

# Advisory Committee of Council Information Report

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Committee	Heritage Guelph
Date	Monday, March 4, 2024
Subject	<b>72 Gordon Street – Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report</b>

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## Executive Summary

### Key Findings

72 Gordon Street is listed as a non-designated built heritage resource on the City of Guelph’s Municipal Register of Cultural Heritage Properties under Part IV, Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act. This report determines that 72 Gordon Street meets 6 of the criteria of Ontario Regulation 9/06. It is therefore recommended that the property be designated under Part IV, section 29 of the OHA. The heritage attributes of 72 Gordon Street display: design or physical, historical or associative, and contextual value.

## Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

### Location



Figure 1: Aerial photograph of 72 Gordon Street (City of Guelph GIS)

The subject property is located on the southeast corner of Gordon and Surrey Streets. The legal description is Plan 8, Lot 149 & 155. 72 Gordon is located within the territory covered by Treaty Number 3, which was signed in 1792, between the Mississaugas of the Credit and the British Crown, and on long-established traditional hunting ground for the Six Nations of the Grand River.

## Background

Lots 155 and 149 can be seen in the McDonald Plan of Guelph from 1828 (Figure 2, Attachment 1). The Plan shows that a creek flowed through both lots towards the Speed River, and which historically flowed through the property on all historic maps until the 1897 (revised 1907) Fire Insurance Plan, which depicts the diversion of the creek underground and shows lots 149 and 155 being used to store lumber (Figure 18, Attachment 1).

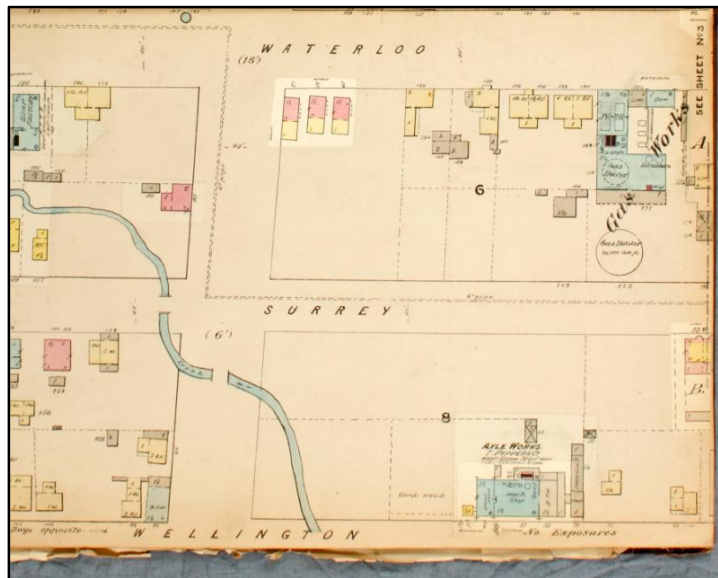


Figure 2: 1897 (revised 1907) Fire Insurance Plan

While the presence of the creek prevented building on lots 149 and 155 until the early twentieth century, the land title abstracts record numerous transactions for both lots throughout the later nineteenth century. For example, between June and September of 1850, the property was sold three times (Table 1, Attachment 1). Notable owners include Hezekiah J. Hall, John Hillyard Cameron of the Upper Canada Building Society, and Henry Hatch, whose name appears on the Cooper's Map as owning another parcel of land in the Ward. In 1868, the land was purchased by George J. Grange, who was Sheriff of Wellington from 1840 until his death in 1876, and in 1871, another part was sold by the Canada Company (who acquired the land sometime between 1868 and 1871) to James Barclay, a builder who constructed the Drill Hall in 1866.

Barclay sold part of the parcel back to the crown in 1874, and it was during his period of ownership that the Guelph Spring and Axle Works was founded by Thomas Pepper in 1872 and its factory buildings erected on the adjacent lots to the east. Industrial buildings can be seen on the property in the Bird's Eye View of Guelph from 1872, as well as the Gasworks buildings on the lots to the north between Surrey and what was then Waterloo Street (now Fountain St E).

For reasons unknown, an order in council in May of 1880 discharged the mortgage, and the land was returned to James Barclay. Barclay sold the land to the Corporation of the City of Guelph later that year, and it was held by the city until 1895 when the lots were purchased by brewing magnate George Sleeman. Sleeman

sold the lots in 1902 to Alexander Bain Petrie, a Guelph druggist and namesake of the Petrie Building at 15 Wyndham Street North.

The first structure to be built on lot 149 was the MacKey Bakery building, which is first seen on the 1922 (1929 Revised) Fire Insurance Plan (Fig. 16, Attachment 1). Lot 149 was sold to MacKey's Bread, owned by George Mackey, in 1928, for \$4000. By 1929 George Mackey owned eight industrial bakeries across Ontario including Kingston, Cobourg, Brantford, Windsor, Chatham, Wallaceburg, St. Catharines, and finally, Guelph. George Mackey and his brothers had entered the bread business selling "products which enabled the baker to vastly improve the quality of bread then made" (Figure 21, Attachment 1). Mackey's Bread was at the cutting edge of the industrialization of bread production during the interwar period in Ontario. Prior to the arrival of Mackey's Bread in 1928, bread in the City of Guelph had been produced by the City's many small-scale bakeries. The Mackey's were so successful that the Whig-Standard reported that "in one year's time the business had increased by 400 percent – something unheard of before in the bread business" (Figure 21, Attachment 1).

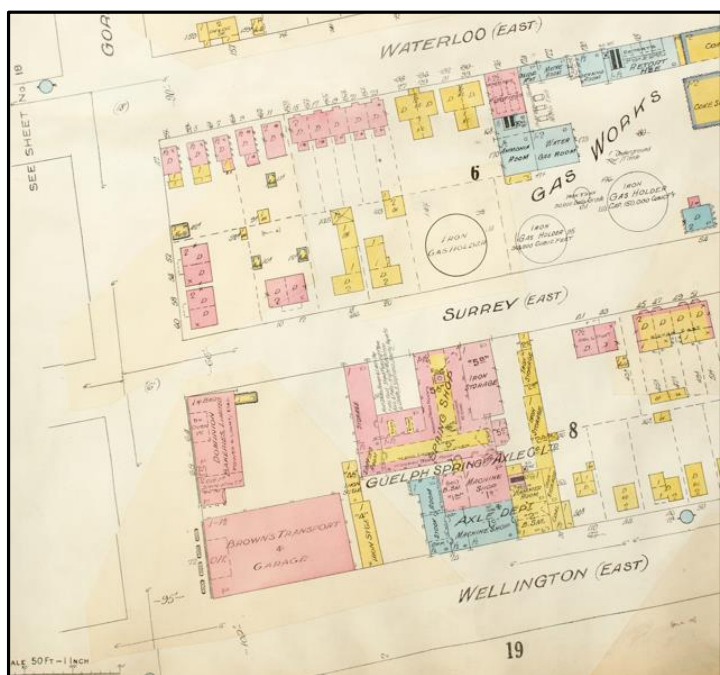


Figure 3: 1922 (revised 1929) Fire Insurance Plan

In 1929, only one year after opening in Guelph, the company and all their locations were bought by Dominion Bread, which had itself been absorbed by Maple Leaf Milling in 1928. The 1929 Fire Insurance Plan (Figure 21, Attachment 1) labels the building as Dominion Bread, however, water meter logs from the period recorded the name as Mackey Bread up until 1933 (Fig. 19, Attachment 1).

The rapid expansion of MacKey's Bread in the period immediately before the economic crash of 1929 may have forced Mackey to sell his company to Dominion Bread, though he continued as president of Dominion Bread. By 1929, Dominion was running 15 bread factories across the province. However, by 1931 Maple Leaf Milling was reporting losses in Dominion Bread and by 1936 Dominion Bread had folded completely.

Liquidation of the Guelph Dominion Bread location was completed in 1941, and assets had been transferred to the parent company Maple Leaf Milling. From 1949-1953 Canada Bread Co. operated the bread factory. The building produced its last loaves of bread in 1953, when it was taken over by Wellington Motors, which operated on site until 1964 when Alfred Schnurr opened Schnurr Electric, which still occupies the building today. The MacKey Bakery building is one of the last vestiges of the once thriving and robust industrial center of Guelph. The location further reflects the history of Gordon Street, Huron Road (now Waterloo Avenue), and the Grand Trunk Railroad as thoroughfares for the transportation of goods to nearby towns.



Figure 4: The newly opened MacKey Bakery in 1929, complete with striped awnings and painted sign. One of two oven chimneys is visible. Source: Guelph Museums.

### **Building Description**

The structure at 72 Gordon Street is a 1-storey, flat roofed, red rug brick functional industrial building, split into 2 storeys on the south side. The structure was purpose-built in 1929 to house a commercial bakery and was commissioned by George MacKey of MacKey Bakeries, one of seven MacKey locations built at this time in locations across Eastern and Southwestern Ontario. The foundation is constructed of large aggregate, poured concrete and is rendered at ground level with a thin layer of stucco. A stepped parapet wall with concrete coping clad in metal runs the length of the Gordon and Surrey Street elevations. Two large chimneys protrude from the roof near Gordon Street above the location of the ovens indicated on the 1929 FIP.

The façade faces Gordon Street and contains eight bays divided by pilasters with corbelled heads and stepped plinths to recessed panels. The windows are the original steel sashes with divided lights or panes. The three southernmost bays on the façade contain an entryway and offices. The third bay to the north contains an entranceway at ground level, surrounded by modern plate glass. The right side also has street level storefront windows topped with a commercial sign. The roofline coping follows the stepped parapet wall, with a raised, decorative cap on each corner. The building sits on a concrete foundation faced with stucco and punctuated by small rectangular, steel sash basement windows. The north elevation, facing Surrey Street, contains three bays, also divided by pilasters with corbelled heads

and stepped plinths to recessed panels. At the rear of the building is a red brick addition, likely added after 1960, as the 1960 FIP indicates a wood-frame addition in this location. The addition is flat-roofed, and contains a loading dock and two small windows.

### **Statement of Significance**

The subject property is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act because it meets six of the nine prescribed criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest, according to Ontario Regulation 9/06 as amended by 569/22. The heritage attributes of 72 Gordon Street display: design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual value.

### **Design/Physical Value**

The subject property meets Criterion 1 because it is a rare and representative example of the functional industrial building type from the interwar period. The 1929 construction is one of few extant factory buildings that showcase early twentieth-century industrial architecture in Guelph, and the last remaining example in this former industrial area.

### **Historical Associative Value**

The subject property meets Criterion 4 because it has direct associations with the MacKey Bread Company, a company that made significant contributions to the development of the industrialization of bread production in Ontario.

The subject property meets Criterion 5 as it yields information that contributes to the understanding of the Guelph community because it is associated with the development of the food-production industry in Guelph.

### **Contextual Value**

The subject property meets Criterion 7 because the property is important in defining, maintaining, and supporting the character of the Gordon and Surrey streetscapes.

The subject property meets Criterion 8 because the property is functionally, visually, and historically linked to the former industrial lands located to the south of the historic downtown core. The location further reflects the history of Gordon Street, Huron Road (now Waterloo Avenue), and the Grand Trunk Railroad as thoroughfares for the transportation of goods to nearby towns.

### **Attachments**

Attachment-1 Historical Documentation and Photos

Attachment -2 Current Photos

### **Report Author**

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