MEMORANDUM

TO: **Heritage Markham Committee**

FROM: **Peter Wokral, Senior Heritage Planner**

DATE: **May 14, 2025**

SUBJECT: Request for Feedback
2730 Elgin Mills Road East
Post Fire Engineering Report

Property/Building Description: Christian Heise House, single detached, 1-1/2 storey dwelling constructed c. 1859.
Use: Vacant Residential
Heritage Status: Individually Designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act

Background

Planning Approvals

- Council has approved applications for Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) and Plan of Subdivision in support of a development including new townhouse units, a pair of semi-detached dwellings and the relocation and incorporation of both the Levi and Christian Heise Houses with detached garages having additional second floor residential units.
- On February 19th 2025, a fire caused significant damage to the Christian Heise House including the loss of most of the roof, partial collapse of the east brick gable wall, heat damage to the west gable wall , partial collapse of the second floor adjacent to the west gable wall as wells as water damage from the extinguishing of the fire and from the interior being exposed to the winter elements.
- In response to an Order to Remedy an Unsafe Building issued by the City's Building Department, the architect hired by the owner of the property commissioned a Structural Report by Tacoma Engineers to review the site and report on any temporary measures immediately necessary to preserve the structural integrity and heritage fabric of the damaged portion of the building, as well as the repairs necessary to restore the building and bring it into a safe condition (See Attached Tacoma Engineers Post Fire Structural Report).
- The report is based on a visual assessment and did not include any destructive testing.
- The report outlines the steps and repairs necessary to make the house safe again but concludes that "substantial sections of structure are currently damaged beyond the reasonable limit of repair" and opines that utilizing as much of the

salvaged building as possible in a reconstruction of the house at the new location "is the most effective way of ensuring safety while preserving the remaining heritage fabric"

- The engineering report was to be reviewed by Heritage Markham at the April 9th, 2025 meeting to obtain feedback from the Committee, but the applicant requested that the matter be deferred until the June 2025 meeting so that the owner could prepare further evidence by qualified professionals to be presented to the Committee.
- The Committee agreed to a deferral of only one month out of concern for the house remaining exposed to the elements and subject to further deterioration, (See Attached Heritage Markham Extract of April 9, 2025);
- The applicant has responded by reiterating their request to defer the matter until the June 11, 2025 meeting of Heritage Markham.

Staff Comment

- Although reconstruction using salvaged material is in the opinion of the engineer the most effective method of balancing safety concerns with preserving remaining heritage fabric, the engineer also provides the stabilization work required to return the building to a safe condition recommending that any preservation work should proceed with caution while prioritizing the safety of workers.
- Heritage staff recommends that the repairs recommended by the engineer to make the building safe proceed with caution while prioritizing the safety of workers rather than using salvaged material to reconstruct the house in its new location for the following reasons:
    - The engineering report states that this work is possible if done with care to protect the safety of workers;
    - The uncertainty of how much heritage building fabric can be successfully salvaged;
    - Concerns regarding the accuracy of any future reconstruction, and whether a reconstruction would comply with the provisions of the Ontario Building Code
    - The reduced heritage value of an inauthentic reconstruction using an undetermined amount of salvaged material
- Therefore, Staff recommends that Heritage Markham recommend the stabilization measures outlined in the engineer's report proceeding with the caution and prioritization of worker safety, so that the Christian Heise House can be stabilized, restored to safe condition, and relocated intact as proposed by the Subdivision application.
- This recommendation could be approved in the interim pending any additional information or studies that the owner may wish to submit for consideration at a future meeting for consideration by the Committee.

Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham

- THAT from a heritage perspective, Heritage Markham recommends that the owner of the Chrisitan Heise House perform the stabilization measures outlined in the engineer's report, proceeding with the caution and prioritization of worker safety, so that the Christian Heise House can be stabilized, restored to safe condition, and relocated intact as proposed by the Subdivision application.

or

- THAT consideration of the fire-damaged dwelling at 2730 Elgin Mills Road be deferred for another month to June 11th 2025, and that the owner be advised that the assessment should also address how structural issues can remedied to retain the house in addition to identifying the current structural condition.

Attachments

Location Map
Google Streetview of the Christian Heise House
Post Fire Photographs of the Christian Heise House
Heritage Markham Extract of April 9, 2025
Tacoma Engineers Structural Report

File: 2730 Elgin Mills Road

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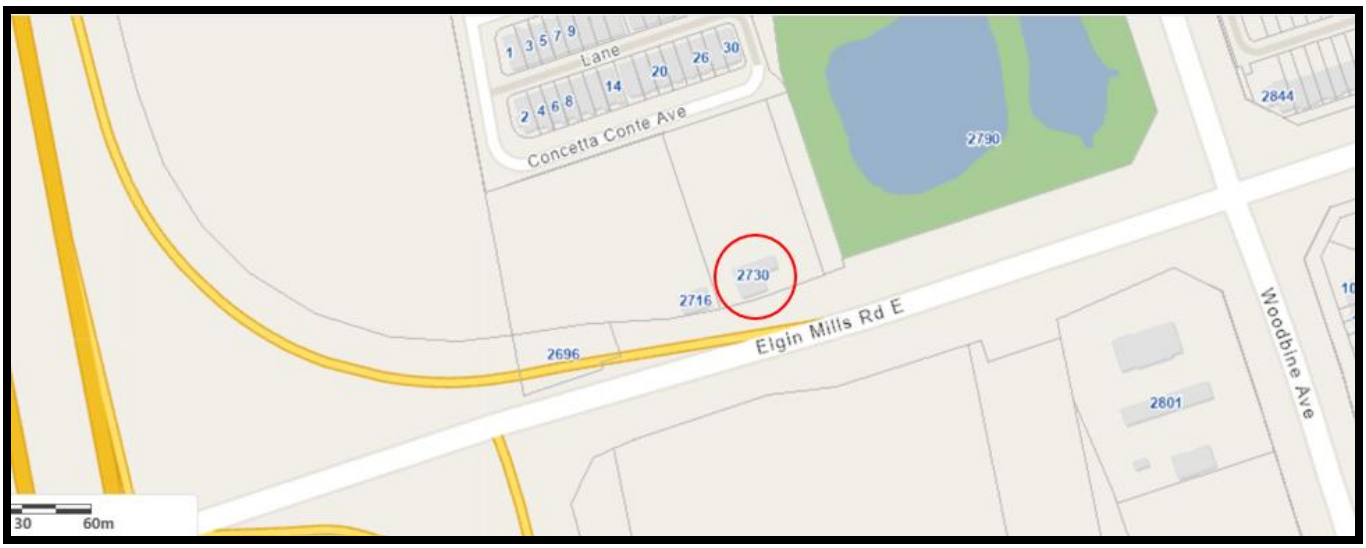
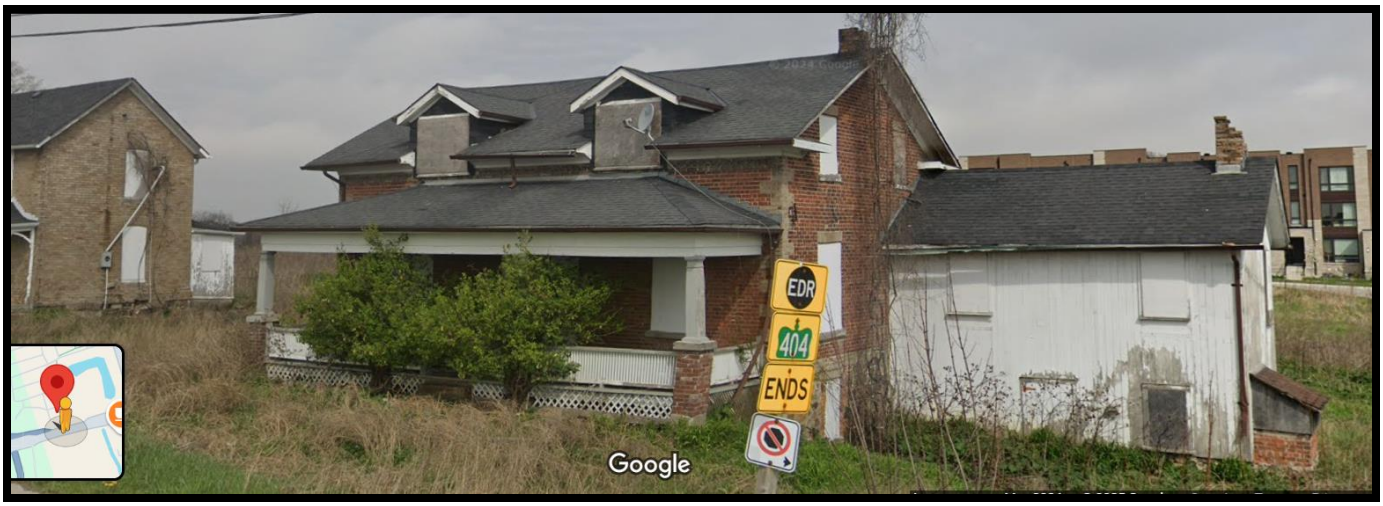
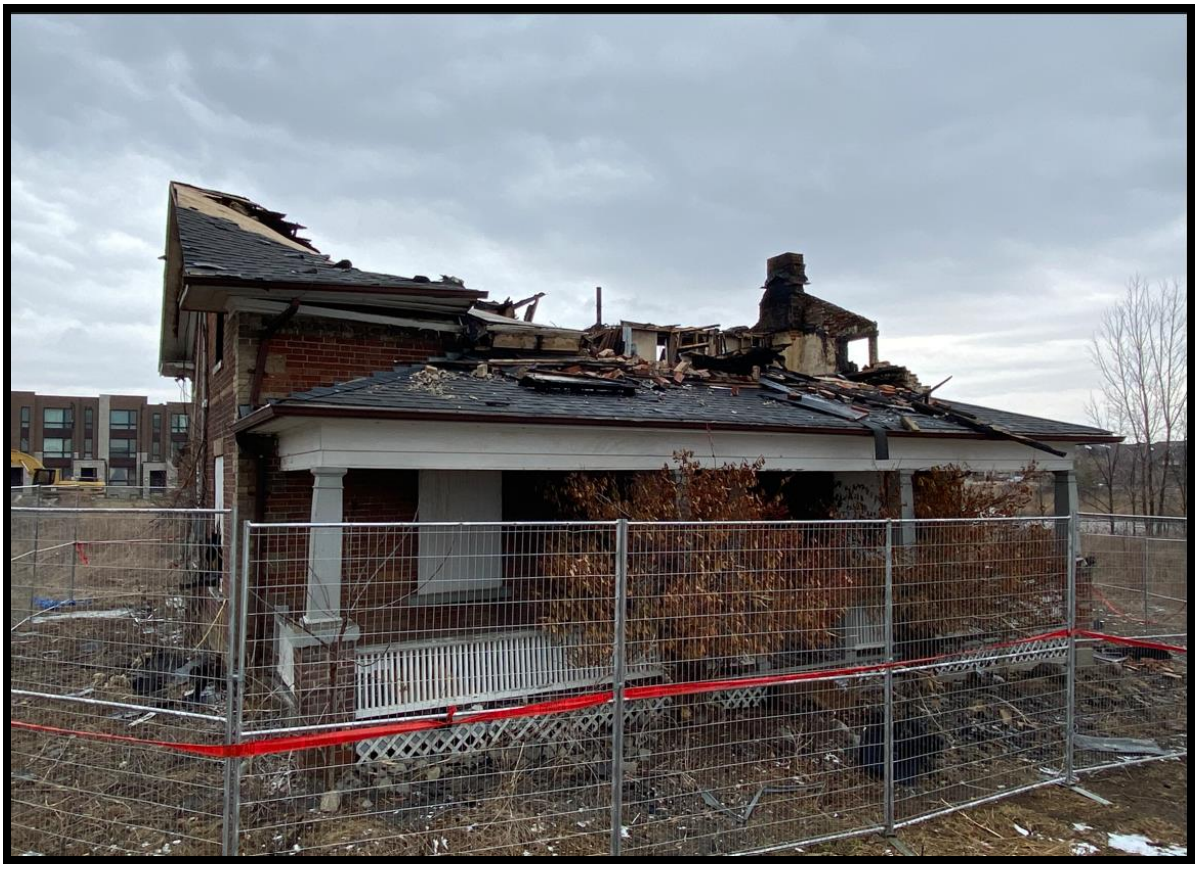
Location Map

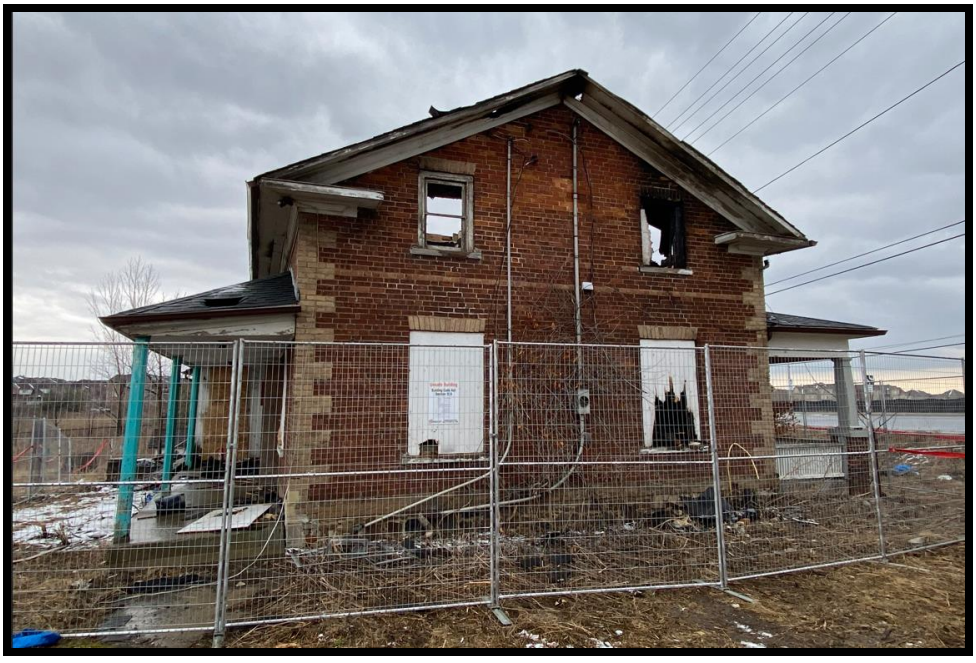


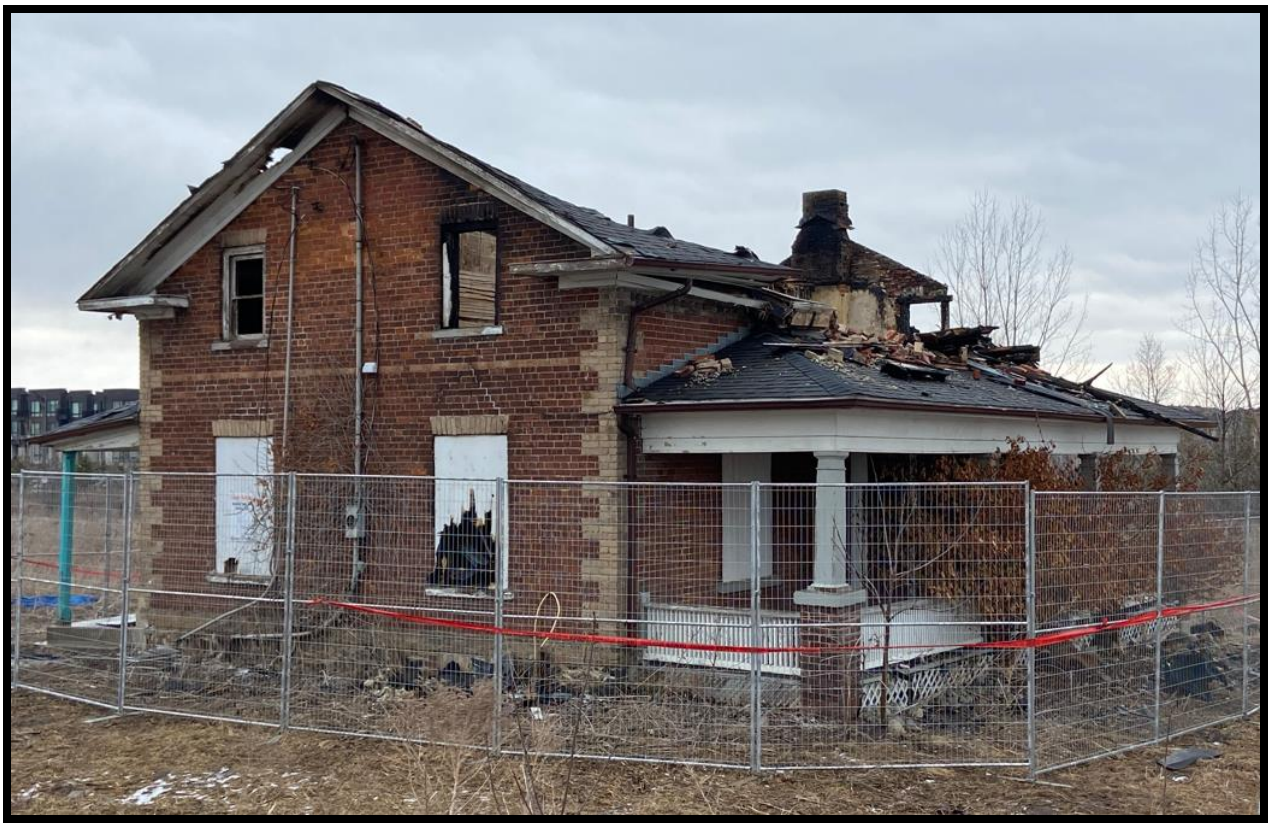
Google Streetview of the Christian Heise House

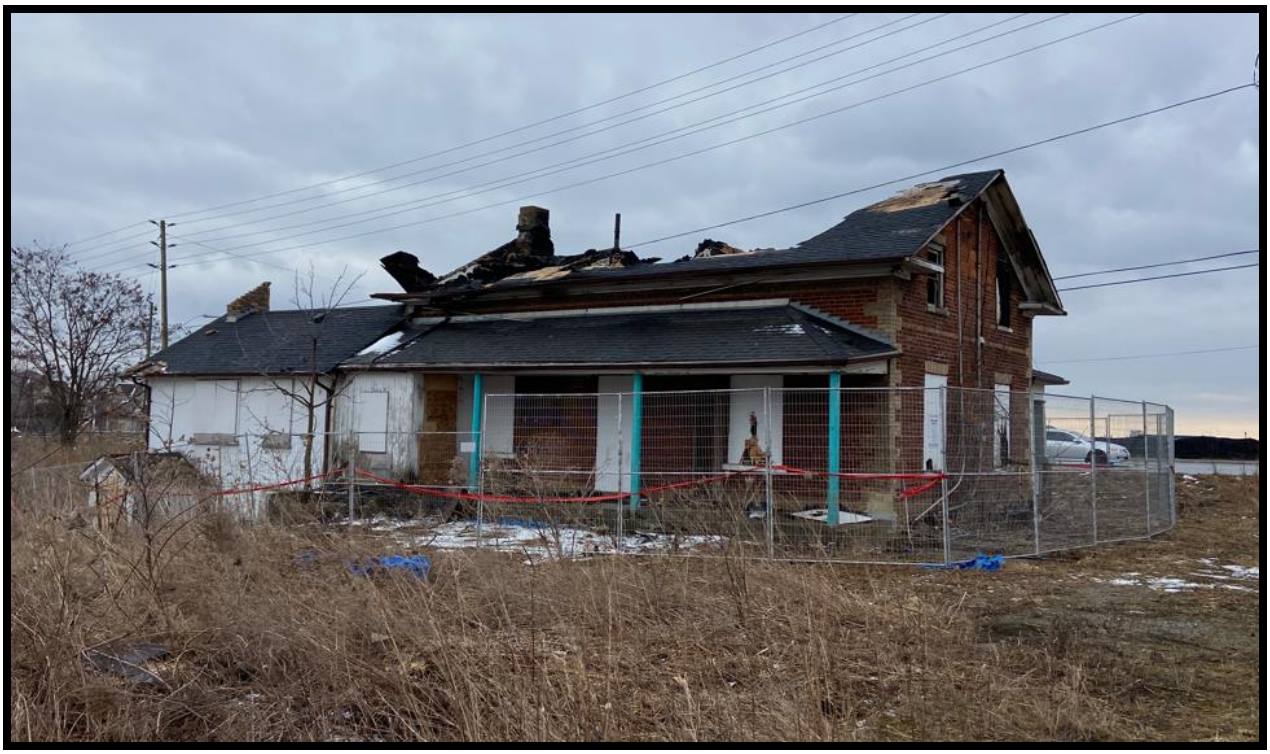


Post Fire Photographs of the Christian Heise House









HERITAGE MARKHAM

EXTRACT

Date: April 25, 2025

To: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning

P. Wokral, Senior Heritage Planner

EXTRACT CONTAINING ITEM # 6.7 OF THE FOURTH HERITAGE MARKHAM COMMITTEE HELD ON APRIL 9, 2025

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6. PART FOUR - REGULAR

6.7 REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK

POST-FIRE ENGINEERING REPORT
2730 ELGIN MILLS ROAD EAST (16.11)

File Number:
N/A

Extract:
R. Hutcheson, Manager, Heritage Planning
P. Wokral, Senior Heritage Planner

Regan Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning, introduced this item as related to an engineering report for the "Christian Heise House" located at 2730 Elgin Mills Road prepared following significant fire damage to the property on February 9, 2025. Mr. Hutcheson advised the Committee that the applicant had reached out to Staff requesting a two-month deferral of the item in order to conduct further structural assessment. Staff are recommending that the Heritage Markham Committee defer the item until the next Heritage Markham Committee meeting on May 14th, 2025.

The Committee made the following comments on the deferral of the item:

- Requested clarification on whether the motion to defer the item needs to include the consideration of costs for addressing and remediating the structural issues.
- Requested clarification on whether the property was insured.

Mr. Hutcheson clarified that it would be beneficial to have the owner include the appropriate costs along with the strategy to address or remediate the property but

this would not be the basis for the Heritage Markham Committee to consider retaining or demolishing the property. Mr. Hutcheson also advised that the detailing of costs would help determine how any identified issues were costed and the method of calculation. Staff are unaware if the property was insured or not.

Recommendation:

THAT consideration of the condition of the fire-damaged dwelling at 2730 Elgin Mills Road be deferred for one month and the owner advised that if further assessment is to be undertaken, it not only considers the dwelling's structural condition but also how any structural issues could be addressed/remedied to retain the house and any associated order of magnitude costs.

Carried

Committee did not vote on the following recommendation:

Recommendation:

THAT from a heritage perspective, Heritage Markham recommends that the owner of the Chrisitan Heise House perform the stabilization measures outlined in the engineer's report, proceeding with the caution and prioritization of worker safety, so that the Christian Heise House can be stabilized, restored to safe condition, and relocated intact as proposed by the approved Plan of Subdivision application.

STRUCTURAL REPORT
Structural Review of Fire Damaged Heritage Building

Date:	March 10, 2025	**No. of Pages:**	7 + Encl.
Project:	Elgin Mills Road House Moving	**Project No.:**	TE-44712-25
Address:	2730 Elgin Mills Rd E, Markham, Ontario.	**Permit No.:**	N/A
Client:	Michael Scott Architect Inc.		

Distribution:	Michael Scott	Michael Scott Architect Inc.	mscott@michaelscottarchitect.ca
	Alexander Spasewski	City of Markham	aspasewski@markham.ca

Background

Tacoma Engineers has been retained by Michael Scott Architect Inc. to provide a structural review of a fire damaged heritage building located at 2730 Elgin Mills Rd E, Markham, Ontario. The assessment has been requested by the Owner, BAT Developments, in response to an Order to Remedy Unsafe Building issued by the City of Markham February 19, 2025 (No.: BV 25 111719). The purpose of this report is to satisfy the requirements of item 2 of the order:

> *Engage a professional engineer to review the site and provide a report on:*
>
> *a) Any temporary measures immediately necessary to preserve the structural integrity and heritage fabric of the damaged portions of the building, and*
> *b) The repairs necessary to restore the building and bring it into a safe condition*

This report is based on a visual assessment only and does not include any destructive testing. A site visit was carried out on February 27th, 2025, by Dominic Geisser, EIT of Tacoma Engineers accompanied by Roy Dalla Zuanna of BAT Developments.

A previous site visit was carried out on February 7th, 2025, by Dominic Geisser, EIT, and Gerry Zegerius, P. Eng., CAHP, of Tacoma Engineers accompanied by Michael Scott of Michael Scott Architect Inc. This site visit was intended to inform the preparation of a heritage asset relocation plan currently in development.

Observations

While on site Tacoma Engineers observed the following:

- The roof has effectively been destroyed (see Photographs 1 and 2 of Appendix A).
- The brick gable end wall on the east side of the house has suffered a partial collapse (see Photographs 4 and 5 of Appendix A).
- The brick gable end wall on the west side of the house is displaying signs of heavy deterioration from heat exposure (see Photograph 6 of Appendix A).
- The second level floor, adjacent to the west gable wall, has collapsed rendering the wall laterally unsupported (see Photographs 7 and 8 of Appendix A).

Structural Preservation and Restoration

As per item 2. a) of the order, the following temporary measures are immediately necessary to preserve the structural integrity and heritage fabric of the damaged portions of the building:

a) Review and reinstate any compromised site security fencing.
b) Install temporary bracing to stabilize the partially collapsed gable wall (east).
c) Install temporary bracing to stabilize the laterally unsupported and fire damaged gable wall (west).
d) Remove debris from the first and second story floor.

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e) Reconstruct the collapsed portion of the second story floor.
f) Reconstruct the roof.
g) Reinstate the building envelope.

As per item 2. b) of the order, the following repairs are necessary to restore the building and bring it into a safe condition:

a) Reconstruct the collapsed masonry wall at the east gable end and along the top of the south wall.
b) Localized masonry repairs at fire-damaged locations.
c) Removal and replacement of all fire-damaged structural members.

Safety Concerns

Due to the structural instabilities observed, carrying out the preservation and restoration work may pose a significant safety risk to workers. The east gable wall is laterally unsupported at the roof level, while the west gable wall is laterally unsupported at the second-floor level, resulting in structural instabilities at both locations. Additionally, the building's interior is exposed to the elements, creating a risk of significant snow accumulation before stabilization efforts can begin. Any additional loading would further increase the risk of collapse. Furthermore, due to fire suppression efforts, the structure been flooded with water. The resulting freeze-thaw cycles may accelerate the deterioration of structural elements, compounding the existing instability.

Conclusion

The fire-damaged heritage building at 2730 Elgin Mills Rd E, Markham, Ontario, has suffered significant structural damage, including the destruction of the roof, partial collapse of the east gable end wall, and structurally significant deterioration of the west gable end wall.

Substantial sections of the building structure are currently damaged beyond the reasonable limit of repair. Due to the observed structural instabilities and potential safety risks, it is crucial to proceed with caution during any proposed preservation, restoration, and deconstruction efforts. Ensuring the safety of workers should be prioritized regardless of the course of action.

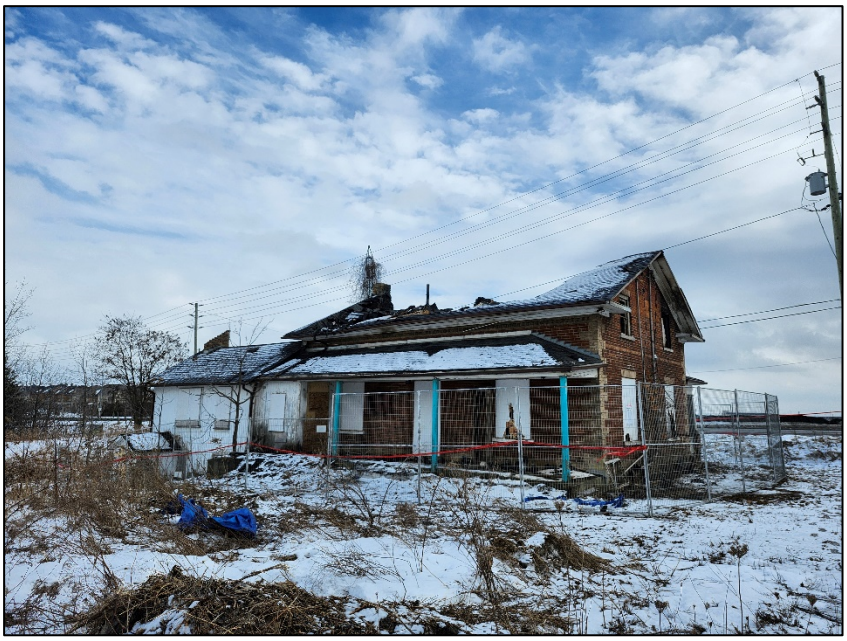
It is the opinion of the undersigned that utilizing as much of the salvaged material from the existing building as part of a future reconstruction at the new location is the most effective means of ensuring safety while preserving the remaining heritage fabric.

Per

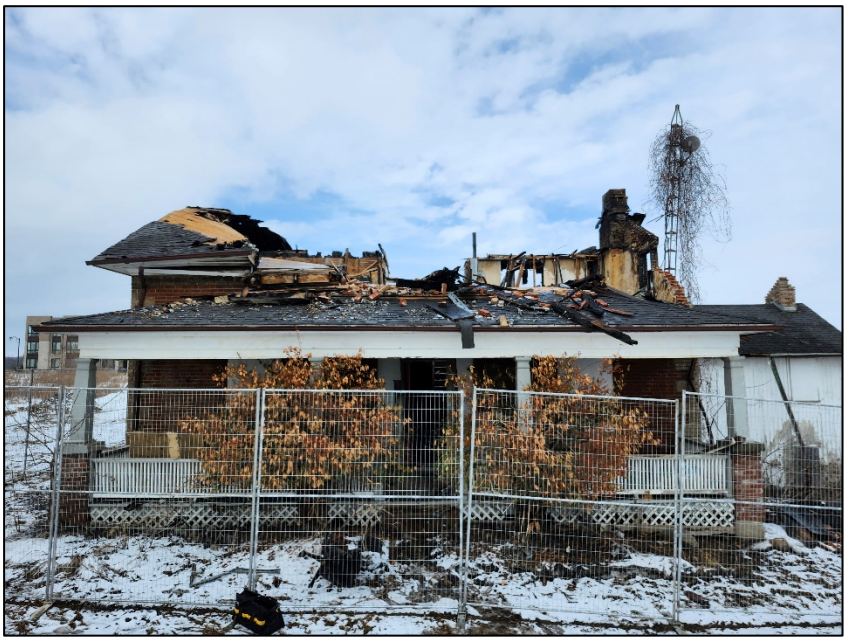
Dominic Geisser, E.I.T.
Structural Designer
Tacoma Engineers Inc.

Encl. Appendix A – Photographs (5 pages)

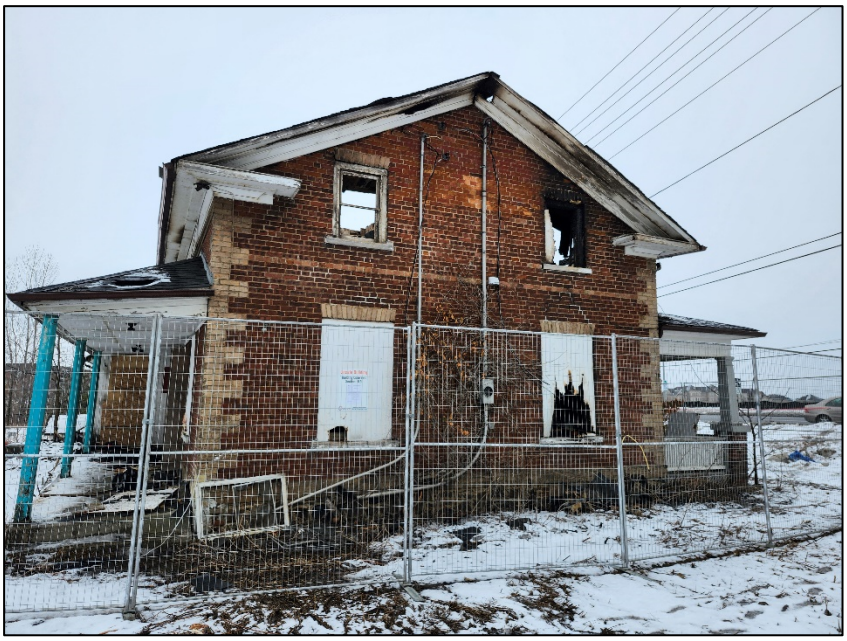
Appendix A: Photographs



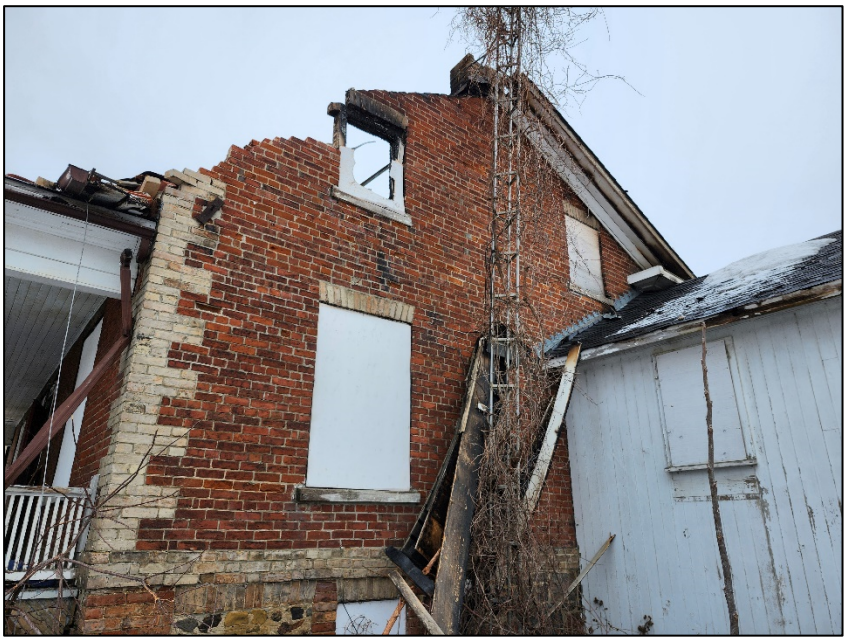
Photograph 1: North façade



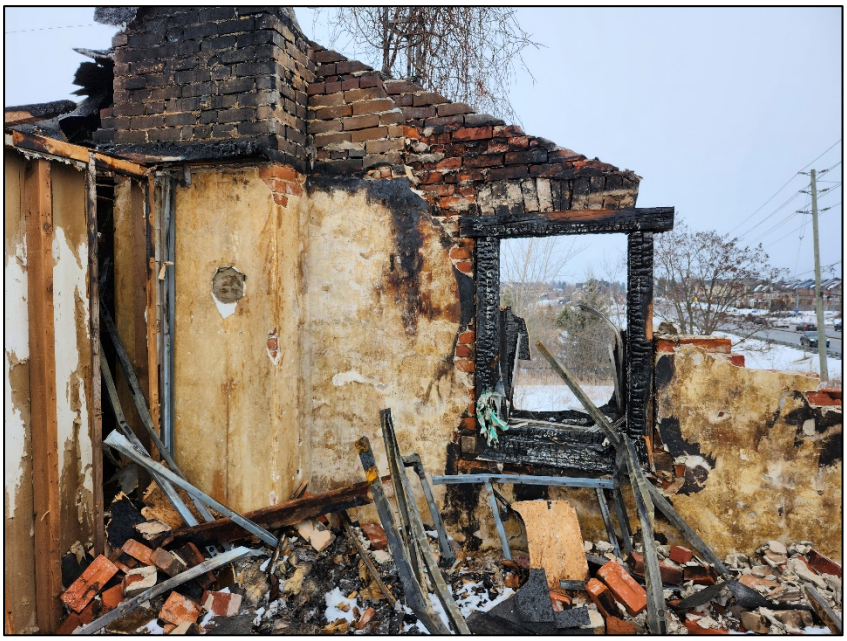
Photograph 2: South façade



Photograph 3: West façade

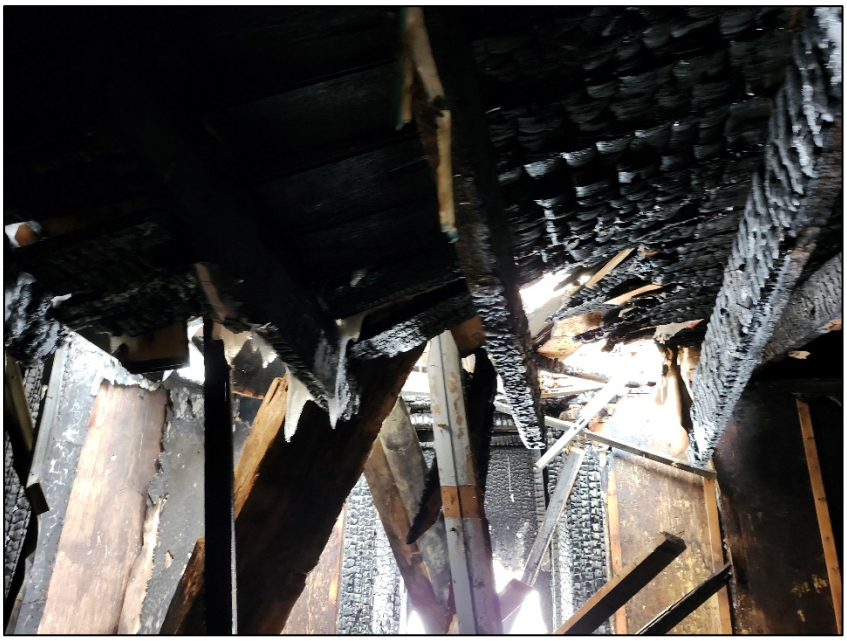


Photograph 4: East façade

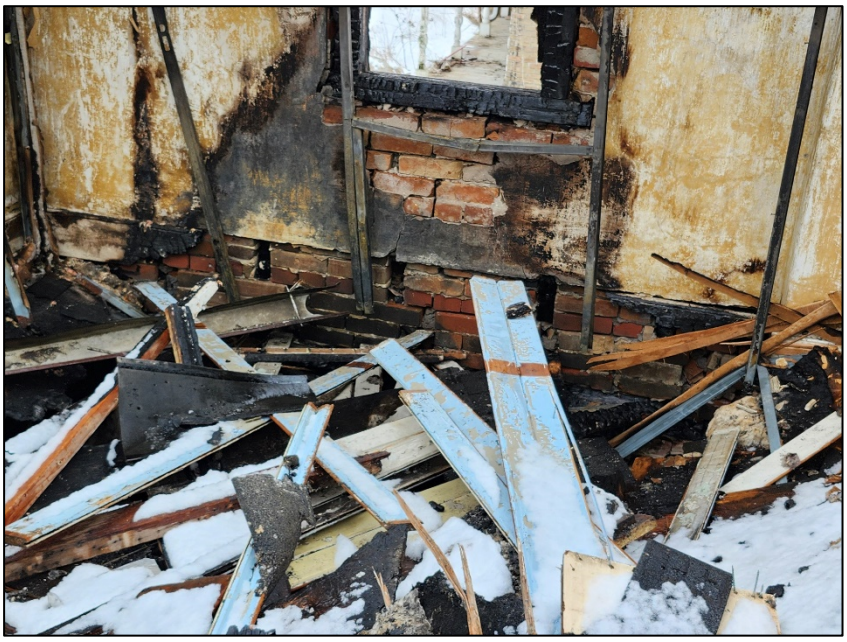


Photograph 5: Partially collapsed east gable wall

Photograph 6: Deteriorated masonry on the west gable wall



Photograph 7: Collapsed second level floor



Photograph 8: Collapsed second level floor