

# Advisory Committee of Council Staff Report

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To Heritage Guelph  
Date Monday, November 4, 2024  
Subject **59 Green Street – Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report**

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## Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report

### Key Findings

59 Green 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. As per the requirements of the OHA, the results of this Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report find that the property meets four of the nine criteria set out by under Ontario Regulation 9/06. It is therefore recommended that the property’s heritage attributes be designated under Part IV, section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

### Location

59 Green Street is located on the north side of Green Street, to the west of Dublin Street North. The legal description of PLAN 156, PT LOT 9 & PT LOT 10.

Figure 1: 59 Green Street. Heritage Staff, 2024.



## Historical Background

Historically known by names such as Emma Place and Maplewood, the two-story Georgian stone farmhouse at 59 Green Street was likely constructed either by or for the "gentleman" William J. Hooper, who owned both Lot 24 and 25 from as early as 1850 to at least 1862, whereupon he relocated to a farm in North Dumfries (Attachment 1, Table 1 & Fig. 17). The home was constructed by the year 1862, as it is present in Thomas Cooper's 1862 'Town of Guelph' (Attachment 1, Fig 5).

Following its sale to Henry Hatch, Lot 25 was subdivided into 11 smaller lots and Emma Street is formally laid out, with what would become 59 Green Street located on Lot 10 (Attachment 1, Figure 7). The lot passed to F.J. Chadwick, who himself sold the lot to David Stirton in 1869. Stirton was an active and important member of not only Chalmer's Church, but Guelph and Wellington writ large. He was one of the Scottish "La Guayara" settlers that travelled from Venezuela to Guelph in the late 1820's, by way of New York City (Wellington Atlas, 1906. P. 6 & 64). In addition to serving as an Elder and a provisional member on the Chalmer's Church Board of Managers, Stirton was also politically influential as both the Member of Parliament for Wellington South and the president of the Guelph and Ontario Investment Savings Society.

Stirton's ownership occurred on the heels of a bitter dispute between members of the Knox Presbyterian Church and the creation of a new congregation and construction of Chalmer's Church on Quebec Street in 1870. Thomas Wardrope was selected as church minister, and it is likely that 59 Green Street was selected as his 'manse,' which in the Scottish Presbyterian faith serves as the official residence and reception venue for the church's minister, and thus would have "witnessed the chatter of church socials and gravity of serious meetings... family celebrations and the tears of funerals" (Doors Open Guelph, 2008).

Figure 2: David Stirton, from 1906 Wellington Atlas, P. 7.

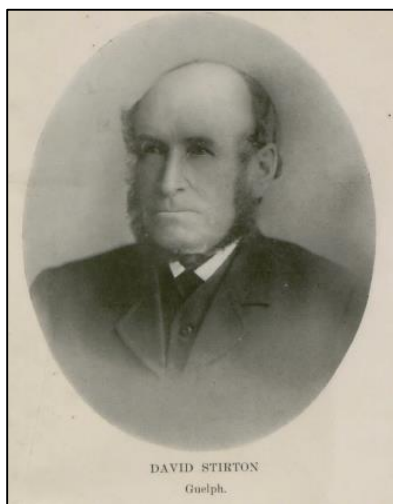


Figure 3: [Rev. Thomas Wardrope, 1819-1914.](#)



59 Green Street's role as Chalmer's Church manse is reinforced by both the 1882-1883 City Directory that lists Reverend Thomas Wardrope as residing on Emma Street (Attachment 1, Figures 19-20), and the connection between 59 Green Street and David Stirton, as shown in the Land Title Abstracts (Attachment 1, Table 1). According to the accounts of previous owners, "the house proved a luxury the young congregation could ill afford", at which point the deed passed from the Chalmer's Church Trustees to George D. Thurnell with a \$3000 price tag (Attachment 1, Table 1). George Thurnell was a retired farmer and the son of Benjamin Thurnell, who was one of Guelph's earliest settlers and served in various civil and administrative roles, such as Guelph Township Councilor (1842-1847) and Reeve (1850-1853).

Following the deaths of George and Fanny, the house passed to son Guy, at which point it sat boarded-up and empty for many years, gradually falling into disrepair until Gordon and Bernice Grierson acquired it in the 1950's (Attachment 1, Table 1).

The Grierson's are reputed to have put significant work into restoring the house, both in its physical qualities but also its reputation, namely that years of neglect had led the neighborhood children to believe it was a haunted house (Attachment 1, Fig. 16). The house has since been thoughtfully maintained by subsequent owners since the Grierson's, a tradition continued by the current stewards.

Figure 4: 59 Green Street, from the 1958 Girdwood Essay.



### **Building Description**

The two-story stone house at 59 Green Street is a well-preserved mid-19<sup>th</sup> century three bay, hipped-roof Georgian limestone house, replete with Neo-Classical refinements that elevate it above the typical stone farmhouses that were characteristic of the 1850's (Attachment 2, Fig 1). Hammer-dressed lintels and sills accompany the French doors and windows, and the limestone voussoirs above the main entryway have been thoughtfully mirrored contrasted with the semi-elliptical fanlight (Attachment 2, Fig 1-2).

## **Statement of Significance**

This property meets four of the nine criteria outlined in Ontario Regulation 9/06, including design/physical value, historical/associative value, and contextual value. It is therefore recommended that the property be designated under Part IV, section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

### **Design/Physical Value**

59 Green Street meets Criterion 1 as it is a representative and early example of a two-story, Georgian-style farmhouse with significant Neo-Classical/French refinements, evident in its symmetrical façade, entryway flanked with colonnades, the fanlight transom and large sidelights, French doors on the first floor, and large, multi-paned sash and storm windows.

### **Historical Associative Value**

59 Green Street meets Criterion 5 because it yields important information about both the history of the Chalmer's Presbyterian Church in Guelph, and the legacy of the Thurnell family, who were early and integral members of Guelph during its formative years.

### **Contextual Value**

59 Green Street fulfils Criterion 7 because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of the area, primarily in how the property is situated on the unique remnants of what was formerly Emma Street.

59 Green Street meets Criterion 8 because it serves as a physical, functional, and historical link to the surrounding area, particularly because it predates the historical Hatch Survey and thus shaped the future development of Emma/Green Street.

## **Attachments**

Attachment 1: Historical Documentation and Photos

Attachment 2: Current Photos

### **Report Author**

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