

**Related to Report PB-67-18, 401 Brant Street/444 John Street**  
**Mike Quackenbush, 16 Jul 2018**

First and foremost, I am a genealogist – a family historian. I look at history through a lens of the people, the places they lived, and how they lived.

I have studied the original footprint of Burlington for a number of years – from the humble settlements of the Mississauga's of the New Credit, to the land tract grant by the British to Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea), the civil founding of our now, Downtown Core area, as Wellington Square by James Gage, to the amalgamation to form the Village of Burlington, through annexation of townships to form the Town of Burlington and most recently the City of Burlington.

The property of 401 Brant Street is not unfamiliar to me. There has been speculation with no definitive year of construction for the building which currently leases to Kelly's Bake Shoppe. Popular and unsourced articles of late indicate the year of construction to be between 1872 and 1877, with the construction of the home by Absalom and Bridge Cline. The source of 1872 was indicated to be the Burlington Historical Society Digital Collections, made reference in the Heritage Impact Study for the currently proposed development by GBCA Architects.

A.B. and Bridget were married in Nelson Township in 1865 – so it the construction of the home between 1872 and 1877 would estimate to be historically accurate – however, there is no founded proof to this.

A.B. does not appear in the 1877 Halton County Atlas in Nelson Township. The 1871 Census of Canada listed A.B. and Bridget with their children, living in Nelson Township. Their neighbours in 1871 are listed in the 1877 Halton County Atlas – as living at Port Nelson, in the Village of Burlington.

Further information from Charles E. Goad's Fire Insurance Plans of 1893 does not show the building in its current location at 401 Brant Street, nor the building on the reverse at 444 John Street. 410 Brant Street appears first in the 1910 Fire Insurance Plans, and 444 John Street doesn't appear until the 1924 Fire Insurance Plans. The best estimate that exists is that the current building at 401 Brant Street was built between 1893 and 1910, and 444 John Street – between 1910 and 1924.

The Heritage Impact Study using Ontario Regulation 9/06 for assessing Culture Heritage Value assessed the property of 401 Brant Street. They concluded that the property is not of significant cultural heritage value. It has some distinguishing portions on the street frontage, but is similar to many shops found in Ontario during the 19th and 20th centuries. The assessment listed two key points, one – that information about the architect or builder could not be determined, and secondly- that the building is not a landmark.

Throughout our community's growth since the 1950's through to current day, we have maximized on green field development. These green fields were farmer's fields – some, original homesteads. Like most of Ontario, we have had space to develop, so we did. Did we develop strategically for the long-term? I don't think so. In my opinion, I think we could have built more densely throughout this expansion of our city so we could be in a better supply position in the present day. That being said, we didn't – and now here we are faced with having to intensify the building we construct going forward – even through redevelopment of lands, such as 401 Brant.

Collectively as a city, we don't do a great job of embracing and educating about our own history. We have let so many true landmarks be demolished over the years with little to no public outcry. If keeping these two buildings is that important to our city, we have let ourselves down by not fighting to keep buildings that do reflect cultural heritage value. It's how we see value.

In concluding, Kelly's Bake Shoppe, the business itself, is valuable to the owners and patrons. It has been defined as a destination in our downtown – which if you're looking for something from that business – it is. Is the building the business operates in valuable? Both experts and I agree it is not. We have to ask ourselves. If Kelly's Bake Shoppe wasn't located in this building, if it sat vacant such as the prior Elizabeth Interiors location – would we be putting up a fight like this? I don't think so. As the owners of Kelly's Bake Shoppe have said, they will continue to exist – this is not the end for them.