



MEMORANDUM

TO: Heritage Markham Committee

FROM: Evan Manning, Senior Heritage Planner

DATE: November 9, 2022

SUBJECT: Ontario Regulation 9/06 Evaluation
26 Langstaff Road East, Thornhill

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

Use: Institutional, currently vacant

Heritage Status: Listed on the City of Markham's Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

Application/Proposal

Purpose

- To evaluate the cultural heritage value of 26 Langstaff Road East (the “subject property”) under Ontario Regulation 9/06 for potential future designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Note that this evaluation is not associated with a demolition application for the subject property.

Background

Area Context

- The subject property, currently under the management of Infrastructure Ontario (“IO”), is located on the west side of Langstaff Road East 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 contain 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.

Heritage Markham Committee

- The Heritage Markham Committee (the "Committee") has been consulted on matters concerning the subject property on three previous occasions in May 2010, December 2013, and September 2022;
- 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;
- At its meeting in September 2022, the Committee received a presentation prepared by TMHC Inc. ("TMHC") regarding the cultural heritage value of the subject property. This evaluation was undertaken at the request of IO. The draft evaluation concluded that the subject property did not meet the criteria as contained within Ontario Regulation 9/06 and was therefore not a significant cultural heritage resource. In response, the Committee recommended that Heritage Section staff undertake their own evaluation of the subject

property under Ontario Regulation for future potential designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Heritage Policy

City of Markham Official Plan (2014)

- Chapter 4.5 of the Official Plan (“OP”) contains policies concerning cultural heritage resources. The following are relevant for the purposes of this memo:
- Concerning the identification and recognition of ***cultural heritage resources***, section 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***, section 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.*

Ontario 9/06 Evaluation

- Ontario Regulation 9/06 “Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest” was introduced by the Province in 2006 to provide a uniform set of criteria for municipalities to use when determining whether a property should be considered a significant cultural heritage resource. As such, it has been used as the evaluation framework for purposes of this memo. A property must meet at least one of the criteria to be eligible for designation under the Act.

Municipal Heritage Recognition and Legislative Context

- The subject property is listed on the **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.

- While designation has no force and effect while a property is under provincial ownership, the protections afforded by Part IV designation come into immediate effect when a property is transferred to municipal or private ownership.

Staff Comment

- At the request of the Committee, Heritage Section staff have undertaken an evaluation of the subject property under Ontario Regulation 9/06 (refer to Appendix D);
- Following this evaluation, Heritage Section staff have concluded that the subject property does not meet the criteria as outlined in the regulation, and as such is not considered to be a significant cultural heritage resource;
- Given this conclusion, Heritage Section staff do not recommend designation of the subject property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

Suggested Recommendation for Heritage Markham

THAT Heritage Markham concurs with the findings of the Ontario Regulation 9/06 evaluation as conducted by Heritage Section staff, and does not recommend designation of 26 Langstaff Road East under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

OR

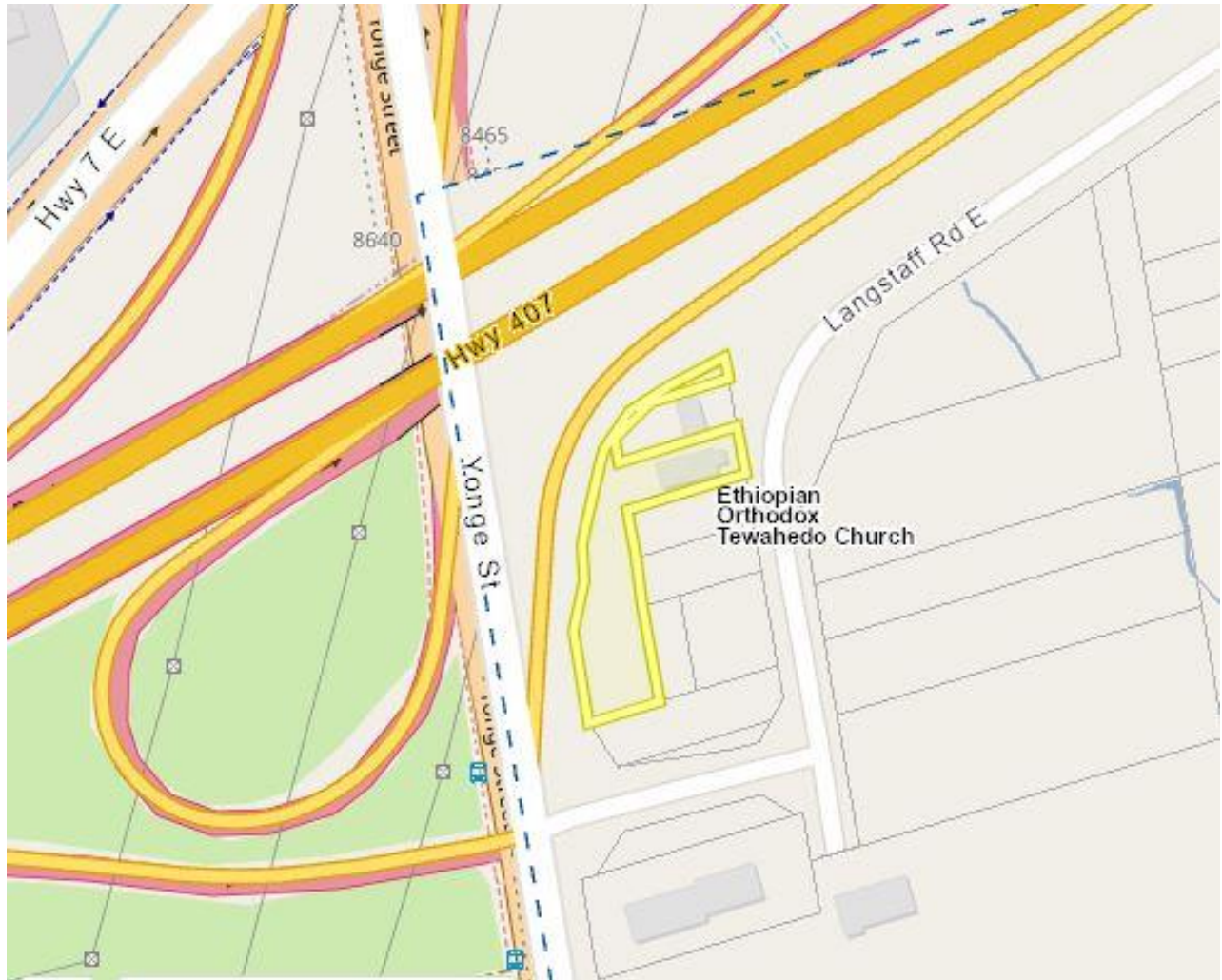
THAT Heritage Markham considers 26 Langstaff Road East to be a significant cultural heritage resource, and recommends designation of the property under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix 'A'	Location Map
Appendix 'B'	Images of the Subject Property
Appendix 'C'	Aerial Image of the Subject Property
Appendix 'D'	Ontario Regulation 9/06

Appendix 'A'

Location Map



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

Appendix 'B'

Images of the Subject Property



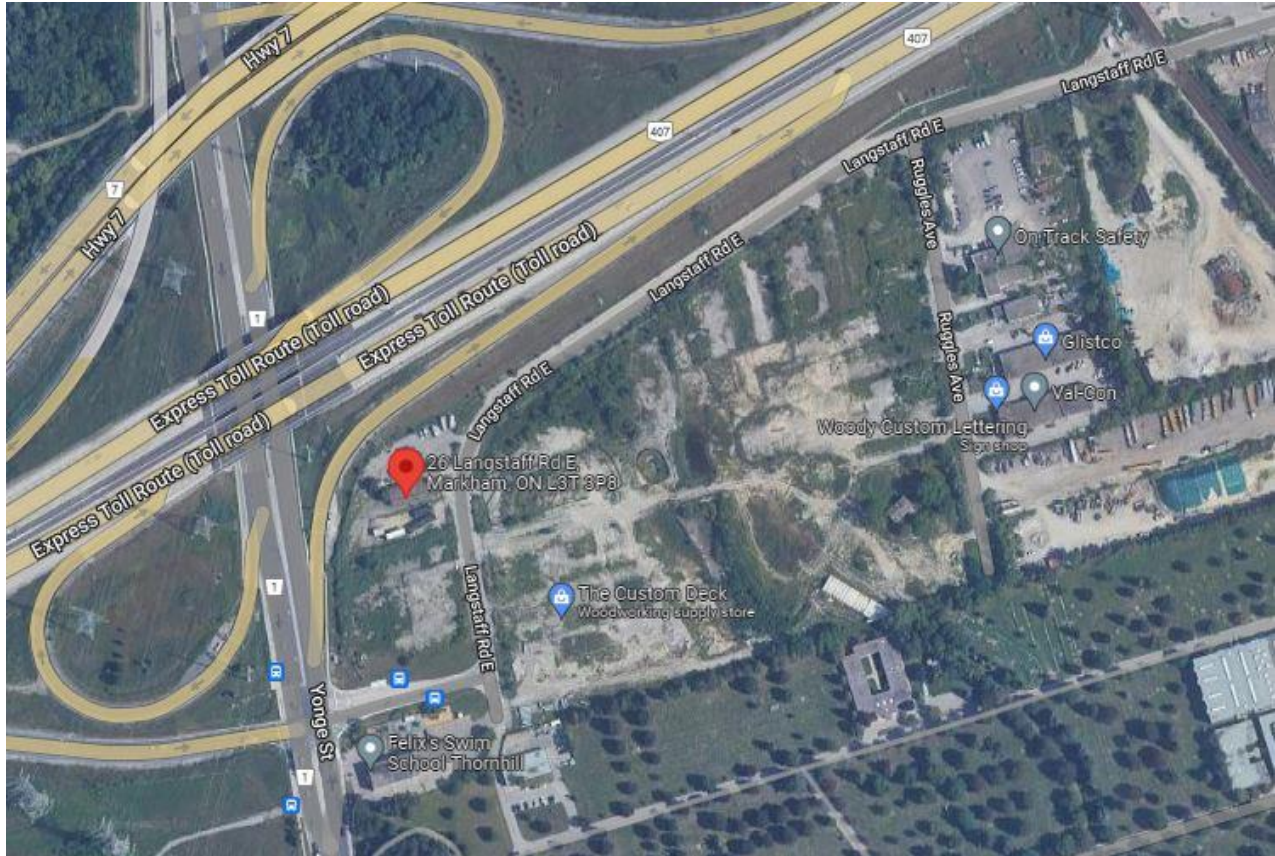
The east (primary) elevation of 26 Langstaff Road East (Source: Google)



(Source: Staff Photo 2004)

Appendix 'C'

Aerial Image of the Subject Property



(Source: Google)

Appendix 'D'

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: 26 Langstaff Road East is unremarkable in design with an absence of fine detailing or materials. The modest ecclesiastical structure is not a rare, unique or early example of its typology, and does not display a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit, nor does it demonstrate a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

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: 26 Langstaff Road has been owned/tenanted by a series of Christian denominations since its construction in 1937. These groups, however, are not known to have made a remarkable contribution to the communities of Langstaff or Thornhill relative to other local congregations, and as such has limited potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of either community. Given the utilitarian character of the building, it's unlikely to be the product of notable architect or designer, and as such has limited significance to either community.

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: The historic context of 26 Langstaff has been highly degraded through the construction of major infrastructure (i.e. the adjacent hydro corridor and Highway 407), disruption of the original road network, and the removal of all but one nearby residential building. What nearby structures do remain contain light industrial uses that are physically, visually, and functionally linked to the current suburban character of the area rather than the historic character of Langstaff. Given the high degree of alteration to surrounding lands, the legibility of Langstaff as a nineteenth century community has been lost. As such, the former church sits as an isolated fragment with tenuous connections to its historic context, limiting its value as a

potential heritage resource. Further, its modest design value and diminutive scale do not make it a landmark.