

# **HERITAGE MARKHAM EXTRACT**

Date: May 11, 2022

To: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning  
E. Manning, Heritage Planner

EXTRACT CONTAINING ITEM # 4.1 OF THE FIFTH HERITAGE MARKHAM  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MAY 11, 2022

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## **4.1 DEMOLITION PERMIT APPLICATION TO DEMOLISH A PROPERTY LISTED ON THE MARKHAM REGISTER OF PROPERTY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST 7951 YONGE ST, THORNHILL (16.11)**

Evan Manning, Heritage Planner, addressed the committee and summarized the memorandum, noting that the property was adjacent to the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District, and was listed on the Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. Mr. Manning advised that the former dwelling, now in commercial use, was fairly intact with modifications including the replacement of doors and windows and the reconfiguration of the original ground floor window along the west elevation. Otherwise the form of the building was intact. He noted that the building was screened from Yonge Street with mature trees.

Mr. Manning indicated that Staff evaluated the property under Ontario Regulation 9/06, noting that the evaluation framework was established by the Province in order to ensure consistency among municipalities when assessing a property's potential cultural heritage value. It was the opinion of Staff that the building has modest design and historical value, but possesses some contextual value as per Ontario Regulation 9/06. He advised that the property was also evaluated using the City's Heritage Resources Evaluation System, and it was the opinion of Staff that the property straddled the Group 2 and Group 3 classifications.

Jeffrey Streisfield, a representative of the applicant, indicated that the property lacks strong reasoning for designation under Ontario Heritage Act, as the property did not constitute a significant cultural heritage resource. Mr. Streisfield noted that the building is located within a highly altered landscape, being surrounded by apartment buildings to the east. Mr. Streisfield requested that the Committee recognize that the property is proximate to the future Royal Orchard subway station, and should be removed to allow for residential intensification of the site. A deputation was made by Valerie Burke recommending the support of the recommendation that finds the house to be a significant cultural heritage resource which should be conserved through designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. She noted that it was an Edwardian Classical building, and is

historically significant for its association with the Heintzman House. Ms. Burke commented that Thornhill has lost many heritage buildings along Yonge Street and that the remaining ones should be conserved to preserve the heritage character of the area.

The Committee provided the following feedback:

- Inquired of Ms. Burke which significant cultural heritage resources were lost on Yonge Street, and whether they were lost prior to the establishment of the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District in 1986.
  - Ms. Burke advised that many were lost in the 1960's but that the area could not afford to lose more cultural heritage resources. She noted that the home could be incorporated into future development plans for the property.
- Inquired of Ms. Burke why the property was not put forward for designation while Ms. Burke was on the Heritage Markham Committee.
  - Ms. Burke stated that some properties get overlooked until brought to the Committee's attention.
- Asked Mr. Streisfield what the total area of the property was, and how far north and south the property extended from the house.
  - Mr. Streisfield advised that the property was approximately 2,200 square meters, and the boundaries were as outlined in yellow on the image provided in the appendix of the Staff report.
- Inquired as to the Applicant's intention for property, as intensification alone did not warrant demolition of the house, and inquired whether incorporation of the house into a future development scheme was possible.
  - Mr. Streisfield stated that intensification was planned to provide needed housing, including affordable housing, given the proximity to the future subway station. He advised that the house should not be conserved as it wasn't a significant heritage resource, and that consideration could be given to salvaging some of the existing material, such as brick, for incorporation into a future development.
- Commented that the written deputation from Diane Berwick makes a strong case for the significance of the house and property, and that Heritage Markham has a long history of working with applicants to incorporate cultural heritage resources into new developments with an outcome that was beneficial for both parties.
  - Mr. Streisfield reiterated that the house should not be incorporated into future plans or the site because it is not a significant heritage resource, and should not be designated under the Ontario Heritage Act. He stated that the need to provide new housing and affordable housing was more important than this particular building, and that

a decision to conserve the building was a matter for Council to consider.

- Inquired why the building could not be incorporated into the future plans for the property.
  - Mr. Streisfield advised adaptive re-use of the existing building was challenging.
- Inquired whether the Applicant would consider relocating the building within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District, as mentioned in Ms. Berwick's written deputation.
  - Mr. Streisfield indicated that the owner may consider this option. He commented that he did not see the significance of the building in Ms. Berwick's letter and reiterated that the property is not located within the District. Mr. Streisfield did not share Ms. Berwick's perspective that the building is a gateway to the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District.

A deputation was made by Barry Nelson, as a representative of the Thornhill Historical Society (THS). He advised that the THS considers the building to be in excellent condition and contributes to the village-like character of Yonge Street in Thornhill. He stated that the significance of the property is found in its historical connection to the Frances family and the Heintzman House. Mr. Nelson recommended accepting the recommendation that the house is a significant cultural heritage resource and should be conserved. Mr. Nelson commented that he had respect for the applicant, as they have a long history of looking after buildings along Yonge Street, and commended the applicant for maintaining the buildings in good condition.

Mr. Streisfield disputed the comment that the building contributes to the village-like character of Thornhill as there are apartment buildings next to it and the subway may soon come through the area.

**The Committee provided the following feedback:**

- Commented that Mr. Streisfield's use of the word "significant" was overemphasized and stated that it was up to the Committee to determine if the building was a significant heritage resource.
- Commented on the discomfort with discussing demolition without considering the use of the building in a different context elsewhere on the property, and without knowing the future plans for the property.
- Clarified with Mr. Streisfield that the property was approximately 0.25 acres in size, and suggested that the value of the property will be higher without the existing building.
- Indicated support for retaining the building on-site.

- Questioned the definition of significant by someone who had an interest in removing the building, noting that properties with less significance and in poorer condition have been conserved elsewhere.
- Inquired why Staff was not clearly in opposition to demolition of the building.
  - Staff commented that there were multiple viewpoints as to the cultural heritage value of the property and that staff values hearing the advice and input of Heritage Markham. Staff indicated that the building contained some design and historical value as described in Ontario Regulation 9/06, but that it was the position of Staff that it was the value was not significant. Staff clarified that the purpose of the memo was to encourage discussion, rather than present a conclusion as to whether the existing building should be conserved.
- Commented that the village-like character of Thornhill was enhanced by the existing building, and it helps tell the story of Yonge Street development.
- Commented that Heritage Markham's role is to reflect on the building from a heritage perspective and not to evaluate affordable housing.
- Commented that the building can still have cultural historical value despite the property not being within the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District, and having not been previously considered for designation under the Ontario Heritage Act.
- Commented that the quantity and age of the trees on the property gives it significance.
- Commented that the significance of the building was greater than that of the location, and inquired as to the likelihood of the owner permitting relocation.
  - Mr. Streisfield indicated that the applicant was prepared to work with Heritage Markham or others to have the building relocated off-site.
- Inquired about the Committee's options for delaying demolition in an effort to find an alternate option.
  - Staff advised the Committee that the building was Listed rather than designated, and that the Ontario Heritage Act requires

Council to make a decision within 60 days following receipt of the intention to demolish as to whether to designate the property. There is no provision in the Act to extend the timeframe for listed properties facing demolition whereas there is this opportunity for designated properties. Committee was also advised that staff had to be cognizant of the timing of future Council meetings to address the 60 day timeframe.

- Inquired whether the demolition permit would have to be withdrawn to extend the time available to discuss potential alternatives.
  - Staff advised that this would allow for negotiations to occur beyond the aforementioned timeframe
- Commented that heritage buildings have been incorporated into several developments within Markham, and stated that conservation need not conflict with intensification of the property.
- In response to Mr. Streisfield's comment that the City and Metrolinx were aware of the plans for the property, the Committee inquired why the proposed use of the land was not presented to the Committee at the meeting.

After further discussion, Mr. Streisfield agreed on behalf of the applicant to withdraw the demolition application and to work with City Staff and Councillor Irish over the next 30 days to discuss alternative options for the building.

Recommendation:

**THAT Heritage Markham receive the written submissions by Diane Berwick and Valerie Burke and the deputations by Barry Nelson on behalf of the Thornhill Historical Society, and Valerie Burke.**

**Carried**