

## **APPENDIX ‘D’: Research Reports**

### **RESEARCH REPORT**



**George and Eliza Brodie House**  
**Northeast Quarter Lot 29, Concession 5**  
**11288 Kennedy Road**  
**c.1860**

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

#### **History**

The George and Eliza Brodie House is located in the northeast quarter of Markham Township Lot 29, Concession 5, a little to the east of the Rouge River, between the historic rural hamlets of Cashel and Almira.

George Mustard received the Crown patent for the entire 200 acres of Markham Township Lot 29, Concession 5, in 1839. According to William Berczy’s 1803 census of Markham settlers, George Mustard was associated with this property as early as 1801. In 1803, he was listed as residing there and appears to have been unmarried as no wife or children were noted in Berczy’s census.

George Mustard's history is very well documented in historical records. He was a son of Alexander Mustard of Farness, Cromarty, Scotland. His brother, James Mustard, left Scotland in 1795 and reached Markham Township in 1801 via Pennsylvania. He and his wife, Elizabeth (Gordon) Mustard, settled on Lot 29, Concession 6. They were also listed in Berczy's 1803 census.

George Mustard followed his brother James to Upper Canada, but his journey was interrupted in a dramatic way. While making the trans-Atlantic voyage, his ship was raided by a press gang and he was pressed into service in the British Navy. This occurred during the Napoleonic Wars when the British Navy was short-handed and used this aggressive method of "recruiting" sailors to man their warships. George Mustard was stationed on a ship bound for the West Indies where the navy was in search of French vessels. After two years, he managed to escape while the ship was at a West Indian port. He made his way to the United States and eventually was able to join his brother in Markham Township.

James and George Mustard were strong supporters of the Presbyterian Church, attending St. Helen's Church at Cashel and later, Melville Church. George Mustard donated a parcel of land for Melville Presbyterian Church and Cemetery in 1849. The brothers also served in the York Regiment of the militia. James was a captain, and George, a lieutenant, served under Colonel Allen. George Mustard was at the western battery of Fort York when it was destroyed during the Battle of York in 1813. He was taken prisoner by the Americans but was later exchanged and continued to serve until the end of the war.

During the turbulent period of the 1837 Rebellion in Upper Canada, the brothers found themselves on opposite political sides. James Mustard supported the Tories, and George Mustard, the Reformers. George Mustard, although a supporter of the Reform party, apparently did not actively participate in the Rebellion.

At the time of the 1851 census, George Mustard was a widower, age 82. He lived in a one-storey log house on Lot 29, Concession 5. His son, William, also resided on the property in a separate household with his wife, Anna or Annie (Graham) Mustard, and their four young children. William and Anna Mustard lived in a one-storey log dwelling. An additional Mustard family household on Lot 29, Concession 5 was that of James Mustard, another son of George Mustard. James Mustard lived in a one-storey frame dwelling with his wife, Jane (Gibson) Mustard, and their young son, George. They resided on the eastern part of the farm.

George Mustard sold the western half of Lot 29, Concession 5 to his son William in 1853. William Mustard constructed a stone farmhouse on the property c.1862, which still stands at 11303 Warden Avenue.

George Mustard Sr. died in 1853. A map of Markham Township dated 1853-54 shows James Mustard's name on the northeast quarter of Lot 29, Concession 5, and his brother Alexander Mustard's name on the southeast quarter. Based on Markham Township Directories, Alexander Mustard did not reside on the property during this time.

From the land records, it appears that after the death of George Mustard Sr., Alexander Mustard became the owner of the northeast quarter of Lot 29, Concession 5 and his brother James, the southeast quarter. In 1859, Alexander Mustard sold the northeast quarter to George Brodie.

According to the 1861 census, George Brodie Jr., age 40, his wife Eliza (Oxley) Brodie, age 36, and their three young children resided in a one-and-a-half storey frame house (11288 Kennedy Road). George Brodie Jr. was the likely builder of this modest frame dwelling, dated c.1860. Also in 1861, James Mustard lived in a one-storey frame house with his wife Jane and their five children (the dwelling noted in the 1851 census).

George Brodie Jr., born in Scotland, was one of the six children of George Brodie Sr. and Jean (Milne) Brodie. George Brodie Sr. was a shoemaker by trade. The family came from Peterhead, Scotland and purchased the western half of Lot 2, Concession 5, Whitchurch Township in 1835. The family homestead was known as Craigieburn Farm, located south of the hamlet of Bethesda. George Brodie Jr.'s younger brother Alexander A. Brodie wrote a detailed family history in 1903 which described the family's journey from Scotland and their experiences as an early settler family in Upper Canada from 1835 to 1842. They initially lived in a log house on a few acres of cleared land then in 1850, constructed a "native stone house" on their property. The family history contains a first-hand account of the Upper Canadian Rebellion of 1837 which occurred only two years after the Brodie family arrived at their new home, plus many other interesting details of what Alexander Brodie described as pioneer life in the early nineteenth century. The old Brodie stone house burned in 1936. Its ruins can still be seen on the property which is on the east side of Warden Avenue, a little to the north of Stouffville Road.

It is interesting to read in A. A. Brodie's history about his father having a letter of introduction to William Lyon Mackenzie from George Low, a prominent gentleman in Aberdeen, asking Mackenzie to recommend to his friend a good part of the country to settle in. Brodie goes on to describe accompanying his father to William Lyon Mackenzie's printing office on York Street to present the letter and recounted the recommendations his father received from him about where to settle. The County of York, north of Toronto, was preferred, though other options were presented.

Similar to the Mustard family, the Brodie family were early members of Melville Presbyterian Church, established in the community of Cashel in 1848. George Brodie Sr. was one of the first elders of the congregation.

George Brodie Jr. and Eliza Brodie sold their farm to William Spoffard in 1868 and moved to Scott Township, now part of Uxbridge, where they were noted in the 1871 census. By the time of the 1881 census, the family had relocated to East Gwillimbury.

In 1870, William Spoffard, an important local landowner in the vicinity of Almira, sold the 50-acre farm to Charles J. Brodie, another son of George Brodie Sr. and Jean (Milne) Brodie. Charles J. Brodie was on the building committee for the construction of the new brick Melville

Church of 1877 and was the leading advocate for the introduction of an organ and hymnal into worship services in 1887.

In 1887, Charles J. Brodie and his wife sold their farm to James Morrin *et al.* According to the 1891 census, James Morrin, a farmer, lived in a two-storey wood dwelling containing five rooms, shared with his sister Janet and his widowed mother, also named Janet. All members of the family were born in Scotland and were members of the Presbyterian Church.

The farm passed from Reverend William Morrin, James Morrin, and Abigail Calvert to Janet Morrin in 1897. There was no Reverend Morrin included in the list of ministers associated with the nearby Melville Presbyterian Church and he did not appear to reside in the area. Brother and sister James and Janet Morrin sold the farm to Fred and Lillie Dennie in 1919. The Dennie family were the owners until 1922, when they sold to Hugh Beckett. The Beckett family owned the property until 1946, after which there was a succession of later owners until the land was sold to investors in 1973.

### **Architecture**

The George and Eliza Brodie House is a one-and-a-half storey frame dwelling with a T-shaped plan, oriented to face south rather than towards the road. It is presently clad in aluminum siding in an imitation of clapboard. The original cladding is unknown. The building rests on a fieldstone foundation with the ground floor placed slightly above grade. There is an enclosed porch in the east-facing ell, and a one-storey shed-roofed addition at the north end of the one-and-a-half storey rear wing.

The medium-pitched gable roof has projecting, open eaves without eave returns. There is a single-stack brick chimney on the west gable end.

The house has a three-bay facade with a single-leaf door sheltered under a small shed-roofed canopy with angled supports. Windows are flat-headed with aluminum-clad trim and projecting lugsills. The window openings, containing one-over-one paned single-hung windows, are framed by narrow louvered shutters that are decorative rather than functional since they do not fit the size of the openings. The modern sash likely replaced multi-paned wood windows typical of the c.1860 period of construction. The windows on the other sides of the house have the same treatment. Second storey windows are smaller in proportion to those on the ground floor. The east gable end has a single window centred on the wall with two windows above.

The rear wing matches the height of the front section of the house. There is a single window in its east-facing knee wall. The enclosed porch has a shed roof and a single-leaf door in the centre, flanked by a pair of four-paned fixed sash on either side. The shed-roofed rear addition, which may have originally functioned as a woodshed and summer kitchen, bookends the enclosed porch.

The George and Eliza Brodie House is a vernacular mid-nineteenth century frame farmhouse, without ornament, designed to serve the needs of a household of modest means. The

symmetrical façade and restrained, formal design is typical of the Georgian architectural tradition that continued to influence vernacular domestic architecture in Ontario long after the Georgian period ended in 1830. Exterior materials have been renewed over time, but the original form remains readily discernable. The scale and design of this house are similar to dwellings constructed by some Markham Township landowners for the use of tenant farmers, but in this case, the house was owner-occupied when first constructed. In this way, the George and Eliza Brodie House could be considered the family's "starter home" before they decided to pursue farming elsewhere, perhaps on a more productive piece of land.



East side view of 11288 Kennedy Road showing rear wing, enclosed porch and shed-roofed addition.

### **Context**

The George and Eliza Brodie House is located in a rural setting north of the former Melville United Church. The house is set far back from the road and is not visible from the public realm. There is a barn to the east of the dwelling. Both structures are placed close to the south property line and east of the meandering Rouge River. This farm property is one township lot south of the rural mill hamlet of Almira. The Brodie House is one of a number of nineteenth century farmhouses in the rural area surrounding Almira that represent the agricultural history of the community.

### **Sources**

Deed Abstracts for Markham Township Lot 29, Concession 5.  
Canada Census: 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911 and 1921.  
Markham Township Directories: Walton (1837), Brown (1846-47), Rowsell (1850-51), Mitchell (1866), Nason (1871), and Markham Township Directory of 1892.  
Maps of Markham Township: McPhillips (1853-54), Tremaine (1860), and Historical Atlas of the County of York, Ontario (1878).  
Property File for 11288 Elgin Mills Road East, containing research on Lot 29, Concession 5.

Research Report on 11303 Warden Avenue, containing research on Lot 29, Concession 5. Heritage Section, City of Markham Planning & Urban Design.

Mustard Family File, Heritage Section, City of Markham Planning & Urban Design.

“William Mustard.” *History of Toronto and County of York, Ontario, Volume II: Historical Notices*. Toronto: C. Blackett Robinson, 1885. Page 300.

“Death of N. Mustard Recalls an Historic Family Background.” *The Stouffville Tribune*, February 10, 1944.

Brodie, Alexander A. *Craigieburn Farm – The Saga of an early Canadian Pioneer Family*. Privately published by A. A. Brodie, 1903. Reprinted by J. A. Brodie (no date).

Bruce, Alex. D. *Historical Sketch of Melville Church and its Presbyterian Background From 1801*. Markham: Privately published, 1945.

Champion, Isabel (ed.). *Markham 1793-1900*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, Second Edition, Revised, 1989. Pages 76-77, 142, 188, 206-207.

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

*The property has design value or physical value as a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.*

**The George and Eliza Brodie House has design value and physical value as a representative example of a modest mid-nineteenth century frame farmhouse of the in the vernacular Georgian architectural tradition.**

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

**The George and Eliza Brodie House has historical value and associative value, representing the locally significant theme of immigration and the associated religious and cultural diversity of Markham Township, as the former farmhouse of an early Scottish Presbyterian family that came to Upper Canada in 1835.**

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

**The George and Eliza Brodie House has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its surroundings as the farmhouse that served this agricultural property from c.1860 well into the twentieth century.**

## RESEARCH REPORT



**James and Catharine Young House**  
**Part Lot 2, Block D & Part Lot 1, Block E, Plan 19**  
**7775 Ninth Line, Box Grove**  
**c.1860**

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

### **History**

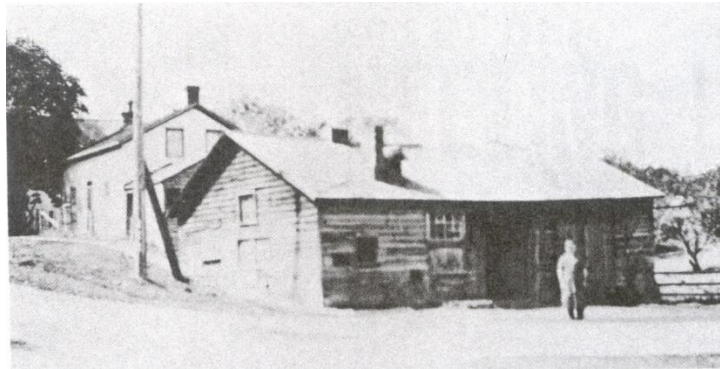
The James and Catharine Young House is located on the southern part of Lot 2, Block D and the northern part of Lot 1, Block E, Plan 19, in the western part of Markham Township Lot 6, Concession 9, in the historic crossroads hamlet of Box Grove.

In the mid-nineteenth century, a hamlet of tradesmen and labourers grew up around a cluster of industries located on the banks of the Rouge River, near the crossroads of Fourteenth Avenue and Ninth Line. In the early years, the community was known as Sparta, after the celebrated city-state of ancient Greece. By 1867, the year of Canada's Confederation, a local post office was opened with the name Box Grove.

The Tomlinson family, along with the Kirkhams, played a prominent role in the establishment of a sawmill, a woollen mill, and a shoddy mill (for recycling old cloth) in the Rouge River valley. These and other industries took advantage of the waterpower available from the creation of a

dam and mill pond in the hollow. In time, modest houses for workers in the numerous industries were built on village lots subdivided from the Tomlinson and Beebe farms. A general store, a Methodist Church, a school, two taverns, two blacksmith shops, and a cooperage were built to serve the needs of local residents and surrounding farm families.

William Ellis Beebe (1801-1874), an American-born blacksmith, established himself in the crossroads hamlet of Sparta after moving from the Buttonville area in the early 1830s. In 1833, he purchased the western 36 acres of Markham Township Lot 6, Concession 9, from Jacob Stover. Beebe's shop produced edge tools and agricultural implements. Evidently, he was also interested in land development because in 1850, he created a plan of subdivision along with Joseph Tomlinson who owned land on the opposite side of Ninth Line. There were already a number of existing buildings on the Beebe property at the time that Plan 19 was laid out. Many of the lots were sold to people who laboured in the local cluster of industries that centred on the Rouge River. These families built modest frame dwellings along the Ninth Line and Fourteenth Avenue frontages within the crossroads hamlet.



Archival photograph of W. E. Beebe's blacksmith shop with the house at 7775 Ninth Line in the background.

In the mid-1850s, William E. Beebe sold Lot 2, Block D, Plan 19 to James Young. He also sold him the northern section of adjoining Lot 1, Block E. Plan 19 illustrates the outlines of buildings that were standing at the time the plan was created in 1850. A small building that straddles the lot line between Lots 1 and 2 appears on the plan and is labelled "B. S. Shop." This note is believed to refer to William Beebe's blacksmith shop. A larger structure south of the smaller one may have been associated with the business. The house at 7775 Ninth Line stands on the approximate site of the small building labelled as the blacksmith shop on Plan 19. It may be that the original shop was replaced by the larger building to the south, and the old shop was replaced by the modest frame house that stands on the property today. Alternatively, it is possible that the shop was mis-labelled on Plan 19 and 7775 Ninth Line is a dwelling standing at the time the plan was created. Both shop and house appear in an archival photograph in *Markham 1793-1900* (page 288). When the photograph was printed, it seems to have been printed backwards because the blacksmith shop in the image was located at the crossroads, and the dwelling was to the north of the shop. In view of the above history and its inherent



uncertainties, a conservative date of c.1860 is suggested for the construction date of 7775 Ninth Line, but it may be at least a decade older.

James Young was a Canadian-born labourer who may have worked in William Beebe's blacksmith shop or in one of the other local industries. In the 1861 census, James Young was noted as living in a frame house with his wife Catharine (McIntyre) Young and their four children. Prior to this, according to the 1851 census, the family resided on Lot 8, Concession 8, just south of Markham Village. At that time, James Young's occupation was given as "Butcher."

In 1855, James Young was assessed for one-half acre on Markham Township Lot 6, Concession 9. By 1860, his land holdings had increased to three quarters of an acre. In 1870, his land holdings went back to one-half acre.

At some point in the 1860s, Lot 3, Block D, came into the ownership of James Young. The abstract of deeds does not show how he acquired this property, which was previously owned by Robert Garwood, a local general merchant.

In 1870, James and Catharine Young moved to Pickering Township. They sold their land holdings in Box Grove to Sarah Minerva Boyce who was a widow who may have been related through marriage to local shoemaker, George Boyce, who lived on Lot 5, Concession 8, within Box Grove. According to the 1871 census, Sarah M. Boyce was American born and had a teenaged daughter in the household. At the time of the 1881 census, her son Elija was living with her. He was employed as a farm labourer.

In February of 1890, Sarah M. Boyce sold the property to Watson Collinson, a local farmer and owner of several other properties in the Box Grove area. He lived at 7801 Ninth Line, so this was an investment property for him. Watson Collinson sold the south part of Lot 2, Block D and the northern portion of Lot 1, Block E to Hannah Hague later in 1890. According to the Markham Township assessment roll of 1900, Thomas Hague Jr. was a mail carrier. In 1906, Thomas and Hannah Hague sold to Eleanor A. Armstrong who was living with her widowed mother Mary (Little) Armstrong at the time of the 1891 census. After that, the property passed through other owners, including Frank Beckett who was awarded ownership by the Directory of Titles in 1981.

### **Architecture**

The James and Catharine Young House is a one-and-a-half storey frame dwelling clad in recently installed wood board and batten siding. With its rear wing and eastern and northern additions, the building plan is complex. The oldest portion is the one-and-a-half storey southwestern volume combined with the core of the one-storey rear wing which would have historically contained the kitchen. Substantial additions were constructed in the early 2010s, coinciding with the application of board and batten siding.

The one-and-a-half storey section has a medium-pitched gable roof with projecting, open eaves. There are no eave returns. The foundation material is unknown. The ground floor is set close to grade and poured concrete curbing obscures the view of the foundation behind it. Originally,

the house had a three-bay facade with a door placed roughly at its centre, flanked by flat-headed windows with a six-over six-pane division. At some point in the history of the building, the door was deemed unnecessary and closed in. On the south gable end is a single, six-over-six paned window placed toward the rear, and two smaller, six-over-six paned windows on the second floor. On the north gable end, a portion of the ground floor wall is now concealed by the modern addition, but on the second floor there is a single one-over-one paned window centred on the wall. Window trim is flat and simple, with projecting window sills.

The one-storey rear kitchen wing, now subsumed within the modern additions, extends from the northern two-thirds of the rear wall of the main block. An enclosed veranda within a south-facing ell likely replaced an open veranda. It has a set of double doors and fixed multi-paned windows set high on the wall. A new gable roof now caps both the kitchen wing and the enclosed veranda, and the structure has been extended to the rear.

The northern addition takes design cues from the historical building in terms of its siding, roof form, and window shapes. The main block of the original building remains discernable within the context of the evolved structure.

The James and Catharine Young House is a modestly-scaled mid-nineteenth century tradesman's dwelling in a village setting. The floorplate of the one-and-a-half storey main block is about the same size as the minimum dwelling required by the Colonial government of Upper Canada to qualify to receive a land grant, generally a log cabin. In its original form, the three-bay facade, rectangular plan, and general sense of symmetry reflected the persistence of the formal, conservative Georgian tradition of domestic architecture in rural communities in Markham Township long after the Georgian period ended in 1830.

In its evolved form, the house has been sympathetically remodelled and added to, retaining the character of an historical building. If the front door had been added back to the facade, as originally proposed in the early 2010s renovation, it would have done much to restore the original character of the building, even if the door was a surface feature and not functional.

### **Context**

The James and Catharine Young House is one of a grouping of older buildings within the historic crossroads hamlet of Box Grove. These buildings are important in defining, maintaining and supporting the character of this nineteenth century crossroads community. Although modern infilling has occurred, enough of the nineteenth century building stock remains for Box Grove to be recognizable as one of Markham's historic hamlets.

The Young House, sympathetically remodelled and expanded in the early 2010s, remains recognizable as a heritage structure and therefore continues to contribute to the heritage character of old Box Grove. The oldest part of the building is prominent on the street, being set forward of its rear wing and modern additions. There is a twentieth century frame detached garage on the south side of the dwelling, set well back from street. The garage is not a heritage structure.

Several properties in the vicinity have been individually designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, and several more properties are currently in the process of being designated.

### **Sources**

Abstract Index of Deeds for Lot 6, Concession 9, Markham Township.

Abstract Index of Deeds for Lots 2 and 3, Block D and 1, Block E, Plan 19.

Markham Township Assessment Rolls, 1870, 1880, 1890 and 1900.

Canada Census 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1931.

Directories of Markham Township: Walton (1837), Brown (1846-47), Rowsell (1850-51), Mitchell (1866) and 1891 Directory.

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

Property File for 7775 Ninth Line, Heritage Section, City of Markham Planning & Urban Design.

Interview with Clarence Degeer at the Markham Museum, January 8, 2007. Recollections of old-time property owners in Box Grove.

Burkholder, Paul. "Box Grove." *Pioneer Hamlets of York*. Kitchener: Pennsylvania German Folklore Society of Ontario, 1977. Pages 91-96

Champion, Isabel (ed.). *Markham 1793-1900*. Markham: Markham Historical Society, Second Edition, Revised, 1989. Pages 287-289.

### **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 James and Catherine Young House has design value and physical value as a unique example of an evolved, modest vernacular village worker's cottage that originally reflected the Georgian architectural tradition.**

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

**The James and Catharine Young House has historical value and associative value for representing the theme of urban development, specifically the nineteenth century development of the historic hamlet of Sparta/Box Grove around a cluster of industries at the crossroads of Fourteenth Avenue and Ninth Line.**

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

**The James and Catharine Young House has contextual value as one of a grouping of nineteenth century buildings that are important in defining, maintaining and supporting the character of the historic crossroads hamlet of Box Grove.**

## RESEARCH REPORT



**Franklin H. Raymer House**  
**Lot 10, Block E, Plan 19**  
**6840 Fourteenth Avenue, Box Grove**  
**c.1895**

**Heritage Section**  
**City of Markham Planning & Urban Design, 2024**  
***Update of 2016 Research Report***

### **History**

The Franklin H. Raymer House is located on Lot 10, Block E, Plan 19, which is within the western part of Markham Township Lot 6, Concession 9, in the historic crossroads hamlet of Box Grove.

William Ellis Beebe, an American-born blacksmith, established himself in the crossroads hamlet of Sparta (later named Box Grove) after moving from the Buttonville area in the early 1830s. In 1833, he purchased the western 36 acres of Lot 6, Concession 9, from Jacob Stover. Beebe's business included specialization as an edge-tool maker and agricultural implement manufacturer. Evidently, he was also interested in land development. In 1850, he created a plan of subdivision at the crossroads, in conjunction with Joseph Tomlinson, who owned land on Lot 6, Concession 8 on the opposite side of Ninth Line. Many of the lots created by this plan were sold to working people who laboured in the local cluster of industries that centred on the Rouge River. These families built modest frame dwellings along the Ninth Line and Fourteenth Avenue frontages within the crossroads hamlet.

Village Lot 10, Block E in the Beebe-Tomlinson Village Plan No. 19 (where 6840 Fourteenth Avenue stands) was first sold to John Mapes, a local farmer who lived on a farm property to the east of the crossroads hamlet in the centre of Lot 6, Concession 9. Joseph Tran, one of the sons of James and Mary (Ashton) Tran, was the next owner. The Tran family farmed the eastern part of Lot 6, Concession 9. In 1890, Joseph Tran sold Village Lot 10 to John Smith, who in turn sold to Franklin H. Raymer in 1895.

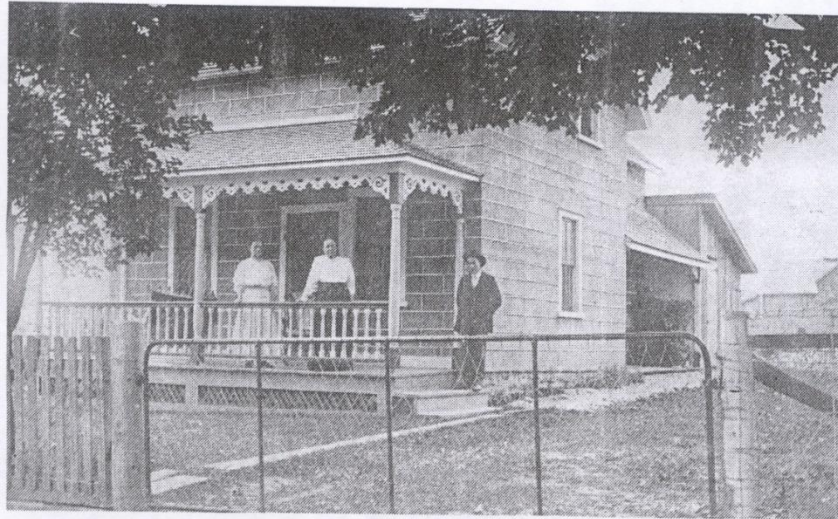
The house at 6840 Fourteenth Avenue was the farmhouse for the Franklin H. Raymer farm that was located north of the village lots. This farm, consisting of 44 acres, was originally the property of blacksmith William E. Beebe. It was sold to David Reesor in 1874, who later sold to Christina Raymer in 1888. In 1902, the 44 acres were sold to Franklin H. Raymer.

Franklin Herbert Raymer (1871-1955) was a son of John Noble Raymer and Christina (Reesor) Raymer. John N. Raymer was a successful farmer in the Box Grove-Cedar Grove community. He established cheese factories in Box Grove-Cedar Grove and Unionville in the late 1860s. After John N. Raymer's untimely death due to smallpox in 1874, his widow, Christina, took over the operation of the cheese factories. The cheese factory east of Box Grove was later operated by Franklin H. Raymer until it closed in about 1900.

The Raymers were among a number of Pennsylvania-German Mennonites who came to Markham in the early nineteenth century. The Raymer (also spelled Ramer) family settled in the eastern part of the Township and are considered the founders of the Mount Joy community north of Markham Village. This branch of the family left the Mennonite Church to become Methodists in the late 1860s, around the same time as the cheesemaking businesses were established.

According to Raymer family history recorded in a publication titled *My First Eighty Years*, by Myrle Hoover Raymer: *"When grandma felt my dad was capable, she passed the responsibility of the farm to him. When old enough to set up farming on his own, dad bought the west half of grandma's farm – Lot 6, Concession 9 in Box Grove. Like his father before him, dad became a successful farmer and cheese maker."*

On Village Lot 10, adjoining the larger Raymer farm property, Franklin H. Raymer built a modest frame farmhouse. Quoting again from Myrle Hoover Raymer's family history: *"Although no longer in the Raymer family, the house still stands. And, like the nearby Box Grove church, a basic part of its superstructure is one of granddad's granary sheds."* An excellent archival photograph of the farmhouse is found in the same publication (see below).



Our home and my birthplace at Box Grove, c1908. The grand verandah stretched the length of the house. My two sisters spent many a moment gazing beyond our large front gate before they were old enough to venture out of the yard alone. L to R Mina McCaffery (a cousin), Grandma Christina Raymer, and Dad.

Franklin H. Raymer's first wife was Emmeline Burkholder (1864-1905) of Cherrywood, Pickering Township. They married in 1899. Emmeline Raymer died at age 41. Franklin H. Raymer married his second wife, Mabel Lena Hoover (1890-1967), in 1910 and the couple had four children, including Myrle, the author of the family history, who was born here in 1911. Myrle was a millwright by trade.

The property was sold by Franklin H. Raymer to his son, Donald Franklin Raymer, in 1948. The Raymer family were the owners until 1969. The barn complex for the Raymer farm, on the north side of a small stream, stood until 2004.



Raymer Farm barn complex, north of the farmhouse (demolished).

In 2017, a large new residence was constructed on the property. As part of that project, the old Raymer farmhouse was placed on a new foundation slightly to the west of its original position

on the property and the exterior restored based on the archival photograph. The heritage house remains prominent on the streetscape, linked to the larger two-storey stone-veneered structure at the rear.

### **Architecture**

The Franklin H. Raymer House is a one-and-a-half storey frame building with an L-shaped plan. The gable roof has a medium pitch and projecting eaves. No historic chimneys remain. A full-width open veranda extends across the façade and another open veranda is located within the east-facing ell. The building rests on a recent concrete foundation and is linked at its rear to a modern brick dwelling constructed in 2017. The historical portion of the restored c.1895 dwelling is clad in stucco scored to resemble ashlar stonework, replicating the finish seen in an archival photograph of c.1908. Modern finishes and later extensions to the original building were removed in the restoration process.

The stucco finish visible in the archival photograph and reproduced during the restoration of the house is particularly interesting. It is a stucco finish made to resemble ashlar stone blocks with imitation mortar joints. This is a locally rare exterior finish. A similar restored stucco finish can be seen on the William Grant House, c.1884, at 2667 Bur Oak Avenue. An earlier example of this noteworthy exterior finish was found under later wood claddings of the Housser House c.1840, relocated from Mount Joy to the Markham Museum.

On the façade (south elevation), the hip roofed veranda seen in the archival photograph has been reproduced. The veranda is supported on slender turned posts and is ornamented with fretwork brackets and spandrels. The fretwork as restored is backed by a solid board fronting the structural plate rather than being below the plate so its decorative effect is somewhat subdued. The veranda also has a balustrade made up of slender turned pickets, reproducing the railing from the archival photograph. The three-bay facade has an off-centre single leaf door with one of the two flanking windows adjacent to it on the right-hand side. Windows are typically flat-headed, single hung, with two-over-two panes. Window openings have plain frames and projecting lugsills.

On the ground floor level of the east gable end there is a single window centrally placed on the wall, and a small, square four-paned window to its right. On the second floor are two windows that are smaller in size than the window centred on the wall below. Within the ell of the rear wing is a shed-roofed veranda supported on slender turned posts. This side veranda has a restrained design compared with the front veranda. The side veranda shelters a single-leaf door and a window. In the knee wall above the veranda roof is a small, square four-paned window.

On the ground floor level of the west gable end, there is a single window placed toward the front corner of the wall, and on the second floor are two windows smaller in size than the window on the ground floor. On the west wall of the rear wing is a single-leaf door positioned near the rear corner.

The Franklin H. Raymer House is a restored vernacular farmhouse that historically existed within the unusual context of a village setting. It was designed as a modestly sized dwelling intended to serve a small farm. Its scale suited the village context into which it was built. Alterations that took place over time were reversed in the 2017 exterior restoration. The alterations that formerly impacted the character of the building were the enclosure of the front and side verandas and the addition of a one-storey lean-to on the west gable end. The archival photograph from the Raymer family history was useful in guiding the exterior restoration.

The asymmetrical arrangement of openings on the front of the house, with the door placed off-centre and adjacent to a window, is a vernacular variation of the locally common Georgian inspired form of domestic architecture. This asymmetry is an indication of a building designed with function taking precedence over exterior design considerations which would have ordinarily favoured a symmetrical arrangement for the façade of even the most humble of dwellings. The restored ashlar patterned stucco finish and ornate front veranda add decorative elements to this modestly scaled former farmhouse that enhance its restrained form.



2017 two-storey stone house addition at rear of heritage dwelling.

### **Context**

The Franklin H. Raymer House is one of a grouping of nineteenth century buildings that remain within the historic crossroads hamlet of Box Grove. These buildings are important in defining, maintaining and supporting the character of this nineteenth century crossroads community. Although modern infilling has occurred, enough of the older building stock remains for Box Grove to be recognizable as one of Markham's historic hamlets. As a component of a large modern residence, the Raymer House retains its prominence on the streetscape due to its forward placement on the property and the recessing of the main portion of the new house to the rear.



## Sources

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## 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 Franklin H. Raymer House has design value and physical value as a unique restored example of a modest vernacular dwelling that historically served as a farmhouse within a village setting. Its restored ashlar-patterned stucco finish is a locally rare exterior treatment with its design based on an archival photograph dated c.1908.**

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

**The Franklin H. Raymer House has historical value and associative value for representing the theme of urban development, specifically the nineteenth century development of the historic hamlet of Sparta/Box Grove around a cluster of industries at the crossroads of Fourteenth Avenue and Ninth Line. It is a noteworthy example of a farmhouse constructed within a village setting, built c.1895 on Lot 10, Block E, Plan 19. The small farm was located behind the village lots. The property has additional historical value and associative value, representing the theme of industry, innovation and economic development, for its association with Franklin Herbert Raymer, who was locally significant as the last operator of the Raymer cheese factory established by his father John Noble Raymer in the mid-1860s. The business endured east of Box Grove until about 1901.**

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

**The Franklin H. Raymer House has contextual value as one of a grouping of nineteenth century buildings that are important in defining, maintaining and supporting the character of the historic crossroads hamlet of Box Grove.**

## RESEARCH REPORT



### **Spofford-Brodie-Smith House**

**West Half Lot 30, Concession 5  
3949 Nineteenth Avenue, Almira  
c.1870**

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

#### **History**

The Spofford-Brodie-Smith House is located on a portion of the western half of Markham Township Lot 30, Concession 5, west of the historic mill hamlet of Almira.

Mathias/Mathew Cline, or Klein, received the Crown patent for the entire 200 acres of Lot 30, Concession 5, in 1815. He had drawn this lot in 1801 and was present on the property at the time of William Berczy's 1803 Census of Markham settlers. The family included Mathew Klein, age 48, his wife Anna, age 44, and their children John, 22; Henry, 18; Mary, 17; Jacob, 10; and Louisa, 9. They may have been related to the Cline family of Pine Orchard, Whitchurch Township, who came to Upper Canada from Pennsylvania in 1802. There is also a possible family connection to John N. Klein of Kleinburg, Vaughan Township. Mathias and Johan (or John) Klein were listed among those who contributed to the cost of construction for the Bethesda Lutheran Church north of Unionville in 1820. There are several versions of the spelling of this surname in the primary source material. Matthias Klein died in 1834 and his property was willed to his sons John, Jacob, and Abraham.

The centre section of the Klein property became part of the core of the mill hamlet of Almira which formed around the grist and woolen mill built by Benjamin Bowman c.1844. A general store and post office were established opposite the mill by the mid-nineteenth century. Walton's Directory of Markham Township, 1837, placed John Cleve (?) on Lot 30, Concession 5. Brown's Directory, 1846-47, placed John Kline on Lot 30, Concession 5. Rowsell's Directory, 1850-51, placed Abraham, John, Jacob and William Kline on Lot 30, Concession 5.

At the time of the 1851 Census, three Cline brothers resided on Lot 30, Concession 5: Jacob, age 33, a farmer; John, age 29, a labourer, and Mark, age 22, also a labourer. John Cline and his wife Theresa lived in a one-storey frame dwelling. Jacob Cline and his wife Jane (Phennie) Cline lived in a two-storey log house shared by Mark Cline. Their ages suggest they were the grandsons of Mathias Klein. On the western half of Lot 30 there was a one-storey log house occupied by Moses Cook, a farmer, and his family. The Cook and Klein families were related by marriage. Yet another log house on Lot 30, Concession 5 was occupied by Solomon Cook, a mason. The log house of Moses Cook is believed to have stood on the site of 3949 Nineteenth Avenue, based on the Markham Township Assessment Roll of 1853.

In 1855, John Klein *et al* sold the western 100 acres of Lot 30, Concession 5, to William Spofford. William Spofford (1808-1878) and his wife Harriet (Ashbridge) Spofford (1813-1887) were English immigrants from Yorkshire who came to Upper Canada sometime between 1833 and 1837 based on the birth places and birth years of their children. The spelling of their surname varies from Spofford to Spafford or Spoffard, depending on the primary sources consulted. The family settled on the eastern 60 acres of Markham Township Lot 31, Concession 5, for which William Spofford received the Crown patent in 1847. This property was to the east of Benjamin Bowman's mills. William Spofford was an early member of the Melville Presbyterian Church. He was a farmer who became a prominent landowner and lumber dealer in the Almira area.

According to Markham Township Assessment Roll of 1856, the property on the western half of Lot 30, Concession 5 was occupied by William and Harriet Spofford's son Charles Spofford. Charles Spofford was born in England. At the time of the 1861 census, Charles Spofford, a farmer, age 28, resided on the property in a one-storey log house with his wife Susan (Pipher) Spofford, age 28, and their young son George, age 5. In 1866, William Spofford and his wife sold the property to their son. By 1871, there were four children in Charles and Susan Spofford's family ranging in age from 14 years to three months. The family's religious affiliation was Primitive Methodist.

The MPAC date of construction for the frame dwelling at 3949 Nineteenth Avenue is 1870. This house apparently replaced the log dwelling noted in the 1861 census.

Charles Spofford and his wife sold their farm to James Brodie in 1877. In that same year, Charles Spofford purchased the eastern 100 acres of Lot 34, Concession 7, Whitchurch Township from the Canada Company. The location of that property is north of the rural crossroads community of Vivian in northeast Whitchurch-Stouffville.

James Brodie (1824-1899), born in Scotland, was one of the six children of George Brodie and Jean (Milne) Brodie. George Brodie was a shoemaker by trade. The family came from Peterhead, Scotland and purchased the western half of Lot 2, Concession 5, Whitchurch Township in 1835. The family homestead was known as Craigieburn Farm, located south of the hamlet of Bethesda. James Brodie's younger brother, Alexander A. Brodie, wrote a detailed family history in 1903 which described the family's journey from Scotland and their experiences as an early settler family in Upper Canada from 1835 to 1842. They initially lived in a log house on a few acres of cleared land then in 1850, constructed a "native stone house" on their property. The family history contains a first-hand account of the Upper Canadian Rebellion of 1837 which happened only two years after the Brodie family arrived at their new home, plus many other interesting details of what Alexander Brodie described as pioneer life in this area in the early nineteenth century. The old Brodie stone house burned in 1936 and its ruins can still be seen on the property, which is on the east side of Warden Avenue, a little to the north of Stouffville Road.

It is interesting to read in A. A. Brodie's history about his father having a letter of introduction to William Lyon Mackenzie from George Low, a prominent gentleman in Aberdeen, asking Mackenzie to recommend to his friend a good part of the country in which to settle. Brodie goes on to describe accompanying his father to William Lyon Mackenzie's printing office on York Street to present the letter and recounted the recommendations his father received from him about where to settle. The County of York, north of Toronto, was preferred, though other options were presented.

Similar to the Spofford family, the Brodie family were early members of Melville Presbyterian Church, established in the community of Cashel in 1848. George Brodie was one of the first elders of the congregation.

James Brodie was married to Matilda A. (Stuart) Brodie (1829-1916). From her obituary we learn that she was born in Dundee, Scotland, and came to Canada in 1844. Before she married, Matilda Stuart was a schoolteacher on the Sixth Line in Markham Township. James and Matilda Brodie had six sons and three daughters. Several of their sons became veterinarian surgeons living in Canada and the United States. At the time of the 1861 census, James and Matilda Brodie resided in Whitchurch Township. James Brodie's occupation at that time was "Lawyer" rather than "Farmer" as it was noted in the 1871 census and thereafter.

In 1891, James and Matilda Brodie sold the farm on Lot 30, Concession 5 to Abram or Abraham Smith and moved into Markham Village where they were enumerated in that year. Abraham Smith (1830-1917) and his wife Elizabeth (born 1832) were of German cultural origin but born in Ontario. They were of the Mennonite faith. By the time of the 1901 census, Abraham and Elizabeth Smith were retired and their son Jacob Smith and his wife Ella had taken over the family farm, raising a large family while Jacob Smith's parents continued to reside in the household. The western end of the frame farmhouse at 3979 Nineteenth Avenue, a historic later addition, appears to have served as a "doddy house" in the Mennonite tradition, a small

separate dwelling unit for the older generation. Jacob Smith inherited the property from his father in 1917.

Levi Smith, one of the younger children of Jacob and Ella Smith, inherited the farm in 1956. He and his wife, Ina, sold to Lewis and Verna Heise in 1962. The Heise family are of Pennsylvania German Tunker origin with roots in Markham going back to 1804. Lewis and Verna Heise soon sold a number of building lots off the property. The current owners of the parcel containing the old farmhouse are Tom Panagopoulos, Maria Panagopoulos, and Nearhos Hatzinikolaou.

### **Architecture**

The Spofford-Brodie-Smith House is a one-and-a-half storey frame dwelling resting on a fieldstone foundation. The siting of the house on a natural slope exposes sufficient foundation height at the eastern end to allow for large basement windows. The front section of the house has a rectangular plan. There is a hip-roofed open veranda centred on the primary or north elevation. An addition extends from the eastern end of the rear wall and includes an east-facing sunroom supported on heavy stone piers. The building is clad in horizontal aluminum siding.

The medium-pitched gable roof has projecting, open eaves without eave returns. There are heavy single-stack red brick chimneys at the east gable end and at the point where the west gable end existed prior to the addition of the doddy house. A large gambrel-roofed front dormer with flared eaves, unique in Markham, is an obvious later addition. The wide dormer has three pairs of modern casement windows.

The front veranda is supported on slender turned posts ornamented with delicate brackets in the Gothic Revival style. It appears that the veranda's length has been shortened so that it does not fully extend across the primary elevation. This may have been done to allow more natural light into the east front room.

The primary elevation is currently composed of five-bays, but the original three-bay front is clearly indicated with a doorcase centred between two windows. The single-leaf, four-panelled wood door is flanked by four-paned sidelights with wood panelled aprons. Window openings are flat-headed and rectangular. Most of the old window openings contain modern replacement windows but two older windows suggest that the original windows had six-over-six panes. At the western end of the primary elevation is another exterior single-leaf door and one window to its left. This door and window would have served the doddy house. The east gable end has two window openings on the ground floor and two smaller window openings above which are regularly placed.

The Spofford-Brodie-Smith House began as a vernacular frame dwelling in the Georgian architectural tradition, a conservative and formal approach to domestic architecture that continued to influence the design of vernacular dwellings in Markham long after the Georgian period ended in 1830. This would have been an old-fashioned house at the time it was constructed. The style of the front doorcase is not typical of the suggested c.1870 date of construction, except for its four-panelled door. A doorcase with sidelights but without a transom

light is more characteristic of vernacular dwellings in this area reflecting the Neo-classical style of the 1820s to 1830s. The extension of the western end of the dwelling in the same style and form to create a traditional doddy house, or separate dwelling unit for an older generation, is an expression of the later Mennonite families who came after the Spoffard and Brodie period of ownership. The cultural history of the property is thereby readable in the architecture of the evolved dwelling.

The wide gambrel-roofed dormer represents the third phase of the architectural evolution of the building. With its flared eaves, the dormer reflects the Dutch Colonial style and likely dates from the 1930s or 1940s. There are few examples of dwellings in the Dutch Colonial style in Markham, mainly because there was not much new construction in the rural township during the period when the style was most popular. This Dutch Colonial dormer addition to a nineteenth century farmhouse is locally unique.

### **Context**

The Spofford-Brodie-Smith House is a remnant of the agricultural history of the area surrounding the core of the historic mill hamlet of Almira. It is sited in a semi-rural setting on an irregularly shaped lot which is a portion of the former farm that existed until the early 1960s when a number of building lots were severed from the original acreage. Modern houses were constructed on those lots, which vary in size.

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Canada Census: 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911 and 1921.

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

*The property has design value or physical value as a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.*

**The Spofford-Brodie-Smith House has design value and physical value as a unique example of an evolved vernacular farmhouse that exhibits three distinct stages of development.**

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

**The Spofford-Brodie-Smith House has historical value for its association with the locally significant theme of immigration and for its association with the cultural and religious diversity of Markham Township as the former farmhouse of early British immigrants from England and Scotland, and its later ownership by a Pennsylvania German Mennonite family who modified the original dwelling with the addition of a traditional “doddy house.”**

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

**The Spofford-Brodie-Smith House has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its surroundings as the farmhouse that served this agricultural property from the late nineteenth century until the early 1960s.**



## RESEARCH REPORT



### **Gormley-Wideman House**

**East Part Lot 31, Concession 4**

**3490 Nineteenth Avenue**

**c.1859**

**Heritage Section**

**City of Markham Planning & Urban Design, 2024**

*Update of Research Reports from 1998 and 2018.*

#### **History**

This rural dwelling, with its associated barns and other outbuildings, is located on the eastern part of Markham Township Lot 31, Concession 4, west of the historic mill hamlet of Almira. The 200 acres of Lot 31, Concession 4 were granted by the Crown to Elizabeth Fisher, who received the patent in 1804. Elizabeth Fisher, the daughter of a United Empire Loyalist, did not reside on the property. According to William Berczy's 1803 Census of Markham Township Settlers, the occupant was Christian Steckley, his wife Magdalena (Heise) Steckley, and their children. The Steckleys were Pennsylvania-Germans, part of a significant group of Mennonite and Tunker families who came to Markham in the early years of the nineteenth century. This community was part of a larger migration of Pennsylvania-Germans who settled in the Niagara Region after the American Revolution, and later, in Waterloo and York Counties. Like the Berczy settlers, the Pennsylvania-Germans were German-speaking.

Jacob Fisher, likely Elizabeth's husband, sold the property to Christian Steckley in 1805. In 1816, Christian Steckley Sr. sold to his son, Christian Steckley Jr. (1785-1865) who married Elizabeth

Hiltz (1781-1854) in 1801. They had a family of nine children. One of their sons, John Steckley, inherited the property from his father in 1865 and that same year, sold the eastern 100 acres to his son-in-law, James Gormley, a storekeeper who married his daughter Margaret in about 1850. John Steckley and his wife, Nancy (Baker) Steckley, retained the western 100 acres. In 1871, several years after the death of John Steckley, his executors sold 25 acres of the western half of Lot 31 to James Gormley to increase his holdings.

James Gormley was a Presbyterian Irish immigrant who may have left Ireland as the result of the potato famine. He came to Markham Township in the 1840s and is mainly remembered as the founder of the hamlet of Gormley's Corners (later known simply as Gormley) at Woodbine Avenue and the Stouffville Road, now within the political boundaries of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. James Gormley was a former schoolteacher who later became a storekeeper and auctioneer. He was Gormley's first postmaster, serving from 1851 to 1876, and was also a notary public. He initially lived in the community that is named for him, on the east part of Lot 35, Concession 3. In 1856, he created a subdivision of village lots, Plan 254 on a 10-acre parcel of Lot 35, Concession 3, purchased in 1850.

James Gormley (1821-1895) was married to Margaret Steckley (1834-1900), a daughter of John and Nancy Steckley of Lot 31, Concession 4. Between the 1851 and 1861 census, James and Margaret Gormley relocated from the hamlet of Gormley to the Steckley farm. John and Nancy Steckley lived in a one-and-a-half storey brick farmhouse (no longer standing) on the western part of Lot 31, and James and Margaret Gormley lived in another one-and-a-half storey brick farmhouse on the eastern part of Lot 31 (the subject property at 3490 Nineteenth Avenue). Both brick houses were constructed between the 1851 and 1861 census enumerations. According to information in the City of Markham's files, the houses were constructed in 1859.

Notwithstanding the varied nature of James Gormley's career, his occupation given in the 1861 census was simply noted as "Farmer."

In 1882, James Gormley sold the farm to Jacob Wideman, a Mennonite minister, and moved to Toronto. James Gormley, his wife Margaret, and their unmarried daughter Annie were living at 93 Isabella Street, Toronto, at the time of the 1891 census. James Gormley was president of the Ontario Industrial Loan and Investment Company Limited, according to a City of Toronto directory of 1891.

The Wideman family were part of the local Pennsylvania-German community. They had come to Markham from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, in 1803. According to a township directory of 1892, several of Jacob Wideman's family lived on Lot 31, Concession 4: Adam, Simeon, Samuel, and Daniel. In 1897, the main portion of the farm was sold to Samuel Wideman, a bishop in the Mennonite church. He was married to Elsie Hoover. In 1914, the farm was sold to their son, Roy Wideman, who was married to Elsie Steckley. In 1969, ownership was transferred to a corporation called Wideview Farms Ltd., who remain the owners in 2024.

This house is of sufficient historical and architectural significance to have been noted in the book *Rural Roots – Pre-Confederation Buildings of the York Region of Ontario: “A Gormley home on Lot 31, Concession 4, remains almost unchanged.”* Page 102.

In 1997, a gathering of over 150 members of the Wideman family was held on the farm to mark the end of over a century of occupation by the family. The farmhouse has been vacant for many years after being sold to investors in 1998.

### **Architecture**

The Gormley-Wideman House is a good representative example of a larger mid-nineteenth century brick Markham Township farmhouse designed with the influences of the Georgian architectural tradition and the Classic Revival style, later modified with the addition of a Mennonite “doddy house/gross doddy” residence. It is noteworthy for its five-bay primary (south) elevation which is uncommon locally since most farmhouses in Markham Township built in the same period had three-bay fronts.

Solid brick construction and a conservative design based on the Georgian architectural tradition, updated with elements of the Classic Revival style, typified the rural vernacular architecture of Markham Township during the prosperous years of the 1850s when there was a strong market for wheat exports as a result of the Crimean War. During this time, the enduring Georgian design principles of balance and proportion was often relieved with patterned brickwork and Classic Revival details, as seen in this example. Buff coloured “white brick” accents on a body of local red brick became common in York County after the 1840s.

As noted above, the house was originally built with a five-bay façade with a central doorcase. The westernmost front window opening was later concealed by the construction of a doddy house addition. The building is one-and-a-half storeys in height, of solid brick construction, and rests upon a fieldstone foundation. The brick is laid in a Flemish bond pattern. The local brick is a pink-orange with buff coloured quoining and splayed brick arches over door and window openings. The medium-pitched gable roof has a substantial Classical wood cornice and eave returns. At either end of the roof are heavy, corbelled brick chimneys. A later external chimney is located on the west gable end.

Windows are typically flat headed with six-over-six panes and projecting wooden lugsills. The openings have slightly cambered heads. Windows are framed with operational louvered wood shutters. The front doorcase has a flat-headed transom and sidelights with a geometric glazing pattern. The door has round-arched panels which reflect an Italianate stylistic influence. Markings on the wall indicate that at one time, a veranda extended across the entire front wall. Until recently, a partial veranda in an early twentieth century style was located on the western part of the facade, sheltering both the front entrance and the entrance to the doddy house. The removal of the veranda revealed the outline of a portico-style porch that once sheltered the principal entrance.

A noteworthy feature of the Gormley-Wideman House, believed to have been added in the late nineteenth century or early twentieth century, was a frame doddy house dwelling unit positioned at the western end of the facade (recently demolished, except for its concrete foundation). The interior entrance to this unit was through a former window opening, converted to a door, now visible due to the demolition of the doddy house. The frame addition was one-and-a-half storeys in height and clad in vertical tongue and groove wood siding. Its purpose was to provide an accessory dwelling unit for the senior members of the household once the next generation took over the operation of the farm, a traditional Mennonite practice.



Front view taken in 2021 with doddy house removed.  
Note the door on the left, originally a window.

At the rear of the house is a shed-roofed frame addition clad in corrugated metal, one-and-a-half storeys in height with a low-pitched shed roof, and a mix of six-over-six and two-over-two windows. It served as a service wing to the main house and the presence of a heavy brick chimney indicates that part of the addition served as a kitchen or summer kitchen with a cooking fireplace. The loft is said to have contained a workshop. A veranda adjoins the rear addition. It has a shed roof supported on simple turned posts. This rear veranda likely reflects the treatment of the former front veranda.



East side view from 1981 showing rear addition.

The interior of the house contains many outstanding historic architectural features, including fireplace mantels, door and window mouldings, wood paneling in the front rooms, and the main staircase with a turned newel post and square balusters. Much of the woodwork has retained its early faux graining.

The removal of the doddy house addition has returned the façade of the Gormley-Wideman House to a five-bay configuration but has removed the component most readily associated with the Mennonite culture of its later long-term owners. The foundation of the doddy house remains, and the demolished frame structure could potentially be reconstructed based on photographic records. Alternatively, the westernmost window could be restored to return the façade to its original appearance.

### **Context**

The Gormley-Wideman House is part of an outstanding complex of historic farmstead structures west of the historic mill hamlet of Almira, and south of the historic crossroads hamlet of Gormley's Corners. The property currently stands within an agricultural landscape. The house is set back from Nineteenth Avenue and is therefore not readily visible from the street. A large, gambrel-roofed barn to the northwest of the house dates from 1902. In the City of Markham's files, numerous photographs document the variety of outbuildings associated with the farm including: barns, a blacksmith shop, turkey house, milk house, carriage house, and garages.



Barn and milk house.

### Sources

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### 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 Gormley-Wideman House has design value and physical value as a good representative example of a mid-nineteenth century brick farmhouse designed with the influences of the Georgian architectural tradition and the Classic 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.*

**The Gormley-Wideman House has historical value for its association with the locally significant theme of immigration, and for its association with the local industry, innovation and economic development as the former home of Irish immigrant James Gormley, storekeeper, postmaster, auctioneer, notary public and farmer, who was locally important as the founder of the crossroads hamlet of Gormley's Corners. Further, the property has associative value for its connection to the early religious and cultural diversity of Markham Township as the later home of several generations of the Pennsylvania-German Mennonite Wideman family.**

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

**The Gormley-Wideman House has contextual value as one of several nineteenth century farmhouses located within the agricultural area to the west of the historic mill hamlet of Almira. The Gormley-Wideman House is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to the site where it has stood since 1859.**