



MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Markham Committee

FROM: Peter Wokral, Senior Heritage Planner

DATE: August 11, 2021

SUBJECT: Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision Applications
ZA 18 149630 & SU 18 149630
Alexander McPherson House (31 Victory Avenue)
186 Old Kennedy Road and 31 and 51 Victory Avenue
Milliken Community

Property/Building Description: Alexander McPherson House, c. 1840, one and one half storey frame farmhouse, Georgian architectural tradition

Use: Vacant

Heritage Status: Designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (By-law 2017-86)

Application/Proposal

- Staff has received applications seeking approval of a proposed By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision in support of a proposed development of 95, rear-lane oriented townhouses divided into 15 separate blocks along with the extension of “Street B”, a new north-south public road (see attached conceptual Site Plan);

Background

- The properties at 186 Old Kennedy Road, 51 and 31 Victory Avenue are all under the same ownership;
- The properties were recently purchased by a new owner who has revised the development applications submitted by the previous owner to only apply to the property at 186 Old Kennedy Road, and not 31 and 51 Victory Avenue as previously proposed;
- In 2017, the previous owner applied to demolish the Alexander McPherson House which occupies the property at 31 Victory Avenue, but withdrew their application with no objection when the City acted to designate the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, with the intention of having it incorporated into any proposed redevelopment of the property;

- Since that time, few measures have been taken by the owners of the Alexander McPherson House to protect it from further deterioration, and the building remains threatened with loss due to neglect;
- The site plan drawing associated with the revised Zoning Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision applications does not illustrate the incorporation of the Alexander McPherson into the proposed residential townhouse development, and the Alexander McPherson House is shown remaining vacant on its original foundation situated on lands intended to be conveyed for a future school;
- In June of 2021, Staff received two Engineering reports from the current owner, prepared in order to justify a new demolition permit application, concluding that that Alexander McPherson House should be demolished due to its poor physical condition. Interestingly, one of the reports also concluded that McPherson house was capable of being restored, but questioned the value of restoration given the loss of original features and cost;
- Heritage Staff provided preliminary feedback indicating that they would not support the demolition of the McPherson House and this appears to have dissuaded the owner from submitting a formal demolition permit application, or a notice of their intention to demolish the McPherson House;
- Staff also communicated their intention to see the McPherson House sensitively incorporated into the proposed townhouse development as a detached dwelling, as it is unlikely that any work to preserve the McPherson House will occur in the near future, or a suitable use will be found for the house if it remains on lands that are to be conveyed for a future school.

Staff Comment

- The Alexander McPherson House property was individually designated by Council pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act in 2017 (see attached statement of significance)
- Given that the site plan accompanying the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision does not propose incorporation and restoration of the Alexander McPherson House, Staff recommends that Heritage Markham not support either application from a heritage perspective, and that the Committee recommend that the Alexander McPherson House be sensitively incorporated into the proposed townhouse development and restored as a detached residence.

Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham

THAT Heritage Markham does not support the proposed Zoning By-law amendment and Draft Plan of Subdivision applications (ZA 18 149630 & SU 18 149630) from a heritage perspective as the development proposal does not incorporate the Alexander McPherson House;

THAT the development proposal for 186 Old Kennedy Road be revised to sensitively incorporated and restore the Alexander McPherson House as a detached dwelling;

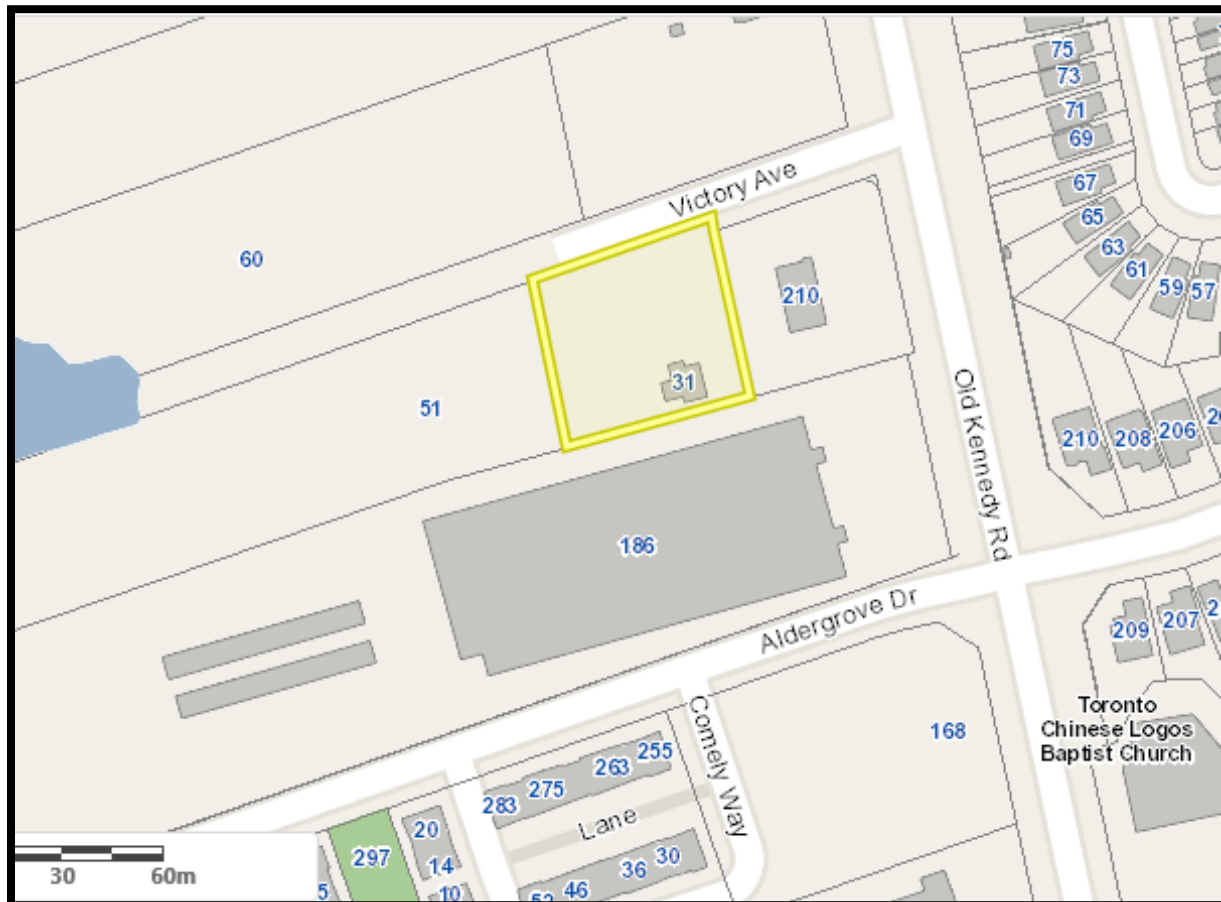
THAT as a condition of approval for the Draft Plan of Subdivision which includes the Alexander McPherson House, the City should secure the standard heritage requirements including:

- secure a Heritage Easement Agreement for the cultural heritage resource;
- obtain a Conservation/Restoration Plan for the cultural heritage resources on the property including both maintenance and restoration requirements as part of a Site Plan Agreement, with implementation secured through a financial security;
- secure commitments from the owners to undertake necessary maintenance on the existing cultural heritage resource, and the proper boarding if it is to continue to be left vacant.
- secure a Markham Remembered plaque to highlight and celebrate the identified cultural heritage resource;

AND THAT the Alexander McPherson house be brought into compliance with both the City's Property Standards and Keep Markham Beautiful By-laws.

File: 31 Victory Ave. Milliken

The Alexander McPherson House
31 Victory Ave. Milliken



The Alexander McPherson House
31 Victory Avenue, Milliken



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Alexander McPherson House 31 Victory Avenue c.1840

The Alexander McPherson House is recommended for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act as a property of cultural heritage value or interest, as described in the following Statement of Significance.

Description of Property

The Alexander McPherson House is a one and a half storey frame residence located on the south side of Victory Avenue in the community of Milliken. Its architectural front faces Old Kennedy Road.

Historical or Associative Value

The Alexander McPherson House is of historical or associative value as the former home of Alexander McPherson, a farmer of Scottish birth that settled in the area in 1830. The township directory of 1837 places him in this location prior to the formal granting of the Lot 2, Concession 5 to him by the Crown in 1846. Alexander McPherson Jr. was bequeathed the property in 1878. He served as a lieutenant in the York Militia. The farm remained in the ownership of McPherson descendants into the 20th century.

Design or Physical Value

The Alexander McPherson House is a representative example of a one and a half storey frame farmhouse with the influence of the Georgian architectural tradition. Although the original exterior cladding is concealed under modern materials and the windows and doors have been replaced within their original openings, the essential form of the c.1840 building remains clearly discernable.

Contextual Value

The Alexander McPherson House is one of a grouping of 19th and early 20th century buildings within the historic community of Milliken. As the oldest remaining building in the area, the McPherson House represents the early phase of Milliken's history, when it was an agricultural community prior to suburban development that began to occur following the First World War.

Significant Architectural Attributes

Exterior character-defining attributes that embody the cultural heritage value of the Alexander McPherson House include:

- Overall form of the building, including the rectangular plan shape of the main block, one and a half storey height, and the one and a half story rear wing;
- Original door and window openings;
- Medium-pitched gable roof with projecting eaves, suggesting eave returns were once present;
- Wood cladding, trim, and eave details that may remain concealed by modern materials.

Proposed Conceptual Site Plan

