

FIGURE 1

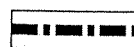
16TH AVENUE

CHAPLE PLACE

WOODBINE AVENUE

APPLE CREEK BOULEVARD

# BUTTONVILLE HERITAGE CONSER- VATION DISTRICT STUDY AREA



STUDY AREA BOUNDARY



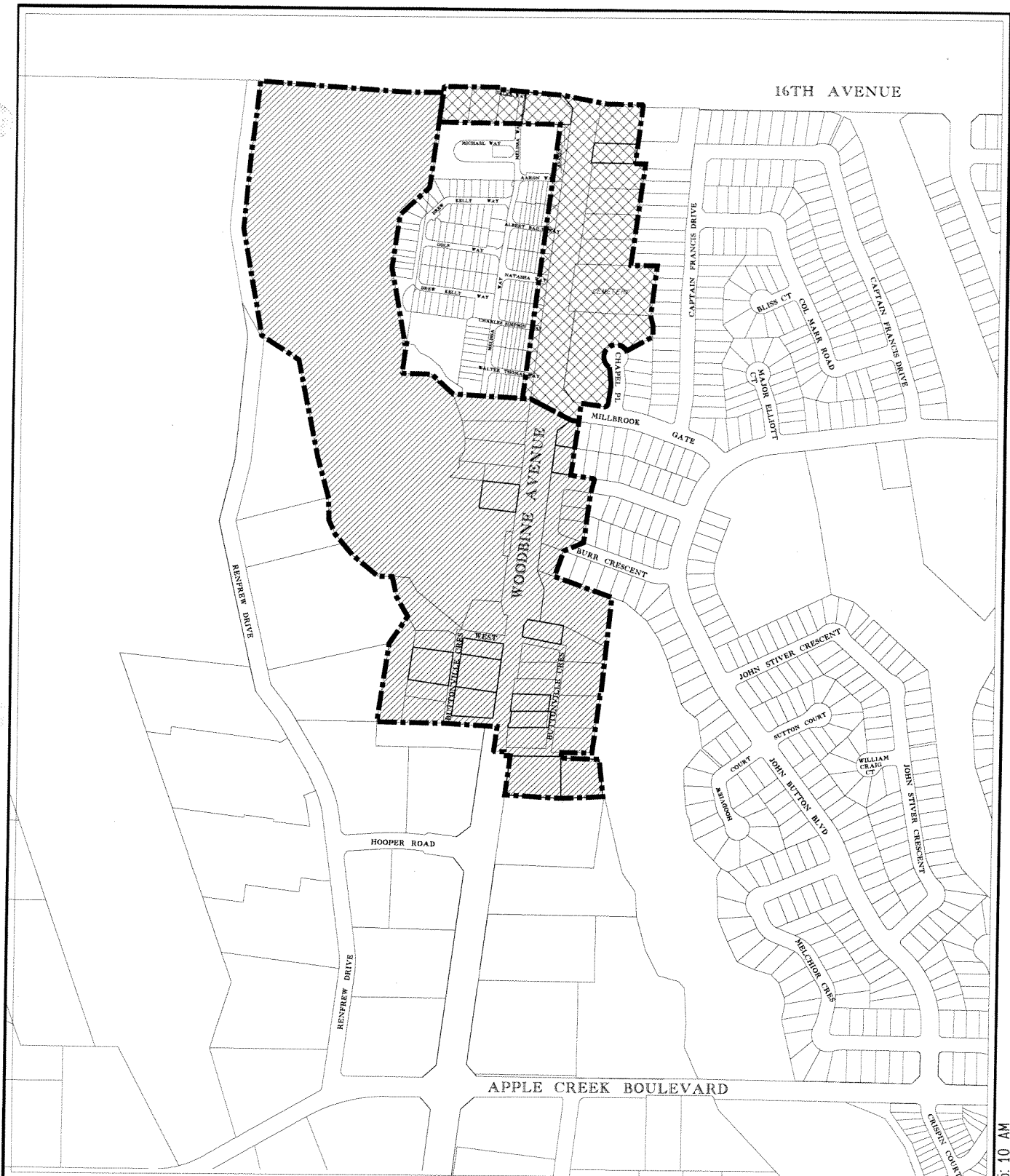
PROPERTIES INDIVIDUALLY DESIGNATED

UNDER PART 4 OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT

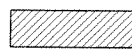


DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMISSION

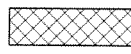




# OPTIONS FOR BUTTONVILLE HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOUNDARY



BOUNDARIES RECOMMENDED  
BY CONSULTANT TEAM



ADDITIONAL AREA RECOMMENDED  
BY HERITAGE MARKHAM

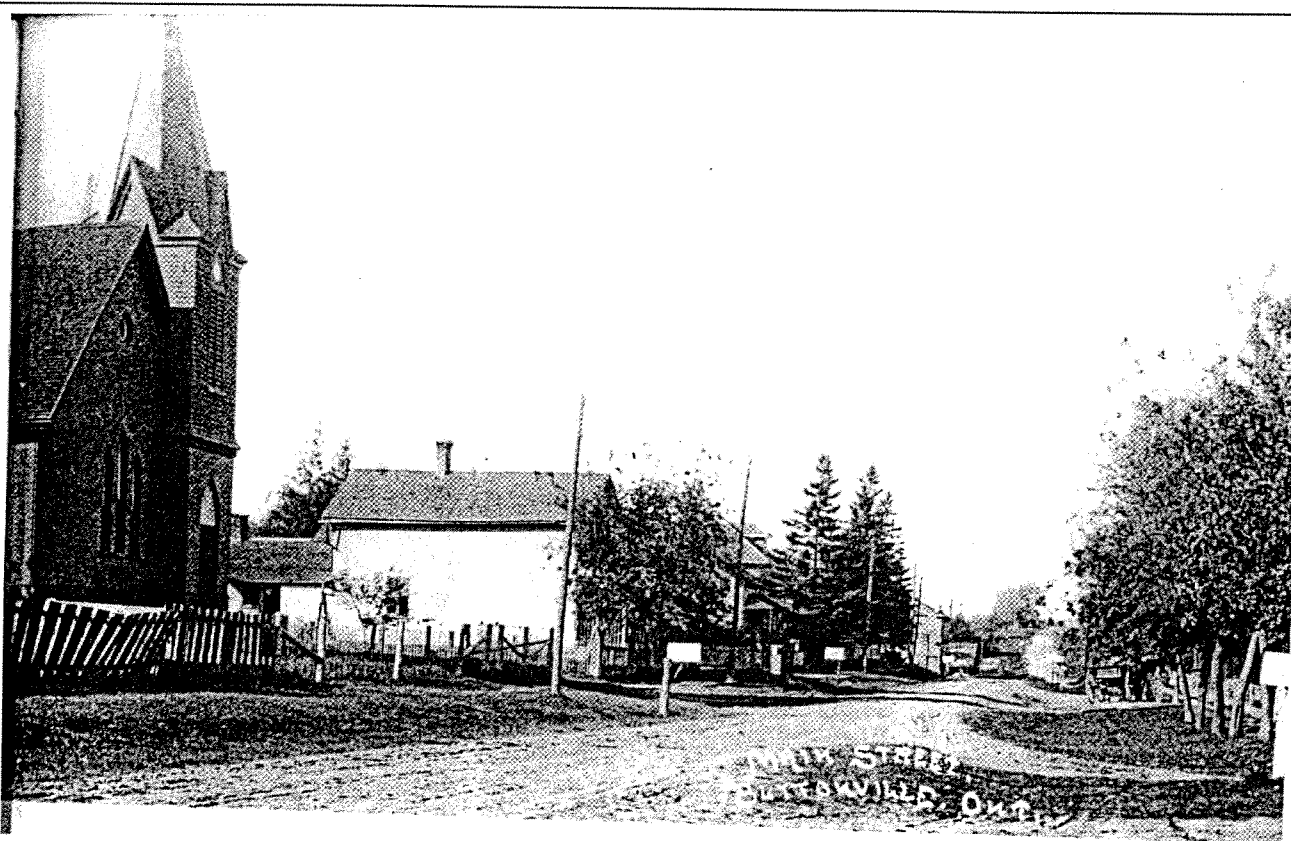


DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMISSION

FIGURE 2

db option.dgn 05/01/2006 11:25:10 AM

## Buttonville Heritage Conservation District Study and Plan Update



Buttonville, 1909. View north on Woodbine Avenue.  
Only some foundations remain of the Lutheran Church on the left. Casella #24.

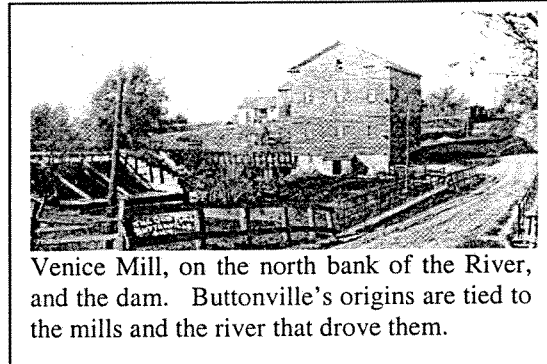
15 June 2005

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

The Town of Markham is committed to preserving its past, as reflected in the motto "Leading While Remembering". The legacy of Markham's built heritage and its remaining historical communities is valued and protected. The Town currently has three Heritage Conservation Districts, created under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act: Thornhill Markham, Markham Village, and Unionville. Each district has a Heritage Conservation District Plan, to guide development activity so that it preserves and enhances the heritage character within those districts.

The hamlet of Buttonville is one of Markham's historic communities. Its history goes back to 1804, when William Willcocks, magistrate and postmaster of the Town of York (Toronto), purchased a 100 acre property on the west side of Woodbine Avenue. Here he established a sawmill that became the nucleus of a village known as Millbrook. When a post office was established, the existence of a previous Millbrook required a name change. Buttonville was chosen, in honour of Major John Button, who owned land to the east of Woodbine, and helped to develop the layout that persists to this day. Buttonville contains a significant number of buildings of cultural heritage importance.



Venice Mill, on the north bank of the River, and the dam. Buttonville's origins are tied to the mills and the river that drove them.

### 1.2 The 1988 Plan

Buttonville was identified as a potential Heritage Conservation District twenty years ago, and a study and plan was produced by a consultant team in 1988. In many details, this document remains relevant to the current situation. For example, 11 of the 13 "Goals and Objectives for a Buttonville Heritage Conservation District" (page 10) remain useful as guidance for the current Study and Plan:

1. To preserve architecturally and/or historically significant buildings; retain, where possible, buildings that are compatible; and make the incompatible buildings, where possible, fit with the visual character of the district.
2. To guide proposals for the repair, restoration and alteration of, and addition to, existing buildings and also proposal for new construction so that they will, when realized, add to, and not detract from, the character of the district.
3. To develop vacant building and development sites in a way which will enhance the district's character.
4. To ensure that signs on buildings and sites and along streets are appropriate to the district's character.
5. To have street lighting and street furniture appropriate to the district character.
6. To preserve trees and other vegetation; and encourage the planting of species characteristic to the district.
7. To preserve historical fences and have new fences respect historical patterns as well as meet contemporary needs.
8. To preserve the Rouge River valley lands as open space; preserve St. John's Cemetery and Buttonville Cemetery; and protect any historical features therein.
9. To preserve the identity and integrity of Buttonville as a distinct community within the larger context of the Town of Markham.

10. To ameliorate the effects of Woodbine Avenue on the district, including the negative visual impact of vehicular traffic travelling along it.
11. To increase appreciation of the district's historical and architectural significance among Town of Markham residents.

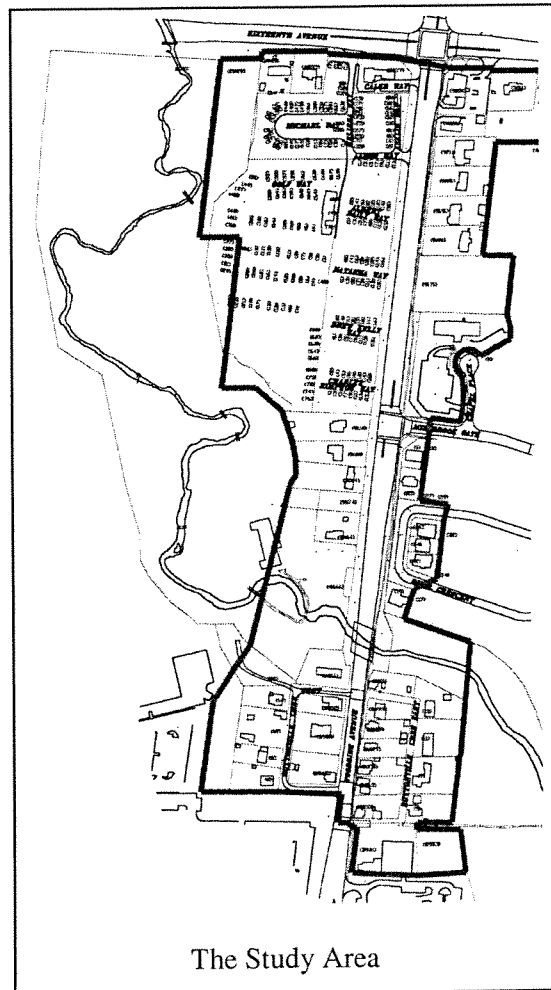
The policy recommendations and heritage conservation guidelines in the 1988 plan are also relevant. Their spirit can be adapted to present needs and standards.

### 1.3 The need for a new plan

The 1988 plan was not adopted. At its heart was a recommendation to create a bypass around the hamlet, retaining the existing roadway of Woodbine Avenue through it. The Town was unable to execute this recommendation and, as a result, the plan was not adopted.

Since the 1988 plan, four significant changes have occurred to the context of the Buttonville hamlet:

- In the absence of a bypass, Woodbine Avenue was widened to four lanes and regraded. This removed extensive roadside tree lines in the old hamlet and on the west side of Woodbine, north of Millbrook Gate. It also reduced front yards, and disturbed the relation between buildings and the street.
- Municipal services were introduced, making possible the intensification of development.
- Changes have been made to Official Plan designations and Zoning By-law provisions. The 1988 zoning was amended from low-density residential to Urban Residential Medium Density (I) and (II). On the privately held lands south of the River, this zoning envisions 89 dwelling units where 20 buildings currently stand.
- New development has occurred along Woodbine Avenue.



The Study Area

In spite of these changes, the historic hamlet of Buttonville has remained a distinctive community in the Town of Markham. Most of the heritage resources that were present in 1988 remain. Many historic properties have been restored, and some have been converted to new uses. 11 properties within the Study Area have been designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act—all since the original study and plan.

Recognizing the value of the historical character of Buttonville, Council has asked for a re-examination of the potential for a heritage conservation district, and an updating of the 1988 documents to the current standard of practice. The Town has retained Phillip H. Carter Architect and Planner as the consultant to prepare this update. This work includes a review of the 1988 plan, and relevant Town policy documents, an examination of the character of the buildings and lands in the area, and consultation staff, the Advisory Committee, and the public.

## 2.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A Public Information Meeting was held at the Heritage Schoolhouse in Buttonville on the evening of April 27, 2005. About 26 people attended. The meeting began at 7:00pm, with a welcome by Ward 6 Councillor Dan Horchik. Susan Casella gave an overview of Buttonville's history. Regan Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning in the Town of Markham, gave a presentation on Heritage Conservation Districts and how they work. Ted Chisholm, who lives in Unionville, gave a presentation called Living and Working in a Heritage District. George Duncan, the Senior Heritage Planner in the Town of Markham presented The Most Often Asked Questions about Heritage Districts. Phillip Carter, who has been engaged to conduct the review, made a presentation on what his work will consist of, and what has been accomplished so far.

A discussion followed, focusing on three questions:

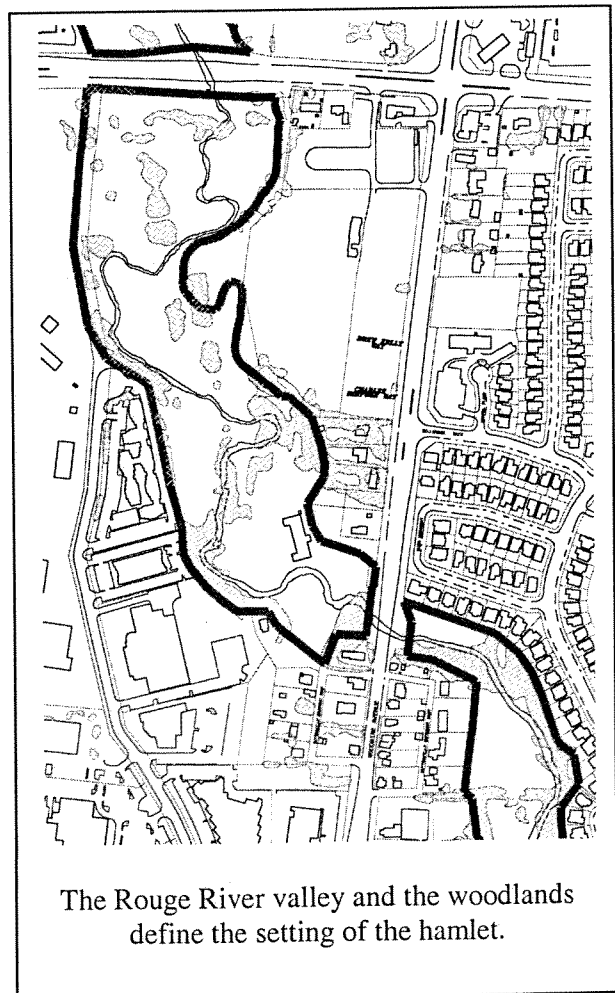
- What do you like about Buttonville?
- What don't you like about Buttonville?
- What issues should the heritage study include?

## 2.1 Identification of Character

Much of what participants liked about Buttonville constitutes a fair description of the heritage character of the old hamlet:

- Old homes and a sense of history.
- Trees, cleanliness, "a piece of the country in the city".
- The river and the natural areas.
- The quaint character of the back streets, and the unique form of flanking crescents—unlike the usual crossroads hamlet.
- The village-like scale.
- Community aspect: friendly; people know their neighbours.

Other positives noted were the potential for compatible infill, and the good business exposure offered by the Woodbine Avenue location and traffic.



## **2.2 Identification of Concerns**

The traffic on Woodbine Avenue has a negative impact, and was prominent in what participants didn't like. Speed, volume, and the quantity of trucking were all cited as problems. Complaints about tree removals and lack of control over private tree-cutting are reflective of the appreciation of the trees and natural areas listed above. The Town was criticised for lack of maintenance on the municipally-owned lot south of Buttonville Crescent West, the condition of the roadways on the Crescents, and a lack of street lighting, and street furnishings such as the flower barrels or baskets that are installed in other Markham communities. It was also noted that Town approvals can take too long.

## **2.3 Identification of Issues**

Participants identified five issues for inclusion in the heritage study:

- Property maintenance standards.
- Quality of the roadway and road base on the Crescents.
- Flooding/drainage of the Crescents
- Creation of a community feature on the municipally-owned lot.
- Air traffic.

## **3.0 POLICY CONSIDERATIONS FOR A NEW BUTTONVILLE HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT PLAN**

The Ontario Heritage Act allows a Heritage Conservation District Plan to address many policy areas directly, and Heritage Conservation District plans can recommend changes in additional municipal policies to help reinforce the preservation of heritage character. The recent amendments to the Act (Bill 60) enlarges the mandate of Heritage Conservation District plans in some areas. For example: a municipality can now prevent, not just delay, demolition of properties designated individually or as part of a heritage district; design guidelines can control landscape elements, not just "structures;" and municipalities can now enact property maintenance standards for heritage elements on buildings.

Sections 3.1 and 3.2, below, outline policy areas that the Plan can directly address, and those that the Plan can recommend be addressed by other municipal action. Most of the problems and issues identified by participants are included.

### **3.1 Direct Heritage Conservation District Policy Areas:**

- Prevention of demolition of heritage buildings.
- Design guidelines to control alterations, additions and restoration to heritage buildings.
- Guidelines for alterations and additions to non-heritage buildings.
- Guidelines for infill buildings.
- Guidelines for landscapes and fences.
- Design guidelines for public works, including Town and Regional governments.
- Develop a plan to reinforce the heritage character of the hamlet, recognizing that the Crescents and the valley are at the heart of that character.

### **3.2 Heritage Conservation District Policy Recommendations in other areas:**

- Create a by-law establishing standards for the maintenance of heritage attributes of property situated in the district, under the newly added Section 45.1 of the Ontario Heritage Act.
- Create a by-law protecting trees, in heritage districts, if not Town-wide.

- Reclaim the old Lutheran Church site at the south side of Buttonville Crescent West as a public amenity, and maintain it.
- Reinforce the viability and character of the Crescents by bringing the surface, base, and drainage up to standard, and by installing appropriate street lighting.
- Revise Official Plan and Zoning By-law provisions to support the goals and policies of the heritage district plan.
- Study ways to reduce traffic speeds on Woodbine Avenue, and to minimize the negative impact caused by the volume of traffic.

### 3.3 Not a Heritage Matter:

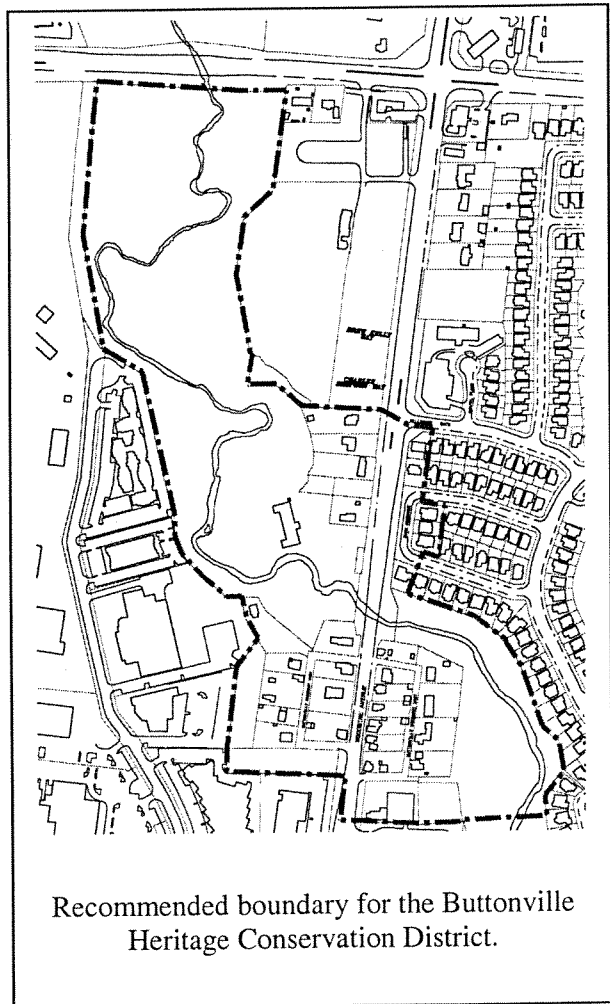
- The issue of air traffic is beyond the scope of this study.

## 4. BOUNDARY CONSIDERATIONS

The consultants note that the aspects of Buttonville most valued by the participants are the old hamlet and the natural areas, and that the distinction between these and the surrounding developing context is appreciated. This agrees with:

- the consultants' analysis of the effects of the changes since the 1988 plan,
- the principle that a Heritage Conservation District should form a distinct area,
- and the historical origins of the Buttonville hamlet.

The consultants believe that the 1988 boundary should be revised to reflect these concerns. The intensive redevelopment north of Millbrook Gate, combined with the widening of Woodbine Avenue has created a modern suburban character that is distinct from the character of the core hamlet. The intermittent heritage resources in this area are protected by Part IV designations. The historical genesis of Buttonville lies in the mill hamlet and the Rouge River, which drove the three local mills.





## 5.0

### Heritage Character

The heritage character of the proposed Buttonville Heritage Conservation District reflects the built and natural heritage of the original hamlet. As in many of Upper Canada's early rural settlements, the conjunction of Simcoe's road grid with a stream presented the opportunity for a sawmill—a necessity as timber was cleared for farms and lumber was needed for construction of barns and houses. As the farms began to produce, grist mills were needed to turn wheat into flour. Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century maps are dotted with "SM" for sawmill, and "GM" for gristmill.

The history of Buttonville begins with the Willcocks and Baldwin mills on the west side of Woodbine Avenue. The coming and going of local farmers to the mills presented the opportunity for other enterprises, and the mills required housing for the workers. Major Button, who owned the land on the east side of the road, co-operated with Baldwin in arranging the layout of a hamlet with back streets (the current crescents) on either side of Woodbine Avenue. Baldwin's preference for large lots, and Button's preference for small ones are still preserved in the plan of the hamlet.

The Stiver Mill, on the eastern (Button) side, added employment and economic activity. However by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, railroads and large-scale industry made Buttonville an economic anachronism, and Venice Mill—the last hold-out—stopped production when the dam washed out in 1920. The hamlet remained, largely undisturbed, for another half century.



The former millpond, viewed from where the south end of the dam stood.



The footbridge in the south valley, near the site of Stiver's Mill.



The crescents maintain a rural quality, and they have a wealth of historic outbuildings.

The proposed HCD includes the sites of Buttonville's mill pond and its three mills: Willcocks, Baldwin, and Stiver. It includes the original two-crescent hamlet, and the nearby heritage houses north of the Rouge River. Of the 32 properties in the proposed district, 17 are graded "A" in the Inventory of Heritage Properties, and 9 of these are designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. In addition, the town-owned Lutheran Church site, and the mill sites have historical and archaeological interest though no original buildings remain.



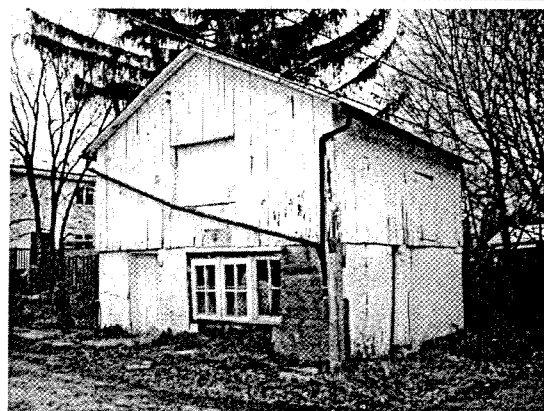
25 Burr Crescent, recently restored, was an outlying farmhouse.

The heritage buildings in Buttonville date from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century through the early-20<sup>th</sup> Century, and represent the range of styles typical of the period.



12-14 Buttonville Crescent West: two mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century styles.

Most of the heritage buildings are residential, but other types are included in the district: shops, barns, a smithy, and a former gas station.



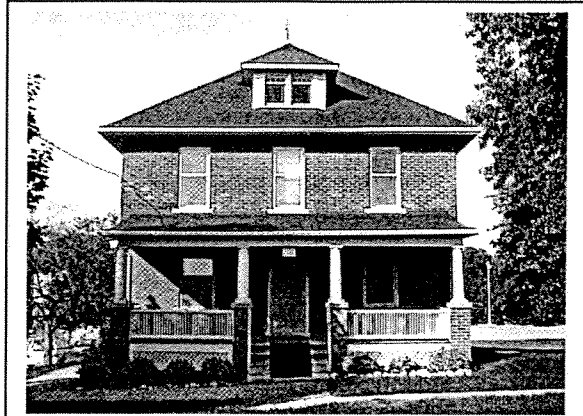
Barn behind 8985 Woodbine Avenue. Said to be used as the refreshment stand for events put on by the Women's Institute.

## 6.0 Heritage Character Statement

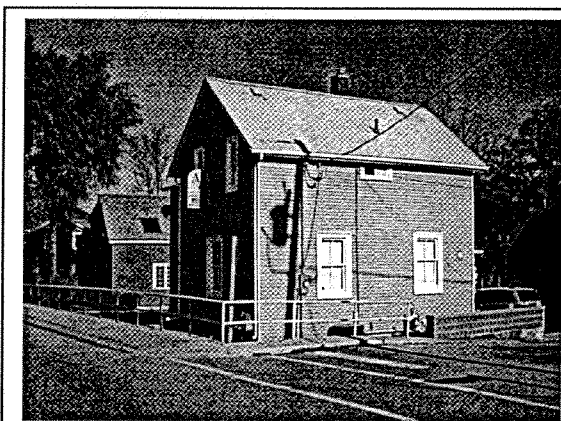
The Buttonville Heritage Conservation District is a distinct community in the Town of Markham, characterized by a wealth of heritage buildings, sites, and landscapes. The Buttonville hamlet is representative of the earliest rural settlement type in Upper Canada: the mill-based village that was necessary for the development of farm from forest in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Though its origins are typical, the layout of the hamlet is a unique plan of twin crescents flanking a historic main road.

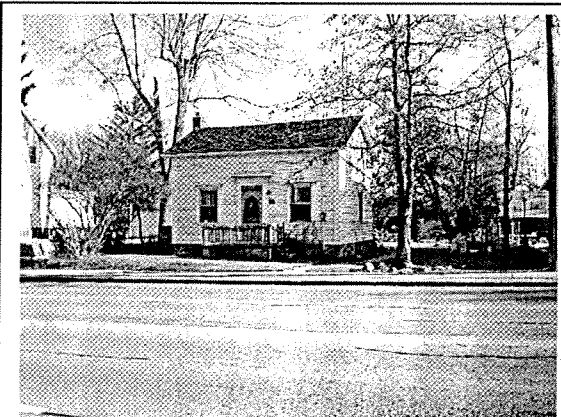
Although the widening of Woodbine Avenue has changed the spine of the hamlet, the District retains its original layout, and many heritage buildings and sites, including outbuildings, remain largely intact. The historical context of the river-driven mills that brought the hamlet into existence lies in the valley lands along the Rouge River.



The Mill House at 9064 Woodbine Avenue was originally a 1-1/2 storey Georgian house, associated with the Venice Mill.



The Tomlinson house & store at 8953 Woodbine Avenue is said to be Buttonville's first shop.



The Button Family House at 8977 Woodbine Avenue is the best-preserved pre-Confederation building in Buttonville in terms of original character and detailing.

HERITAGE MARKHAM  
EXTRACT

Buttonville  
HCD Study -  
Public Participation

APPENDIX B

DATE: September 20, 2005

TO: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning  
G. Duncan, Senior Heritage Planner

EXTRACT CONTAINING ITEM #4 OF THE TENTH HERITAGE MARKHAM  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2005

4. REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK  
BUTTONVILLE HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT STUDY UPDATE  
2005 (16.11)  
Extracts: R. Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning  
G. Duncan, Senior Heritage Planner
- 

The Senior Heritage Planner noted that the Buttonville Heritage Conservation District Study Update has been completed and presented to the Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee in June. The consultant, Phillip Carter was in attendance to provide an update to Heritage Markham.

Phillip Carter addressed the committee with regard to the Buttonville Heritage Conservation District Study. Mr. Carter noted that the Buttonville area will be the fourth heritage district for the Town of Markham. The study has followed the original boundaries except it does not go north of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Although the area has seen new development over the year and an increase in traffic, it still remains an historic hamlet. The homes are well maintained and heritage buildings have been retained.

Mr. Carter also noted that the old heritage district plan was reviewed and the character of the study area was re-examined as part of this current study. Issues were identified with the Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee and recommendations have been presented to this committee for action. The residents of the area are generally supportive and wish to retain the old character and rural quality of the village.

Mr. Carter recommended a reduced district boundary that includes the core hamlet, historic outliers and river valley. An inventory has been completed of every building in the district. Mr. Carter indicated that the Heritage Conservation District does not simply address preservation of historic buildings, but is a plan for the district.

It was noted that no lots on the north end of the study area south of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue are included in the boundaries. Concerns were expressed that the Buttonville cemetery had not been included in the district. It was noted that the cemetery can be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. There were also concerns expressed with regard to the exclusion of the properties on the east side of Woodbine south of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Heritage Staff noted that the 3 heritage properties in this area are already designated under Part IV of the Act.

**HERITAGE MARKHAM RECOMMENDS:**

THAT Heritage Markham receive the Buttonville Heritage Conservation District Study and Plan Update report dated June 15, 2005, and endorse its findings;

AND THAT the proposed District boundaries be extended to the east side of Woodbine south of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue and on the west side to include the row of townhouses that front onto Woodbine Avenue.

**CARRIED.**