of Oakwood as one of the main population centres in Mariposa Township from the mid-nineteenth century. The property yields information regarding the history and provision of education in both Oakwood and Mariposa Township and the changing landscape of rural schooling in Ontario throughout the twentieth century through its construction, operation and closure.

### Contextual Value

932 Highway 7 has contextual value as a local landmark and an important part of the hamlet character of Oakwood. The property is surrounded by other residential, institutional and commercial structures of a similar age in a variety of architectural styles which, taken together, form a cohesive historic landscape. The property maintains and supports this hamlet character and is historically linked to its surroundings as part of this development.

Oakwood developed around the corner of what is now Highway 7 and Eldon Road beginning in the 1830s with the first registered plan of subdivision in 1853. Several other plans of subdivision were registered in the 1860s and 1880s which formed the historic core of the village; new subdivisions were not created again until the 1960s. The limited amount of post-nineteenth century development has resulted in a small community, still centred around the main intersection of Highway 7 and Eldon Road, with a significant proportion of historic building stock and which retains its historic land use patterns. The Fire Insurance Plan of Oakwood, dating from 1910, shows the community just prior to the construction of the new school and the land use and built form patterns



remain extremely similar, with the streets and many of the buildings from that time still extant.

The majority of extant buildings in the core of the hamlet date from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and are constructed in a range of historic architectural styles popular during this period. Most of these structures are single family residential properties, with a number of historic commercial and institutional properties also located in the community. 932 Highway 7 is one of the historic institutional properties located in the community, alongside the Oakwood United Church and former Town Hall. Taken alongside the other historic properties in the community, it forms part of this historic hamlet landscape and is historically linked to its surroundings as part of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century development of the community. It supports the historic character of the community in its date of construction, its architectural style and location on a large lot within the core of the historic settlement.

The presence of the school as part of a built up area of the township helps define its character as a hamlet within a larger rural area. The concentration of buildings within Oakwood and the presence of both institutional and commercial structures help differentiate the community from its rural surroundings which follow traditional Ontario agricultural patterns. The school is a contributing feature to this hamlet character and helps reinforce the nature of Oakwood as a built up area within the wider landscape of rural Mariposa Township. It is a key built heritage feature of the hamlet landscape which supports its role as a local population centre in Mariposa, both historically and in the contemporary context.

The property is also a local landmark as its former school and later its public library. The building operated as a school beginning 1914 and closed in 1985, operating as an educational facility a much longer period than most other rural schools across Kawartha Lakes, many of which closed in the 1960s. As its educational facility, the building is a well-known institutional structure in Oakwood, an important community role which is further enhanced in its more recent role as the local public library. It is also located in a prominent location in the village along the Highway 7 corridor where it can be seen as motorists and pedestrians pass along the highway through the hamlet. It is visible from a number of angles throughout the community and forms as key part of its built form and overall landscape. Its distinctive architecture, namely its decorative belfry, reinforces its landmark status as an architecturally unique building within the community.

## Summary of Reasons for Designation

The short statement of reasons for designation and the description of the heritage attributes of the property, along with all other components of the Heritage Designation Brief, constitute the Reasons for Designation required under the Ontario Heritage Act.

### Short Statement of Reasons for Designation

#### Design and Physical Value

The property has design and physical value as a representative example of an early twentieth century schoolhouse in Mariposa Township. The school was constructed in 1913 in the Beaux-Arts style which was popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for educational architecture in Ontario and demonstrates a high degree of craftsmanship through its well-executed elements, something that was recognized at the time of its construction. It includes key elements of the Beaux-Arts style as employed for school architecture including banks of windows, rounded arches, and a projecting entrance with a decorative belfry.

#### Historical and Associative Value

The property has historical and associative value as the former school house for Mariposa School Section 12, which covered the community of Oakwood beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. It has direct association with the history and development of education in the community. The school was constructed in 1913 to a design by Barrie-area architect William B. Taylor to replace an older frame school in the hamlet and yields information regarding the history of education in both Mariposa Township and the hamlet of Oakwood, as well as Oakwood's role as a population centre for the surrounding rural area.

#### Contextual Value

The property has contextual value as a local landmark as well as a contributing feature to the historic hamlet character of Oakwood. The property is a landmark as the former local school and later the public library. It is located in a prominent location in the community along Highway 7. It contributes to the historic hamlet character of Oakwood as one of a range of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings which comprise the majority of the community's building stock. As one of the community's primary institutional buildings, it reinforces the character of Oakwood as a hamlet in a primarily rural agricultural township.

### Summary of Heritage Attributes to be Designated

The Reasons for Designation include the following heritage attributes and apply to all elevations, unless otherwise specified, and the roof including: all façades, entrances, windows, chimneys, and trim, together with construction

materials of wood, brick, stone, stucco, concrete, plaster parging, metal, glazing, their related building techniques and landscape features.

### **Design and Physical Attributes**

The design and physical attributes support the value of the property as a former schoolhouse constructed in the Beaux-Arts style which demonstrates a high degree of craftsmanship in its execution.

- One storey red brick construction
- Dutch gable (jerkinhead) roof
- Shingled gables
- Decorative bargeboard
- Wide eaves
- Brackets
- Projecting entrances including:
  - Rounded arch with buff voussoir
  - Gable roof with shingled gable
  - Date stone
  - Ox-eye windows
- Hexagonal belfry including:
  - Hexagonal roof
  - Fishscale shingles
  - Rounded columns
  - Brackets
- Fenestration including:
  - Grouped windows
  - Sash windows
  - Rounded windows with buff voussoirs
  - Lintels
  - Lug sills

### **Historical and Associative Attributes**

The historical and associative attributes support the historical value of the property as the former local school.

- Association with the history of education in Oakwood

### **Contextual Attributes**

The contextual attributes support the value of the property as a local landmark and contributing feature to the historic hamlet character of Oakwood.

- Location along Highway 7 in the hamlet of Oakwood
- Relationship with other historic properties in the hamlet
- Views of the property from Highway 7
- Views of the property from Eldon Road

- Views of the surrounding hamlet from the property

## Images















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