

## **APPENDIX 'D': Research Reports**

## **RESEARCH REPORT**



### **Nighswander-Topper House**

**Lot 10, Concession 10**

**7855 Highway 7 East**

**c.1890**

**Heritage Section**

**City of Markham Planning & Urban Design**

**2024**

#### **History**

The Nighswander-Topper House is located on a parcel of the centre part of Markham Township Lot 10, Concession 10, west of the C.P.R. railway line.

Samuel Reynolds, U.E.L. received the Crown patent for the entire 200 acres of Lot 10, Concession 10, Markham Township in 1813. He also leased Lot 9, Concession 10 from the Crown in 1803. Lot 9 was directly south of Lot 10. Samuel Reynolds and his wife, Margaret (Van Rensselaer) Reynolds were from Dutchess County, New York. As Loyalists, they first went to New York City in 1777, and then to New Brunswick in 1783, having been displaced by the American Revolution. In the 1830s, Samuel Reynolds sold off different parts of Lot 10 to his sons Justice, William and Asa. Asa Reynolds purchased 50 acres, partly in the eastern half of the lot and partly in the western half.. In 1844, Asa Reynolds sold his property to William Goodfellow Armstrong.

William Goodfellow Armstrong is often referred to as Captain Armstrong due to his service in the militia. He emigrated from Cumberland, England in 1817, and came to Upper Canada via

New York. In 1823, William G. Armstrong purchased Lot 10, Concession 8, a property that stretched from Main Street, Markham Village, to Ninth Line. The Armstrong property became known as Ash Grove Farm.

In 1865, William Armstrong Jr., a son of William G. Armstrong and Esther (Reesor) Armstrong, moved from the homestead near Markham Village to his father's property on Lot 10, Concession 10. This property was called Locust Hill Farm, and this name was adopted for the local post office in 1886. William Armstrong Jr. was the first postmaster. He married Maria McCreight in 1866. William Armstrong Jr.'s second wife was Jane McCreight.

Over time, the Armstrong family increased the size of Locust Hill Farm through the purchase of additional acreage on Lots 9 and 10, Concession 10. By 1875, the property comprised 235 acres and was in the ownership of William Armstrong Jr.

The Ontario and Quebec Railway (later to become part of the Canadian Pacific Railway) was built through this area in 1884, and a station was established on the north side of what is now known as Highway 7 East. The station was initially called Green River but was soon changed to Locust Hill to avoid confusion with the nearby hamlet of Green River in Pickering Township. A hamlet gradually developed on both sides of the sideroad on lands owned by the Reesor and Armstrong families. One of the earliest developments was the building of a combined temperance hotel and general store adjacent to the railway line on a one-acre parcel of Lot 10, Concession 10 purchased by Michael Nighswander and his brothers Henry, David and Tillman in 1884. The Nighswanders are one of Markham's Pennsylvania German families. The temperance hotel and general store were constructed during 1884-1885. In 1885, a post office was established in the community and operated from the Nighswander store. Its name was changed from Green River Station to Locust Hill in 1886.

The Nighswander brothers constructed modest houses for rental purposes to the west of the hotel and store in approximately 1890. According to local tradition, there were three such houses, but an archival photograph in the collection of the Markham Museum shows only two. The houses were said to have been rented for \$36 a year each. The house closest to the store was 7861 Highway 7 East, which has recently been demolished after standing in an abandoned and heavily degraded state for many years. The other Nighswander rental house was the subject property at 7855 Highway 7 East.

In 1892, Michael and Henry Nighswander sold their interest in the property to their brother David Nighswander. In 1899, David and Annie Nighswander sold the eastern portion containing the temperance hotel and store to Charles Mark, and in 1900 sold the western portion containing the two rental dwellings to Alfred Ireson and his nephew William Ireson. In 1908, William and Violet Ireson relinquished their interest in the property to Alfred Ireson. Alfred Ireson was a painter that lived in the nearby community of Belford.



Archival view of the temperance hotel and general store in Locust Hill and the two rental houses to the west c.1920.  
Markham Museum Collection

Alfred and Nettie Ireson sold the rental houses in two parcels in 1913. The easterly house (7861 Highway 7 East) was sold to Minnie King. The westerly house (7855 Highway 7 East) was sold to Christopher Topper. Christopher Topper was an employee of the Canadian Pacific Railway who came to Locust Hill in 1904, according to a note on the back of an archival photograph in the collection of the Markham Museum. He was born in Ontario and had an English background. Christopher Topper married Mary Adeline Porter in 1898. They had a daughter named Grace or Gracie. According to the 1911 census, Christopher Topper's occupation was given as "Track Man." At the time of the 1921 census, he was Section Boss for the railway. The family initially lived as tenants in Locust Hill, but by 1913 were able to purchase one of the modest houses originally constructed by the Nighswander brothers.



Christopher Topper at Locust Hill in 1951.  
Markham Museum Collection

The Topper family were long-time owners of 7855 Highway 7 East. Christopher Topper died in 1962. In that same year his executors and his widow Mary sold the property to Edward and Patricia Butler, who soon sold to Lois Wheeler. In 1973, the property was expropriated by the

Province of Ontario, but was later transferred back to private ownership. In 1979, Lois Wheeler sold to Lee Reid and Tone Saetre. In 1983, the property was purchased by Allan Davidson and Janis Arnold. Janis Davidson is the owner in 2024.

## **Architecture**

The Nighswander-Topper House is a one-and-a-half storey frame dwelling with a gable-fronted rectangular plan. The principal entrance, offset to the left on the primary (north) elevation, indicates a side-hall interior layout. The building rests on a low concrete foundation with its ground floor level set close to grade. There is a one-storey addition on the rear (south) elevation. Wide composition siding in a shingle style used in the 1970s may cover earlier narrow clapboard siding. The gable roof has a medium pitch, with projecting, open eaves. There are no historic chimneys remaining on the roof ridge.

The primary elevation has a single-leaf door opening on the left, and a flat-headed rectangular window opening to the right. The door is a modern insulated unit with a glazed upper portion and a panelled lower portion. A concrete porch with a metal railing provides access to the entrance. A photograph from the early 1980s shows the ground floor window with a rectangular transom light above a fixed single-paned sash. This window, and all others on the building, have been replaced with modern single-hung windows with one-over-one panes. There are two tall, narrow, flat-headed windows on the gable wall on the second floor level. Windows on the side walls are similarly tall, narrow and flat-headed. Door and window trim is plain, and the window openings have projecting lugsills. On the west side wall, the southernmost window has been replaced with a side door. Selected windows have modern, decorative shutters.

Information about the earlier appearance of this house can be found by examining photographs of its now demolished twin at 7861 Highway 7 East. The two houses were sided in narrow clapboard and had single-hung windows with one-over-one glazing. Both had a covered, full-width front veranda supported on simple wood columns and a single-stack brick chimney at the north end of their roof ridge. The houses were simply detailed without ornamental woodwork in their gables or on their verandas.

The Nighswander-Topper House is a vernacular dwelling in a common North American house form known as an open-gable cottage. This type of gable-fronted house was popular for middle-class and working class housing from about the third quarter of the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. It was well-suited to narrow urban lots, but was sometimes used for modestly-scaled farmhouses. The origins of this house form can be traced back to the American Greek Revival architectural style with its gable-fronted houses that echoed the pedimented façades of Greek temples of Classical antiquity. As the gable-fronted house form continued in use past the period of Greek Revival popularity, it evolved into variations that incorporated elements of later architectural styles such as Queen Anne Revival, or were simply designed without any distinguishable stylistic features, as was the case with 7855 Highway 7 East. The removal of the front veranda some time before 1981 has further simplified the character of this house.

## Context

The Nighswander-Topper House is one of a grouping of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings that contribute to and define the character and extent of the historic hamlet of Locust Hill. It is the last remnant of the Nighswander brothers' late nineteenth century development that was a key element of Locust Hill's character. The temperance hotel and general store was lost in 2012. The Nighswander tenant house at 7861 Highway 7 was demolished in 2023 after a number of years of neglect.

## Sources

Abstract Index of Deeds for Markham Township Lots 9 and 10, Concession 10.

Canada Census 1891, 1901, 1911 and 1921.

Directory of Markham Township 1892.

Archival Photograph Collection, Markham Museum.

Find-a-Grave Web Resource: Christopher and Mary Topper.

Property Files for 7861 and 7877 Highway 7 East.

Armstrong, Mrs. J. R. "Locust Hill." *Pioneer Hamlets of York*. Kitchener: Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1977. Pages 63-65.

Champion, Isobel (ed.). *Markham 1793-1900*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, Second Edition, Revised, 1989. Pages 58, 60, 246-248.

McAllister, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995. Pages 90-91.

## Compliance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

*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.*

**The Nighswander-Topper House has design and physical value as an altered representative example of a vernacular gable-fronted cottage of the late nineteenth century.**

*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.*

**The Nighswander-Topper House has historical value as it is associated with the early development of the hamlet of Locust Hill after the arrival of the Ontario and Quebec Railway in 1884, and the theme of industry, innovation and economic development as a component of the Nighswander brothers' development of a combined temperance hotel and general store and adjoining rental housing 1884-1890.**

*The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.*

**The Nighswander-Topper House has contextual value for being one of a number of late nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings that contribute to and define the character and extent of the historic hamlet of Locust Hill.**

## RESEARCH REPORT



### **Peach's United Church** **East Half Lot 26, Concession 6** **10762 McCowan Road** **c.1863; Remodelled c.1890**

**Heritage Section**  
**City of Markham Planning & Urban Design**  
**2024**

#### **History**

Peach's United Church is located on part of the eastern half of Markham Township Lot 26, Concession 6, east of the historic hamlet of Cashel.

Hugh Carfrae received the Crown patent for the entire 200 acres of Lot 26, Concession 6, Markham Township, in 1803. The property passed through the hands of several investors after being purchased by James Fenwick in 1808. James Fenwick, born in Scotland, was a distinguished early resident of the area.

James Fenwick owned Lot 26, Concession 6 for only a short time before selling to a series of non-resident investors. He sold the property to John S. Baldwin in 1819. In 1823, John S. Baldwin sold to his brother, William Warren Baldwin, the noted Toronto doctor, businessman, lawyer, architect, and reform politician.

William W. Baldwin sold to James H. Rose in 1834. The deed abstracts do not provide any information about how Lot 26, Concession 6 came to be in the ownership of William Anderson

by the mid-1850s. Starting at this time, Anderson and his wife began selling small parcels off the western end of the property as the crossroads hamlet of Cashel began to grow.

Markham Township maps of 1853-54 and 1860 show the western half of Lot 26, Concession 6 in the ownership of William Anderson, and the eastern half in the ownership of John Anderson. According to the 1861 census, William Anderson (possibly the son of William Anderson Sr.), a farmer, age 27, was born in Canada West (Ontario). His wife was Mary, age, 21, born in Scotland. They had a son, John, age 4. This must be a different John Anderson from the John Anderson whose name appears on the maps of this time period. There is nothing in the deed abstracts to show the division of the lot into eastern and western parts belonging to William Anderson and John Anderson.

In 1863, John Anderson (possibly John Anderson of Lot 17, Concession 10) sold the eastern half of Lot 26, Concession 6, to John Peach. John Peach was the son of Thomas and Catharine Peach of Lot 23, Concession 7. The Peach family were English immigrants that came to Canada in 1834. John Peach was an unmarried farmer, and according to census records of 1871, he continued to live in his parents' household even after the purchase of the farm east of Cashel. At the time of the 1881 census, John Peach still lived on Lot 23, Concession 7.

In 1863, the same year that the property was sold to John Peach, a plot of land at the south-east corner of Lot 26, Concession 6, was donated for a Primitive Methodist church named Peach's Chapel, or Peach's Appointment, which later became Peach's United Church. The land for the chapel and cemetery were donated by Thomas Peach who held a mortgage on John Anderson's property. In 1862, Thomas Peach entered into an agreement with John Anderson in connection with the church site, which was registered in 1863, just prior to the sale of the eastern part of Lot 26, Concession 6 to Thomas Peach's son John.

The congregation started as a class of Primitive Methodists who had begun meeting in 1847 in a schoolhouse at the northwest corner of Lot 25, Concession 7. The location of this schoolhouse is shown on the McPhillips Map of Markham Township, 1853-54, and on Tremaine's Map of 1860. Curiously, it does not appear on the 1855 map showing Markham school sections.

The leader of the class in 1847 was Reverend William Lyle. Peach's Chapel was one of eleven Primitive Methodist congregations in Markham Township by 1855. With few ordained ministers available, these groups relied on the services of lay preachers, and Thomas Peach, known as "Daddy Peach," was one of these. Some local families that were part of the congregation in the early days included Peach, Hastings, Lee, Spofford, Boynton, Williamson and Jennings.

In a detailed history of the church written by Trevor Watson in 1968, it is stated that the schoolhouse that was the original meeting place for the Primitive Methodist congregation, and that the building was relocated to the site gifted by Thomas Peach in 1863. The old schoolhouse was remodeled to serve as a chapel after funds were raised to do so.



The opening services were held on January 10, 1864. A detailed description of the new church was recorded in an account of the opening of Peach's Chapel in the *Christian Journal* of January 22, 1864: "The Chapel is a very good white clapboard building 38' x 26' with a beautiful porch and tower in the front and six semi-circular windows. It is indeed an exceedingly neat, and commodious chapel." On the Monday following the opening service, a public tea meeting was held which "closed cheerfully with good satisfaction." Henry Jennings, who lived next to the cemetery, donated the lumber for the driving sheds along the north side of the church property. Cemetery plots were free, as per the terms of Thomas Peach's donation of the land.

In 1884, with the union of all Methodist denominations, Peach's became part of the Methodist Church in Canada and was included in the Markham circuit with Markham, Box Grove, Ninth Line, Tenth Line, and Whitevale.

In the April 23, 1890, issue of the *Christian Guardian*, the Reverend Newton Hill, then minister, reported that the congregation was building a new church. They used the old structure which they brick-veneered after removing the old steeple and altering the roofline to a steeper pitch, resulting in the appearance of the building as seen today.

In 1891, Peach's became part of the Unionville circuit, along with Bethel, Christie, Ebenezer, and Hagerman. In 1910, Peach's was transferred to the Lemonville Circuit with Lemonville, Bethesda, and Ballantrae as the other appointments.

In 1925, the United Church of Canada was created through the union of the Methodist Church, some Presbyterian Churches, and the Congregational Church. Peach's became a pastoral charge of the United Church, along with Melville and Bethesda.

One of the last ministers at Peach's United Church, Reverend G. Robins, stepped down for health reasons in June 1954. He was described by Trevor Watson as "an outstanding minister and scholar." His replacement was Reverend H. Moddle, who served the congregation for a brief period of time. In 1955, it was decided that the church should be closed for regular services. Since that time, each year the old church is opened for a memorial service.

### **Architecture**

Peach's United Church is a one-storey brick building with a rectangular plan. There is an enclosed entrance porch centred on the east (front) gable end, and a small frame shed on the rear wall. The building rests on a fieldstone foundation. The red brick is a veneer over an underlying frame structure. The frame structure, which originally served as a schoolhouse, predates the 1863 construction date of the first phase of the chapel by an unknown number of years. It was standing at least as early as 1847 when first used as a place of worship for local Primitive Methodists.

The red brick walls of local brick were laid in common bond with radiating arches ornamenting the heads of door and window openings. A small area of tumbled brick is found in the peak of the gable end wall of the entrance porch. High on the gable end wall of the main volume of the

building is a rectangular “1890” datestone of white marble. Inset into the south side wall there are three grey granite tablets commemorating the names of those from Peach’s that served in the First and Second World Wars.

The roof has a steep pitch with projecting, open eaves. It is clad in standing-seam metal and replaced earlier roofing of shingles. There is a bold shingle mould on the gable-end fascia boards and a single-stack, corbelled brick chimney at the west end of the roof.

The front wall, facing McCowan Road, has no windows. The entrance porch is faced in brick that matches the treatment of the main volume of the church. The porch has a gable roof and a double-leaf door with a blind pointed arch above that is faced in angled, narrow tongue and groove wood. The two panels of each of the doors are also finished in angled, narrow tongue and groove. On each side wall of the porch is a small pointed-arched window with two-over-two panes.



Detail of front elevation of Peach’s United Church showing entrance porch and datestone.

On the side walls of the building there are three pointed-arched single-hung windows with projecting lugsills. The glazing of these windows consists of large panes of glass with a border of multi-coloured, narrow panes, typical of the 1890s period of remodeling. None of the windows have been replaced with stained glass memorial windows as seen on a number of other churches of the same denomination in Markham.

The frame shed attached to the rear wall has a gable roof and horizontal aluminum siding. The structure rests on a concrete foundation. The shed has a plank door on its north and south walls and a small, four-light window centred on the west wall.

In the early days of Methodism in Ontario, chapels and churches that were erected in rural communities across the province were generally rendered in a simplified version of the Classic Revival style, recalling the Classical architecture of the temples of ancient Greece. A gable-fronted rectangular plan (sometimes aptly referred to as “temple-fronted”), medium-pitched

gable roof, symmetrical arrangement of openings, and absence of Gothic Revival details are characteristic features of the early Methodist places of worship in Markham Township. These buildings had a classic simplicity that seemed to be an outward expression of the faith of the people that built them. No archival photographs are known of Peach's Chapel in its 1863 form, but the description contained in the *Christian Journal* provides a general idea of its early appearance.

The remodelling of 1890 transformed the architectural character of Peach's United Church by updating it with features associated with the Gothic Revival style including a steeper roof and pointed-arched windows. The only hint of the original Classic Revival character was the simple, symmetrical form of the building. Peach's United Church is a vernacular building that is a late, restrained expression of the Gothic Revival style in contrast to the High Victorian Gothic Revival architecture seen on larger Markham churches of the late nineteenth century such as Victoria Square United Church. The beauty of this church lies in its stark simplicity, crisp Gothic Revival windows, and rural setting.

### **Context**

Peach's is the traditional, informal name given to the intersection of Elgin Mills Road East and McCowan Road. Peach's United Church and its adjoining cemetery to the south form a landmark on the north-west corner. The property is enhanced by its semi-rural setting and mature trees. The Markham Fairgrounds are on the opposite side of McCowan Road. To the west is the John Peach House at 5060 Elgin Mills Road East, c.1876, which is historically linked to this property.

### **Sources**

Deed abstracts for Lot 26, Concession 6 and Lot 23, Concession 7, Markham Township.  
Canada Census: 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911.  
Markham Township Directories: Walton (1837), Brown (1846-47), Rowsell (1850-51), Mitchell (1866), Nason (1871), 1892 Directory.  
Maps of Markham Township: McPhillips (1853-54), Tremaine (1860), Historical Atlas of the County of York (1878).  
Property Files for 10762 McCowan Road, 5060 Elgin Mills Road, 10387 McCowan Road, Heritage Section, City of Markham.  
Anderson Family File. Heritage Section, City of Markham.  
Peach Family File, Markham Museum.  
Champion, Isabel (ed.). *Markham 1793-1900*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, Second Edition, Revised, 1989. Pages 152, 155-156. 233.  
Watson, Trevor. "Peach's." *Pioneer Hamlets of York*. Kitchener: The Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario, 1977. Pages 104-111.

**Compliance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

*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.*

**Peach's United Church has design and physical value as a late representative example of a rural chapel in the vernacular Early Gothic Revival architectural style.**

*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.*

**Peach's United Church, founded in 1847, has historical value and associative value, representing the religious diversity of Markham Township as an early Primitive Methodist church.**

*The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.*

**Peach's United Church, located to the east of the historic crossroads hamlet of Cashel, has contextual value for being physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its site, where it has stood since 1863. It has further contextual value for being historically linked to the John Peach House at 5060 Elgin Mills Road East.**

*The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.*

**Peach's United Church has contextual value as a landmark at the north-west corner of Elgin Mills Road East and McCowan Road.**

## **RESEARCH REPORT**



### **Summerfeldt-Toole House**

**West Half Lot 25, Concession 5**

**4075 Elgin Mills Road East**

**c.1855**

**Heritage Section**

**City of Markham Planning & Urban Design**

**2023**

#### **History**

This mid-nineteenth century fieldstone farmhouse is located on the western part of Markham Township Lot 25, Concession 5, west of the historic crossroads hamlet of Cashel. Lot 25 was originally a 200-acre Clergy Reserve, one of a group of properties set aside by the government of Upper Canada to be used by the Church of England (Anglican Church) to generate income through leasing. In 1810, a lease was granted to Jacob Shultz, then in 1835, a lease was granted to Nicholas Hebner. Both of these family names are associated with the Berczy Settler group.

In 1847, John W. Crosby received the Crown patent for the eastern half of Lot 25, Concession 5, and in 1853 William Summerfeldt received the Crown patent for the western half. William Summerfeldt had been involved with the property since 1845 when it was released for purchase by the Crown. The Sommerfeldt/Summerfeldt family was part of William Berczy's group of German settlers. William H. Summerfeldt (1818 – 1906) was a farmer, the Canadian-born son of George Henry Sommerfeldt and Clarissa Ransom. He married Sarah Bowman (1828-1899), and unlike most of the Berczy Settler group, he was a member of the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) rather than a member of Lutheran Church. According to the 1851 census, the

Summerfeldts resided in a one-storey frame house on Lot 25, Concession 5. He later increased his property holdings through the purchase of additional acreage on the eastern half of Lot 25, Concession 5 in 1855.

A new farmhouse of fieldstone construction was built on the property between the time of the 1851 census and the 1861 census (c.1855). In the 1861 census, the occupant of the fieldstone farmhouse was not William Summerfeldt but William Lawson, an English immigrant, and his family. By 1861, the Summerfeldts had moved to Mount Albert in East Gwillimbury and rented their Markham Township property to tenant farmers. William Summerfeldt became a partner in the Summerfeldt and Brown Flouring and Grist Mill in Mount Albert. It is curious that he would have invested in such a substantial new residence on his Markham farm only to relocate a short time later. Perhaps the business opportunity in Mount Albert was simply too attractive to resist.

William Summerfeldt retained ownership of his property on Lot 25, Concession 5 until 1867 when he sold 100 acres of the western half, and 15 acres of the eastern half, to Isaac Toole (also spelled "Tool"). The Toole family were Quakers that originated in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and came to Whitchurch Township in approximately 1802 after living for a short time in the Niagara area.

Isaac Toole's parents, Moses Toole and Elizabeth (Powell) Toole, moved to East Gwillimbury Township in 1827. Their farm was in a rural community called Franklin, south of Mount Albert. Although Isaac Toole was the owner of the former Summerfeldt property in Markham Township, it was his younger brother Aaron Powell Toole who resided there. Isaac Toole may have learned about the availability of William Summerfeldt's farm through their mutual connection to Mount Albert. In 1875, Aaron Toole became the owner.

According to the 1871 Census, Aaron Toole was a farmer of the Quaker faith, age 51. His wife was Emma (Tindall) Toole. There were nine children living in the household at that time, ranging in age from 19 to an infant less than one year old. The oldest son, Moses, became a carriage painter by trade, as noted in the 1881 and 1891 census returns.

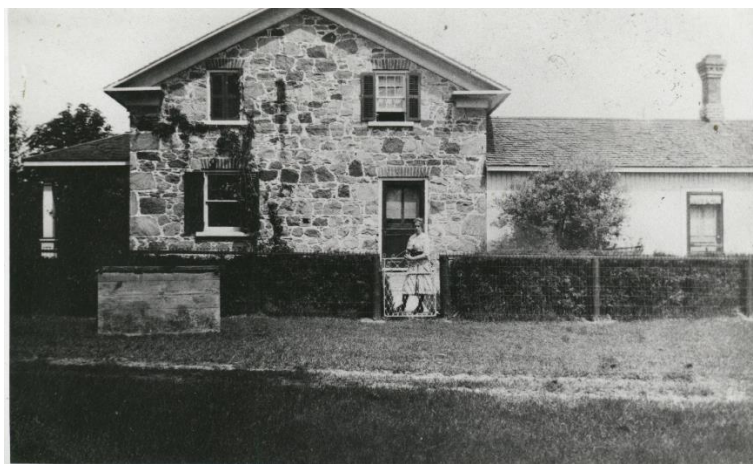
Aaron Toole died in 1894. The property passed through a series of owners including Joseph Gee (1897), George Gee (1909), Charles Smith (1920), Walter Smith (1944) and in more recent times, Stephen B. Roman/Romandale Farms (1954). Romandale Farms Ltd. was the owner in 2017.

### **Architecture**

The Summerfeldt-Toole House is a one-and-a-half storey stone dwelling with a rectangular plan. There is a small front porch on the north wall, and a small, single-storey gable-roofed frame addition on the rear wall. The walls are constructed of split, coursed random rubble with large, roughly squared stone quoins at the corners. The local fieldstone mainly consists of black basalt, grey limestone and grey and pink granite. The heads of door and window openings are

flat-headed and have splayed arches of red brick. The roof is a medium-pitched gable with wide overhanging eaves and eave returns. There is a small, gable-roofed dormer on the rear.


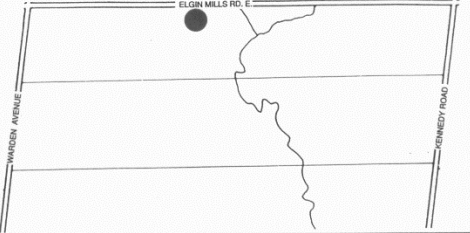
The primary (north) elevation of the house is composed of three bays. Door and window openings are ordered and symmetrically placed. The front doorcase has a flat-headed rectangular transom light and sidelights. A photograph from 1982, which was copied for the 1991 edition of the *Markham Inventory of Heritage Buildings*, shows the transom with multi-paned geometric glazing. Windows on the second floor are proportionately smaller than those on the ground floor. Modern window units have been inserted into the original openings, and one window on the west elevation has replaced an earlier side door opening. The front porch, with a bellcast roof supported on wood treillage, is a sensitively-designed alteration.



4075 Elgin Mills Road East – South View, 1910.  
Markham Museum Collection

The Summerfeldt-Toole House is a representative example of a mid-nineteenth century fieldstone farmhouse showing the influence of the Classic Revival style. This is seen in its symmetry, flat-headed doorcase with transom light and sidelights, and deep eave returns. Archival photographs in the collection of the Markham Museum illustrate that some alterations have occurred but the essential form of the dwelling has remained intact. A photograph of the west side of the house, dated 1910, shows multi-paned windows framed with operational louvered wood shutters on the upper floor, a side door, an Edwardian Classical front veranda, and a frame rear wing that would have perhaps contained a summer kitchen and woodshed. A Classic Revival cornice decorated the eaves, and this cornice was still present in 1982 when a photograph was taken of the front and east elevations of the house. Now, as the result of later renovations, the wood cornice has been removed. The paired front windows shown in the 1982 photograph are of interest. This type of window opening is not typical of mid-nineteenth century Markham, however two other local examples from the same time period are known: the Nicholas Hagerman House (1858) in Hagerman's Corners, and the Ebenezer Madill House (1858, demolished) south of the hamlet of Mongolia.



MARKHAM INVENTORY OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS		
S I T E	ADDRESS: 4075 Elgin Mills Road East	VILLAGE:
	LOT/CONCESSION: 25/5	CONCESSION BLOCK: E3 A/R No.: 160-440-00
S T A T U S	PRESENT USE: Residential	ORIGINAL USE: Residential
	HERITAGE DESIGNATION: n/a	1982 INVENTORY: 573
	OFFICIAL PLAN: Agriculture 1	ZONING: A1
P H O T O G R A P H		
		
E3 - 1		

## Context

The Summerfeldt-Toole House is a farmhouse in an agricultural setting west of the historic crossroads hamlet of Cashel. There is a barn complex to the rear of the house. The dwelling faces Elgin Mills Road with its front door located on the north elevation. It is one of a number of existing buildings connected to the Summerfeldt family, but the only one of fieldstone construction. Most stone dwellings remaining in Markham are found in the eastern portion of old Markham Township, typically associated with farm properties settled by Pennsylvania German families. As such this example, in this location, is locally uncommon.

## Sources

Abstract Index of Deeds for Markham Township Lot 25, Concession 5.

Canada Census: 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911.

Markham Township Directories: Walton (1837), Brown (1846-47), Rowsell (1850-51), Mitchell (1866), Nason (1871) and 1892 Directory.

Maps of Markham Township: McPhillips (1853-54), Tremaine (1860) and Historical Atlas of the County of York, Ontario (1878).

Property File for 4075 Elgin Mills Road East, Heritage Section, City of Markham Planning & Urban Design.

Research Report on 4075 Elgin Mills Road East by Su Murdoch Historical Consulting, 2017.

"Isaac Tool." *History of Toronto and County of York, Ontario*. Volume II: Biographical Notices.

Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1885.



Champion, Isabel (ed.). *Markham 1793-1900*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, Second Edition, Revised, 1989. Pages 22-23.

**Compliance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

*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.*

**The Summerfeldt-Toole House has design and physical value as a representative example of a mid-nineteenth century fieldstone farmhouse showing the influence of the Classic Revival style in its symmetry, flat-headed doorcase with transom light, and sidelights and deep eave returns.**

*The property has historical value or associative value because it is associated with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.*

**The Summerfeldt-Toole House has historical value for its association with the Berczy Settler families that arrived in Markham Township in the late eighteenth century, and for its association with the nineteenth century trend whereby farmsteads were improved as the agricultural community progressed past the early settlement phase.**

*The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.*

**The Summerfeldt-Toole House has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked its site where it has stood since the mid-1850s.**

## **RESEARCH REPORT**



### **John Peach House East Half, Lot 26, Concession 6 5060 Elgin Mills Road**

**c.1876**

**Heritage Section  
City of Markham Planning & Urban Design  
2023**

#### **History**

The John Peach House is located on part of the eastern half of Markham Township Lot 26, Concession 6, east of the historic hamlet of Cashel.

Hugh Carfrae received the Crown patent for the entire 200 acres of Lot 26, Concession 6, Markham Township, in 1803. The property passed through the hands of several investors after being purchased by James Fenwick in 1808. James Fenwick, born in Scotland, was a distinguished early resident of the area. After serving in the British Royal Navy until he was discharged in Jamaica c.1802, Fenwick settled in Markham Township in 1806. He established an inn and distillery at a crossroads community initially known as Crosby's Corners, later named Cashel, when a post office was opened there in 1851.

James Fenwick owned Lot 26, Concession 6 for only a short time before selling to a series of non-resident investors. He sold the property to John S. Baldwin in 1819. In 1823, John S. Baldwin sold to his brother, William Warren Baldwin, the noted Toronto doctor, businessman, lawyer, architect, and reform politician. William W. Baldwin and his son, Robert, played an important role in the establishment of responsible government in Canada.

William W. Baldwin sold to James H. Rose in 1834. In 1838, Rose gifted an acre of land to James Fenwick *et al*, which was the parcel of land that St. Helen's Presbyterian Church had been established upon in 1827. The deed abstracts do not provide any information about how Lot 26, Concession 6 came to be in the ownership of William Anderson by the mid-1850s. During their ownership, Anderson and his wife began selling small parcels off the western end of the property as the crossroads hamlet of Cashel began to grow.

William Anderson was a non-resident owner. He may have been related to the Anderson family of United Empire Loyalists. The patriarch was Peter Anderson, an ensign with the King's Rangers during the American Revolutionary War that came to Markham via Nova Scotia. Markham Township maps of 1853-54 and 1860 show the western half of Lot 26, Concession 6 in the ownership of William Anderson, and the eastern half in the ownership of John Anderson. According to the 1861 census, William Anderson (possibly the son of William Anderson Sr.), a farmer, age 27, was born in Canada West (Ontario). His wife was Mary, age, 21, born in Scotland. They had a son, John, age 4. This must be a different John Anderson from the John Anderson whose name appears on the maps of this time period. There is nothing in the deed abstracts to show the division of the lot into east and west parts belonging to William Anderson and John Anderson.

In 1863, John Anderson (possibly John Anderson of Lot 17, Concession 10) sold the eastern half of Lot 26, Concession 6, to John Peach. John Peach was the son of Thomas and Catharine Peach of Lot 23, Concession 7. The Peach family were English immigrants that came to Canada in 1834. John Peach was an unmarried farmer, and according to census records of 1871, continued to live in his parents' household even after the purchase of the farm east of Cashel. At the time of the 1881 census, John Peach still lived on Lot 23, Concession 7. A relative, Thomas Peach Morris, a farmer, lived in the same household.

In the same year that the property was sold to John Peach, a plot of land at the south-east corner of Lot 26, Concession 6, was given for a Primitive Methodist church named Peach's Chapel, which later became Peach's United Church.

John Peach married Martha M. Lewis in 1884, a late marriage for both of them. There were no children. After this marriage, Thomas Peach Morris moved to the other Peach family property on Lot 26, Concession 6, where he was noted in the 1891 census, and in the Markham Township directory of 1892. Thomas P. Morris was married to Elizabeth Pearce and lived in a two-storey brick dwelling containing 9 rooms (5060 Elgin Mills Road East).

The architecture of the brick house on Lot 26, Concession 6 suggests a construction date in the mid-1870s to the mid-1880s. The MPAC year of construction is 1876. The Peach House is a high quality farmhouse to have been constructed on a property that was not the principle residence of the owner. Homes built to serve the needs of tenant farmers were traditionally more modest in scale and construction. It is possible that John Peach had the house constructed for his own use, but upon the death of his father in 1880, decided to remain on the family homestead on Lot 23, Concession 7 rather than moving to the property he had purchased in 1863.

Martha Peach died in 1898. John Peach died in 1916. Both are interred at Peach's United Church cemetery with a large pink granite monument marking their resting place. John Peach willed his residence on Lot 23, Concession 7 to Thomas Peach Morris, and the property on Lot 26, Concession 6 to a nephew, Thomas H. Peach, the son of his brother George Peach. In 1926, Thomas H. Peach leased the property to Jacob S. Wideman for 10 years. The property was sold out of the family in 1940 after which it has passed through the ownership of others. The farm has been divided into multiple rural residential lots.

### **Architecture**

The John Peach House is a one-and-a-half storey, painted brick dwelling with a H-shaped plan. The portion of the building that is of cultural heritage value is the T-shaped southern section. The house has a painted fieldstone foundation and a ground floor level about three steps above grade. Prior to painting, the house had a red brick body trimmed with buff brick (historically referred to as "white brick") accents consisting of quoining, a brick plinth, and "eyebrow" arches over door and window openings.

The primary elevation of the house is composed of three bays with a central, single-leaf door topped with a single-paned, segmentally-headed transom light. The door has a bracketed surround with a shallow, hip-roofed cap. This door surround has a historic character but is a later addition. There are windows on either side of the door, and a window above the door set within a steep centre gable. On the wall above the ground floor openings, there is a horizontal line that indicates the former existence of a full-width veranda. Now there is a modern wood deck with a simple railing and a lattice base.

Window openings are segmentally-headed, with projecting lugsills, and contain two-over-two single-hung windows behind modern storm windows. Windows are accented with modern, louvered shutters with flat rather than segmental heads. The "eyebrow" arches over window openings project slightly from the wall face, otherwise, the paint treatment would make them difficult to see.

The east gable end wall has a window centred on the ground floor level, and two windows on the second floor. The west gable end likely has a similar arrangement. The second floor window openings are lower in height than those of the ground floor.

The rear wing is one-and-a-half storeys height. There is a veranda in the east-facing ell, with a shed roof supported on simple, slender posts. The ground floor openings within the porch

appear to have been modified during renovations, perhaps connected with the construction of a large frame addition at the rear of the dwelling. Only one window remains on the east wall within the veranda. Other openings may have been closed up to suit programmatic changes within the interior.

The house has a medium-pitched, cross gable roof with projecting, open eaves. There is a steep centre gable on the front or south wall. This gable is ornamented with a kingpost with a turned pendant, hinting that there once may have been decorative wooden bargeboards. There are no known archival photographs that document the earlier appearance of the building. No historic chimneys remain. There is an exterior, brick chimney centred on the west gable end wall of the rear addition.

The John Peach House is a representative example of an Ontario Classic farmhouse, as defined by Marion MacRea and Anthony Adamson in *The Ancestral Roof – Domestic Architecture of Upper Canada* (1963):

*“The little vernacular house, still stubbornly Georgian in form and wearing its little gable with brave gaiety, became the abiding image of the province. It was to be the Ontario Classic style.”*

The Ontario Classic is a house form that was popular from the 1860s to the 1890s with many examples constructed on farms and in villages throughout Markham Township. These vernacular dwellings were often decorated with features associated with the Gothic Revival style or Italianate style, as was the case here with the steep centre gable ornamented with a kingpost and the eyebrow-like window heads. With its one-and-a-half storey form, T-shaped plan, symmetrical three-bay front, patterned brickwork (now concealed by paint), and segmentally-headed two-over-two windows, this vernacular building is a good representative of farmhouses built in old Markham Township in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

### **Context**

The John Peach House is located in a semi-rural setting east of the historic hamlet of Cashel. There is a late nineteenth or early twentieth century barn complex to the northeast of the dwelling, and a modern, detached three-car garage. Peach’s United Church and cemetery, listed on the *Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest*, is a nearby property of cultural heritage value at the north-west corner of Elgin Mills Road and McCowan Road (10762 McCowan Road). Further to the west is the Cashel Road House, an historically-designated hotel, store and post office dating from the mid-nineteenth century (refer to City of Markham By-law 298-78).

### **Sources**

Deed abstracts for Lot 26, Concession 6 and Lot 23, Concession 7, Markham Township.

Canada Census: 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911.

Markham Township Assessment Rolls: 1855, 1857, 1858.

Markham Township Directories: Walton (1837), Brown (1846-47), Rowsell (1850-51), Mitchell (1866), Nason (1871), 1892 Directory.

Maps of Markham Township: McPhillips (1853-54), Tremaine (1860), Historical Atlas of the County of York (1878).

Property Files for 5060 Elgin Mills Road, 10387 McCowan Road, and 7 Heritage Corners Lane. Heritage Section, City of Markham.

Anderson Family File. Heritage Section, City of Markham.

Peach Family File, Markham Museum.

Champion, Isabel (ed.). *Markham 1793-1900*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, Second Edition, Revised, 1989. Pages 155. 233.

### **Compliance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

*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.*

**The John Peach House has design and physical value as a good representative example of an Ontario Classic farmhouse designed with elements of the Gothic Revival and Italianate architectural styles.**

*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.*

**The John Peach House has historical value and associative value, representing the locally significant theme of agriculture, specifically the improvement of nineteenth century farmsteads as the agricultural community progressed past the early settlement phase.**

*The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.*

**The John Peach House, located to the east of the historic crossroads hamlet of Cashel, has contextual value as a former farmhouse that has stood on this site since the mid-1870s. It is historically linked to Peach's United Church at 10762 McCowan Road.**

## RESEARCH REPORT



### **School Section No. 14** **East Half Lot 6, Concession 7** **5650 Fourteenth Avenue** **(Formerly 5500 Fourteenth Avenue)**

**c.1889**

**Heritage Section**  
**City of Markham Planning & Urban Design**  
**2023**

#### **History**

School Section No. 14 is located in the south-west corner of the eastern half of Markham Township Lot 6, Concession 7, approximately halfway between the historic hamlets of Hagerman's Corners and Box Grove.

Cornelius Van Ostrand (also spelled "Van Nostrand") received the Crown patent for the entire 200 acres of Markham Township Lot 6, Concession 7, in 1809. This was part of 500 acres of land in Markham Township granted to Van Ostrand in 1799. Cornelius Van Ostrand, of Dutch ancestry, was a native of New York where his family had lived since the 1630s. He served as a commissioned officer in the British Army during the American Revolutionary War, but stayed in the United States for a period of time after the hostilities ended. In the winter of 1799-1800, the family came to Upper Canada and settled in an area that in time became known as York Mills or Hogg's Hollow.

In 1812, Cornelius Van Ostrand entered into an agreement with William Crosby to sell the eastern 100 acres of Lot 6, Concession 7, Markham Township. William Crosby was also from New York. The family came to Upper Canada from Herkimer County in 1807, arriving in Kingston that year. William Crosby died not long after his purchase of the Van Ostrand property. His widow and children remained there after his death. James Crosby, a son of William Crosby, became the owner and in 1856 he and his wife entered into an agreement to sell 40 square rods of their property to the Trustees of School Section No. 14, which was in a rural area of south-central Markham Township between Hagerman's Corners and Box Grove.

The *Public School Act* of 1846 required the Province of Canada West to provide free education to children up to the age of sixteen. When Markham Township enacted a by-law to establish school districts in 1855, there were 23 school sections across the municipality.

According to the McPhillips Map of Markham Township, 1853-1854, there was already a schoolhouse at this location. It is not known when it was first established. The school also appears on Tremaine's Map of 1860 and the map in the Historical Atlas of the County of York, Ontario, 1878.

In 1864, James Crosby sold the eastern half of Lot 6, Concession 7, less the school site, to Elijah Miller. Three year later, Elijah Miller sold the property to James Stacey. The one half acre school site was awarded to James Stacey in 1878.

In 1889, a new brick schoolhouse in the Romanesque Revival style replaced earlier building dating from the 1850s. The exterior appearance of this typical one-room rural schoolhouse remained the same well into the twentieth century.

Beginning in the mid-1950s, as Markham Township began to modernize after the end of the Second World War, the municipality's initiative to consolidate its numerous school sections through the creation of Township School Areas resulted in the closure of many rural schoolhouses. School Section No. 14 closed in the early 1960s, and in 1963, the Public School Board of Township School Area 2 Markham Township sold the property to the Trustees of the Netherlands Reformed Church, who remain the owners. A complementary addition was made to the west side of the old school in 1992 to house a general purpose hall and ancillary uses for the place of worship.

### **Architecture**

Schoolhouse SS No. 14 is a one-storey brick institutional building with a gable-fronted rectangular plan. A covered entrance porch is centred on the south elevation. The building has a raised fieldstone foundation with the floor level set several steps above grade. On the west side of the former schoolhouse is a brick addition that mimics its style and materials in a simplified manner with the two structures joined with a connecting link at the south-west corner of the original building.



The buff brick walls of the former schoolhouse were laid in common bond. There are simple brick buttresses at the corners, and between the three bays of the side walls. The buttresses have angled brick copings. On the primary (south) elevation, at the level of the eaves, are two string courses of brick turned at an angle to form a sawtooth pattern. Window openings have radiating brick “eyebrow” arches which project slightly from the wall face to create a shadowing effect. High on the gable wall is a rectangular datestone with the year “1889” and the school section number inscribed upon it.

The medium-pitched gable roof has projecting, open eaves with soffits clad in aluminum. There is a robust shingle mould on the fascia. At the north end of the building is a heavy, single-stack chimney with a concrete cap. There is no belfry existing today, but based on other schoolhouses in Markham, one almost certainly existed historically.

The primary elevation is composed of three bays, with the central covered brick porch containing the main entrance flanked by a window on each side. The porch has a steeply-pitched gable roof and a wide opening topped by a half-round arch. The brickwork of the porch is decorated with a rock-faced string course or impost at the base of the arched opening. The flanking single-hung windows have half-round arches, two panes over two, and projecting lugsills.

The east elevation has three bays with three windows matching those on the south elevation, positioned between the buttresses. The west elevation, partially covered by the addition, was originally the same as the east elevation, but an interior door opening has been inserted where the southernmost window used to be to connect the old building to the newer section. The addition contains a multi-purpose hall, a kitchen, washrooms, and other facilities to support the place of worship use.

Schoolhouse SS No. 14 was designed in the Romanesque Revival style, characterized by the use of half-round arches. The influence of this style is particularly evident in the treatment of the enclosed porch. The building’s design follows the standard plan that was popular in rural Ontario under the administration of J. George Hodgins from the mid to late nineteenth century, when Hodgins served as deputy superintendent of education and later, deputy minister of education. Hodgins promoted the building of attractive, durable and functional schoolhouses and this one is a representative example. Diversity in architectural style was encouraged to prevent uninteresting sameness in the school buildings between the different school districts. The typical rural school in mid to late nineteenth century Markham Township followed a meeting hall plan with its entrance on the gable end. Most were made of brick and replaced older frame buildings. Many schoolhouses had separate entrances for boys and girls. Inside, there were separate cloakrooms for boys and girls even if there was only one door, as was the case with this example. Schoolhouses had large windows to let in the natural light and to provide good ventilation. High ceilings enhanced the light and ventilation within the single classroom where all the elementary school grades were taught.

The state of preservation of this former schoolhouse is exceptionally good. Other than the addition to the west side of the building, the only significant alteration is the absence of a belfry.

### **Context**

Schoolhouse SS No. 14 is one of the few nineteenth century buildings remaining in the south-central part of the City of Markham. The McCauley-Couperthwaite House (c.1870) at 5560 Fourteenth Avenue, to the west of the subject property, is the only other local remnant of the agricultural community that once existed in the area.

Markham is fortunate in having a large number of its historic one-room schoolhouses still standing on their original sites. One example, the Buttonville Schoolhouse, is a living history facility providing York Region School Board students with an early twentieth century public school experience. It houses the Board's historical archives. Two examples of former rural schools in the immediate area include the Hagerman School at 4121 Fourteenth Avenue which has been converted to a restaurant, and the Box Grove Schoolhouse at 7651 Ninth Line, which is a part of small community centre. Both are designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

### **Sources**

Deed Abstracts for Lot 6, Concession 7, Markham Township.

Maps of Markham Township: McPhillips (1853-54), Tremaine (1860), and Historical Atlas of the County of York, Ontario (1878).

Property File for 5650 Fourteenth Avenue, Heritage Section, City of Markham Planning & Urban Design.

Brydon, Catherine. *Markham 1900-2000 – Our Past Inspires Our Future*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, 2017. Page 218.

Champion, Isabel (ed.). *Markham 1793-1900*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, Second Edition, Revised, 1989. Pages 64-65, 170-171.

Kennedy, Scott. *Tales from the Hollow – The Story of Hogg's Hollow and York Mills*. Toronto: Friesen Press, 2022. Chapter 8.

McIlwraith, Thomas F. *Looking for Old Ontario: Two Centuries of Landscape Change*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997. Pages 160-161.

### **Compliance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

*The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early examples of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.*

**Schoolhouse SS No. 14 has design and physical value as a well-preserved representative example of a late-nineteenth century one-room rural schoolhouse designed in a vernacular expression of the Romanesque Revival style.**

*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.*

**Schoolhouse SS No. 14 has historical value and associative value as it is associated with the early delivery of publicly funded education in Markham Township, a critical government service required for community development., A public school operated on this property from the early 1850s to the early 1960s.**

*The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.*

**Schoolhouse SS No. 14 has contextual value for being physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its site where it has stood since 1889, and for the long-standing use of the site for a public school since at least the early 1850s.**

## RESEARCH REPORT



**Jacob Wismer House**  
**East Half Lot 15, Concession 7**  
**46 Timbermill Crescent**  
*(Formerly 5815 Sixteenth Avenue)*  
**c.1840**

**Heritage Section**  
**City of Markham Planning & Urban Design**  
**2024**

### **History**

The Jacob Wismer House is located on a part of the eastern half of Markham Township Lot 15, Concession 7, in the historic community of Mount Joy.

David Wismer (1768-1856) and Lydia (Everet) Wismer (1769-1856) of Bedminster Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania came to Markham Township in 1806. They were a Pennsylvania-German Mennonite family who were part of the migration of Pennsylvania-Germans that followed the Berczy settler group as early European arrivals into Markham Township. The Wismers and their six sons and two daughters settled on Lot 17, Concession 7, a property north of the Markham Museum. The area was called “Mount Joy” after the original American home of another Pennsylvania-German family, the Ramers. In time, many members of the Wismer family became members of a Protestant denomination called the Bible Christian Church. They worshipped at a chapel on the west side of today’s McCowan Road, south of Sixteenth Avenue,

where a historic cemetery still remains. David Wismer and his descendants became significant landowners in the vicinity of Mount Joy and Quantztown. The community of Wismer Commons is named after them.

Two of David and Lydia Wismer's American-born sons, Jacob (1797-1895) and Asa (1795-1871), obtained the Crown patent for separate portions of Markham Township Lot 15, Concession 7 in the early 1840s. Jacob became the owner of the eastern 100 acres in 1842, and Asa the western 100 acres in 1843. In 1843, Jacob sold the western 10 acres of his property to his brother. According to Walton's Directory of 1837, both were living on this property at that time. It is not clear how long they had been tenants on Lot 15, Concession 7. By the mid-nineteenth century, there were three Wismer farms along the south side of Sixteenth Avenue: Jacob Wismer with the easterly portion, Asa Wismer with the centre portion, and Asa Wismer's son, David L. Wismer, with the smaller westerly portion.

A schoolhouse serving the educational needs of Mount Joy was established at the north east corner of Jacob Wismer's farm in 1835. School Section No. 6 remained at the crossroads until 1864, when a new site was purchased from the Strickler family a short distance to the north of Sixteenth Avenue. A brick schoolhouse was constructed on the new site, which stood until 1907 when it was replaced with a new, two storey brick school that now houses the offices of the Markham Museum.

In approximately 1840, Jacob Wismer built a substantial two-storey farmhouse using plank-on-plank wall construction. He and his wife, Elizabeth Wurts (1801-1850), raised a family of eight children. At the time of the 1851 census, Jacob Wismer was listed as a yeoman (farmer-land owner) and widower living in a twostorey board house. Members of his extended family shared his residence, including Henry Jackson, cabinet maker, and his wife, Delilah (Wismer) Jackson, Jacob Wismer's eldest daughter. By 1852, Jacob Wismer had re-married. His second wife was Julia Curtis (1818-1892). Of the three Wismer family farmhouses on Sixteenth Avenue, only Jacob Wismer's dwelling remains. The other Wismer farmhouses, located to the west, were one-and-a-half storey brick dwellings that were still standing in 1976-1977, but were demolished prior to the suburban development of the farmland.

Beginning in 1847, A number of village lots fronting Main Street were sold off from the east side of Jacob Wismer's property.. Some were purchased by family members. One of the properties contained an implement factory, illustrated on Miles and Co.'s *Historical Atlas of the County of York, Ontario*, 1878 map of Markham Township.

Jacob Wismer's obituary in the July 11, 1895 edition of the *Markham Economist* contained some interesting information about his life. The Wismer family were known to be long-lived. Jacob Wismer died in his 95<sup>th</sup> year. A photographic portrait is found on page 57 of *Markham 1793-1900*. In his younger days Jacob Wismer was politically active as a strong and active supporter of the Reform party, campaigning among his neighbours during elections to secure votes for his party. When Jacob Wismer was passed over for a Justice of the Peace appointment

by the Baldwin cabinet, he changed his political allegiance to the Tory party in response to what he considered a personal affront.

Not long after the death of Jacob Wismer in 1895, his son Jacob Everet Wismer sold the family farm to John W. Johnson. In the early 1900s, John and Maria Johnson began to transfer parts of their property to their sons Lewis and Wesley. In 1914, they sold the remaining 60 acres to Albert and Harvey Wideman, the owners of A. & H. Wideman Hardware and Jewelry, a prominent business on the east side of Main Street North, Markham Village. This property was purchased as an investment since neither of the Wideman brothers resided there. Later in 1914, Albert and Mary Wideman and Harvey and Benetta Wideman sold 20 of their 60 acres to Alfred Stover. This parcel contained the old Jacob Wismer farmhouse.

Alfred Stover was a tenant of Simeon Stover who owned a modest house on a quarter acre lot that had been severed from the Wismer farm in the mid-nineteenth century (336 Main Street North). At the time of the 1911 census, Alfred Stover was a farm labourer. After his purchase of the acreage containing the Jacob Wismer House, he became a farmer, as shown in the 1921 census. His wife was Christina "Tina" Stover. Their small farm was located to the west of the line of village houses and businesses that fronted on Main Street North in the village of Mount Joy.

Alfred Stover was a long-time owner. In 1968, his executors sold to Gio-Batta Garlotti. In 1971, Gio-Batta Garlotti transferred the property to Angelina Garlotti. Angelina Garlotti sold the parcel containing the old house to Ray Arthur Fugeman and Sheila Jessie Louise Fugeman in 1987. Ray Fugeman has been a dedicated member of the Markham Historical Society for many years, and along with Jim Beierl, he is credited with designing and laying out the Millennium Sundial on the grounds of the Markham Museum. The sundial commemorates the old communities of Markham Township that have been lost to the urbanization of the once primarily rural municipality.

Ray Fugeman remained the owner of the property until 2017. The current owners are Gregory and Sandra Sommer.

### **Architecture**

The Jacob Wismer House is a two-storey frame dwelling with a rectangular plan. The building is sided in narrow clapboard. The foundation as described in the 1991 edition of the *Markham Inventory of Heritage Buildings* is fieldstone, but is possibly a fieldstone facing. A site visit would be required to determine the nature of the foundation material. A modern covered porch shelters the principal entrance facing Sixteenth Avenue. A shed-roofed addition extends the full width of the rear wall. Behind the house is a large L-shaped accessory building that incorporates a garage and a one-and-a-half storey studio with loft.

The underlying structure of the dwelling is of plank-on-plank or sawmill plank construction, a building technology that had its heyday in Southern Ontario the 1840s as an alternative to post and beam construction. Rough-sawn planks were stacked one upon another and nailed

together to form solid wood walls. Narrow one-inch thick planks were laid with a slight offset to allow for the application of exterior stucco and interior plaster. Less skill was required to erect a plank-on-plank building than what would be required in timber framing, and in places where there was a local sawmill and a ready supply of timber, this was a faster and economical way to build. There are several other examples of plank-on-plank construction in both the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District and Markham Heritage Estates. Typically, these are one or one-and-a-half storey structures. The Jacob Wismer House is noteworthy as a rare two-storey example of plank-on-plank construction. It is not known if the original exterior finish was stucco or roughcast. The existing wood clapboard has been in place for some time. It is trimmed with corner boards, a frieze board, and a water table.

The medium-pitched gable roof has projecting eaves with eave returns and flat soffits. No historic chimneys remain. There is an exterior red brick fireplace chimney centred on the west gable end wall and an exterior red brick chimney offset to the south on the east gable end wall. Roughly centred on the rear roof slope is a hip-roofed, dormer-like extension of the second floor.

The original primary (north) elevation is composed of five-bays on the ground floor and three-bays on the second floor. The principal entrance, which is now functionally a rear door since the access onto Timbermill Crescent was created, is centred on the wall. The single-leaf door has a Classical surround with pilasters and an entablature. There are two flat-headed, rectangular window openings on either side of the entrance with projecting lugsills. Until recently, the window openings contained single-hung windows with two-over-two panes. These windows likely replaced multi-paned windows characteristic of the c.1840 date of construction. The current windows are casements with no pane divisions. The front porch, with its broad, low-pitched gable roof and simple wood posts, has been in place since at least the early 1980s based on the photo in the old *Markham Inventory of Heritage Buildings*. On the second floor, the three flat-headed rectangular window openings are lower in height than those on the ground floor and are not vertically aligned with the ground floor window openings but centred between them. The previous windows were single-hung with eight-over-two panes. The upper sash appeared to be a remnant of the original style of windows with the lower sash updated to in the late nineteenth century to contain fewer panes. The current windows are modern one-over-one single-hung units. Shutters flanking the window openings on the north elevation are non-functional.

The east gable end wall has two flat-headed rectangular window openings on the second floor, and no window openings on the ground floor. The west gable end similarly has two windows on the second floor, but there is one window on the ground floor to the right of the fireplace chimney.

The Jacob Wismer House is a good representative example of a frame, two-storey Pennsylvania German farmhouse of the mid-nineteenth century, and is a locally rare example of a two-storey building of plank-on-plank construction. It is a vernacular building that generally reflects the simplified Georgian architectural tradition brought to Markham Township by Pennsylvania

German families. This is exhibited in its rectangular form, restrained detailing, and the disciplined placement of door and window openings.

As noted in *Markham 1793-1900*: “The typical Pennsylvania German farmhouse...was Georgian in design, an even trade from English neighbours.” A similar perspective is found in *A Splendid Harvest-Germanic Folk and Decorative Arts in Canada*: “The structures of Ontario-German settlements reflect both the Pennsylvania and Continental backgrounds of these pioneers and their descendants. The Pennsylvania Germans brought with them their taste for houses in the Georgian style.”

The vernacular Georgian architectural tradition in Ontario persisted long after the Georgian period ended in 1830. The essential principles of uncluttered designs with a sense of symmetry, order, and formality influenced vernacular architecture for much of the nineteenth century. This conservative approach to domestic architecture could be applied to the humblest dwellings or to the most substantial of residences. There were very few high-style Georgian buildings constructed in old Ontario. In a rural communities such as Markham, the design principles of the Georgian architectural tradition were stripped down to their most basic elements. In the instance of this property, the difference between the number and placement of window openings on the principal elevation represents a variation on classic Georgian principles and highlights the vernacular character of the Jacob Wismer House. To quote Robert Mikel in *Ontario House Styles*:

*“Not all buildings conformed to the strict Georgian rules. Depending on circumstances and cultural backgrounds, variations appeared in the overall Georgian design.”*

### **Context**

The Jacob Wismer House is a remnant of the agricultural community that historically surrounded the village of Mount Joy. Its nineteenth century architecture and frame exterior contrasts with the 1980s suburban development in which it is now embedded. This contrast is accentuated because the house symbolically retains its original orientation to Sixteenth Avenue even though its one-time front yard now functions as a back yard. Also, the northern boundary extends further toward Sixteenth Avenue than the neighbouring development where road widenings have been taken.

This property is located outside of the boundaries of the Mount Joy section of the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District and opposite the entrance to Markham Heritage Estates. The property contains mature vegetation and has a split cedar rail fence on the Sixteenth Avenue frontage. The area of the property where the most significant alterations have taken place is on the side fronting onto Timbermill Crescent.

### **Sources**

Abstract Index of Deeds for Markham Township Lot 15, Concession 7.  
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Markham Township Directories: Walton (1837), Brown (1846-47), Rowsell (1850-51), Mitchell (1866), Nason (1871) and 1892 Directory.

Maps of Markham Township: McPhillips (1853-54), Tremaine (1860) and Historical Atlas of the County of York, Ontario (1878).

Property File for 46 Timbermill Crescent, Heritage Section, City of Markham Planning & Urban Design.

Wismer Family File, Heritage Section, City of Markham Planning & Urban Design, including *The Wismer Family* by Marie Jones, Curatorial/Research, Markham Museum, prepared for Wismer Public School, 2003, Wismer genealogy from the Markham Museum, further genealogical information from Kathryn Jamieson, Vancouver, British Columbia, and related materials.

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Champion, Isabel (ed.). *Markham 1793-1900*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, Second Edition, Revised, 1989. Pages 55-57, 164-165.

Mikel, Robert. *Ontario House Styles – The distinctive architecture of the province's 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century homes*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company Ltd., 2004. Pages 13-16.

### **Compliance with Ontario Regulation 9/06, as amended – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest**

*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.*

**The Jacob Wismer House has design and physical value as a good representative example of a frame, two-storey Pennsylvania German farmhouse of the mid-nineteenth century, and a locally rare example of a two-storey building of plank-on-plank construction.**

*The property has historical value or associative value because it is associated with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.*

**The Jacob Wismer House has historical value as it is associated with the Pennsylvania German Mennonites who were among the earliest European settlers of Markham Township in the early nineteenth century, and for its direct association with Jacob Wismer, a prominent member of the Wismer family of Mount Joy-Quantztown.**

*The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.*

**The Jacob Wismer House has contextual value because it is physically, functionally visually and historically linked to its surroundings where it has stood since c.1840.**