



Report to: Development Services Committee

Report Date: June 12, 2012

SUBJECT: Eligibility of James Brander House for
Relocation to Markham Heritage Estates
31 Helen Avenue

PREPARED BY: George Duncan, Senior Heritage Planner, ext. 2296

REVIEWED BY: Regan Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning, ext. 2080

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Heritage Markham recommends to Council that the James Brander House at 31 Helen Avenue be declared eligible for relocation to Markham Heritage Estates, due to its cultural heritage value or interest, threatened state, and the absence of either short or long-term uses by the owner;

THAT the relocation of the frame rear wing of the building is supported if a future owner wishes to retain it;

THAT the current owner undertake the necessary work to make the roof of the brick portion watertight to prevent further deterioration pending future relocation of the building;

AND THAT Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Not applicable.

PURPOSE:

To recommend to Council that the "James Brander House" at 31 Helen Avenue be declared eligible for relocation to the Markham Heritage Estates subdivision.

BACKGROUND:

The James Brander House is listed on the Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The James Brander House, located at 31 Helen Avenue, south of Unionville, is listed on the *Markham Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest* and is designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. It is a two storey, Italianate style farmhouse with patterned brick veneer, dating from c.1875. The Statement of Significance is attached as Appendix 'A.'

The house is located within an automobile dealership and was to be restored as part of a proposed expansion

This former residential property was purchased by the neighbouring Volkswagen dealership to provide room for the expansion of the business. The heritage building was designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act in 2004, and was to be incorporated

into the development plans in a future phase of the automobile dealership's expansion, to serve as an office for used car sales.

Only the two storey brick portion of the building is protected under the designation by-law

At the time of the designation and Heritage Markham's review of the development application, the Town agreed that only the two storey brick portion of the building would be protected and incorporated into the development. This portion was deemed to be the original and most significant part of the James Brander House. A restoration plan was prepared by the owner's consultant.

The owner's plans for expansion of the dealership did not occur

The proposed expansion of the dealership did not take place and the property has since been acquired by a new owner that does not intend to expand the existing dealership. The property owner would like to remove the heritage building, which has been vacant since 2004 and is now in a deteriorated state. There is no immediate or long-term use for the structure and therefore no incentive to invest in its repair and restoration (see written submission to Heritage Markham by Al Duffy, on behalf of Mr. Jim Cochrane, Appendix 'B').

Without a short-term or long-term use, the James Brander House is at risk of further damage or loss

Without a short-term or long-term use, the James Brander House is going to continue to be a vacant structure under threat from the elements, animal occupation and potential vandalism. Property Standards staff have visited the site in response to a complaint about its deteriorated state. Heritage Section staff have also conducted a site visit and noted serious deterioration, mainly due to water infiltration from a leaking roof, particularly in the rear wing. Although the owner could be compelled by Property Standards to make the necessary repairs to secure the building from the elements and other threats, this would only be a short-term solution.

The James Brander House was identified as a threatened building in the Markham Heritage Estates Study, 2004

The James Brander House is included as a threatened building in the Markham Heritage Estates Study 2004. The study proposed relocation as an option if on-site preservation was not possible. The 2004 study determined that since the house is a good example of the Italianate style, it could be considered for potential eligibility for relocation to one of the smaller lots in Markham Heritage Estates.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Staff is of the opinion that on-site preservation is unlikely

Staff is of the opinion that on-site preservation is not likely, and that relocation is the most viable option available. There are currently no examples of the Italianate style in Markham Heritage Estates, therefore the relocation of the James Brander House is recommended as it will add to the architectural diversity of Markham Heritage Estates. In

order to address the immediate property standards issues, staff recommends that the current owner undertake minor repairs to make the roof of the brick portion water-tight.

Heritage Markham has recommended that the James Brander House be declared eligible for relocation to Markham Heritage Estates

Given the significance of the James Brander House, and the uncertainty about its future, Heritage Markham and Heritage Section staff is of the opinion that action must be taken to ensure the house will be preserved before more deterioration occurs. This is an instance where on-site options for the preservation of the building have not materialized, leaving Markham Heritage Estates as a solution for the preservation of an important heritage resource. Heritage Markham recommended that Council declare the James Brander House eligible for relocation to Markham Heritage Estates and that the owner be requested to facilitate this process. The recommendation allowed a future owner the option of also relocating the two storey frame portion of the building, which is also of some heritage significance even though it is not protected by the heritage designation. (Heritage Markham Extract, April 11, 2012, Appendix 'C').

Further options can still be examined for alternate locations

Even though Council may declare the heritage building eligible for relocation to Markham Heritage Estates, the owner, or Town staff, can continue to promote the potential for relocation to a building lot elsewhere in the area, perhaps as an infill building within one of the heritage conservation districts or other neighbourhoods. Relocation of threatened heritage buildings into Markham Village, Unionville and new developments has occurred in Markham in the past, such as the Prentice House at the corner of Main Street South and James Scott Road.

The James Brander House meets the building eligibility criteria for Markham Heritage Estates

The James Brander House meets all the Town of Markham's criteria for eligibility for relocation to Markham Heritage Estates. The house is located within the current boundaries of the Town, it is not in a heritage conservation district, and is listed on the *Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest*. Research and site investigations have shown that the building is significant and seriously threatened on its original site due to its long-time vacant state and the lack of plans for its future use. Attempts have been made to preserve the building on, or close to its original site without success.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The relocation of the heritage house will be the financial responsibility of a future purchaser

Approval of the recommendations of this staff report will not have any financial implications with respect to costs for the Town of Markham. The relocation of the house to Markham Heritage Estates, or another location within the Town of Markham, will be the financial responsibility of a future purchaser. As with the other heritage houses approved for relocation to Markham Heritage Estates, the owner will be expected to advertise the building for relocation, and award the house to the bidder of their choice.

The Town of Markham's role from that point will be to implement the lot selection and financial capability process for the new owner, sell the building lot within Heritage Estates to them, and process a restoration plan and site plan control application.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.


ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This report aligns with the Corporate Direction of Managed Growth and Environment by ensuring that significant cultural heritage resources are preserved within the context of the changing urban landscape .

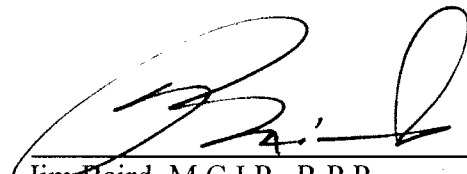
BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDED BY:



Rino Mostacci, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Director of Planning & Urban Design



Jim Baird, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.
Commissioner of Development Services

ATTACHMENTS:

Figure 1: Owner/Applicant and Location Map

Figure 2: Building Photographs

Appendix 'A': Statement of Significance

Appendix 'B': Correspondence from Al Duffy

Appendix 'C': Heritage Markham Extract September 14, 2011 Meeting

Figure 1:

File Path:

Q:\Development\Heritage\property\Helen\DSCJune122012

Agent:

Al Duffy

Telephone: 416-432-5160; email aduffy8@gmail.com

Owner:

1788289 Ontario Inc.

Telephone: 905-477-2212

Attn Kim Petrasso

Fax: 905-477-2214

7997 Kennedy Road

email: Jim.Cochrane@tcbmw.com

Markham ON L3R 2E2

Location Map:

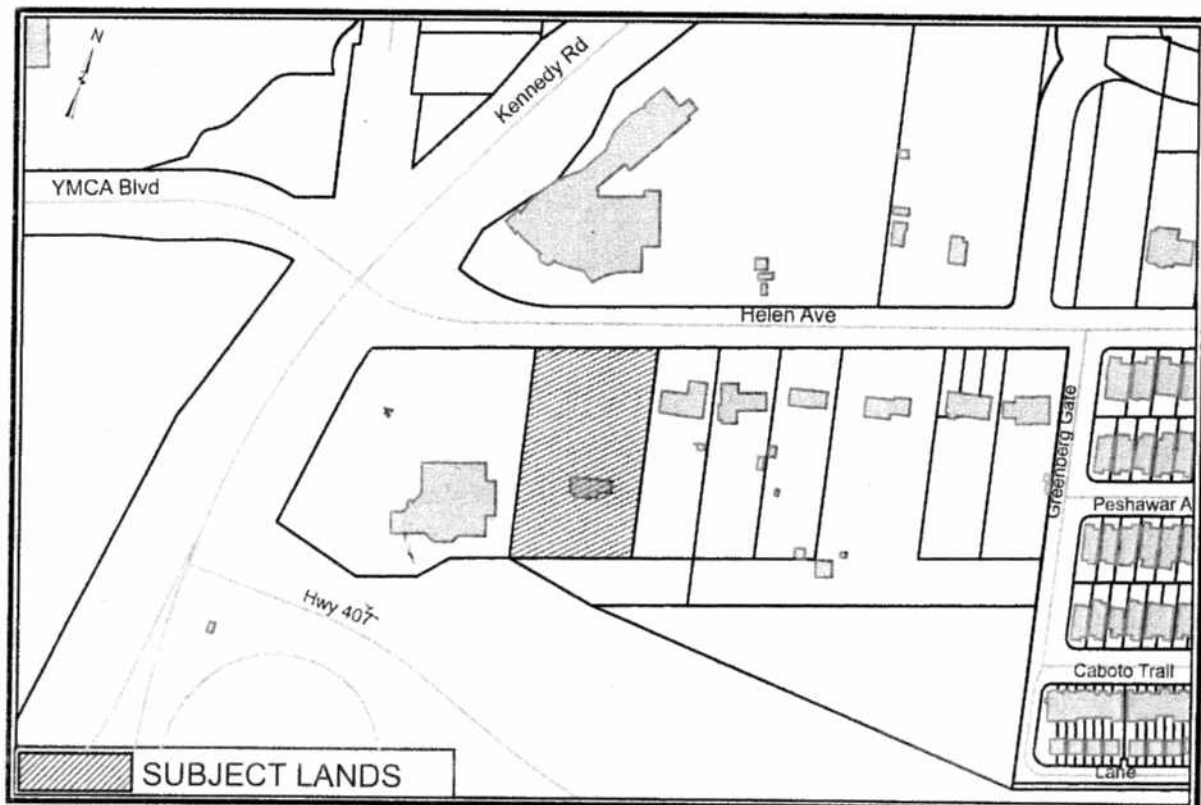
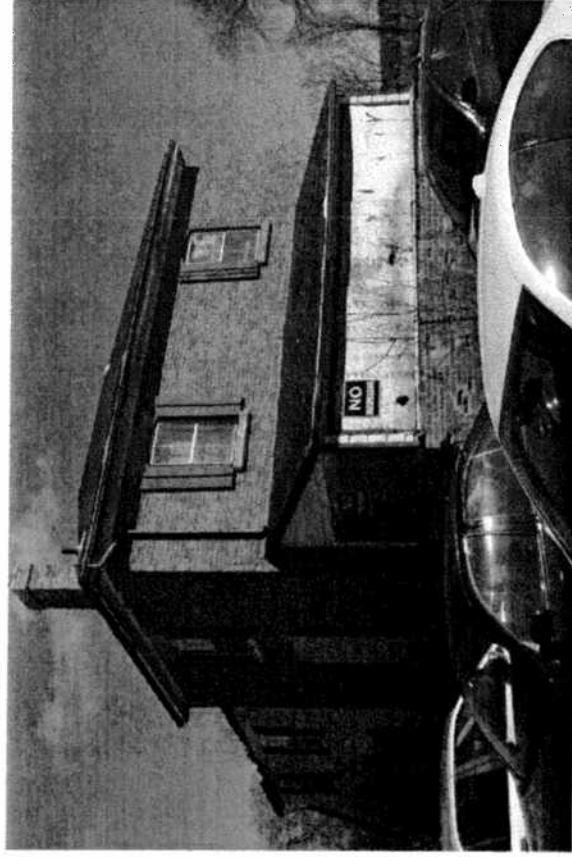
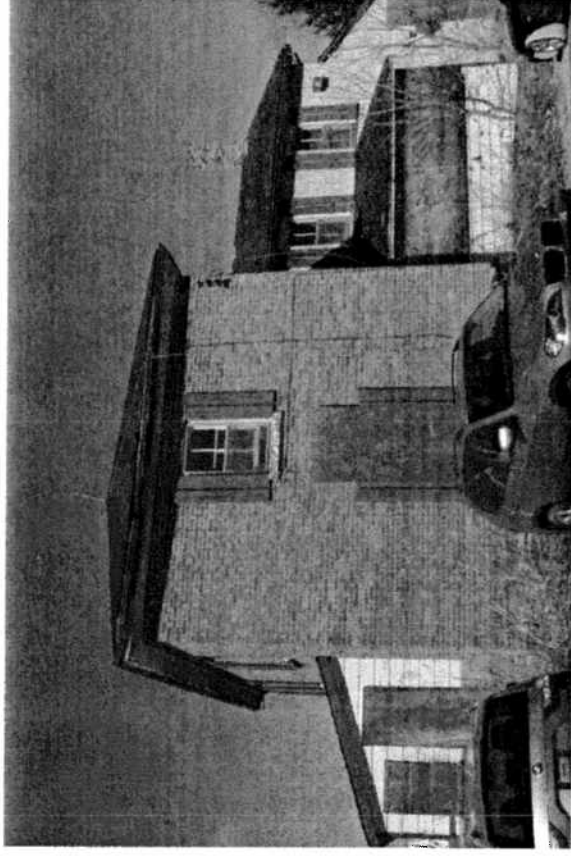


Figure 2: James Brander House Current Photographs

West and north view



South view



James Brander House

Historical Significance

The house at 31 Helen Avenue was built on Lot 8, Concession 6, land originally granted by patent in 1816 to Johan Englehardt Helmke. Helmke, one of the original Berczy settlers, played a prominent role during the journey of William Berczy's German immigrants through the Genesee Valley of New York State and ultimately to Markham Township. The 200 acre farm lot was later divided among the children of Johan Helmke and his wife, Mary (Stiver) Helmke.

In 1849, the portion of the west half of Lot 8 that later became the site of the existing house on the property was sold to William Whiteoak. The Whiteoak family resided in a log house that was likely constructed during the Helmke period of ownership. In 1871, James Brander, a farmer from Pickering Township, purchased the property. About 1875, he replaced the old log house with a new, two storey patterned brick farmhouse. In 1879, Brander sold to Thomas Cann. The Cann family owned the farm into the early part of the 20th century. In 1920, the land was subdivided for residential development, creating Helen Avenue. The farmstead remained on a larger parcel.

Architectural Significance

The house at 31 Helen Avenue is two storey brick building in the vernacular Italianate style. It is similar in materials and details to the Harrington House in Unionville, and may have been a simplified version constructed by the same builder. A two storey, frame rear wing was added to the east wall in the late 19th century, possibly to replace a smaller kitchen wing. This addition is not included in the Reasons for Designation.

The house is constructed of local red brick with white (buff coloured) brick accents, and rests on a fieldstone foundation. The building has a low to medium pitched hip roof and segmentally-headed window openings, typical of the Italianate style. Windows are single hung with a 2/2 glazing pattern. The front is 3 bays, with a centre door capped with a segmentally-headed transom light.

Contextual Significance

The James Brander House is of contextual significance as a reminder of the agricultural community that once surrounded the village of Unionville prior to the urbanization of the area that began during the latter half of the 20th century.

Significant Architectural Attributes to be Conserved

- All segmentally-headed 2/2 wood windows, with their associated wood trim and projecting wood sills;
- Front door opening with its segmentally-headed opening for a transom light;

- Red and buff brickwork, including the brick arches over door and window openings;
- Hip roof with wood soffits, fascia and associated trim;
- Single stack brick chimney at the north west corner of the roof;
- Fieldstone foundation;
- The form of the building, with its rectangular plan shape.

31 Helen Ave.
April 11 - 2012

Re Heritage House on Volkswagen site on Kennedy

APPENDIX B

Mr George Duncan
Senior Heritage Planner
Planning and Urban Design Department
Town of Markham

Dear George,

Thank you for taking time to visit the above property with me to assess the current condition.

As I explained during your visit the present owner of the dealership Mr Jim Cochrane purchased the dealership some years ago, but was not involved in any discussions with your department or others about the eventual disposition of the house.

Mr Cochrane did have some discussions with a resident of Helen Ave who was interest in moving the house to his property on the east end of Helen Ave. The resident decided that the house was not worth moving and ended the discussion.

I understand that there was in the past consideration by the previous owner of using the house as an office but that idea was abandoned due to configuration of the house and costs.

Mr Cochrane is also the owner of the BMW site to the North and runs the office function for the Volkswagen dealership from that location. There is not a use for the building by the dealership and due to security and the locking of the gates to reduce theft it would not be feasible to rent the building to a third party.

Mr Cochrane is prepared to work with your Committee if you have anybody that may be interested in relocating the building to another site, failing that, if there are materials in the house that can be used on other heritage building in Town, you are more than welcome to them.

I will attend your meeting at your convenience to answer any questions.

Thanks
Al Duffy
416 432 5160

HERITAGE MARKHAM
EXTRACT

APPENDIX C

DATE: April 23, 2012
TO: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning

EXTRACT CONTAINING ITEM #12 OF THE FOURTH HERITAGE MARKHAM
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 11, 2012

12. REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK
31 HELEN AVENUE
STATUS OF JAMES BRANDER HOUSE (16.11)
Extracts: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning
-

The Senior Heritage Planner reviewed the history of the subject property and the request by the applicant to find an appropriate solution for the future of the building. Staff recommended approval of the eligibility of the heritage house at 31 Helen Avenue for relocation to Markham Heritage Estates. A letter of explanation was received from Al Duffy, agent for the applicant.

HERITAGE MARKHAM RECOMMENDS:

THAT Heritage Markham supports the James Brander House at 31 Helen Avenue (brick portion) as an eligible building for relocation to Markham Heritage Estates, due to its cultural heritage value, threatened state, and the absence of either short or long-term uses by the owner;

AND THAT the relocation of the frame rear wing of the building is supported if a future owner wishes to retain it;

AND THAT the owner undertake the necessary work to make the roof of the brick portion watertight to prevent further deterioration pending future relocation of the building;

AND THAT staff provide to the owner, a list of people waiting to obtain a heritage house, and encourage the owner to contact them.

CARRIED