

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Joseph Marr House

c.1848

3 Heritage Corners Lane

The Joseph Marr House is recommended for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act as a property of cultural heritage value or interest, as described in the following Statement of Significance.

Description of Property

The Joseph Marr House is located on the east side of Heritage Corners Lane, within Markham Heritage Estates. The house was relocated to this site from 8992 Reesor Road, in the Locust Hill community, in 2005.

Historical or Associative Value

The Joseph Marr House is of historical and associative value for its connection to the Marr family and Markham's period of agricultural prosperity in the mid-19th century. Its original location was on Lot 14, Concession 9, granted to William Marr in 1809. The Marr family remained loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolution, and as a result were compelled to leave their home in Pennsylvania in 1799. William, his widowed mother and several siblings first settled in the Niagara district. They petitioned for land grants in Markham Township in 1801. William Marr married Phoebe Earls and they had 9 children. Marr served as a lieutenant in Captain John Button's cavalry troop during the War of 1812, and was a government supporter during the Upper Canadian Rebellion of 1837.

Joseph Marr (1798 – 1885) was the second child of William and Phoebe Marr. He married Lucy Crosby. In 1848 Marr purchased a portion of the east half of the family homestead. It is thought that the existing house on the property was built about 1848, though it possible that the house may have been constructed prior to the formal purchase of the land. In 1857, the property was sold to Christian Reesor, a prominent local landowner that resided on Lot 14, Concession 10, directly across the road from the Marr farm. For many years the house and farm were occupied by tenant farmers while the property remained in the ownership of the Reesor family until 1920.

Design or Physical Value

The Joseph Marr house is good example of a modest, one and a half storey vernacular dwelling that reflects the Georgian architectural tradition in its symmetry, rectangular plan, and simplicity

of design. The building is of solid brick construction using the local variegated clay brick typical of eastern Markham Township. The brickwork of the façade was laid in Flemish bond, while the other walls were rendered in common bond. A one storey frame kitchen wing/woodshed extends from the rear wall. It appears to date from the early 20th century and has a “boomtown” front where the east wall extends past the side wall of the brick portion of the house. The vertical tongue and groove siding of the rear wing is a characteristic finish found on frame buildings in Markham Township dating from the third quarter of the 19th century into the early decades of the 20th century.

A particularly significant feature of the brick portion of the house is the formal central door within a panelled reveal, topped with a three paned transom light. There is no indication that a covered porch or verandah ever existing on this house, which is in keeping with the design of many of Ontario’s Georgian tradition buildings. Door and window openings are flat-headed and have angled brick arches. Existing wood windows have 2/2 glazing that likely replaced the earlier multi-paned sash, possibly with 9 over 9 glazing in the larger front windows. The eave returns and gable end chimneys, not present at the time of relocation, have since been restored.

Contextual Value

The Joseph Marr House has contextual value as a restored building from the Locust Hill community, relocated in 2005 to Markham Heritage Estates to save it from demolition due to the realignment of Reesor Road by the Region of York. In its present context, the house helps illustrate the range of architectural styles, building materials, and cultural backgrounds of the Town’s heritage buildings.

Significant Architectural Attributes

Character-defining attributes that embody the cultural heritage value of the Joseph Marr House include:

Brick Portion

- Overall form of the brick house, with its rectangular plan and 1 ½ storey height;
- Fieldstone facing on the foundation;
- The front doorcase with panelled reveals, panelled door, and 3-paned transom light;
- Wooden 2 over 2 sash style windows with their wood brick moulds, projecting wood sills, radiating brick arches, and replicated wood shutters;
- Medium-pitched, wood shingled gable roof, with wide, overhanging eaves, restored eave returns, associated wood trim and mouldings, and replicated brick gable-end chimneys;
- Door and window trim in the north front room, with mouldings, corner blocks and panelled window aprons.

Frame Portion

- Overall form of the single storey rear wing, with its rectangular plan, offset on the rear wall of the brick portion of the house;

- Vertical V-groove wood tongue and groove siding;
- Boomtown front facing Heritage Corners Lane;
- Medium-pitched, wood-shingled gable roof with its associated wood trim and mouldings, and replicated brick centre stove chimney;
- Wooden 1 over 1 sash style windows with the associate wood sills and trim.

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