

1011 Portage Road, Geographic Township of Eldon (Sir William Mackenzie Estate Cultural Heritage Landscape)

Heritage Designation Evaluation

Eldon Township

LT 6 N/S NELSON ST AND W/S KING ST PL 106; LT B, 20 E/S WELLINGTON ST, 21 E/S WELLINGTON ST PL 106; WELLINGTON ST PL 106 CLOSED BY UNREGISTERED BYLAW NO. 1102; LT 7 N/S NELSON ST AND W/S KING ST PL 106; LT 5 N/S NELSON ST AND W/S KING ST PL 106; PT LT 6 W/S KING ST AND N/S NELSON ST PL 106; PT LT A PL 106; PT S PT LT 41-42 CON N PORTAGE RD ELDON PT 1, 57R1457;; CITY OF 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 1011 Portage 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 a late Victoria estate Kirkfield and in Kawartha Lakes more broadly. The house itself is a representative example of a Queen Anne style estate house with bay and gable form an eclectic and picturesque house style that emerged in the late nineteenth century and includes large two-storey bays as well as a substantial verandah. The property is unique to Kawartha Lakes in its size and execution as a large country estate and forms a cohesive cultural heritage landscape.

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

The property displays a typical degree of craftsmanship for a property of this type.

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

There are no specific technical or scientific achievements associated with the 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 historical associations with Canadian railway builder Sir William Mackenzie. Mackenzie was raised in Kirkfield and began his career as a saw and grist mill owner in the community before beginning to invest in railway development in the late nineteenth century. The house on the property was constructed in 1888 as the country estate of Mackenzie, his wife Lady Margaret Mackenzie and their nine children and the estate developed throughout the following two decades.

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 development of education in Kirkfield in the twentieth century through its former use as St. Margaret's Convent and School for Girls.

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

The designer and builder of the 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 supports and maintains the historic hamlet character of Kirkfield as one of a large collection of extant nineteenth century properties within the community, particularly along Portage Road which is the main artery through the community.

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 century development of Kirkfield. The community developed substantially in the late nineteenth century, particularly through investment by Sir William Mackenzie who owned the subject property, and experienced a substantial amount of growth resulting in the construction of the subject property and many surrounding it.

iii. is a landmark.

The property is a local and regional landmark and is widely recognized as an important historic structure in Kirkfield. The property's landmark status derives from its associations with Sir William Mackenzie as well as its prominent location in the heart of Kirkfield along Portage Road.

Design and Physical Value

1011 Portage Road has design and physical value as a representative example of a late nineteenth century estate in Kawartha Lakes. Developed for railway builder and Kirkfield native Sir William Mackenzie, his wife lady Margaret Mackenzie, and their family, the property includes a large Queen Anne style house with distinctive bay and gable forms, that is representative of the employment of this style in larger homes of the period, as well as a range of landscape features constructed in the period after 1888. It is one of only a few extant late nineteenth century estate houses in Kawartha Lakes and, along with the prominent house, retains a wide array of extant landscape features on the property including the perimeter wall, the grove of Norway spruce and the former gatehouse building. Taken together, these elements form a cohesive cultural heritage landscape which demonstrate the stylistic considerations of a late nineteenth century country estate.

The first estates in Ontario developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century when those with means – often the immigrant sons of British gentleman alongside military officers – acquired large properties through land grants and set about building substantial homes with landscaped grounds. Inspired by Britain's country estates, they set about replicating this well-established lands use type in the colonial context, in part for their own gratification, but also to begin to imprint British landscape ideals on the Canadian wilderness which was, at that point, still relatively undeveloped by European standards. Estates such as Castle Frank, established by Governor John Graves Simcoe on the Don River, exemplified these types of properties, which often included Classically-inspired estate houses in the Palladian fashion integrated into sprawling grounds with various natural elements and grand vistas. While some were permanent residences, others were not and occupied as summer retreats or as occasional residences away from a primary residence in the urban areas. Most integrated the same general set of elements including a primary dwelling house as the central focus of the estate, secondary structures including gatehouses, gazebos or follies, landscaped elements such as paths or retaining walls, gardens, lawns and large wooded areas, with a substantial emphasis on the integration of built and manmade elements into the existing natural landscape, modified to suit the needs of the owner.

One of the most important aesthetic considerations in estate development during this period, both in Britain and Canada, was the idea of the picturesque, which emerged in the late eighteenth century as a reaction to the highly formal estates and associated landscapes of the Renaissance and Baroque period. The picturesque took its cues from the natural world and rejected formal symmetry and precision in favour of asymmetry, variety and irregularity and was associated with the Romantic movement flourishing the arts at the same time. In practical terms, this meant the creation of estates with a variety

of interrelated but eclectic elements and the use of naturalistic landscape features in the creation of gardens and woods. This aesthetic applied to both landscape and architecture; although early estate houses had a tendency to be constructed in Classical styles, they gradually evolved to more eclectic forms, using a range of architectural forms to evoke a romantic and fashionable ideal. In Canada in particular, this aesthetic lent itself well to the development of highly naturalistic estates which often integrated local trees and shrubs and almost invariably included wooded areas as well as grassed lawns and gardens in combination with a variety of built elements. The prevailing view regarding estates in Canada was that they should be integrated in some way with the surrounding natural landscape to add to the romantic and naturalistic aesthetic preferences of the time. There was a widespread understanding amongst the estate building class that the Canadian landscape was, in fact, particularly suited for picturesque estate development because of the existing natural conditions which included a wide variety of trees and shrubs, as well as existing natural views, particularly in areas near to water; groves of trees, for example, would often be retained and cultivated near the house to provide a romantic woodland for enjoyment, even as the rest of the land was cleared for farming. This view of what the estate landscape should look like, with its combination of tamed and manmade elements interspersed with natural features, remained prevalent throughout the nineteenth century and influenced several generations of estate builders over the next several decades.

Despite its relative isolation and later date of settlement than much of southern Ontario, several of these early estates existed in Kawartha Lakes, particularly in Verulam Township between present-day Bobcaygeon and Fenelon Falls where a number of gentry and military men settled in the 1830s with the intention of becoming gentleman farmers. Three of these – Blythe Farm constructed by John Langton 1833, Maryboro Lodge constructed by James Wallis in Fenelon Falls in 1837, and Dunsford House constructed by the Rev. James Hartley Dunsford in 1839 – were of particular prominence and the main buildings of the latter two remain extant. Unlike some others further to the south, these early Kawartha Lakes estates were relatively primitive, with smaller, less decorative houses than their more southerly counterparts. Nevertheless, their location in picturesque settings, particularly with regard to Maryboro Lodge prior to the growth of the village around it, are representative of the picturesque aesthetic favoured in estate development and design which integrated elements of the natural landscape and dramatic views to create a romantic and idyllic setting for a country home.

By the second half of the century, estate construction was still very much in vogue but for a new class of people. While the estates of the early nineteenth century were primarily developed for gentlemen and military officers who had

emigrated to Canada, those of the late century were those of businessmen who had made their fortunes in the country's booming industrial economy, building up businesses and vast amounts of money in industries such as lumber, railways and utilities. The majority of these estates were located on the edges or in close proximity to urban areas where most of these businessmen regularly worked. With the rapid urbanization of Canadian cities, those with means sought to create their own oasis away from the heat, noise and pollution of urban areas and generally sought out sites that offered a sense of isolation, pleasing views and natural elements, but still in close proximity to their business empires. Periodically, however, they were developed in highly rural areas usually built by men who were originally from the area or whose businesses were based there. Several of these estates were developed in Kawartha Lakes in the final decades of the nineteenth century, including the Mackenzie estate, railway developer George Laidlaw's estate on Balsam Lake, and the sprawling Boyd holdings in and around Bobcaygeon which included several interconnected estates for the lumber baron Mossom Boyd and his children.

Like their earlier counterparts, a major focus of the later estate was the house. In the late nineteenth century estate, the architecture of the primary dwelling house evolved and tended to become more developed as the century wore on, due in no small part to the increasing settlement of the country and growing prosperity that allowed for larger homes constructed in a better quality with more elaborate details; the availability of manufactured bricks in the second half of the century, for example, made constructing large brick mansions substantially more feasible than several decades previously. The architectural style of these structures also changed with the rise of a number of architectural styles which were readily adopted for estate design. These included Gothic Revival, Romanesque Revival and Queen Anne which were highly influential in residential design and were readily incorporated into estate design. These styles were easily integrated into wider picturesque aesthetics for their eclectic and romantic features, particularly when viewed in opposition to more formal Classical styles. The style chosen for the house itself largely depended on the taste of the owner; the proliferation of different architectural styles, each with their own various subtypes, made the architecture of estate houses in the late nineteenth century highly diverse.

Surrounding the estate house were the grounds of the estate itself which included a wide array of built and natural elements. One of the biggest shifts in landscape design from the early to the late nineteenth century was an increased emphasis on regularized flower gardens. Where as earlier estates had emphasized more closely natural elements and the integration of built forms within them, the later part of the century saw increased focus on creating curated flower gardens, in addition to various natural and picturesque

elements. The rise of horticultural societies, particularly in Britain, led to increasing interest in the cultivation of flowers and non-native plants, idealized through botanical gardens such as Kew where wide arrays of exotic and vibrant species were cultivated. This type of gardening was certainly more challenging in Canada because of the climate and required adaption, but gardens, nevertheless, became a more central feature in the late nineteenth century estate; new hardy species were identified or developed, while native species were cultivated and trained for a garden environment. Particularly for those in urban or semi-urban areas with smaller amounts of land than the country estates of their predecessors, a focus on gardens over wide natural landscapes was a necessary shift to respond to their location and surroundings. That being said, the interest in and development of picturesque settings with natural or semi-natural landscapes did not go away, but rather evolved to include a stronger emphasis on more controlled elements.

The outline for nineteenth century estate design, as a whole, was articulated by the American landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing, who was well-known in the nineteenth century for his treatises on architecture, landscape design and gardening. Downing's understanding of landscape design was articulated in his 1841 text, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America*, which covers a wide array of topics related to landscape design. Unlike his British contemporaries publishing similar texts around the same period, Jackson's understanding of landscape derived from a fundamentally North American experience and his approach to the integration of built, cultivated and natural elements reflects this. In discussion the layout of estates, he recognizes the high likelihood for the presence of existing mature woodlands and focuses his advice accordingly. In Jackson's view, the house was the central focus of the design, with polished lawns and garden in closest proximity to it. Large or ornamental trees could be emphasized in this cultivated area, while more wild and natural wooded areas were at a distance from the house. He makes a point, however, to note that the transition from the cultivated areas to natural areas should be gradual and measured to avoid disruption to the eye and to make the scene appear a cohesive and connected whole. Throughout the whole, he notes that there should be a "marked natural character" with a focus on fluidity of forms, irregular layouts and asymmetry to emphasize the natural and picturesque aesthetic of the estate as a whole. Farmed portions of the property, it was noted, should be set away from the house and landscaped areas.

Nineteenth century estates generally adhered to Jackson's direction with regard to this layout and integration of the elements. The house was generally the focal point of the property, and surrounded by gardens, lawns and mature or ornamental trees. The gardens, for the most part, were not of the formal Classical variety, but developed in more naturalistic shaped and layouts with

diverse flowers and shrubs in accordance with the local climate. These lawns and gardens gradually transitioned to more natural woodland, sometimes with interspersed copses of trees. Often, a variety of small built structures were integrated into the overall design, including elements such as retaining walls, fences and gates along the front of the property, gazebos and follies, and extensive paths and terraces through the cultivated grounds. Those which included farmlands, which were in the minority, included these to the rear and side of the estate along with any associated buildings, away from the main house and its immediate ground which were reserved for the pleasure of the family and entertaining.

The Mackenzie estate is highly representative of this nineteenth century landscape form. The property was purchased in 1886 and developed over the next decade into a large and respectable gentleman's estate to reflect the increasingly prosperous business empire of William Mackenzie, whose fortunes rose throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century through the expansion of the railway throughout Canada. The estate was the Mackenzies' primary home and was constructed to replace their first house, also located in Kirkfield, a respectable, but less grand, brick house in the village. The property would eventually become their country home, as they would purchase a large mansion in Toronto in the late 1890s alongside a cottage on Balsam Lake.

The primary feature of the estate is the house which was constructed in 1888, with an addition added to the western side in 1934 when the estate was being operated as a convent and girls' school by the Sisters of St. Joseph. The house is two-and-a-half storeys in height and constructed in the Queen Anne style which was popular in the late nineteenth century. Although the house has been modified since its original construction, it has retained the majority of its architectural elements, as well as its overall form and massing which mark it out as representative example of the Queen Anne style, as applied to a large rural estate house.

The Queen Anne style was primarily used for residential buildings and was intended as a break from the more revivalist styles of the mid-nineteenth century. Rising to prominence in the 1880s, the style emphasized an eclectic mix of highly decorative architectural elements on asymmetrically massed structures. Although it drew from historical precedent through its use of both Classical and medieval elements, the style itself was not a revivalist style as it integrated these elements freely and took a wide variety of forms as it was adapted and interpreted for communities across Ontario. Built on irregular plans, Queen Anne houses integrated a wide array of bays, gables, wings, turrets, and verandahs into unique compositions embellished with a range of decorative wooden and brick elements. These houses could be of various sizes; the flexibility of the style allowed it to be adapted to a range of different types of dwellings, from small cottages to large mansions and estate houses.

The style formed part of the picturesque aesthetic movement and contributed to that overall aesthetic as preferred for the nineteenth century country estate.

The house's south façade, its primary elevation, includes two substantial bays topped with front-facing gables, a frequently used motif in Queen Anne architecture in Ontario. The bay-and-gable form had particularly found favour in the development of semi-detached urban residential buildings in Toronto and other urban centres in Ontario where two bays flanked a central porch with entrances to each unit; this form has been copied here but with a single central entrance. Although the Queen Anne style usually favoured asymmetrical massing on its front facing façade, the two-bay massing can be found in other detached examples of the style. As in other examples of this form, the bays include large sash windows to allow maximum light on the interior of the structure.

The asymmetrical massing typical of Queen Anne houses can be seen in the rear of the structure. The house contains a number of wings which extend back from the street facing façade; the majority of these date from the time the house was constructed with the exception of the wing on the north west corner of the house which was added in 1934. The eclectic layout and rambling wings of this property is highly typical of larger Queen Anne style dwellings where the addition of various wings added to the irregular and picturesque nature of this style.

The Queen Anne style was also exemplified by its use of eclectic decorative elements from a range of different sources and combining them together in a highly decorative whole. Many houses of this type are known for their highly ornate woodwork, decorative brickwork, mixed cladding, and pronounced window and door surrounds. 1011 Portage Road is a less embellished example of this style, and was when it was originally constructed. However, the house still contains a range of elements typical of the Queen Anne style. These include its decorative brackets, decorative wooden bargeboard, raised window hoods with keystones and stacked chimneys. Together, these elements form a cohesive whole and mark the house as being of this style. One of the most recognizable features of Queen Anne properties is often their verandahs, which this property originally contained and has been substantially modified since construction in 1888. The original porch was contained between the two bays and comprised of ornate stick-style turned woodwork. This has since been replaced by the larger, more expansive verandah across the front of the house which was added in the twentieth century and now forms a vital aspect of the house; despite this change, wrap around verandahs of this type were typical in many nineteenth century Queen Anne designs and the larger verandah maintains and supports the architectural character of the house. A verandah was also originally constructed on the east elevation of the building which has since been removed. Nevertheless, the house, as a whole, retains

much of its historic integrity and remains representative of the Queen Anne style as applied to a large rural estate house.

Along with the house, the estate contained substantial grounds and associated lands. At nearly 1 000 acres, the Mackenzie estate was large, much larger than most other estates of the nineteenth century business class. The size can be accounted for by the fact that the Mackenzies were also running an active farming operation on the property with beef and dairy herds as well as horses, as they bought up land throughout the 1890s. Like George Laidlaw whose estate on Balsam Lake was effectively a gentleman's estate combined with a substantial sheep and cattle ranch, Mackenzie modelled his estate after that of a gentleman farmer, and creating something on a much vaster scale than the majority of his fellow businessmen of the estate building class. The majority of the agricultural land, as well as the golf course, has since been severed and sold, but the house's immediate grounds remain intact and associated with the building itself. Comprised of approximately twelve acres, the property includes a range of built and natural features which come together to form a cohesive landscape which, while naturalistic, is very much composed.

The landscaped grounds were primarily the work of Margaret Mackenzie. The lawns and gardens had been established when the house was originally constructed, but, in 1895, she hired a Scottish floriculturist, whose name and background is unknown, to develop and improve them to suit the landscape gardening tastes of the day. This included both gardens directly adjacent to the house and in its surrounding grounds, which were maintained by gardening staff. The exact flowers and shrubs used in the landscaping are not known, but the trees that were planted as part of the estate remain and including the large mature trees of various varieties adjacent to the main house, the grove of Norway spruce known as "Apostles' Row" planted to the rear of the house, and maples and elms along the street; over 600 maples and elms were planted both on the estate and along the streets in Kirkfield as part of Margaret Mackenzie's wider beautification initiatives for the village. A variety of built elements were also integrated into the outside landscape, both for practicality and for visual interest. These included both small buildings, as well as decorative landscape features such as benches and sundials and the retaining wall and fence along the street facing side of the property. The most notable of these is the large water tower used to store water for irrigating the flower gardens, constructed in a rustic design with a flared octagonal roof, shingle cladding and multi-pane windows. An image taken in 1910 of the rear of the house shows the tower in relation to the house, as well as the landscaping in this area of the property including large trees and manicured lawns.

The estate also included an nine-hole golf course, laid out in 1902. The designer of the golf course was George Cummings, the Scottish-Canadian golf pioneer and well-respected golf course architect, whose other projects included high-

level competition courses including Scarboro Golf and Country Club in Scarborough and Summit Golf Club in Richmond Hill. The exact layout and location of the course is unknown as it has been since removed, but its ninth hole was located in close proximity to the new Presbyterian Church.

The agricultural lands were located primarily behind the landscaped portion of the estate. There is limited physical remnants of this section of the estate which has been severed and sold from the current property, although much of the land remains under cultivation under different owners who are not associated with the current estate. The agricultural land was primarily used for beef and dairy, as well as raising horses and infrastructure was erected to facilitate it. This included a variety of barns, housing for employees, a dairy house, and a carriage house, the latter of which is still standing, but has been severed from the main estate.

Taken together, these built and natural elements form a cohesive cultural heritage landscape that is a representative example of a late nineteenth century rural estate. Although the estate is substantially smaller than when it was originally developed, the retained portion of the property contains the core elements of an nineteenth century estate of this type including the main house, landscaped grounds, and built and natural heritage elements in the property around the main building.

Historical and Associative Value

1011 Portage Road has historical and associative value for its direct historical associations with Sir William Mackenzie for whom the estate was originally constructed. Mackenzie, who was born in Kirkfield, grew into one of the key players in the expansion of railways in Canada in the second half of the nineteenth century, including the development of the transcontinental railway. Despite his successes on the national stage, Mackenzie remained connected to Kirkfield and chose to build his country estate in the village in 1888. In 1976, Mackenzie was recognized as a person of national historic significance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. The plaque associated with this designation is located on the subject property, recognizing Mackenzie's connection to his country estate and hometown. Furthermore, the property also yields information regarding the history of education in Kirkfield through its later use by the Sisters of St. Joseph as St. Margaret's Convent and School for Girls.

Sir William Mackenzie is arguably Kirkfield's most prominent and well-known resident, rising to prominence in the late nineteenth century for his work as a railway builder. He was born in Kirkfield in 1849, the fifth son to John and Mary Mackenzie, who had come to Eldon Township as part of a large wave of Scottish settlers to the area in the first half of the nineteenth century and settled on a acreage on the south side of the Portage Road. Educated in

Bolsover, Kirkfield and the grammar school in Lindsay, he originally pursued a career in teaching before embarking on his first business venture, running a general store in Kirkfield. By about 1872, however, he had joined his brothers in a timber cutting and contracting company, specializing in larger structures including schools, businesses, warehouses and bridges.

Mackenzie's entry into the railway business came in 1874 when the company won the contract to construct bridges and other wooden structures for the Victoria Railway which was, at the time, being constructed north from Lindsay to Haliburton via Fenelon Falls and Kinmount. Through this work, he became familiar with three substantial players in Ontario's railway business whose connections would later prove vital: George Laidlaw the railway promoter and builder who himself owned a nearby estate on Balsam Lake, James Ross the Scottish engineer and prominent railway builder in both Canada and the United States, and surveyor Herbert Holt. Ross, Holt and Mackenzie would soon collaborate again on another of Laidlaw's lines, the Credit Valley Railway, another regional railway constructed between Toronto and St. Thomas.

The 1870s were a time of significant expansion of railway construction across Ontario and the beginnings of discussion regarding the transcontinental system. The first railways in Canada had opened in Quebec and the Maritimes in the 1830s as small lines serving local industries. By the 1850s, however, the availability of government support for railway building sparked a massive railway boom which continued throughout the 1860s and 1870s. The 1870s, in particular, saw substantial expansion of regional lines, especially in central Ontario which had, with the exception of Lindsay and Peterborough, previously been poorly served and which was also experiencing a substantial increase in settlement. During this time, men such as Laidlaw, Ross, Holt and Mackenzie began their rise in the railway business, first on regional projects before their eventual rise to more nationally-focussed lines.

Projects such as the Victoria Railway were important for local communities, providing significant economic impacts through freight services and a boon to local transport, but this impact was focussed primarily on the areas that they served. At the same time as these railways were being constructed, however, both the federal government and various businessmen were contemplating the idea of a transcontinental line. The line would serve both a political purpose – to link and provide access to the entirety of the country and discourage American expansionism – and an economic one – to help the movement of goods and people across the country. After nearly a decade of discussion, and several changes of government, the federal government signed a contract in 1880 for the construction of the transcontinental railway, the Canadian Pacific Railway.

In 1881, Mackenzie travelled west in an attempt to secure contracts to construct portions of the line, but to no avail as these contracts were primarily awarded to large American firms. In 1883, however, the management of the mountain section of the line through the Rockies was taken over by Ross, with Holt as his superintendent and Mackenzie was quickly awarded numerous contracts for various wooden structures along the line, including bridges and stations. In 1885, Mackenzie and his company built the Mountain Creek Trestle Bridge, designed by W.A. Doans and one of the largest trestle bridges ever constructed. In this work, Mackenzie relied heavily on his connections in Eldon Township, bringing much of his equipment with him and hiring a crew of men from Kirkfield and the surrounding area who were sometimes referred to as the "Eldon reserve." It was during this time that Mackenzie met Donald Mann, a fellow railway builder and his future business partner. Together with Ross and Holt, Mackenzie and Mann collaborated on a variety of projects related to the transcontinental railway until the end of the 1880s, including a variety of spur lines and auxiliary structures, such as protective barriers against avalanches.

By the 1890s, the majority of the work on these lines had been completed and Mackenzie began to branch out into other, related business ventures including the development of utilities both in Canada and abroad. His major venture, however, was the development of an electrified streetcar line in Toronto, a project on which he partnered with Ross under the banner of the Toronto Railway Company, the direct precursor to the present-day TTC. Under Mackenzie's leadership, public transit in Toronto transitioned from horse-drawn streetcars to electrified ones, with the first electrified streetcar ran in August 1892. Mackenzie's company operated this transit system until the creation of the TTC in 1921.

At the same time, Mackenzie was embarking on another, larger venture: the construction of a second transcontinental railway. In conjunction with Mann, Mackenzie established the Canadian Northern Railway which was intended to serve the northern prairies which were not serviced by the CPR. They built the system through a combination of purchasing other, older lines and constructing new ones, relying on the influx of new immigrants westwards to turn profits. Although initially serving only the northern Prairies, the line quickly expanded to a more national concern with the acquisition of the Great Northern Railway through Quebec in 1903. The two men worked closely with investors and various levels of government to build the line which initially turned a handsome profit; this would change by the First World War, however, when a range of factors provided substantial financial challenges to Mackenzie's venture. The line would be nationalized 1918 and, along with the Grand Trunk lines nationalized in 1919, formed the basis of the Canadian National Railway.

Throughout this period, Mackenzie's stature grew exponentially from successful local contractor to a major player in national transportation and utilities development. In addition to his railway development, Mackenzie had also built a substantial national and international business empire, with interests in a huge array of ventures, from gas, electric, and telephone utilities to railroads, hotels and steamships, to coal mining, whaling and timber extraction. By the late nineteenth century, he, along with his wife Margaret Merry also from Kirkfield, had taken his place amongst Toronto's business elite and nouveau riche as one of Canada's most well-known businessmen, purchasing the mansion Benvenuto on Avenue Road in 1897 where he would entertain lavishly and socializing with Toronto's most prominent citizens; in 1912, he would host the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the former of whom was the third son of Queen Victoria and then the Governor General of Canada. In recognition of his service in railway construction, Mackenzie was knighted in 1911 and, by many, was informally known as "the railway king of Canada." His business approach was one of broad ambitions and substantial gambles, with varying degrees of financial success, and was described in the 1912 edition of *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time* as "a man of unusual character, of amazing energy of indomitable purpose, and of positive genius for achievement."¹

Despite this, Mackenzie's connection to his home town remained. In the early days of his success as a railway builder in the local area, Mackenzie had made ventures into local politics, serving as councillor for Eldon Township between 1876 and 1877 and as reeve between 1880 and 1881, although front line politics was certainly not his ultimate calling; he remained an active member of the Conservative Party and intimately involved in politics on the local, provincial and national levels. In 1888, when his business was yielding substantial profits, he commissioned a house for his estate in Kirkfield, now known as 1011 Portage Road. The estate, which had been purchased in 1886, was intended to house Margaret and the couple's nine children who were born between 1873 and 1888. Although they had relocated to Toronto by 1891 as Mackenzie's business was increasingly focussed on work in the city and with various Toronto businessmen, the Kirkfield property remained their country estate and the family spent significant amounts of time there. By the early twentieth century, it included nearly 1000 acres of farmland and a private golf course and was maintained by thirteen servants for the family's time there, as well as for visits by various businessmen and politicians. In 1896, Margaret Mackenzie purchased a second property on Balsam Lake to construct a substantial summer cottage for the family.

¹ *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography of Living Characters* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), 702.

The Mackenzies also had a substantial influence on the development of Kirkfield itself, beginning as early as the 1870s. Mackenzie's work in contracting was a substantial employer locally and brought money to the community, especially through his role in the development of the Toronto and Nipissing Line. Along with his brothers and their contracting company, Mackenzie owned and operated several substantial industrial concerns in the community that were both key local suppliers and employers, including a sawmill, sash and door factory, a furniture factory, and the local grist mill. Kirkfield in the 1870s and 1880s was booming, a condition in which Mackenzie played no small part as one of the community's major businessmen and employers. The company was also substantially responsible for the development of the built fabric of the community during this time, building houses, schools, and hotels throughout Kirkfield and the surrounding area, as well as a variety of agricultural and industrial buildings.

As Mackenzie's business developed, and shifted its focus to western Canada, his influence on Kirkfield remained. He remained a substantial employers of local men, many of whom travelled west with him to build his railway infrastructure, and, when they returned, their wages returned with them. The money from the contracting of the transcontinental line had a direct and substantial impact on Kirkfield's economy as new stores and businesses were established to serve the increasingly prosperous and respectable town. Not only did he employ local men, but Mackenzie actively purchased supplies from local businesses and transported them west for use in the Rockies. It was also at this time that Mackenzie began to invest in local real estate, purchasing large blocks of land throughout Kirkfield, including his own estate which he bought in 1886.

These investments in local real estate gave Mackenzie additional influence over the development of the community on an architectural level and everyday life in the village. Mackenzie was responsible for the construction of a range of new buildings in the community, both as a contractor and a property owner, and during his lifetime, the village underwent a substantial transformation, from a rough pioneer community to a more genteel and pastoral village which a range of Victorian buildings in a variety of styles and sizes, including private residences, stores and hospitality establishments. Margaret Mackenzie was also intimately involved in the town's development, and envisaged a community far removed from the shanties and rough structures of the mid-century; her influence in the social and architectural side of the Mackenzie enterprises is well-documented as it was she who purchased their Toronto mansion, commissioned the cottage on Balsam Lake and managed affairs at home while her husband ran his business empire. She invested in both physical infrastructure and landscaping in the community, planting trees throughout the community to beautify its streetscape and building the Kirkfield Inn in 1912

as a temperance establishment. The Mackenzies also funded the construction of the new Presbyterian church, St. Andrew's in 1905, and likely also contributed to the construction of the new Catholic church, St. John the Evangelist, in the late 1890s. Kirkfield's development between the mid-1870s and early twentieth century was significant and, while not completely driven by the Mackenzies, was directed and financed in large part by their efforts, goals, and money.

The Mackenzies' also drove the development of Kirkfield's social calendar. The estate was host to a wide array of guests for various parties and events. Some of these were social, with Margaret Mackenzie presiding over a substantial guest list comprised of prominent figures in business, politics and society at the Kirkfield house to further her husband's various interests and solidify the place of the Mackenzies in Canadian moneyed society; guests from the city were able to take the train to the community and stay in the substantial house. Her husband was a businessman known on the national level, and his home in Kirkfield was a key social and political space in his empire. Mackenzie himself was intimately involved in a range of local affairs, from business to politics, where he was a long-time and active member of the Conservative party, support and promoting local conservative candidates since the 1870s. He was knighted in 1911.

Mackenzie died in 1923. Margaret had predeceased him by six years and their son Joseph, then living in New York, sold the estate to the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1927. The order, which had roots in France, had become established in Toronto in around 1850 and formed a number of congregations throughout Ontario throughout the late nineteenth century, including in Peterborough. The order had a substantial focus on education and established a range of schools throughout the province, with a particular focus on girls' education and the house was converted to a girls' school and convent. A wing was added to the main house and the gatehouse replaced by the current structure which was used as a classroom block. By the late twentieth century, the school had closed and the building again sold, in 1976, to be converted into a hotel and guest house. It has since transitioned again to an events centre.

Contextual Value

1011 Portage Road has contextual value as a local and regional landmark. Its role as the former Mackenzie Estate and the current home of the Sir William Mackenzie Inn make it a recognized and well known location in both Kirkfield and the wider region. Further, the property is a contributing feature to the historic hamlet landscape of Kirkfield which includes a wide array of late nineteenth and twentieth century historic structures. The subject property supports and maintains the historic hamlet character of the area and also is

historically linked to its surroundings, both as part of the wider redevelopment of Kirkfield in the late nineteenth century, but also through direct connections with a range of other businesses directly related to the Mackenzies.

1011 Portage Road is well-known locally as both the Mackenzie Inn and as the former William Mackenzie Estate. The property is located in a prominent position along Portage Road in Kirkfield at the heart of the village, as it was when it was originally constructed in 1888. The property is recognized in the local area as a prominent and important landmark in the village which speaks to the historic of the Mackenzie family and their influence in the area as well as and is recognized regionally as the home of the former railway magnate and in its current form as the Mackenzie Inn, a wedding and event venue. The property can be seen when travelling along Portage Road, the main thoroughfare through the village which also acts as a key transport route through northern Kawartha Lakes more generally. It is the largest residential property in the community and helps shape the streetscape through Kirkfield, with views to and from the property, which is set back from the street on substantial lawns, providing key views within the village. The property has been featured in local and provincial media as a local landmark, both through its historic associations and its present-day usage as an events venue. Similarly, the property has been marked by an Ontario Heritage Trust plaque recognizing William Mackenzie who was identified as a National Historic Person by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 1976, signifying its landmark status through its connection to a recognized-individual with historic significance in the development of Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In addition to its landmark status, the property also maintains and supports the historic hamlet character of Kirkfield and is historically linked to its surroundings as part of the historic development of the community and its wider connections to William and Margaret Mackenzie. Kirkfield was first settled by non-indigenous settlers in the 1830s, with the village emerging by the 1850s as a centre for local agriculture, logging and the construction of the nearby colonization road, Victoria Road which ran from Glenora to Vankoughnet. The mid-nineteenth century village was a rough affair, but developed rapid after the arrival of the Toronto and Nipissing Railway in the early 1870s. It was also during this period that the Mackenzies began to have significant influence on the development of the village, first as builders and contractors, and later as patrons, with a range of buildings constructed between 1870 and 1920 having direct historical links with the subject property as the home of the Mackenzies and central focus of their larger building regime.

The exact structures that were directly constructed or paid for by Mackenzie are not fully known although it likely includes a range of late Victorian homes

and commercial structures still extant within the village. Several known structures in the community with direct links to the Mackenzies are still extant and form part of the village's wider historic landscape. These include the property at 1719 Kirkfield Road, which is the former carriage house for both the estate and the former Kirkfield Inn, which burned down in 1925; this structure is now a private dwelling. Similarly, the former St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, which has been converted into a museum and event space and is located at 992 Portage Road, also has direct associations with the family as the building was funded by Mackenzie; it is believed that St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, located at 1045 Portage Road, was also supported by the Mackenzies as Margaret Mackenzie was a Catholic, unlike her husband, a Presbyterian. Similarly, Margaret Mackenzie also embarked on a wider beautification project of the village in conjunction with the landscaping of the house which result in the planting of hundreds of deciduous trees throughout the village; these large mature trees now form an integral aspect of the community's streetscape and link the subject property, its landscaped grounds and the wider landscape of the village together both visually and historically.

From a visual standpoint, the property also maintains and supports the wider historic landscape of Kirkfield. Kirkfield is a small village located in rural Eldon Township and is surrounded primarily by agricultural land and vegetated open space. The community is comprised of a range of historic residential, commercial and institutional structures, including the subject property, arranged in a compact village form which is differentiated from the surrounding rural landscape by usage, land use patterns and architectural forms. Although it does include a number of contemporary structures, the built fabric of the community is substantially historic with a large portion dating to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the period of construction for the Mackenzie house. This significant concentration of late Victorian and Edwardian buildings is aesthetically coherent through a share vocabulary of form and decoration. These buildings are located along Portage Road and Kirkfield Road, the main arteries in the community, as well as its side streets on either side of the community's main intersection. In addition to supporting this historic character, the subject property is also a defining feature of the community: the size of both the house and property, as well as its prominent location along Portage Road, make it a central focus of the community's built landscape.

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

1011 Portage Road has design and physical value as a representative example of a late nineteenth century estate in Kawartha Lakes. Developed for railway builder and Kirkfield native Sir William Mackenzie and his family, the property includes a large Queen Anne style house with distinctive bay and gable forms, that is representative of the employment of this style in larger homes of the period, as well as a range of landscape features constructed in the period after 1888. It is one of only a few extant late nineteenth century estate houses in Kawartha Lakes and, along with the prominent house, retains a wide array of extant landscape features on the property including the perimeter wall, the grove of Norway spruce and the former gatehouse building. Taken together, these elements form a cohesive cultural heritage landscape which demonstrate the stylistic considerations of a late nineteenth century country estate.

Historical and Associative Value

1011 Portage Road has historical and associative value for its direct historical associations with Sir William Mackenzie for whom the estate was originally constructed. Mackenzie, who was born in Kirkfield, grew into one of the key players in the expansion of railways in Canada in the second half of the nineteenth century, including the development of the transcontinental railway. Despite his successes on the national stage, Mackenzie remained connected to Kirkfield and chose to build his country estate in the village in 1888. In 1976, Mackenzie was recognized as a person of national historic significance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. The plaque associated with this designation is located on the subject property, recognizing Mackenzie's connection to his country estate and hometown.

Contextual Value

1011 Portage Road has contextual value as a local and regional landmark. Its role as the former Mackenzie Estate and the current home of the Sir William Mackenzie Inn make it a recognized and well known location in both Kirkfield and the wider region. Further, the property is a contributing feature to the historic hamlet landscape of Kirkfield which includes a wide array of late nineteenth and twentieth century historic structures. The subject property supports and maintains the historic hamlet character of the area and also is historically linked to its surroundings, both as part of the wider redevelopment

of Kirkfield in the late nineteenth century, but also through direct connections with a range of other businesses directly related to the Mackenzies.

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 unique example of a Victorian estate in Kirkfield, and Kawartha Lakes more broadly, which forms a cohesive cultural heritage landscape. These include both the estate house and the landscape elements on the wider property.

Estate House

- Two-and-a-half storey brick construction
- Gable roofs
- Irregular massing
- Symmetrical façade
- Two-and-a-half storey bay and gables
- Central entrance including:
 - Doors
 - Sidelights and transom
- Decorative bargeboard
- Brackets
- Stacked chimneys
- Dormers
- Shingled cladding
- Fenestration including
 - Sash windows
 - Raised window hoods with keystones
 - Lug sills
- Wrap around verandah including:
 - Paired Columns
 - Entablature
 - Rusticated stone
 - Stairs
 - Railings
- Porches
- Internal relationship of built and natural elements including:
 - Views of the house from the grounds

- Views within the grounds of natural and built elements
- Orientation of built and natural elements in relation to one another

Landscape Elements

- Brick retaining walls with capstones
- Brick pillars
- Iron fence
- Landscaped gardens
- Mature trees
- Lawns
- “Apostles’ Row” Norway spruce grove
- Benches and decorative elements
- Octagonal water tower including:
 - Flared roof
 - Multi-pane windows
 - Shingle cladding
- Log cabin ruins
- Outbuildings
- Classroom block/gatehouse including:

Historical and Associative Attributes

The historical and associative attributes support the value of the property in its associations with Sir William Mackenzie.

- Relationship of the property to Sir William and Lady Margaret Mackenzie
- Ontario Heritage Trust plaque

Contextual Attributes

The contextual attributes support the value of the property as a local and regional landmark, as well as a contributing feature to the character of the local hamlet.

- Location of the property along Portage Road
- Views of the property from Portage Road and surrounding historic properties
- View of Portage Road and surrounding rural properties from the subject property
- Location of the gatehouse and fencing along the sidewalk
- Relationship of the property to other Mackenzie-associated properties in Kirkfield

Images









SIR WILLIAM MACKENZIE 1849-1923

Born near here, Mackenzie became a successful local merchant and contractor on Ontario railways. He built this house in 1888. After 1886, with associates, he obtained major construction contracts on numerous Canadian railways and by 1895 was one of Canada's leading railway builders and financiers. In 1899 Mackenzie and Donald Mann organized the Canadian Northern Railway, which later became a transcontinental system. Knighted in 1911, Mackenzie achieved international prominence through business directorates and electric railway and power development in Canada, Europe, the Caribbean, and South America. His influence declined following the Northern's nationalization in 1917, and after much dispute his Ontario power companies were acquired by the province in 1920. He died in Toronto and was buried at Kirkfield.

Erected by the Ontario Heritage Foundation, Ministry of Culture and Recreation

Select Bibliography

Bliss, Michael. *Northern Enterprise: Five Centuries of Canadian Business*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987.

The Canadian Men and Women of the Time: A Handbook of Canadian Biography of Living Characters. Toronto: William Briggs, 1912.

Downing, Andrew Jackson. *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Adapted to North America*. New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1841.

Fleming, R.B. *The Railway King of Canada: Sir William Mackenzie, 1849-1923*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1991.

Foster, Janet W. *The Queen Anne House: America's Victorian Vernacular*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.

Kalman, Harold. *A History of Canadian Architecture*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Kirkconnell, Watson. *County of Victoria: Centennial History*. 2nd edition. Lindsay: County of Victoria Council, 1967.

Maitland, Leslie. *The Queen Anne Revival Style in Canadian Architecture*. Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1990.

Mikel, Robert. *Ontario House Styles: The Distinctive Architecture of the Province's 18th and 19th Century Homes*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Co., 2004.

Regehr, T.D. "A Backwoodsman and an Engineer in Canadian Business: An Examination of a Divergence in Entrepreneurial Practice in Canada at the Turn of the Century." *Historical Papers/Communications historiques* 12, no. 1 (1977): 158-177.

Weir, Scott. "The Picturesque Gothic Villa Comes to Town: The Emergence of Toronto's Bay and Gable House Type." *Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada* 41, no. 1 (2016): 57-76.

Williams, Ron. *Landscape Architecture in Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014.

Wright, Janet. *Architecture of the Picturesque in Canada*. Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1984.