

**HERITAGE VAUGHAN COMMITTEE - MAY 16, 2012****1. 141 CENTRE STREET – WARD 5****Recommendation**

Cultural Services staff recommend:

1. That the information provided in this report be received.

**Contribution to Sustainability**

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions, Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan, Goal 4, Objective 4.1:

- To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.

**Economic Impact**

N/A

**Communications Plan**

All agenda items and minutes relating to Heritage Vaughan committee meetings are circulated to relevant City departments, applicants and their representatives.

**Purpose**

To receive the information in this report.

**Background and Analysis****Background**

This item was deferred from the April 18, 2012 meeting.

The structure at 141 Centre Street is a Registered property under the Ontario Heritage Act. It is known as the Owen McCartney House. It is of the Georgian Style, circa 1840. It features a three bay front elevation arrangement with central front doorway, 12 over 12 and 8 over 12 double hung windows and stucco as exterior cladding. The property is listed on the City's register of buildings under the Ontario Heritage Act; however, it is not included in the Thornhill Heritage Conservation District and therefore not designated under the Ontario Heritage Act.

At the January 2012 Heritage Vaughan Committee meeting, the committee requested that the owner be invited to a future Heritage Vaughan meeting to discuss the building. The owner accepted the invitation for the April 18, 2012 meeting.

At the April 18, 2012 meeting the item was deferred to the May 16, 2012 meeting. The owner accepted the invitation to the May 16, 2012 meeting.

**Analysis**

141 Centre Street, Thornhill

**Description of Property**

The property at 141 Centre Street, Ontario, contains a two storey, white stucco house situated at the end of a long driveway which cuts through woods at the front of the same property and that of the adjacent 121 Centre Street property. The house dates back to circa 1840 and reflects design characteristics typical of the Georgian style. The structure features a boxy massing, with punched windows and a low hip roof with standard overhang. The front façade features the symmetrical

arrangement of the windows and entryway in three bays, comprised of the central location of the main door on the ground level, with a divided light window centered on it on the second floor, and a set of windows at each side, one on the ground floor and the other centered on it on the second floor. The building is set back considerably from the street and is screened from view and the Centre Street traffic, by the woods lining the driveway. The simplicity and elegance of the architecture together with the natural setting gives the home a private and stately feel, which has been maintained since its construction.

#### Statement of Cultural Value or Interest

The cultural heritage value of 141 Centre Street lies in the home on the property being a model example of Georgian architecture, dating from c.1844, within Thornhill's historic core. Its construction is attributed to Esquire Owen McCarthy<sup>1</sup>, an Upper Canada pioneer. The home is associated with the life of notable carpenter to the Thornhill community Robert Jarrott, and associated with longtime resident and notable Canadian John S.H Guest, co-founder of Appleby College, Oakville. The house has contextual value as being one of the earliest surviving structures of the original village, thus contributing to the rich history of the area as a pioneer village of former Upper Canada.

#### Description of Heritage Attributes

The following is a general list of features of cultural heritage value (character defining elements):

- It has the potential to yield information that contributes to the understanding of a community. This house is an excellent example of the domestic Georgian style, constructed as a result of a flow of ideas particular to their time and place as they formed part of a unique and marked time for architectural ideas. The loyalist sentiment of the time adopted the Georgian style as a symbol of loyalty to the British Crown (Kalman 139).
- It is associated with the life of an early pioneer, Owen McCarthy, Robert Jarrott a notable carpenter to the Thornhill community and notable Canadian John S.H Guest co-founder of Appleby College, Oakville
- The building's siting, building envelope, structure, original exterior finish materials all contribute to the following key ideas that describe the architectural design at 141 Centre Street and are described in the points below:
  - Massing: front portion is rectangular in plan with narrower rectangular two storey tail addition on south façade, two storey and hip roof throughout. The east wall of the addition aligns with the east wall of the original front portion of the house.
  - Front Façade: Symmetry in front façade, aligned arrangement of windows (ground floor with top floor in three bays)
  - Understated main entry door surround with tapered pilasters of classical style, entablature and cornice
  - Roughcast stucco exterior cladding
  - 12 over 12 wood sash windows on ground floor, 8 over 12 pane wood sash windows on the second floor.
  - Original window locations and dimensions at front, east and west facades.
- The subject building and siting is important in defining, maintaining and supporting the early 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture style of early Thornhill at the cusp of its first economic growth, just before the abolition of the Corn Laws in 1846, which impacted the community with the tragic loss of Benjamin Thorne (the man who gave the name to the Village) just four years later and with that the start of twenty years of economic struggle (Fitzgerald, 40-43), and has maintained its Georgian features through history since then.

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<sup>1</sup> McCarthy's name appears spelled in two ways within the Land Records: McCarty and McCarthy. McCarthy is used throughout the report as it is the spelling used in the signature portion of the Instruments.

## Architectural Significance – Background Information

### The Georgian Style in Upper Canada:

In his book “A History of Canadian Architecture” Kalman tells us that an estimated 7,000 people loyal to the British Crown arrived to portions of today’s Ontario and Quebec from the United States as a result of the end of the Independence war fought between the United States and Britain. After the first years of settlement soon the “architecture developed a more consistent and rigorous version of Georgian Classicism, because they found this style to be an effective and appropriate way to articulate for the young province an image that conveyed self –confidence and control, and that declared loyalty to the British Crown and British values”(Kalman 139). The style is referred to as Georgian Classicism because it has classical elements that relate to the architecture of classical antiquity of Rome and Greece, as it was interpreted by the architects in Britain under the span of the years 1714 to 1830 in which the Empire was ruled by Kings George I to IV ”(Kalman 139 and British Monarchy). During this period in British North America an architectural style that was simple and adhered “...to conventional rules of symmetry and proportion...” accented with select and sparse classical details, if any, such as cornices, columns, pilasters, entranceway details, paneled doors and interior paneling (Kalman 139). These details together with the multi-pane double hung design of the windows and the overall simple shaped massing are the most notable features of a Georgian style home. The pioneers that came to Upper Canada continued the tradition as they spread and settled throughout southern Ontario’s forests, clearing and following the Humber and its tributaries establishing milling villages where the conditions were suitable such as in Thornhill.

## Historical, Associative and Contextual Significance

### Ownership History of 141 Centre Street:

The Land Records show that the lands comprehending Concession 1 Lot 30 were first registered as a Crown grant on March 29, 1810 with all 210 acres granted to John Wilson, Senior. He subsequently sold the entire parcel to his son Stilwell Wilson (transaction registered on February 23, 1814) and then to William Allen (registered on May 23, 1822). On July 31, 1823 Henry John Boulton is registered as the grantee for 55 the North East 55 acres on the lot. This transaction marks the first severance of the original 210 acres. These 55 acres were then sold to Daniel Brooke Jr. (registered May 26, 1824). Starting the same year and into the next, he sold severed parts of the 55 acres to 7 different people, including an unspecified amount of acreage to Robert Wiles in 1824 and again in 1825, this time 11 acres were noted (Inst. 5168 registered April 5, 1825). Wiles then sold six acres to Joseph Milburn, registered in September 28, 1829. This parcel passed through several hands including John Vanderburgh, F.D. Hunter (4 acres), Thomas Elliott (4 Acres) William Lane and finally one acre to Owen McCarty (ins. 12923 signed “McCarthy”). This parcel was bought by Robert Jarratt (Reg. May 22, 1846). Robert’s last name sometimes appears spelled as “Jarrott”. In May 12, 1871 instrument 848 reflects the decision at the Court of Chancery that gives ownership to the parcel to Mary Jane Jarrott . Subsequently, instrument 1102 (reg. 18 May 1872) reflects the decision at the Court of Chancery that gives ownership of two acres to Joseph Cox. Joseph Cox owned the property until his death at which time it was left to the Thornhill Presbyterian Church as specified in his will on October 24, 1928. (Inst. 9160). The trustees of the Thornhill Presbyterian Church sold the property in 1928 to Earl Victor Doan and his wife Vera Doan and held the mortgage until 1935. In 1935 the deed was transferred back to the trustees of the church (Ins. 16976). In December 1937 the property was bought by John and Gladys Guest (only Gladys’ name appears in the Instrument). In 1953, Gladys Guest, at that time a widow, sold the property to Edward and Joyce Duder. The Duder family has owned the property since that time.

## The Owen McCarthy House: Remnant of an Incipient Thornhill

The Owen McCarthy house is presently identified by the municipal address known as 141 Centre Street in Vaughan within Concession 1, lot 30. Describing its location by lot and Concession is the reference method that was used back between 1792 and 1794 when Governor Simcoe first commissioned the survey of Yonge Street to connect Lake Ontario at York with the lake that would be given his name, Lake Simcoe, and is still used today in the larger scale. The impetus for the growth of the area known today as Thornhill was in fact the making of Yonge Street, opening the

path to the settlement of lands to the north of York, together with the favorable milling sites along the Don and Humber Rivers. Starting in 1793, groups of Loyalists started settling along Yonge Street brought by Governor Simcoe who was offering grants of land provided that the land was cleared and a home built with specific conditions to be met. Clearing the land and building a home could take many years of work. This was the case also for Concession 1 Lot 30. (Fitzgerald 13-21).

It was not until 1810 that Lot 30 Concession 1 in its entirety comprising of 210 acres was officially granted to John Wilson Sr., as the first registered private owner of the lot (Land Records, City of Vaughan Archives). He was one of the first Loyalists to move to this area and thought to have been the first miller in the Vaughan area. He came from New Jersey, after spending some initial years in New Brunswick with his wife, two of his four sons and other family members (By-law 21-83 JEH McDonald and Fitzgerald, 18). John Wilson Sr. was Justice of the Peace and "took an active part in local affairs" (Fitzgerald 20). Stilwell Wilson, son of John, was elected overseer of highways, and fence viewer on Yonge Street from lots 26 to 40 in 1799 (Fitzgerald 20). In 1823 the lot was first severed. It is recorded as a "Buy and Sell" transaction when it was registered in July 31. The record indicates that the North East 55 acres of the lot were sold by William Allan to Henry Boulton and subsequently it was divided into several smaller parcels and sold off to new arriving parties. 141 Centre Street as we know it today was part of one of these parcels in which the Owen McCarthy house still stands.

Owen McCarthy was a yeoman, which meant that he was a gentleman-farmer and small estate owner (Genealogy and Ogilvie, 675). Owen McCarthy and his wife Christiana McCarthy sold the 1 acre parcel to Robert Jarrett in 1844 (registered in 1846). Robert had married Susannah Chapman in 1837, thought to be a daughter of Nathan Chapman (Broughton), first settler of lot 28 Concession 1. By 1861 the Jarretts had 12 ½ acres "attached to the tenement" (Broughton, 1861 Census). In 2012, 141 Centre Street is comprised of approximately 1.69 acres.

#### Corn Laws and their Effect in Thornhill

Around 1810 when John Wilson Sr. officially got the first grant, the area was known by the name of Lyon's Mills. The village changed names a few times and by 1842 it was established as Thornhill, named after Benjamin Thorne, the well known prosperous miller. By the early 1840's when the Owen McCarthy house was built, Thornhill was a very prosperous village hub and the success of Benjamin Thorne's mill was largely a contributor, becoming the most important milling centre north of Toronto (Fitzgerald, 34-40). It had not been without hardship that it achieved this status, however, having survived the cholera outbreak of 1832 that "spread rapidly through Lower and Upper Canada" and divided opinions through the rebellion of 1837. However, in a span of 18 years (1829 to 1847), "the post office, stage coach service, and toll gate were established, four churches, and two schools were built" (Fitzgerald, 40). The real economic test arrived in mid-1846 when the Corn Laws were repealed with the effect of opening the British market to grain from all countries. In consequence Benjamin Thorne's mill was ruined by 1848, causing the economy of the Village to suffer greatly from this loss. The decision on the grain tariffs had been impending for a long time. Some residents, such as Owen McCarthy, may have prepared for the worst in the months prior to this event and may have taken their investments elsewhere. He died sometime between May 22, 1846 and December 18, 1847. His son and heir, in December 1847 is recorded as being a resident of Rochester, New York (previously having been a resident of Vaughan) when he sold another acre previously owned by his father, in the same lot and concession in Thornhill to James Hugo of Markham (Ins.no. 30459). Others, such as Benjamin Thorne, were not so prepared, as he had expanded his business in 1843 in Holland Landing, leaving him with large quantities of unsold flour by 1848 (Fitzgerald 40). Robert Jarrett, was the owner of the McCarthy house through the subsequent difficult years that came after 1846 and continued to live in Thornhill to see better years to come in the 1860's making his living as a well respected carpenter and joiner working with Martin (Ins.no. 26886, Broughton 2).

#### Later Owners

The next owner Joseph Cox and his wife Sara A. Armstrong, was a very involved member in the Thornhill community as member of the Thornhill Presbyterian Church, and willed the estate to the same church, since the couple had no children. After the church's Trustees tried to sell and managed the property for a number of years, sold the property to Gladys Guest and her husband John Guest. John Guest graduated from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge 1897. After working as an assistant master at Upper Canada College since 1901, he became the first headmaster at

Upper Canada Preparatory School. Later, with Gladys's father, Sir Edmund Walker, he co-founded Appleby College, a private boys' school in Oakville, in 1911. He served as headmaster until 1934, and moved to the McCarty house the next year and made several renovations including introducing the three part windows in the south façade. The Guests had two sons and two daughters. In 1945 the Guests sold two acres of their parcel to Julia Biriukova, and art teacher in Upper Canada College, originally from Russia, with the Guests keeping the parcel with the home (Broughton). The Duder family acquired the home from his widow after John Guest passed away in 1953. The Duder family has owned the property for the longest period of time since then.

### Sources

#### Articles:

Broughton, Jim. The Story of 141 Centre Street, The Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill, Newsletter, February 2005.

#### Books:

Fitzgerald, Doris M. Thornhill 1793-1963, The History of an Ontario Village. Copyright, Canada, 1964, by Doris FitzGerald.

Kalman, Harold. A History of Canadian Architecture, Vol 2. Oxford University Press, Ontario, 1994.

Ogilvie, John. The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language, Vol IV. Blackie and Son, 49 and 50 Old Bailey, E.C. Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dublin, 1883. (digitized by Google).

Reaman, G. Elmore A History of Vaughan Township, Two Centuries of Life in the Township, University of Toronto Press, 1971.

Land Registry Records and Instruments for Concession 1, Lot 30:

York Region Land Registry Office, 50 Bloomington Rd W, 3rd Floor, Aurora, ON L4G 3G8

The Archives of Ontario, 134 Ian Macdonald Boulevard, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M7A 2C5

#### Essay:

Easton, H.Jerry. Thornhill: From Wilderness to Urban Village. Unpublished essay written in 1975. Student at York University.

#### Web sources:

##### Genealogy:

[http://www.genealogy.com/genealogy/Glossary/NEWGLO\\_Y.html](http://www.genealogy.com/genealogy/Glossary/NEWGLO_Y.html)

The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language, Vol IV:

[http://books.google.ca/books?id=PYICAAAQAAJ&pg=PA675&dq=dictionary+AND+yeoman+AND+farmer+AND+Canad\\*&hl=en#v=onepage&q=yeoman&f=false](http://books.google.ca/books?id=PYICAAAQAAJ&pg=PA675&dq=dictionary+AND+yeoman+AND+farmer+AND+Canad*&hl=en#v=onepage&q=yeoman&f=false)

The Official Website of the British Monarchy:

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/HistoryoftheMonarchy/KingsandQueensoftheUnitedKingdom/TheHanoverians>

##### Wikipedia:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corn\\_Laws](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corn_Laws)

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- STRATEGIC GOAL:  
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:  
Preserve our heritage and support diversity, arts and culture.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, and the necessary resources to implement this program have been allocated and approved.

**Regional Implications**

N/A

**Conclusion**

Please refer to recommendation section of this report.

**Report Prepared by**

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Attachments



141 Centre Street

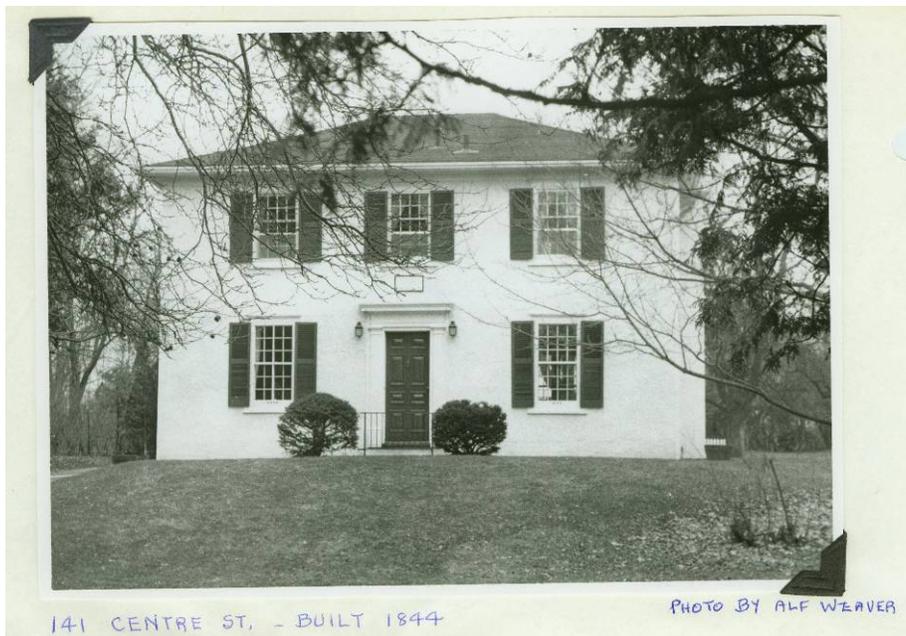
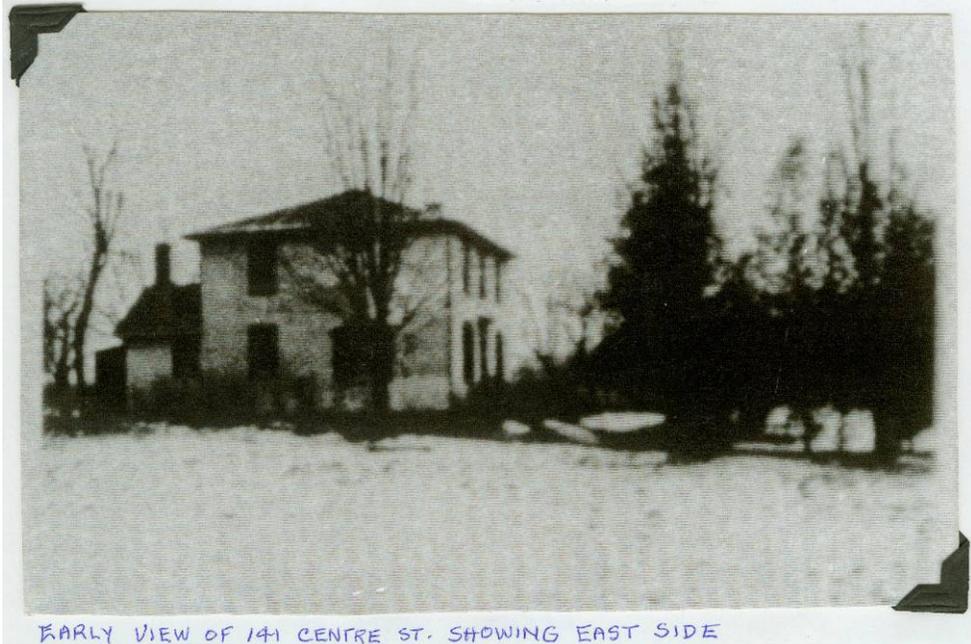


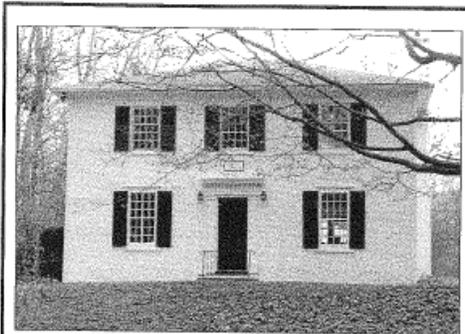
Fig. 1 Photo courtesy of the City of Vaughan Archives.



EARLY VIEW OF 141 CENTRE ST. SHOWING EAST SIDE

Fig. 2 Photo by JEH. McDonald courtesy of the City of Vaughan Archives.

**Centre Street**



Location: 141 Centre Street  
 Year Built: Circa 1840  
 Style: Georgian  
 Storeys: 2  
 Classification: Inventoried

Cladding: Stucco  
 Roof: Hipped, asphalt shingles  
 Windows: Wood double-hung, 12/12

Description: A substantial, but starkly simple, 3-bay Georgian house. The central entry door has a broad surround; the jambs having plain tapered pilasters with plinths and capitals, and the deep entablature having a pronounced cornice. The window heads have similar cornices on a smaller scale. The windows all have true shutters. The roof is a low-sloped hip roof with moderate overhangs. There is a substantial exterior chimney on the right. The house is set well back on a very large lot, and the many mature trees to the front screen the house from Centre Street. Substantial outbuilding at left rear.

Archives: MM-Weaver 171

History: This house was built for Owen McCartney, Esquire. He was one of the early landowners whose fortunes changed. Robert Jarratt, notable Thornhill joiner and carpenter, bought the house in 1844. It has been owned by E. Duder since 1954.

Comments: This property is an important cultural and natural heritage asset and contributes to the heritage character of the village.



MM-Weaver #171, February 1973

Fig. 3 Entry in HCD Inventory

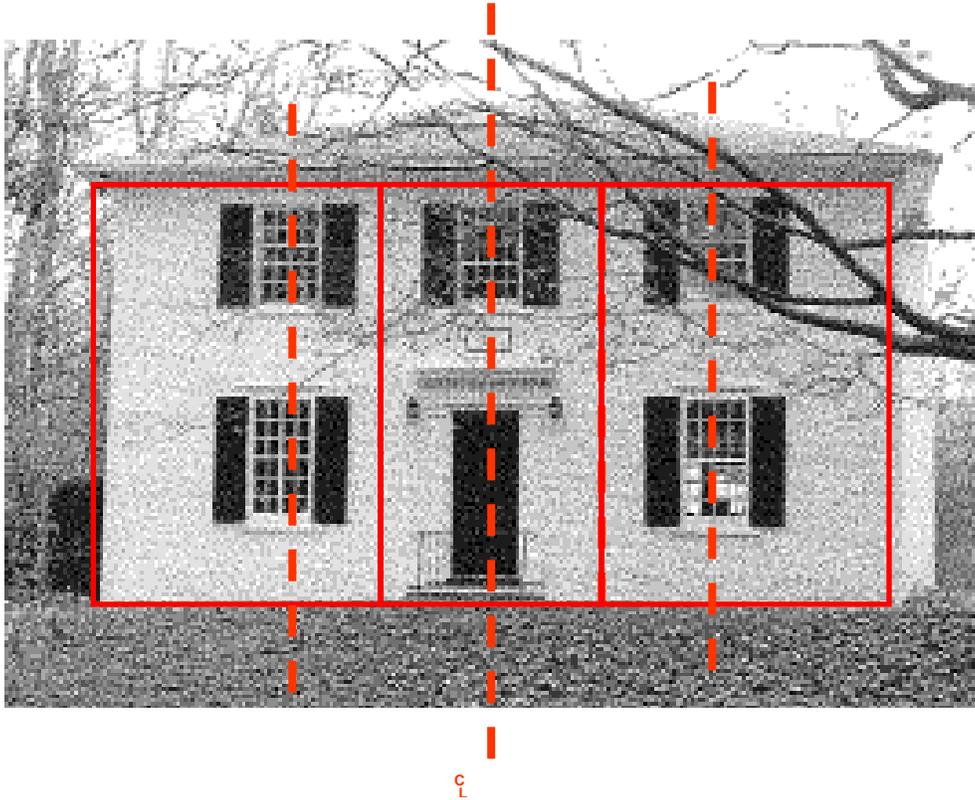
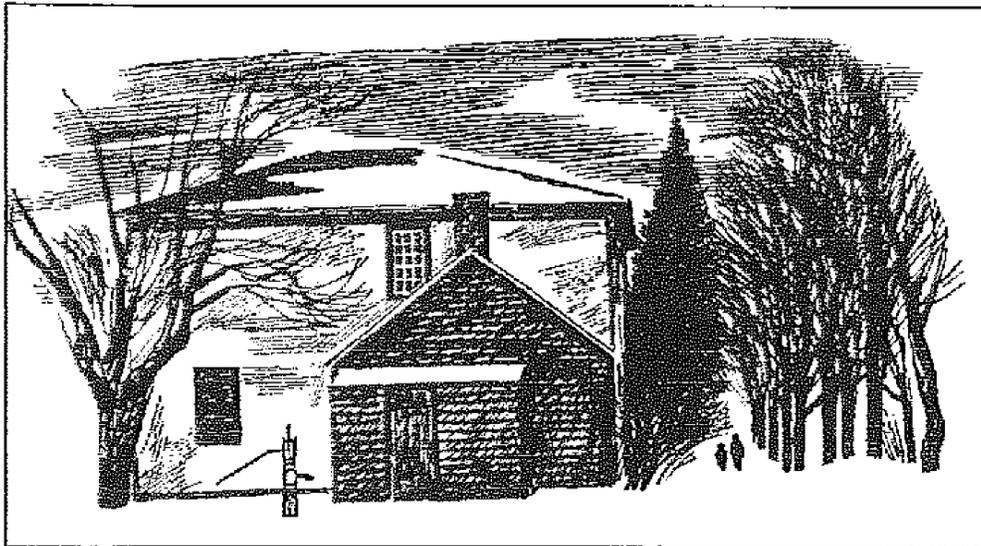


Fig. 4. Visual analysis of front facade



Fig 5 to 17. Photos by Cultural Services, 2008, 2011. unless specified.



*Above: "The Lane", by Thoreau MacDonald, showing the rear of 141 Centre Street before 1938.*



