

# 16 Bolsover Road, Geographic Township of Eldon (Bolsover Community Centre)

## Heritage Designation Evaluation

Geographic Township of Eldon

PT S PT LT 9-10 CON N PORTAGE RD ELDON PT 1 & 2, 57R409; 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 16 Bolsover Road 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 an early twentieth century rural schoolhouse. The building was constructed in 1901 and includes a range of features popular in schoolhouse architecture at this time including the steeply pitched gable roof, polychromatic brickwork, pilasters, large windows and belfry.

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

The property displays a high degree of craftsmanship in its extant woodwork, namely the decorative woodwork in the belfry and rose window motif on the front elevation of the structure.

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 Eldon Township and more specifically the community of Bolsover as the local school which was in operation in this building from 1901 to 1973 and in older structures from 1860.

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 the community of Bolsover and in rural Eldon Township as the former school house serving Eldon School Section 5. It also provides information on the growth and demographics of this part of Eldon Township from the mid-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 architect and builder of this property are unknown.

3. The property has contextual value because it:

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

The property is important in supporting the character of both the hamlet of Bolsover and of rural Eldon Township. The building is one of the primary historic institutional properties in the area and helps define the settlement of Bolsover which includes a concentration of historic and contemporary buildings.

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

The property is historically linked to its surrounding as part of the historic landscape of the community of Bolsover and of rural Eldon Township more generally. The area includes a wide array of historic buildings of a variety of sizes, types and styles, and this structure supports that historic rural character of the area as one of its primarily institutional structures.

iii. is a landmark.

The property is a local landmark as both the former local school and current community centre. It is located in a prominent position along Bolsover Road entering into the hamlet of Bolsover.

## Design and Physical Value

16 Bolsover Road had design and physical value as a representative example of a Victorian-style one room schoolhouse in Eldon Township and in Kawartha Lakes more generally. Constructed in 1901 as the local school serving Bolsover and the surrounding area, the school is representative both architecturally and in its size and functions of schools constructed in rural Ontario around the turn of the twentieth century. It is notable for its polychromatic brickwork as well as its retained historic belfry. 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.

16 Bolsover Road, also known as Eldon School Section 5 or the Bolsover School, was constructed in 1901 to serve the community of Bolsover and the surrounding area. It was not, however, the original school. The first school for the area was constructed in log at a nearby location on land donated by Kenneth Campbell. It was, however a distance from the growing settlement and a new frame school was built in the present location in 1865. This building served the community until 1901 when the current structure was erected.

Early schools, such as the original 1860 log building, were highly rudimentary and had little in the way of architectural design or merit. These were intended to provide a useable space for schooling as communities developed; in 1860, for example, Bolsover was still a very young place with its initial mill on the Talbot River only established in the 1850s. As communities grew, consolidated and became more financially secure, however, they often demanded better school facilities than a log shanty or hut and they set about building new buildings, often in accordance with contemporary building trends and styles. As a result, school architecture underwent a substantial change in many communities throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, from utilitarian to substantially more considered and architectural.

For those living in remote areas, new designs for school, and other buildings, were often provided by pattern books. While urban schools benefited from the increasing number of architects living and working in Ontario's cities in the second half of the century, rural and remote communities could not always rely on a professional to bring the newest architectural designs. Instead, they often relied on books or publications which showed examples of buildings in new and popular styles and designs that could be executed by local builders without specific design expertise; pattern books were developed for a variety of different building types, and schools were no exception. These types of publications were a substantial boon to rural communities wanting to build a new school in an up-to-date fashion with various amenities, but without the resources to find and hire 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.

An early example of a school design which had a substantial influence the design of rural schoolhouses in the second half of the nineteenth century was found in the *Canadian Farmer*, a periodical on rural life published throughout the 1860s and 1870s. This periodical, which touched on all aspects of rural life, occasionally published plans and elevations for buildings suitable for rural communities and, in June 1866, published a design for a rural one-room schoolhouse. This design was relatively basic and consisted of a small building on a rectangular plan with a gable roof. The sides were divided into two bays with reasonably large windows and the front included a central entrance with a fanlight and flanking rounded windows. It included a small belfry with a number of decorative details, such as brackets and a finial, as well as rounded windows, raised window surrounds, stacked chimneys, a semi-circular sign above the door, and brackets along the eaves.

This relatively basic design set the standard for Victorian schoolhouses throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Schools had been built in this way or on similar plans throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century, but the publication of this design solidified the use of this plan across Ontario, although the majority of schoolhouses in the late nineteenth century contained three, as opposed to two, bays. The publication also promoted the addition of decorative design elements to elevate it from a utilitarian to architectural structure, something that became increasingly common throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. By the end of the century, rectangular plan with a gable roof, belfry, central entrance and a range of decorative details was the norm in school design across rural Ontario.

In addition to design inspiration found in privately published materials, standards and designs for school construction were also promoted by the provincial government and nascent Department of Education, which had been formed in 1876 as the body responsible for the development, regulation and administration of education across the province. These texts generally included a range of guidelines on different aspects of school construction, as well as example school designs and architectural details that local schools could incorporate into new construction. 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.

One of the core foci of the government's school architecture texts was the physical comfort and safety of the students. This included items such as fire safety, adequate heating and ventilation, sanitation and lighting, all of which were seen both as important health and safety issues, but also features that would be generally beneficial to creating a positive learning environment. 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.

One of the primary drivers of these new ideas was J. George Hodgins, a protégé of Egerton Ryerson in the early years of public education in Ontario who later served as the Deputy Minister of Education from the foundation of the department until 1890. The first, *The School House: Its Architecture, External and Internal Arrangements*, was published in 1876 and the second, and more well-known, *Hints and Suggestions on School Architecture and Hygiene*, in 1886. A third publication, *School Room Decoration: An Address to Canadian Historical Societies*, came out in 1900, but was more focussed on promoting aspects of Canadian history in the classroom than actual architectural design.

Hodgins' primary focus was safety and comfort and strongly condemned the majority of schoolhouses in Ontario, particularly those in rural areas which he found to be generally unsafe, uncomfortable, too small, and ugly. The majority of his guidance concerned specific and practical elements of the school's physical plant. These included items such as having large windows to ensure good lighting and ventilation, central heating, large classrooms with enough room for all of the students, and sanitary privies and water sources. For many nineteenth century schools, these were significant and real safety concerns

and Hodgins was not the only author to address them. However, as a key government official, his direction in this regard helped propel communities in both urban and rural Ontario towards building schools with appropriate facilities in this regard.

However, Hodgins' was also concerned with aesthetics, not from the view point of promoting specific architectural styles or design elements, but based on the widespread nineteenth-century belief that physical space had an impact on the morals and values of society. On a more practical level, he believed that a pleasant, aesthetically-pleasing school made for a better and more conducive learning environment for children, allowing them to get more out of their education. He was a strong advocate for ensuring that schools, as a major community structure, helped to elevate the overall character and aesthetics of a town or village and were a well-built and well-designed landmark in communities across the province.

To support, a range of designs were included in Hodgins' books. Some of these were very practical, and not aesthetically-focussed, designs for classroom layouts, heating systems or privy vaults that were integral to Hodgins' focus on school safety and comfort. However, he also includes a range of architectural renderings for schools of different sizes and locations to help promote his vision of aesthetically-pleasing school architecture. While there are a range of designs in both books using a variety of design features and layouts, a number of trends is noticeable, specifically in relation to school designs he identifies as being for rural areas. The first is that the rectangular, three-bay, gable roofed plan similar to that proposed by the *Canadian Farmer* is used multiple times as a base design for rural schools, particularly in his first books which includes more examples of smaller schools. The second is the consistent use of the Victorian style in the schools he includes.

Architecture classified as Victorian is diverse and eclectic, but falls outside one of the primary, and more rigid, stylistic types of the second half of the nineteenth century, such Gothic Revival, Italianate, or Queen Anne styles. While many architects and builders across both rural and urban Ontario chose to construct new buildings in one of the more defined architectural styles of the day, others chose to take different elements from different styles and mix them to create what is now known generically as the Victorian style; although this term is often used to refer to any building outside of the major styles constructed between about 1840 and 1900, its use extended up until around 1910, when a shift to more consciously Classical forms emerged.

Victorian architecture generally included a mix of both Classical and Gothic motifs and was applied to a range of building types, although it was, by far, the most common in residential properties. Most of these buildings were relatively simple in their overall plan – often a basic rectangular or L-shaped plan – but



were dressed up with a range of decorative features and motifs to provide the embellished and ornamented aesthetic prevalent in Victorian design. While eclecticism was one of the defining features of Victorian architecture, there were a number of key features which were common and found across many different examples this architectural style, and on diverse structures with regard to size, location, and use.

The first of these elements was decorative woodwork which could be applied to a range of different parts of the building. In residential architecture, this was usually seen in gingerbread, or vergeboard, and on ornate verandahs and porches. This woodwork could incorporate a range of different motifs to create intricate and often delicate patterns. For non-residential structures, such as schools or commercial buildings, this type of woodwork was also employed, but was often less ornate and applied elsewhere, on features such as belfrys, brackets or entrance surrounds.

The second major element was the use of polychromatic brickwork. While many Victorian buildings were constructed in stone or wood, and thus did not incorporate this feature, the increasing use of brick in building construction, due to the rise in mass produced bricks, throughout the nineteenth century made it more and more common in Ontario communities. To add additional embellishment to these structures, bricks of different colours were used to create decorative details on the structure; the combination of red brick with buff brick details became pervasive across the province in the late nineteenth century. This sort of colourwork could be used extensively to create a range of effects on a building's exterior, although, as with other forms, there were popular places where contrasting colours of brick were employed. These included to define elements such as quoins, window hoods, coursing and pilasters, or to embed decorative designs directly into a building's surface.

While this style is most commonly associated with residential design, due to its widespread use for homes throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, it was also used in other buildings. This included schools, particularly one room schoolhouses, as evidenced both by the wide range of examples in Hodgins' texts in this style, the example in the *Canadian Farmer*, and the substantial number of surviving rural schoolhouses in this style across the province. Within Kawartha Lakes itself, the number of surviving schoolhouses, both rural one-room school and larger examples in towns and villages, is substantial. Smaller extant examples abound and include the Fleetwood School, constructed in 1876 and located at 971 Fleetwood Road in Manvers Township, the Peniel School, constructed in 188 and located at 313 Quaker Road in Mariposa Township, McIndoo's School, constructed in 1883 and located at 10 Linden Valley Road in Mariposa Township, Victorian Road School, constructed at some point in the 1880s and located at 17 Richmond Street East in Bexley Township, and the Glenarm School, constructed in 1875 and located



at 401 Birch Point Road in Fenelon Township. A larger urban example can be seen in Bobcaygeon, in the Bobcaygeon School at 49 King Street East and constructed in 1873.

In light of other schools constructed during this period, the Bolsover school is highly representative of Victorian-style architecture as employed in one-room school house design and can serve as an exemplar of this architectural type. The building is constructed on a basic rectangular plan, consistent with the vast majority of one-room school houses, with a steeply-pitched gable roof. The building is executed in red brick with buff brick coursing, pilasters, and window and door hoods. The side elevations of the building are divided into three bays using pilasters and with large multi-pane windows in each bay, although the original windows have since been replaced. Large windows also appear on the front elevation as well as a central entrance with a substantial multi-pane transom; these were an essential elements adopted into school design in the late nineteenth century to assist with the need, as identified by the government and other sources, for adequate lighting and ventilation for students.

The school is notable for its two primary decorative elements, outside of the brickwork. The first is the rose window motif on the front elevation of the building above the entrance. This decorative element, which does not serve a practical purpose, is executed in wood and mimics the shape and tracery of a rose window, in a conscious use of Victorian and Gothic forms. The other is the belfry on the roof of the structure. The belfry is a small wooden structure with a hipped roof, but includes decorative brackets and a finial, another nod to wider traditions in Victorian architecture. Both of these features, or versions of them, were widely used in school house design in this period but the features at Bolsover are particularly well-executed and show a high degree of craftsmanship with regard to the woodwork in this structure.

However, while the Bolsover school is a representative example of a Victorian-style school house, it is also a late one. The style in which the school is built, while very popular in the late nineteenth century, was falling out of favour by the early twentieth century in favour of Classical and Beaux-Arts style schools. This shift can be seen in the 1909 *Plans for Rural School Houses* produced by the Ontario Department of Education to assist local school boards design and construct new buildings. While continuing to promote ideas regarding hygiene, ventilation, light and safety that developed in the late nineteenth century, there is a notable stylistic shift in the 1909 text towards Classical features, with defined lintels and lug sills, porticos, columns, pediments and hipped and jerkinhead roofs featuring heavily.

This stylistic shift can be seen in two contemporaneous buildings in Eldon Township: the subject property and the Palestine School, constructed in 1900

to serve Eldon School Section 6 and located at 910 Hartley Road. While there are certainly similarities between the two buildings, including the use of red brick and the three bay design, the shift from Victorian to Classical is evident between these structures. Whereas the Bolsover School uses a steeply pitched gable roof, polychromatic brickwork and the rose window motif, the Palestine School uses a jerkinhead roof, plain red brick and a rounded arched centre window on the front elevation in a shift away from the Victorian style. This shift is subtle, but was occurring at the turn of the century when both buildings were constructed. Later schools in the township, such as Woodville Elementary School, constructed in 1923, show a clear stylistic shift with the rejection of Victorian elements in favour of the Classical style.

A more similar structure to the Bolsover school can be found in the Hartley school, constructed ten years earlier in 1891 to serve School Section 4 and the community of Hartley to the south of Bolsover in Eldon Township. Like the Bolsover school, it was constructed to replace an older building, although in this case the school section transitioned directly from a log structure built at some point in the mid-century to a brick schoolhouse. This structure, located at 305 Hartley Road, is built of buff brick but demonstrated some of the same key features as its contemporary in Bolsover. These the steeply pitched gable roof, windows and doors with transom, a central circular motif on the front elevation, and three bay construction. Unlike the Bolsover school, however, the Hartley school using raised brick coursing and voussoirs, as opposed to polychromatic brick, for decorative emphasis. Despite this, these are two very similar schools and are demonstrative of rural school architecture just prior to the shift to Classical forms that took place at the turn of the century.

When viewed in relationship to the larger context in which it was built, the Bolsover School is a representative, but late, example of a Victorian-style one-room school house. It employs key architectural features of this type of rural school, notably the polychromatic brickwork, large windows, and ornate belfry, and is a well-preserved example of this type of structure both in Eldon Township and Kawartha Lakes more generally.

### Historical and Associative Value

16 Bolsover Road has historical and associative value as the former schoolhouse serving Bolsover and the surrounding area. As the former school, the property yields information regarding the history of education in Bolsover and northern Eldon Township from the mid-nineteenth to the late-twentieth century. It also provides information regarding the growth and demographics of Bolsover from the late nineteenth century as a key community building that responded to the development of the community from the mid-nineteenth century.

Eldon Township was first surveyed between 1826 and 1829 and settlement began soon after. Its earliest pioneers were mostly of Scottish descent and settled in the township quickly after lots were made available. This Scottish settlement continued throughout the nineteenth century and profoundly shaped Eldon Township's demographics, with large number of Scottish settlers continuing to arrive in the township. Although this settlement later diversified, Scotland remained the primary country of origin for most Eldon Township residents into the twentieth century, with the plurality of residents listed in the 1911 census as being of Scottish descent, and by a substantial margin.

Eldon was a primarily rural township divided, for the most part, between agricultural lands in the south and more heavily forest lands suitable for intensive lumbering to the north. With the exception of Woodville, which straddled the Eldon-Mariposa township boundary, the township did not have any major settlement areas in the nineteenth century and remained steadfastly rural with a few small hamlets scattered throughout the township, catering to the local farming community and the lumber industry, both major economic drivers throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. These hamlets, including Bolsover, were the local service centres for the townships with shops, churches, schools, and small localized industries.

Bolsover developed primarily as a lumbering centre, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Eldon Township was uniquely disadvantaged in Victoria County due to the relatively limited number of watercourses flowing through the township and the even smaller number of major waterways. The major exception to this was the Talbot River which flows through the northwest corner of the township and on which Bolsover was established by Duncan McRae in the mid-nineteenth century. With a location on a waterway close to lumbering operations, Bolsover was well-placed to develop into a local industrial centre. McRae established a sawmill on the river and throughout the next several decades established a large and successful lumbering business. By 1881, Bolsover had a sawmill, a gristmill, a carding mill, a shingle mill, several taverns and stores, a Presbyterian church and a local public school, and the population reached about 150 people by the late century. The early twentieth century, however, would see a substantial decline in both population and economic output in the hamlet and surrounding areas, primarily due to the substantial decline in the lumber industry through the late nineteenth and twentieth century.

At the same time, education and its provision was developing and evolving across both Kawartha Lakes, then Victoria County, and Ontario as a whole. The earliest history of 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 to create schools and the requirements for teacher certification. However, during this time, school provision was by no

means universal, as most schools were fee-paying, associated with specific religious denominations or both, limiting the reach of most schools to urban upper and middle class children. 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. Education in rural areas was often much more informal, with basic literacy and numeracy skills taught in more informal settings, such as private homes or organized on an ad hoc basis on community buildings.

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 earliest schools in Eldon, as elsewhere, were privately operated and informal and likely began as early as the 1830s. The first schools were operated in private homes, then gradually evolving to more public spaces in the early 1840s, although there were as of yet no formal school sections. These school sections first started developing, in line with developments throughout the province, in the early 1840s when Eldon School Section 1 established in the vicinity of Lorneville. Throughout the 1840s and 1850s, the township's formal school sections began to develop, primarily located in or in close proximity to its numerous hamlets and often becoming formalized from an earlier, informal school constructed by local families to serve their children. By mid-century, Eldon was divided in ten school sections serving children in rural areas and hamlets throughout the township.

The first school to serve Bolsover and the area surrounding it, which would eventually be established formally as School Section 5, was a log structures built around 1860 on land donated by Colonel Kenneth Cameron, one of a large number of Scottish settlers in the Bolsover area who had arrived in the first half of the century and established communities throughout Eldon. This school was not at a location of the present school, but was built around this time as Bolsover was beginning to grow and thrive as a community with the establishment of the saw and grist mills and a range of local businesses.

By 1865, a new school was required and at a different location. A new frame building was constructed at the present location which was closer to the community. This building served Bolsover as its school for the next 36 years until the present building was constructed in 1901. Apart from these details, little is known about this school or its development, but a number of conclusions can be drawn from the context in which it was constructed. The first is that the construction of the first school and its subsequent predecessors reflected the growing prosperity of Bolsover throughout the late nineteenth century. While other areas of Eldon Township had schools as early as the 1840s, the first school in Bolsover was not establishment until 1860, after the construction of the local mill in the 1850s. While the construction of a school for this area was certainly encouraged by a range of factors, the growth

of Bolsover as a community was a key driving factor in the establishment of a school section in this area. Its reconstruction in 1865 and again in 1901 speaks to the increasing prosperity of the community in relation to its connection to the lumber industry, although, by the time the current school was constructed, the decline of the industry, and gradual exodus of people from the community, had already begun. Nevertheless, the school, which served several generations of children living in Bolsover and the surrounding area and functioned as a key community space, directly responded to the community's demographic growth and demonstrates both the introduction and progress of formal schooling in the area as well as wider demographic trends.

The school continued to operate throughout the twentieth century. By 1920, attendance had become mandatory, meaning that the school aged population in many centres increased dramatically and new schools were required for many communities; this was not, however, the case in Bolsover or Eldon Township more generally or indeed many rural communities across Ontario. This was as a result of a general decrease in the rural population across the province throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, through an exodus of rural inhabitants for more urban areas. While the reasons for this varied by region across the province, the population exodus in northern Eldon and in Bolsover specifically was driven by the decline of the lumber industry; as the majority of the pineries in the surrounding area were depleted, the industry moved north, making the lumber mill and associated industries in the community less profitable and eventually leading to their closure. The census population statistics from Eldon, which do not include Woodville, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century support this: after hitting a population high of 3 778 in 1881, the population dropped successively throughout the next five decades, dropping to 2 994 in 1901 when the school was constructed, and further to only 1 845 in 1931. These statistics mirror a similar population trend in Victoria County more generally and demonstrate ability of rural communities to continue to use their turn of the century schools as their population and, by extension, school aged children, decreased.

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, sometimes at a substantial distance from their homes, and so schools such as that in Bolsover 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, Eldon Township School Board and its successor from 1969, the Victoria County School Board, began the process of closing schools and divesting its assets as smaller rural schools were closed in favour of a number of consolidated schools throughout the area. Two schools were eventually designated to serve the students of Eldon Township. One was Woodville Elementary School, which had been constructed in 1923 and expanded in 1972-1973 when it transitioned from the local school serving the community of Woodville to a largest consolidation school for the community as well as the surrounding rural area. The other was Kirkfield Public School, now Lady Mackenzie Public School, which first opened in the mid-1950s and was enlarged and reconstructed as the school expanded and took on additional students with the closure of the rural schoolhouses.

The school at Bolsover was one of the later schools to close and remained in operation until 1973, when students were transported to Kirkfield. That same year, the Board sold the property for the nominal amount of \$1 to the Township of Eldon, continuing the usage of the building as a public gathering space for the community. The Township operated the building as a community centre until amalgamation with the City of Kawartha Lakes in 2001, although the building continued to be owned by the municipal government and used for this purpose.

When examined in light of this context, the school demonstrates and reflects a number of trends in education in Eldon Township and rural Ontario more generally from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The school demonstrates the progress of education in Ontario from the late nineteenth into the twentieth century as one of a series of schools serving the community. It also reflects the development of Bolsover as a hamlet and population centre within the township beginning in 1850. The property yields information regarding the history and provision of education in Eldon Township and the



changing landscape of rural schooling in Ontario throughout the twentieth century through its construction, operation and closure.

### Contextual Value

16 Bolsover Road had contextual value as a contributing feature to the historic rural landscape of northern Eldon Township and to the hamlet of Bolsover. The property is historically related to its surroundings as part of this wider rural landscape, as well as the more localized hamlet landscape, which both include a range of historic buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, alongside more contemporary structures. It is also a local landmark as the former local school and in its current role as the community centre for the local area.

The property is located in the hamlet of Bolsover which developed along the Talbot River beginning in the 1850s. The community developed around a saw mill on the river and was soon a thriving lumbering community. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century and into the early decades of the twentieth century, new buildings in a range of historical architectural styles and types were constructed in the community, including the subject property which was built in 1901 as the local school. Since that time, which can be considered the community's heyday, the population of the community has declined as its industrial establishments, which included the original saw mill as well as grist, planing and shingle mills, have closed and few physical remains of these industrial buildings remain. New residential and recreational properties have developed side by side with a range of historic residential properties from the lumbering period.

Despite these changes, Bolsover retains its character as a historic hamlet through its retained nineteenth and early twentieth century structures. In the community, then as today, the subject property is one of the primary institutional structures in the hamlet and helps define Bolsover as the settlement area for the surrounding rural area. It is historically linked to other buildings within the hamlet from this same historic period of development as part of Bolsover's historic hamlet landscape. However, it also functions in conjunction with the more modern properties in the area to help define the area as a settlement in contrast with the surrounding rural and more sparsely settled area of northern Eldon Township in which it is located.

From a wider perspective, the school also supports and maintains the rural character of northern Eldon Township. The one-room schoolhouse, in popular memory and culture, is inextricably linked with the development of rural communities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the continued presence of a building of this type on the landscape reinforces the wider historic rural character that is associated with this building type. It was, and remains, one of the primary public buildings and gathering places for a

dispersed rural community in this part of Kawartha Lakes and, in that role, supports the rural character of the area which is defined by its dispersed settlement patterns and limited infrastructure. Similarly, it is historically linked to the range of historic agricultural and other rural properties in the surrounding area as part of the northern section of the township's rural development around the turn of the century as these buildings, taken together, provide information on the historic development of the area and maintain a consistent historic character.

The property is also a local landmark as the former school serving Bolsover and the surrounding area. A school was located on this property beginning in 1865 and this particular structure served as the local school from its opening in 1901 until 1973 when it was closed as part of the wider program of rural school closure and consolidation occurring across the province from the mid-twentieth century. During this period, generations of local children passed through its doors and undertook their formative education in this building, making it a key institutional and community structure in Bolsover and the surrounding area. After its closure, it transitioned in use to a community centre, continuing its role as an important community hub and public building. It is now owned by the City of Kawartha Lakes.

## 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

16 Bolsover Road has design and physical value as a representative example of a Victorian-style one room schoolhouse constructed in Eldon Township. Built in 1901, the property is a late example of this style of schoolhouse but nevertheless demonstrates key architectural features that were popular in the late nineteenth century for school design. These include the standard rectangular plan and gable roof design, the use of polychromatic brickwork with pilasters, coursing and window hoods, large multi-pane windows, a rose-window motif on the front elevation of the building and the ornate belfry. The elements of the building, particularly its woodwork, are extremely well-executed and demonstrate a high degree of craftsmanship for a building of this type.

#### Historical and Associative Value

16 Bolsover Road has historical and associative value as the former school serving the community of Bolsover and the surrounding area. Constructed in 1901, the building was erected as the third iteration of the local school to serve Eldon School Section 5. The property has direct historical associations with the history and development of education in Eldon Township and in Bolsover more specifically. Through its role as the former local school, it yields information regarding trends in local and rural education in both Eldon and Ontario as a whole, and also provides information regarding the demographic growth of Bolsover throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a local population centre for the surrounding rural area.

#### Contextual Value

16 Bolsover Road has contextual value in that it maintains and supports the historic hamlet character of the community of Bolsover and, at the same time, supports the rural character of northern Eldon Township. The building, in its former role as the local school and its contemporary role as a community centre, is one of the key institutional structures in the local area and helps define the hamlet as a settlement area, while also speaking to the historic development of the surrounding rural area. The property is historically linked to its surroundings as part of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century development of both northern Eldon Township and the community of Bolsover. The property is a local landmark as the former school and current community centre.

## 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 representative example of a Victorian-style one-room schoolhouse in rural Eldon Township.

- One storey red brick construction
- Three bays
- Steeply pitched gable roof
- Chimney
- Square belfry including:
  - Finial
  - Decorative brackets
- Central entrance including:
  - Multi-light transom
- Fenestration including:
  - Sash windows
- Rose window motif
- Polychromatic brickwork including:
  - Pilasters
  - Coursing
  - Window and door hoods
- Date stone
- Rusticated foundation

### Historical and Associative Attributes

The historical and associative attributes support the value of the property as the former Bolsover School.

- Association with the history of education in Eldon Township
- Date stone

### Contextual Attributes

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

- Prominent location along Bolsover Road

- Orientation towards Bolsover Road
- Views of Bolsover Road and surrounding properties from the property
- Views of the property from Bolsover Road and the surrounding properties



## Images











## Select Bibliography

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