

# STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE

## LEGAL DESCRIPTION

ADDRESS: 12 Ontario Street

PLAN M72 Part Lots 34 and 37 RP 64R 3004 Pt 2

ROLL: 1928 000 2200 28000

1½ storey, Victorian wood frame house with central gable and later ashlar cement block verandah and dormers (cca. 1860's)

## OVERVIEW

The cultural heritage value of the property known as 12 Ontario Street meets the criteria set out by the Province of Ontario under *Ontario Heritage Act* Regulation 9/06 for the categories of design/physical, historical/associative and contextual value.

## HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In 1851 as the Northern Railway made its way north, the settlement then known as Rupertsville was selected for the Richmond Hill Station. In anticipation of potential boom in Maple, a subdivision along on Lot 21, Concession 3 was created in 1853, known as RP 72. Lots were created on either side of the railway and represents one of the early plans of subdivision in Vaughan Township, and the first subdivision of what was known as the Village of Maple. The next subdivision in Maple would not be created for 100 years.

The first holders of the lots that became 12 Ontario Street were real estate speculators, but in 1867 three lots – Lot 31, 34, 37 – were bought by James Connor for \$860. It is thought that the 1 ½ storey Ontario Gothic cottage style wood house was built shortly after on what is identified as Lot 37 of Plan 72. James Connor did not own the property for long and it was sold shortly afterwards to Edgar Jarvis for \$1155 in 1869.

As Edgar Jarvis (creator of Rose Park in the Rosedale subdivision in Toronto) was a known real estate speculator and investor, it's not thought he ever lived on the property. It was sold to James Woods (various spelled Wood or Woods from records) in January 1871 for \$1800.

James Woods was a well-known man who arrived in Rupertsville in 1848. The Woods family, along with the Nobles, the Olivers, and the Ruperts, are identified as “founding families” of Maple in the History of Vaughan Township<sup>1</sup>. These same three lots were purchased, and it is thought that James Wood Junior lived in the house, due to notices of letters for Mr. Woods published in the York Herald. The Woods family continued to live in Maple for at least 3 more generations, and a family history was published in The Liberal Newspaper in 1948<sup>2</sup>, outlining the history of Maple and the Woods family descendants.

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<sup>1</sup> A History of Vaughan Township

<sup>2</sup> The Liberal newspaper (Richmond Hill Library)

James Woods was the first blacksmith in Maple but he was also known as local leader whose children went on to own farms and businesses in the area, including a bakery.

In 1887, James Wood sold Lots 31, 34 and 37 to Thomas Cousins and his wife Mary Jane. Thomas Cousins was also originally a blacksmith, but also began to run several businesses including a hardware store, the Maple Sand, Gravel and Brick Company, and in 1928 was one of the first Trustees of the Maple Police Village. Thomas Cousins did purchase several lots of land in Maple and he and his family continued to live in Maple. Cousins Lane is named after the family.

In 1894, the Land Titles indicate that Thomas Cousins shared the title of the property with Thomas McCormack, who was brother to Mary Jane Cousins. Thomas McCormack was a teacher who continued to live in 12 Ontario until 1907.

The sale of Lots 31, 34, and 37 in 1907 to Robert King represents the first alteration to the property and it at that point split into 2 lots – a north lot that remained as 12 Ontario Street and a south lot that became 10 Ontario Street. The north lot was sold to Horace Rumble and his wife in 1916 and the south lot was sold to Mark Badger.

In 1920, the north lot was sold to Ethel Chapman (daughter of Mark Badger) and Harry Chapman. In January 1921, it was noted in The Liberal newspaper that Harry Chapman had set up his blacksmith shop and was “prepared to carry out his trade in all its branches” (January 27, 1921). The blacksmith shop remained on the property until 1973 and the relevant structures are visible on aerial photos of the property from 1942-1970. A notice in 1973 advertises the sale of all blacksmith items in as-is condition.

Harry Chapman continued to practice blacksmithing until as late as 1957; he also worked several other positions: he was a constable of the village of Maple before and after it was incorporated into a Police Village, and was also a Trustee. During WWII, he worked as a foreman of the Toronto Ship Building Company.

It is thought that the ashlar concrete block front porch was added in the 1920's in the early years of the Chapmans' fifty year ownership of the company. The front porch would have been considered to be a modern update to the home and now is a significant element of the house's history and the family with the longest tenure to the home.

Although Harry Chapman died in 1960, Ethel Chapman lived in the house until 1973. At this time, the buildings and implements of the blacksmith shop and other items were sold via auction. Also, at this time, Ethel sold the property and it was severed from Lot 31. The remaining house was now on Part Lots 34 and 37 of Plan 72 and it has remained there since.

## **DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**

12 Ontario Street is located at the southwest corner of Ontario Street and Railway Street, one block north of Major Mackenzie Drive West and one block east of Keele Street. The site is situated in a residential neighbourhood that contains homes from the

late 19th century and every decade of the 20th century. The north boundary of the property runs along the south side of Railway Street and the east side of the property faces onto Ontario Street.

The building is an Ontario-Gothic frame house with characteristic central gable, but currently without ornament; it is presently clad in narrow vinyl siding over wood. The front-facing façade ground floor is concealed by an enclosed, hipped-roof verandah with piers and parapet walls built of early, rock-faced pre-cast ashlar concrete blocks (cca. 1920). The house sits on a stone foundation.

Stocky, square-section piers with simple bases and caps remain visible and pre-date casements above (which contain unusual, mirrored panes). The centrally-located front door appears to be old, half-glazed storm door, with two lower horizontal panels. At the second floor gable, the window is a rectangular casement, with plain wooden frame and sill remaining visible. Narrow soffits retain plain wooden boards and narrow gable fascias are without shingle-mouldings.

At side elevations, the windows are a variety of recent, replacement units, including a bay window (with false muntins) at the north elevation, and single-pane casements elsewhere. Side-gable soffits are wider, and clad in plain boards (possibly plywood), and fascias are without shingle-mouldings. Rear wing (west) has similar elements, and feature tall pop-up dormers at both north and south sides, both with updated windows.

The large chestnut tree at the northeast corner of the property is also an important element in the cultural heritage value, as its age and tree canopy enhances the streetscape.

This lot is significant in establishing and maintaining the cultural heritage streetscape and the history of the pre-20th century history of Maple Village.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The York Herald newspaper (Richmond Hill Library)  
City of Vaughan Archives  
A History of Vaughan Township  
The Liberal newspaper (Richmond Hill Library)