

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE

DESCRIPTION

Municipal Address: 11511 Weston Road

Legal Description: Lot 30, Concession 5

Roll:

Brief Description: 1-1/2 storey former school built in Gothic Revival

OVERVIEW

The cultural heritage value of the property known as 11511 Weston Road meets the criteria set out by the *Ontario Heritage Act* under Province of Ontario Regulation 9/06 for the categories of design/physical, historical/associative and contextual value.

Name: Formally Known as the Bryson School

Date Built: c.1860

Condition: The building is in good to fair physical condition

DESIGN OR PHYSICAL VALUE

The subject property at 11511 Weston Road is a former school. Built in c. 1860 using a L- shaped plan, the building is an example of a structure constructed in the Gothic Revival style. While the Gothic Revival style was initially used for religious buildings when it first arrived in Canada, it would also be adapted to other types of buildings including homes, schools, and government buildings. One of the indicators of the style is the pointed-arched windows, which can be seen at the subject property. The former school is built with red brick and comprises of buff-brick quoins and voussoirs. Viewing the property from Weston Road there are two pointed-arched windows, one on either side of a brick chimney, and a horizontal bi-colour brick pattern can be seen near the roofline. Also from this view, an entrance into the building is visible, and there is a pointed-arched motif above the doorframe. The view of the elevations from Kirby Road showcases a mixture of rectangular shaped and pointed-arched windows. In addition, there are blind arches above some of the windows. The bi-colour brick pattern band near the roofline, has also been incorporated to the elevations that can be seen from Kirby Road as well. These elements help to demonstrate the structures excellent craftsmanship. The windows located in the gables facing Kirby Road were later additions, along with the balcony. An article from *The Liberal* from 1965 described the removal and placement of a new belfry. The old belfry had to be removed due to dry rot. It was also noted in the article that sixteen months prior, the schoolhouse was purchased by Rev. B. F. Andrews, who was a Presbyterian, and Mrs. Andrews, and converted into a residence. The building's transition from a school to a residence serves as a prime example of adaptive reuse in Vaughan.

HISTORICAL/ASSOCIATIVE VALUE

The property at 11511 Weston Road, was once known as Bryson School; alternatively, it was also known as British School No. 10, or School Section No.10 (S.S. No.10). Prior to the new construction, the old school building was built from logs. When the new school building was constructed, c. 1860, it cost \$2,200. It could hold up to fifty students and was heated by a stove located in the center of the room. It is understood that Neil Malloy wanted a good bell for the building, and in turn a bell was ordered from a company in Chicago for \$50. An insurance policy for \$1,200 was also taken out for the property.

A minute book from 1869 indicates that the students attending the school paid six cents per week. With regards to attendance, older boys would only attend during the winter months because they would assist with the farming during the other times of the year when it was busier. The Bryson School held events in which the students would participate. A 1953 article in *The Liberal* newspaper reported on a Valentines concert, which would involve Drills, a play, recitations, and other elements. To attend the concert adults paid twenty-five cents, while the cost for children was fifteen cents. The event demonstrates that the school served not only as a place for education, but also played a role in community engagement.

The trustees of the school (Neil Malloy, Alexander Cameron, and Isaac Murray) purchased the corner lot from Robert Phillips for \$100. Trustee Alex Cameron and his family were known to be active in the community. For instance, not only was Alex Cameron and his wife Barbara members of the Woodbridge Presbyterian church, his wife was also a member of the Woodbridge Women's Institute. Alex's son, James Cameron, would later go on to become warden of York County in 1914. The last local trustees were Stewart Diceman, Roy Bowen, and Gordon Burbidge. Vaughan Township would later assume responsibility of the building in 1960.

There have been several landowners over the years. The 1860 map indicates that the west belonged to P. Peterman, while the east belonged to A. Cameron. *The Tremaine* map of 1878 has the name Tho. Phillips on the west Side, while Alex (Alexander) Cameron was located on the east Side. The 1918 map has Mrs. R. Phillips on the west side, while J.A. Cameron, who was as a Deputy Reeve for Vaughan Council, occupies the eastern portion of the lot.

Lot 30, Concession 5 is also often associated with Donald Cameron (1819-1858) and the Cameron family. Donald Cameron left Baramolach, Argyllshire, Scotland for Canada in 1819 with his wife Christine McLeven. Initially living in Caledon, Donald and Christine had two children together: Agnes and Sarah. After the death of his first wife, he married Elizabeth Armour, moved to Vaughan, and settled on Lot 30, Concession 5 (east half of the lot). While he had some hardships in Caledon, he had more success in Vaughan. Not only did he become a successful farmer, but he would also go on to serve as a Councillor for Vaughan Township from 1853 to 1856. He was also a trustee for St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Maple. In his memoir, *Memoir of the Life of Donald Cameron*, he discusses adjusting to his move to Canada and building a life in a new country. Donald's son, Archibald, also contributes to the memoir. Donald's other son Alex, whose name appears on the 1878 map, would also serve as trustee for the Bryson school. A *Times and Guide* article from 1936 discusses a Cameron family reunion, which honoured the memory of Donald and his three brothers: William, Archibald, and Hector. Although Donald's brothers settled in Middlesex County, the four brothers were pioneers of the Cameron family in Canada, having left their home in Scotland for a new life. These progressions of events help to give insight into the life of new settlers in Vaughan, showcase the Cameron family as famers, and as well as their involvement in their community.

CONTEXTUAL VALUE

11511 Weston Road structure and lot are significant in establishing and maintaining the cultural heritage aesthetic and the history of the mid-19th century history of Vaughan. Located on the northwest corner of Lot 30, Concession 5, the property holds contextual value as it is a

longstanding feature, and historically linked to its surroundings. Being a fixture that can be seen near the corner of Weston Road and Kirby Road, it could be understood that it was an identifiable structure and marker within its community. The trustees of the school, Neil Malloy, Alexander Cameron, and Isaac Murray came together to help build the former school, and this building reflects both their individual success in having the ability to support the endeavour, as well as their commitment to contribute to the development of their community. It is here that the merit of the structure lies, just as much as in the architectural value.

SUMMARY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE

Architectural Attributes

- Pointed-arched windows
- Red brick, with buff-brick quoins and voussoirs
- belfry was custom ordered from Chicago
- Brick chimney
- Horizontal bi-colour brick pattern near the roofline
- L-plan
- Blind arches

Historical Attributes

- Bryson School, a.k.a. British School #10
- Trustees included resident/owner of 11151 Weston Road
- property owned by early Councillor of Vaughan Township

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

City of Vaughan Archives

Cook, H. A. (2011). *Some of Vaughan's pictorial past*. Hugh A. Cook.

Kalman, H. (2000). *A Concise History of Canadian Architecture*. Oxford University Press.

Reaman, G. E. (1971). *A History of Vaughan Township: Two centuries of life in the township*. Vaughan Township Historical Society.

Plander, B. (1975). *Old Buildings in the Town of Vaughan*.

A Real Sky Hook. (1965). *The Liberal*. Retrieved from <https://history.rhpl.ca/3216175/page/14?q=bryson+school&docid=OOI.3216175>

Coming events. (1953, February 5). *The Liberal*. Retrieved from <https://history.rhpl.ca/3215518/page/2?n=>

Cameron family gathers for reunion at Vellore. (1936, June 19). *Times and Guide*. Retrieved from <https://vitacollections.ca/westonnews/3555048/page/3867684?q=donald+cameron>.

Building styles. Gothic Revival. (n.d.). <http://www.ontarioarchitecture.com/gothicrevival.html#gothicwestern>