



MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Markham Committee

FROM: Evan Manning, Senior Heritage Planner

DATE: September 14, 2022

SUBJECT: Request for Feedback
26 Langstaff Road East, Thornhill

Property/Building Description: Former Willowdale Baptist church constructed c.1937

Use: Institutional, currently vacant

Heritage Status: 26 Langstaff Road East is listed on the City of Markham's Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Application/Proposal

Purpose

- To provide an update by TMHC Inc. ("TMHC") on the activities of Infrastructure Ontario ("IO") related to municipally-recognized cultural heritage resources at 26 Langstaff Road East in the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan Area;

Context

- IO has retained TMHC to conduct a Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report ("CHER") to determine the cultural heritage significance of the property municipally-known as 26 Langstaff Road East (the "subject property");
- At the request of the Ontario Realty Corporation, the subject property was evaluated in 2009 for its potential cultural heritage value by Contentworks Inc. The report concluded that the subject property was "not of significant heritage value".
- This evaluation predated the adoption of the *Standards & Guidelines for Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties* (the "S&Gs") by the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries in April 2010. As such, IO has retained TMHC to conduct an evaluation of the subject property within the framework of the S&Gs;
- TMHC has produced a draft version of the CHER, and is seeking input and feedback from Heritage Markham regarding the preliminary conclusions of the report;
- Note that the CHER is not associated with a redevelopment proposal for the subject property, nor has a demolition permit been submitted.

Background

Area Context

- The subject property is located on the west side of Langstaff Road East and is nearby to the eastbound onramp leading from Yonge Street to Highway 407;

- The majority of surrounding buildings have been removed and the land left vacant. There remains a small concentration of buildings located on the east side of Ruggles Avenue that house light industrial uses;
- The Munshaw Homestead at 10 Ruggles Avenue was designated under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* in 2014 (By-law 2014-20);
- In 2008, the Town of Markham engaged a team of planners specializing in Transit Oriented Development (TOD.) to examine the community of Langstaff and prepare a Langstaff Gateway Land Use and Built Form Master Plan to guide future redevelopment. The area is a large block east of Yonge Street, south of Highway 407, west of Bayview Avenue and north of the Holy Cross Cemetery. This old, mixed-use neighbourhood contains a number of industrial and commercial operations, many with open storage. Intermixed with this activity were some older houses, a number of which were listed on the Town of Markham's *Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest*. Pomona Creek runs through the study area, and there is a significant woodlot at the east end of the site;
- Land was being assembled by development companies in anticipation of a major transformation of this key transportation node, which has significant potential for intensification as it is served by York Region Transit/VIVA, GO, Yonge Street, and Highway 407. In the future, a proposed subway line will be an additional transportation advantage;
- A Public Meeting was held on the Langstaff Gateway Official Plan Amendment and Secondary Plan on March 2, 2010. Official Plan Amendment OPA 189 was approved in June of 2010;
- In September 2021, the Province announced a proposed Bridge Station Transit Oriented Community (TOC) that would apply to approximately 25 hectares within the Langstaff Gateway Secondary Plan area. The area is bound by Yonge Street to the west, Hwy 7 to the north, Cedar Avenue to the east and the Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery to the south.
- On April 14, 2022 the Province issued an enhanced Minister's Zoning Order to provide zoning for the Bridge Station TOC.

Historical Information

- 26 Langstaff Road East was built as a Baptist church in 1937 and was initially municipally-known as 26 Church Street;
- In 1979, the building was expropriated by the Government of Ontario and combined with adjacent lands to provide the future corridor for Highway 407;
- Rather than demolish the building, the Provincial government leased the subject property to a series of Christian denominations who would tenant the building for the next thirty years. The subject property is currently vacant and is owned by the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS).

Heritage Markham Committee

- The Heritage Markham Committee (the "Committee") has been consulted on matters concerning the subject property on two previous occasions in May 2010 and December 2013;
- At its meeting in May 2010, the Committee accepted the Heritage Building Evaluation Sub-Committee's preliminary recommendation that the subject property qualified as a Group 2 building under Markham's Heritage Resources Evaluation System. For a description of this evaluation system, please see Appendix D of this memo;

- At its meeting in December 2013, the Committee excluded the subject property in its recommendation to not object to the removal of a series of listed heritage properties in the Langstaff Secondary Plan area (75 and 77 Langstaff Road East and 20 and 24 Ruggles Avenue). The Committee excluded the subject property because it was not proposed to be removed at that time.

Heritage Policy

Municipal Heritage Recognition and Legislative Context

- The subject property is listed on the of Markham's Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest;
- Note that “listing” a property as provided for by Section 27 (3) of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (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. This, however, only applies if the property is municipally or privately-owned;
- As per Section 26.1 (1) of the Act, provincially-owned properties are not subject to Part IV-designation by a municipality, allowing for their removal by the relevant Provincial ministry or agency should it be determined that the property or properties do not possess significant cultural heritage value in accordance with Ontario Regulations 9/06 and 9/10.

Staff Comment

- As noted above, Heritage Section staff are not aware of any specific development application for the subject property.
- As noted in the past, the principal issue regarding retention of heritage buildings in this area is the difficulty in the integration of these small buildings into the proposed high density development, and their preservation during the development of the planning area, which will require significant changes to site grading and extensive work for creating the necessary infrastructure to support the new community.
- As requested by TMHC, the Committee may wish to offer feedback on the preliminary findings of the CHER as it relates to the cultural heritage significance of the subject property.

Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham

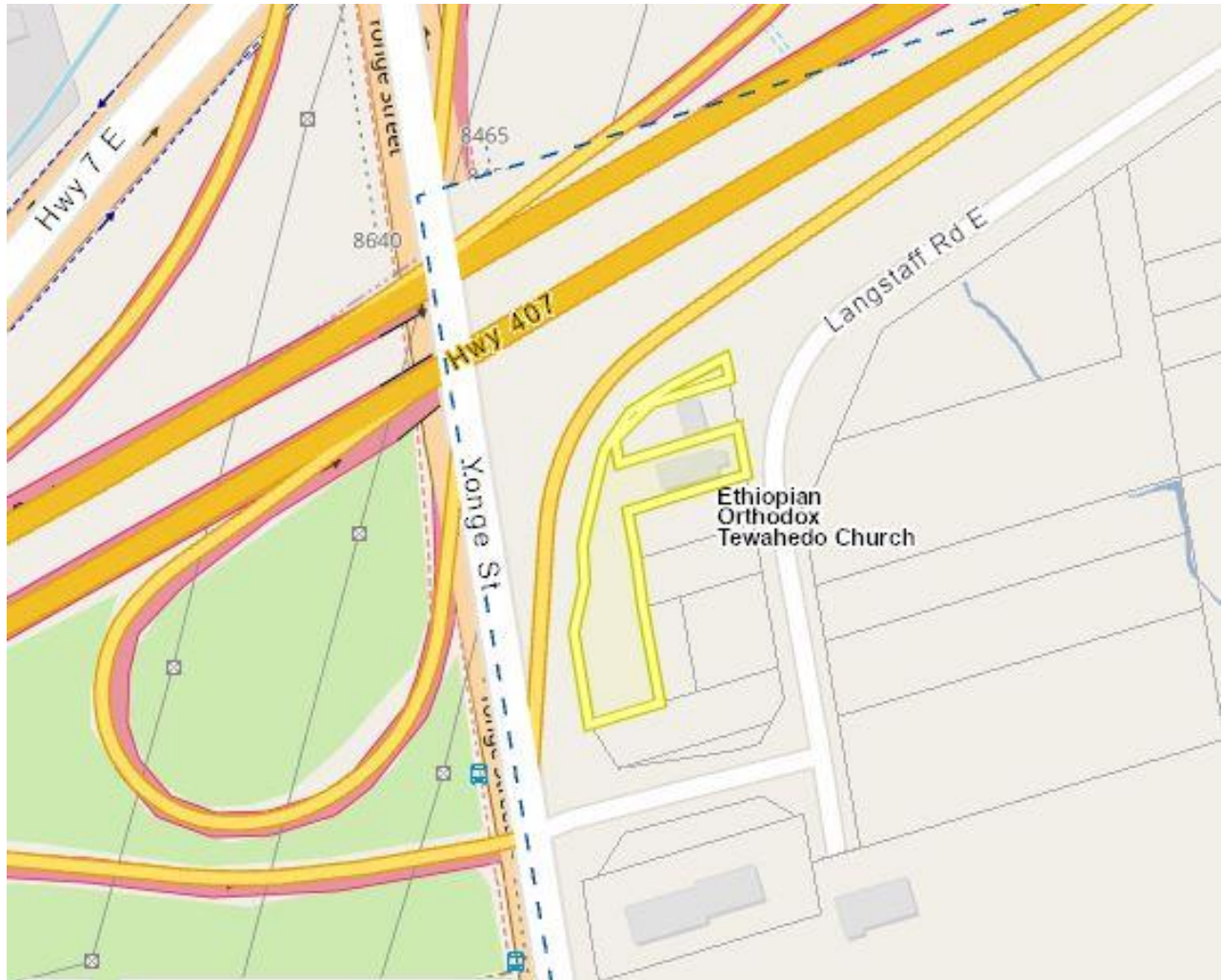
THAT Heritage Markham receive the deputation from TMHC regarding the preliminary findings of their CHER for 26 Langstaff Road East.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix ‘A’	Location Map
Appendix ‘B’	Image of the Subject Property
Appendix ‘C’	Aerial Image of the Subject Property
Appendix ‘D’	Markham’s Heritage Resources Evaluation System

Appendix 'A'

Location Map



Property map showing the location of the subject property [outlined in yellow] (Source: City of Markham)

Appendix 'B'

Image of the Subject Property



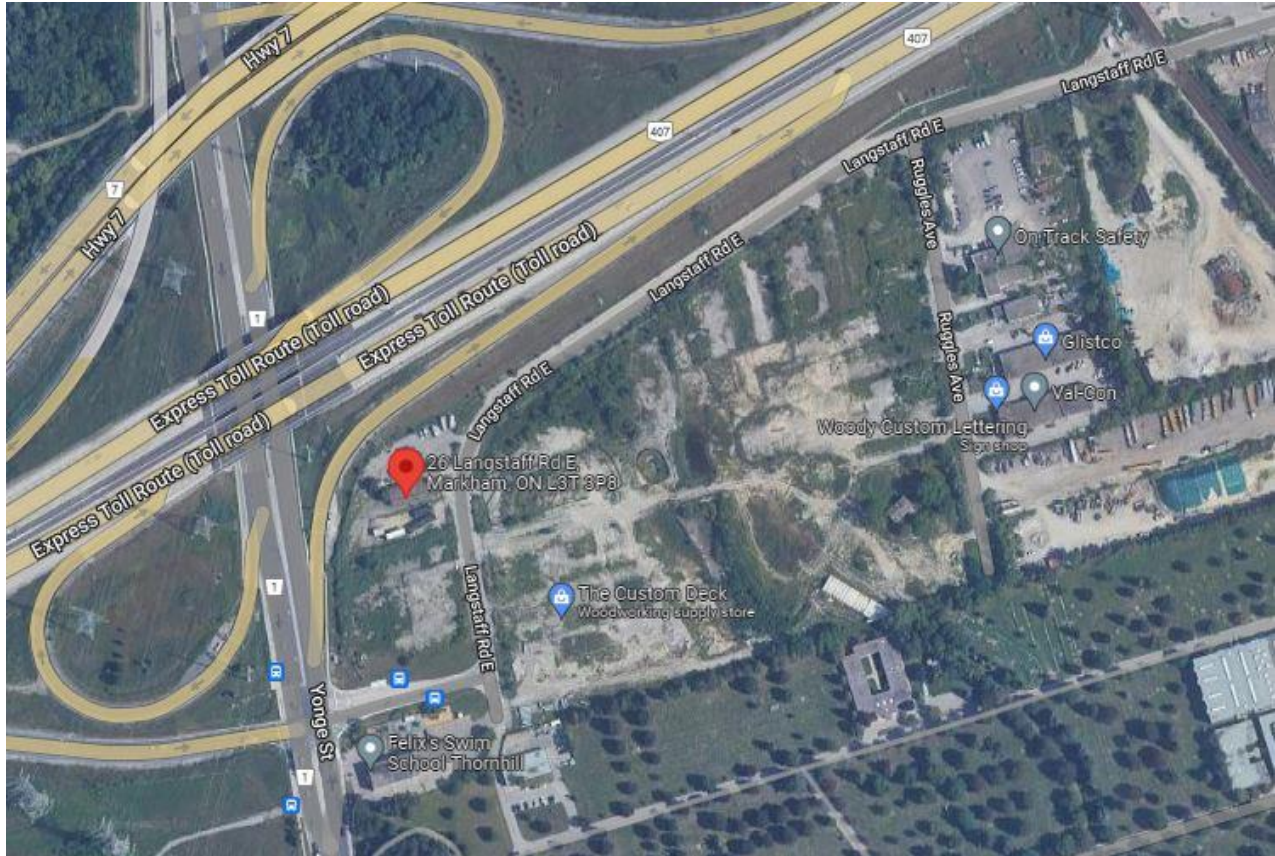
The east (primary) elevation of 26 Langstaff Road East (Source: Google)



(Source: Staff Photo 2004)

Appendix 'C'

Aerial Image of the Subject Property



(Source: Google)

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.*