



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: November 23, 2020

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**SUBJECT:** Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse, 10961 Victoria Square Boulevard, Ward 2

**PREPARED BY:** Peter Wokral, Senior Heritage Planner, ext. 7955

**REVIEWED BY:** Regan Hutcheson, Manager Heritage Planning, ext. 2080

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. That the report titled “Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse, 10961 Victoria Square Boulevard, Ward 2”, dated November 23, 2020, be received;
2. That as recommended by Heritage Markham, the George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse -10961 Victoria Square Boulevard be approved for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act as a property of cultural heritage value or interest;
3. That the Clerk’s Department be authorized to publish and serve Council’s Notice of Intention to Designate as per the requirements of the Ontario Heritage Act;
4. That if there are no objections to the designation in accordance with the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Clerk be authorized to place a designation by-law before Council for adoption;
5. That if there are any objections in accordance with the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act, the Clerk be directed to refer the proposed designation to the Ontario Conservation Review Board;
6. That if the designation is referred to the Conservation Review Board, Council authorize the City Solicitor and appropriate staff to attend any hearing held by the Board in support of Council’s decision to designate the property; and
7. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is to recommend to Council that the “George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse” be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

**BACKGROUND:**

**The property is listed on the Markham Register**

The subject dwelling has been recently relocated a short distance from its former address at 10975 Woodbine Ave. (See Figure 4-Archival Photograph) to a prominent lot at the corner of Victoria Square Boulevard and George Peach Avenue that forms an entrance to the surrounding subdivision development (See Location Map and Aerial Map Figures 1 &2). The property is listed on the Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The Register is the City’s inventory of non-designated properties

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identified as having cultural heritage value or interest, Part IV properties (individual designations) and Part V properties (district designation).

**The George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse is a fine example of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century solid brick classical revival farmhouse constructed for a prosperous farming family**

The George and Isabella Farmhouse is fine example of the solidly built, architecturally forthright farmhouses constructed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century during one of the most prosperous agricultural eras in Markham's history. As a condition of subdivision approval, the exterior of the house has been meticulously restored and enhanced with a replica front veranda and compatible rear addition and attached two car garage. The dwelling acts as a fitting entrance to the newly developed subdivision, and provides a tangible reflection of the City of Markham's Motto "Leading while Remembering" (see Figure 3- Photographs of the George and Isabella Peach farmhouse).

**The George and Isabella Peach House has been assessed using the Province's Designation Criteria**

The Government of Ontario on January 25, 2006 passed a regulation (O.Reg. 9/16) which prescribes criteria for determining a property's cultural heritage value or interest for the purpose of designation. Municipal councils are permitted to designate a property to be of cultural heritage value or interest if the property meets the prescribed criteria.

The purpose of the regulation is to provide an objective base for the determination and evaluation of resources of cultural heritage value. The prescribed criteria help ensure the effective, comprehensive and consistent determination of value or interest by all Ontario municipalities. The criteria are essentially a test against which properties can be judged; the stronger the characteristics of the property compared to the standard, the greater the property's cultural heritage value. The property may be designated if it meets one or more of the following criteria.

- The property has design value or physical value because it:
  - Is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type expression, material or construction method,
  - Displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit,
  - Demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
  
- The property has historical value or associative value because it:
  - Has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community;
  - Yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or
  - Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community
  
- The property has contextual value because it:

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- Is important in defining , maintaining or supporting the character of an area
  - Is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings
  - Is a landmark

Following staff's research and evaluation under Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property merits designation under Part IV (Section 29) of the Ontario Heritage Act for its design, associative and contextual value.

From a design perspective, the George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse is a representative example of a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, solid brick Classic Revival farmhouse. It exhibits high quality architectural detailing, craftsmanship and building techniques reflecting the growing prosperity of Markham's farming families in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century around the time of the both the Crimean War (1853-56) and American Civil War (1861-65) when instability in both Europe and United States led to high prices for Canadian agricultural products. In this era, many farming families in Canada West, were able to upgrade from earlier modest log and frame buildings to more substantial and comfortable brick and stone farmhouses.

The property has associative value for representing the former farming uses and families that worked the land surrounding hamlet of Victoria Square for almost 200 years. George Peach immigrated to Upper Canada from England in the 1830's. He and his wife Isabella Loadman were well established by the 1850's, and had acquired the means to construct the brick farmhouse circa 1860. The Peach family played a significant role in the local Primitive Methodist Church at Victoria Square, and George Peach was an occasional lay preacher at the Peach's meeting house, near the crossroads community of Cashel.

The property has contextual value as it maintains its original orientation and general proximity to the portion of Woodbine Avenue renamed Victoria Square Boulevard and it now forms a historical landmark surrounded by parkland that marks the north end of the hamlet of Victoria Square.

The Statement of Significance – Reasons for Designation is attached as Appendix 'A'.

### **Heritage Markham has recommended designation**

The designation process under the Ontario Heritage Act requires a municipal council to consult with its municipal heritage committee when properties are considered for designation. Heritage Markham recommended that the George and Isabella Peach House be designated as a property of cultural heritage value or interest on June 10, 2015 once successfully relocated to its new lot.

### **OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:**

**The protection and conservation of heritage resources is consistent with City policies**

The City of Markham Official Plan contains cultural heritage policies related to the protection and conservation of heritage resources, including how they are to be treated within the development of an area. Cultural heritage resources are often a fragile gift from past generations. They are not a renewable resource, and once lost, they are gone forever. Markham understands the importance of safeguarding its cultural heritage resources and uses a number of mechanisms to protect them. It is the policy of Council to recognize their significance by designating individual properties under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act. Designation helps to ensure that the cultural heritage values and heritage attributes are addressed and protected.

As a condition of development approval for the plan of subdivision, the owner agreed to enter into a Heritage Easement Agreement and to permit the designation of the property under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. The owner executed the Heritage Easement Agreement in 2015.

The owner has restored the exterior of the dwelling as per a Heritage Site Plan Agreement and has installed a Markham Remembered plaque on the property highlighting the history of the property and the Peach family.

#### **Provincial planning policies support designation**

The Ontario Government's Provincial Policy Statement which was issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act includes cultural heritage policies. These policies indicate that significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved. Designation provides a mechanism to achieve the necessary protection. The policies further indicate that development and site alteration may be permitted on adjacent lands to protected heritage property where the proposed development has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the heritage attributes of the resource will be conserved.

#### **Designation acknowledges the importance of the heritage resource**

Designation signifies to both the owner and the broader community that the property contains a significant resource that is important to the community. Designation doesn't restrict the use of the property. However, it does require the owner to seek approval for property alterations that are likely to affect the heritage attributes described in the designation by-law. Council can also prevent, rather than just delay, the demolition of a resource on a designated heritage property.

The owner has been advised that a designation by-law is being recommended and has no objections. The designation of this cultural heritage resource is supported by staff.

#### **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Not Applicable

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS**

Not Applicable

**ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

Heritage designation aligns with the strategic priorities of Managed Growth and Environment. Designation recognizes, promotes and protects heritage resources, which strengthens the sense of community. The preservation of heritage buildings is environmentally sustainable because it conserves embodied energy, diverts sound construction materials from entering landfill sites, and reduces the need to produce and transport new construction materials.

**BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:**

Acceptance of this recommendation to designate the property located at 10961 Victoria Square Boulevard under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act will require the Clerk's Department to initiate the following actions:

- publish and serve on the property owner, the Ontario Heritage Trust and the public through newspaper advertisement, Council's notice of intention to designate the property as per the requirements of the Act: and
- prepare the designation by-law for the property to be approved by Council.

**RECOMMENDED BY:**

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Biju Karumanchery, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.  
Director of Planning & Urban Design

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Arvin Prasad, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.  
Commissioner of Development Services

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Figure 1 - Owner/Agent and Location Map

Figure 2 - Aerial Map

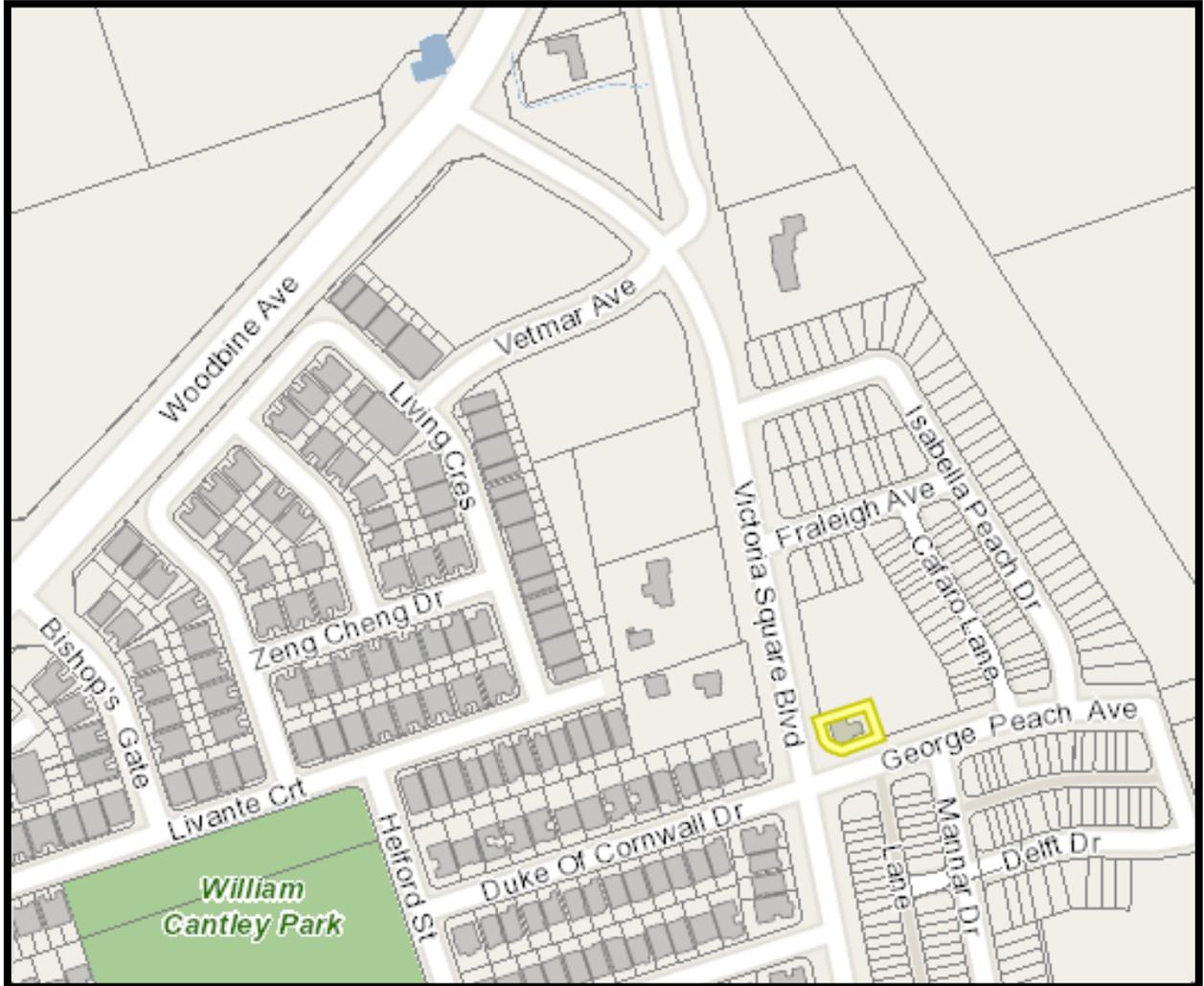
Figure 3 - Photographs of the George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse

Figure 5- Archival Photograph of the George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse

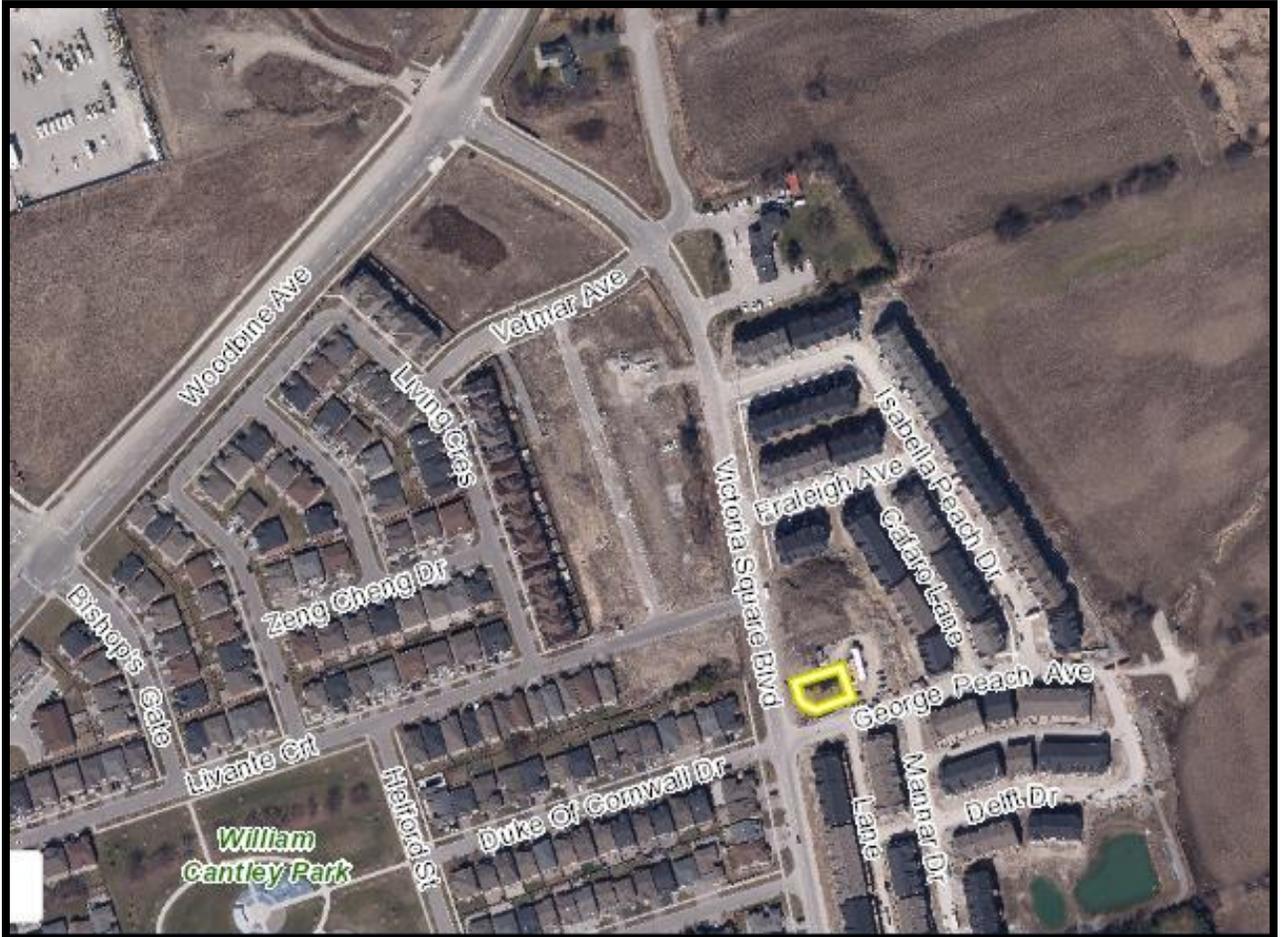
Appendix 'A' – Statement of Significance

**FIGURE 1- Owner and Location Map**

**Owner:** EP Victoria Square Manors LP



**FIGURE 2 - Aerial Map**



**FIGURE 3 – Photographs of the George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse**



**FIGURE 4-Archival Photograph of the George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse (prior to restoration)**



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**Appendix ‘A’  
Statement of Significance/Reasons for Designation**

**George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse  
c.1860  
10961 Victoria Square Boulevard**

The George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse is recommended for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act as a property of cultural heritage value or interest, as described in following Statement of Significance.

**Description of Property**

The George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse is located on the east side of Victoria Square Boulevard, north of the historic community of Victoria Square. The property has transitioned from farmland to residential development.

**Design and Physical Value**

The George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse has design value as a representative example of a mid-nineteenth century farmhouse designed with elements of the Georgian architectural tradition and the Classic Revival style. Its T-shaped plan with a rear kitchen wing, patterned brickwork, one and a half storey height and symmetry in the placement of openings is characteristic of its period of construction. Brickwork on the west wall has a Flemish bond pattern, an indication of superior craftsmanship.

**Historical and Associative Value**

The property has historical and associative value as the former home of George Peach, an English-born farmer, and his wife Isabella Loadman. The Peach family immigrated to Canada about 1830. By the mid-1850s, George and Isabella Peach were well enough established to purchase a farm from King’s College and build a fine brick farmhouse circa 1860. The farmhouse contributes to an understanding of the former agricultural community. The family played a significant role in the local Primitive Methodist Church at Victoria Square, and George Peach was an occasional lay preacher at Peach’s meeting house, near the crossroads community of Cashel.

**Contextual Value**

The George Peach House has contextual value as a farmhouse located within the former farming community that surrounded the historic crossroads community of Victoria Square. The property maintains its original orientation and general proximity to the portion of Woodbine Avenue renamed Victoria Square Boulevard and it now forms a

historical landmark surrounded by parkland that marks the north end of the hamlet of Victoria Square.

**Significant Architectural Attributes**

Character-defining attributes that embody the cultural heritage value of the George and Isabella Peach Farmhouse include:

- T-shaped plan outline of the original house;
- One and a half storey height and roofline;
- Brick walls with a red brick body decorated with quoins and arches over door and window openings in white brick;
- Gable roof with wide, overhanging eaves with eave returns, asphalt shingles and wood cornice mouldings;
- Gable end chimneys on the main block;
- Front entrance with transom light, multi-paned sidelights, and panelled wood door;
- Six over six paned wood windows;
- Replicated full width front veranda and side porch;
- 2019 one and one half storey frame addition;