



MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Markham Committee

FROM: Evan Manning, Heritage Planner

DATE: May 11, 2022

SUBJECT: Intention to Demolish a Property Listed on the Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest
7951 Yonge Street, Thornhill

FILE: N/A

Property/Building Description: Two-storey single-detached building constructed c1910-1915

Use: Commercial (formerly residential in use)

Heritage Status: Listed on the Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest and considered adjacent, as defined in the 2014 Official Plan, to the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District

Application/Proposal

- The City has received written notice from the owner of 7951 Yonge Street (the “subject property”) of their intention to demolish the existing building. A development application to replace the existing commercial building has not been submitted.

Background

- The subject property is located on the east side of Yonge Street. A low-rise commercial plaza is located immediately to the north of the subject property while high-rise, multi-unit residential buildings are found to the south and east of the subject property. The Thornhill Club, a private golf course, is located adjacent to the subject property on the west side of Yonge Street. For a property map, aerial image and photographs of the subject property, please see Appendix A and B.
- The subject property is also adjacent to the northern wings of the Thornhill-Markham Heritage Conservation District which extend north of the core area of the district in Markham along the Yonge Street right-of-way to meet with the boundary of the Thornhill-Vaughan Heritage Conservation District on the west side of Yonge St.
- The existing Edwardian building dates from c1910-1915 and was originally residential in use. Based on a review of archival photography included in Appendix E, conversion of

the property to commercial uses occurred in the mid-1980s. Removal and replacement of original windows and doors is assumed to have occurred at this time.

Legislative and Policy Context

Ontario Heritage Act

- As per Section 27 (9) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (the “Act”), an owner wishing to demolish a property listed on a Municipal Register must give the council of the municipality at least 60 days notice in writing of their intention to demolish or remove the building.
- The council of the municipality has 60 days following receipt of the intention to demolish to render a decision as to whether to designate the property under Part IV of the Act, or to consent to its removal. If council fails to make a decision within the prescribed time frame, the council shall be deemed to have consented to the demolition of the listed property.
- As noted above, the subject property is listed on the Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. Note that “listing” a property as provided for by Section 27 (3) of the Act does not necessarily mean that the property is municipally-considered to be a significant cultural heritage resource, rather it provides a mechanism for the municipality to be alerted of any application to demolish the on-site structure(s), and provides time for evaluation of the property for potential designation under Part IV of the Act.

City of Markham Official Plan (2014)

- Chapter 4.5 of the Official Plan (“OP”) contains polices concerning cultural heritage resources. The following are relevant to the proposed demolition of 7951 Yonge Street:
- Concerning the identification and recognition of ***cultural heritage resources***, Chapter 4.5.2.4 of the OP states that it is the policy of Council:

*To ensure consistency in the identification and evaluation of ***cultural heritage resources*** for inclusion in the ***Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest*** and/or for individual property designation, by utilizing the criteria for determining ***cultural heritage*** value or interest established by provincial regulation under the Ontario Heritage Act and criteria included in Markham’s Heritage Resources Evaluation System.*

- Concerning the protection of ***cultural heritage resources***, Chapter 4.5.3.2 of the OP states that it is the policy of Council:

*To give immediate consideration to the designation of any ***significant cultural heritage resource*** under the Ontario Heritage Act if that resource is threatened with demolition, inappropriate alterations or other potentially adverse impacts.*

Staff Comment

Ontario Regulation 9/06 Evaluation

- The subject property was evaluated using Ontario Regulation 9/06 “Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest” in accordance with the above-referenced OP policy. This regulation, introduced by the Province in 2006, provides a uniform set of criteria for municipalities to use when determining whether a property should be considered a significant cultural heritage resource.
- Based on research undertaken in support of the Ontario Regulation 9/06 evaluation for the subject property, it is the position of Heritage Section staff that the subject property has both minimal *design/physical value* as well as *historical/associative value* while possessing some *contextual value*.
- For a copy of the evaluation using Ontario Regulation 9/06, please see Appendix C.

Markham’s Heritage Resources Evaluation System

- The subject property was evaluated using Markham’s Heritage Resources Evaluation System in accordance with the above-referenced OP policy. This evaluation system, created by Heritage Section staff in 1991 to offer more context-specific criteria for the assessment of potential significant cultural heritage resources, has a point-based property classification system consisting of three tiers (Group 1, 2 and 3). It is a complementary evaluation system to Ontario Regulation 9/06 to which it predates.
- The City’s Group 1, 2 and 3 classifications are defined as follows:
 - GROUP 1 those buildings of major significance and importance to the Town and worthy of designation under the Ontario Heritage Act
 - GROUP 2 those buildings of significance and worthy of preservation
 - GROUP 3 those buildings considered noteworthy
- The City’s Evaluation System guidelines also indicate the following:
 - It should also be noted that the designation or demolition of a building should not be based solely on the results of this rating and classification exercise. There may be exceptions, for example where a building may possess one specific historical attribute of great significance, but otherwise receives a low rating. While the evaluation criteria and classification system will provide a valid guideline for both staff and Council, the Town (now City) should retain the option to make exceptions when necessary.
- The findings of this evaluation indicate that the subject property straddles Groups 2 and 3. For a description of the typical guidance associated with each Group, please see Appendix D.

Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham

THAT Heritage Markham finds that 7951 Yonge Street is a significant cultural heritage resource and should be conserved through designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

OR

THAT Heritage Markham finds that 7951 Yonge Street is not a significant cultural heritage resource and has no objection to demolition of the existing building.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 'A'	Property Map
Appendix 'B'	Aerial Image Photographs of the Subject Property
Appendix 'C'	Ontario Regulation 9/06
Appendix 'D'	Markham's Heritage Resources Evaluation System
Appendix 'E'	Archival Material

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Appendix 'A'

Property Map



The subject property is outlined in yellow (Source: City of Markham)



The subject property (light blue) in relation to the boundaries of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District (dark blue) with the 60m adjacency buffer (Source: City of Markham)

Appendix 'B'

Aerial Image and Photographs of the Subject Property



The subject property is circled in red (Source: Google)



The north and west (primary) elevations (above) & north and east elevations (below) of 7951 Yonge Street (Source: City of Markham)



South elevation (above) and the subject property as seen from Yonge Street (below) (Source: City of Markham)

Appendix 'C'

Ontario Regulation 9/06

1. The property has design value or physical value because it,

- i. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method,*
- ii. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, or*
- iii. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.*

Staff Comments: 7951 Yonge Street is a modest representative example of Edwardian Classicism in a residential context. The architectural style emerged in the early twentieth century during the reign of King Edward VII (1901-1910) as a reaction against the excesses of Victorian architecture. Characteristics of the architectural style included rational balanced designs, expansive front porches, red brick masonry with rusticated stone detailing, prominent front gables and often in a residential application, restrained ornamentation. Edwardian architecture also featured elements of pre-Victorian architecture with classical detailing employed most commonly. While 7951 Yonge Street exhibits some of these characteristics, notably the building's material composition, rationality, and restrained classical detailing, they are unremarkable in their execution and do not reflect a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit. Similarly, the building is not a rare or a unique example of Edwardian Classicism as it displays level of sophistication more typical of suburban development.

2. The property has historical value or associative value because it,

- i. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community,*
- ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture, or*
- iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.*

Staff Comments: 7951 Yonge Street is historically situated on Lot 32, Concession 1. The initial landowner was Anthony Hollingshead, a United Empire Loyalist, who was awarded the parcel of land in 1798. Hollingshead built the first dwelling on the property further to the east. Constructed of adobe and fired brick with wood framing, it is believed that parts of this initial dwelling were incorporated into the later on-site structure (now known as the Heintzman House). Based on the archival material included within Appendix D, the property passed through a number of landowners before being purchased by George Crookshank in the mid-nineteenth century. Crookshank served in a variety of capacities within the colonial government as well as the private sector, amassing considerable wealth. To reflect this success, he constructed a 13 room mansion on the site of the Hollingshead farmhouse. Following his death in 1859, the property, known as Sunnyside Manor, was purchased by George Paxton who in turn sold the property to Henry Lemon. The farm was subsequently purchased by John Francis in 1881. His sons Samuel

and Elijah farmed the property. Samuel Francis moved into 7951 Yonge Street in 1916 (it is assumed that the Francis family built the dwelling). Charles Theodore Heintzman and his wife, Marion, purchased Sunnyside Manor in 1930 from Samuel Francis who passed away shortly afterwards in 1937. His son and his wife, William and Mae (Campbell) Francis lived in the house until their deaths in 1969 and 1953, respectively.

In 1955 Sunnyside Manor, contemporarily known as the Heintzman House, was sold by the Heintzman family to real estate developers who constructed the residential community that exists today. This development removed the residential buildings that formerly existed adjacent to 7951 Yonge Street as well as the linear driveway that provided access to the Heintzman House. In 1985, alterations were undertaken to 7951 Yonge Street as part of its conversion to commercial uses including the removal of original doors and windows.

While there is significance to the property (i.e. Lot 32, Concession 1) it is associated with the owners that constructed and later expanded the Heintzman House rather than the later occupants of 7951 Yonge Street who are not known to have made a significant contribution to the development of Thornhill.

3. The property has contextual value because it,

- i. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area,*
- ii. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings, or*
- iii. is a landmark. O. Reg. 9/06, s. 1 (2).*

Staff Comments: 7951 Yonge Street is positioned on a prominent rise of land north of Cricklewood Park. Construction coincided with the gradual subdivision of the original land grants for farming purposes, and following the arrival of the The Metropolitan Railway (later Toronto & York) in 1885, small-scale suburban growth. While not of a size or prominence to be considered a landmark, the building is historically linked to its surroundings. Together with municipally-recognized heritage resources along both sides of Yonge Street, notably the nearby Mortimer House at 8000 Yonge Street, the subject property helps make legible an earlier layer of residential growth within Thornhill.

Appendix ‘D’

Markham’s Heritage Resources Evaluation System

GROUP 1

- *The designation of the building pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act will be pursued.*
- *Every attempt must be made to preserve the building on its original site.*
- *Any development proposal affecting such a building must incorporate the identified building.*
- *Appropriate alternative uses for the building will be encouraged when necessary to ensure its preservation.*
- *A Letter of Credit will typically be required to ensure the protection and preservation of the building.*

GROUP 2

- *The designation of the building pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act will be encouraged.*
- *The retention of the structure in its existing location is encouraged.*
- *Any developed proposal affecting such a structure should incorporate the identified building.*
- *Appropriate alternative uses for the building will be encouraged when necessary to ensure its preservation.*
- *A Letter of Credit may be required to ensure the protection and preservation of the building.*

GROUP 3

- *The designation of the building pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act may be supported with an approved restoration plan, but would not be initiated by the Town.*
- *Retention of the building on the site is supported.*
- *If the building is to be demolished, a photographic record, measured drawings and/or salvage of significant architectural elements may be required.*

Appendix 'E'

Archival Material



Archival photographs of the subject property pre-1985 prior to conversion to commercial use(above) and in 1985 during conversion to commercial use, note the exterior paint has been removed by this time and the original windows replaced (Source: Thornhill Historical Society)



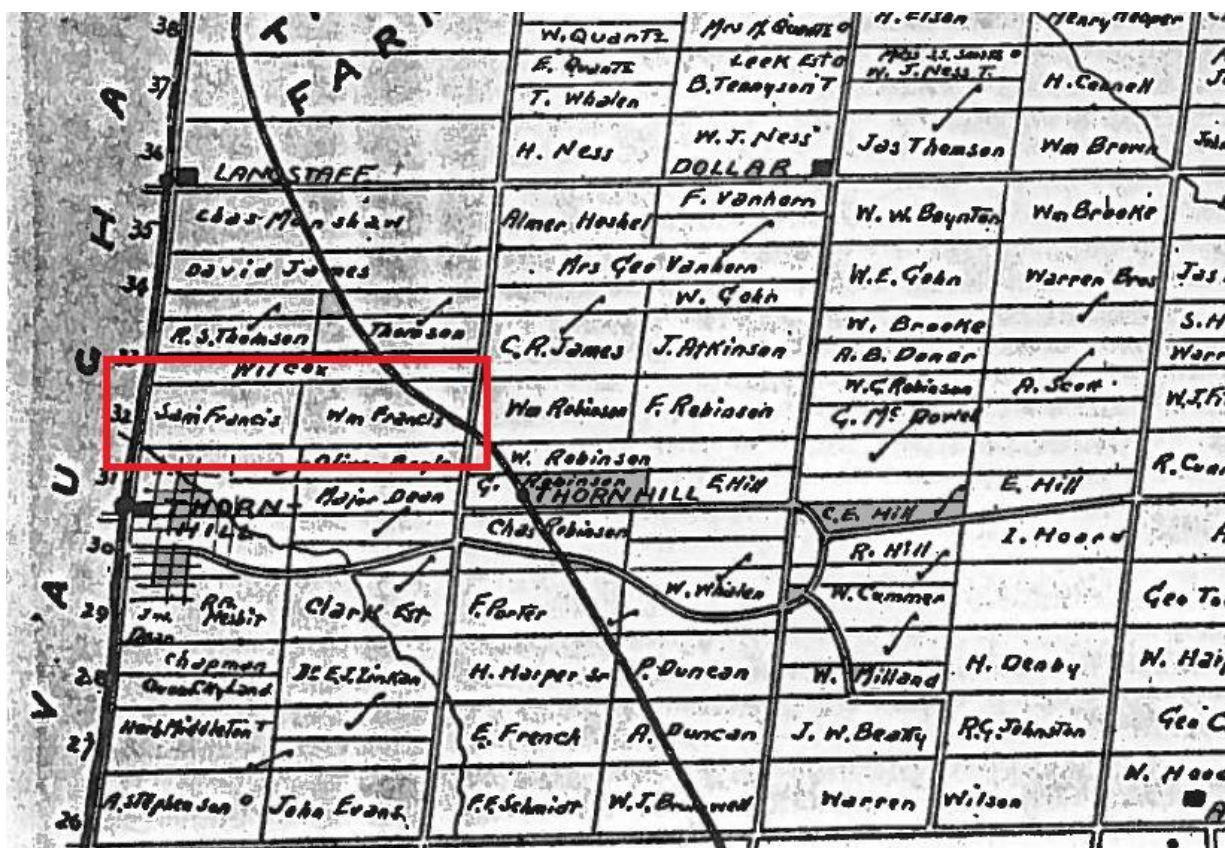
Aerial photograph of the subject property (circled in red) and surrounding context prior to the arrival of post-war suburban growth c1961. The Heintzman House (circled in orange) is accessed from a long, linear driveway from Yonge Street (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



Aerial photograph of the subject property (circled in red) and surrounding context. Note the adjacent suburban growth which by this point has replaced the linear driveway to the Heintzman House (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



Aerial photograph of the subject property (circled in red) c1977. By this point the surrounding context resembles its contemporary form with the exception of the adjacent commercial plaza which has yet to be constructed (Source: City of Toronto Archives)



1919 Agricultural Census indicating land ownership/tenancy of Lot 32, Concession 1