



HERITAGE MARKHAM

EXTRACT

Date: November 18, 2025

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

EXTRACT CONTAINING ITEM # 6.1 OF THE ELEVENTH HERITAGE MARKHAM
COMMITTEE HELD ON NOVEMBER 12, 2025

6. PART FOUR - REGULAR

6.1 DEMOLITION HERITAGE PERMIT APPLICATION 16 JOHN STREET, THORNHILL HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT (16.11)

File Number:
HE 25 140685

Peter Wokral, Senior Heritage Planner, introduced the item regarding a demolition permit for the house at 16 John Street following a fire that occurred in the summer of 2025. An Engineering Assessment Report was completed, and the structural engineer determined that the house must be completely demolished due to the damage caused by the fire and the unsafe conditions. Heritage Section staff supports the demolition provided that measured drawings of the historic portion of the house are created so that the original exterior can be replicated in the same general location, based on an archival photograph of the house.

Evelin Ellison, deputant, spoke on behalf of the Ward One South Thornhill Residents Association to emphasize the need to maintain the visual historical character of the core streetscape. Ms. Ellison requested that the City of Markham commission an independent heritage engineering report to determine whether any part of the original structure can be salvaged. Ms. Ellison further recommended that, if demolition is approved, it be conditional on reconstructing the building in a manner consistent with its original form, scale, and contribution to the streetscape.

Barry Nelson, deputant, spoke on behalf of the Thornhill Historical Society to urge the Committee to defer the item until an independent heritage sensitive structural engineer can conduct an assessment of the building. Mr. Nelson spoke about the importance of historical building conservation and expressed that any rebuilding should proceed as selective reconstruction rather than as a replica building.

Edward Burlew, the owner, responded to the comments from the deputants. Mr. Burlew described the condition of the house prior to the fire, noted the efforts made to maintain the property, clarified the context of the building's condition before the incident, explained the dangers the building poses in its current condition, and stated that his intention is to construct an exact replica of the original building.

The Committee made the following comments:

- Asked about the process for placing conditions on demolition permits and how the City can enforce such conditions.
- Sought clarification on the purpose and impact of obtaining an additional engineering report, and what new information would be provided by deferring the item for another expert review.
- Asked whether any exact drawings of the original structure exist, whether the architect can take accurate measurements to determine the basic form of the building, and whether the intent is to replicate the building to the 1969 photograph.
- Expressed that attempts be made to salvage any materials such as windows or doors, to the reconstruction of the building.

Frank Park, architect for the application, also responded to comments from the Committee regarding the ability to determine accurate measurements of the building based on photographs and on-site measurements. Mr. Park noted that he will work with Heritage Section staff to gather as many archival photographs as possible in order to obtain accurate measurements.

Recommendation:

THAT the written submission from Barry Nelson, on behalf of the Thornhill Historical Society, be received;

THAT the deputations by Evelin Ellison, on behalf of the Ward One South Thornhill Residents Association, Barry Nelson, on behalf of the Thornhill Historical Society, be received;

THAT Heritage Markham recommends that if any building materials of the original structure can be salvaged that it be repurposed for the historic replica of the house;

AND THAT Heritage Markham recommends that Council only support the demolition of the house at 16 John Street, conditional on the owner preparing measured drawings of the historic portion of the house to be used in the construction of an accurate replica of historic house in the same general location on the property.

Carried