

Deputation for file B014/21

The Unique Situation in Seneca Heights

by: Judy Lam, resident of Seneca Heights for 19 years



Purpose of deputation:

1. Rationale as to why Seneca Heights deserves better mitigation
2. To convey the uniqueness of Seneca Heights & that the severance does not "maintain the character" of this established, large lot neighbourhood

Seneca Heights: A Unique Situation



- Seneca Heights is one of the oldest communities in a rapidly growing Vaughan
- **unique archaeologically** (pockets of land that retain archaeological potential), **historically significant** (1520 Huron Wendat village) and **architecturally distinctive** (1950s mid-century homes designed by award winning architectural pioneer, Jerome Markson)
- **overwhelming majority oppose the severance**
- **39 homes and 54 resident signed the petition in opposition**



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Arborist has identified this ancient oak on Tayok as being approx. 500-600 years old.

It is not uncommon in Seneca Heights to find trees that are hundreds of years old with very developed root systems.

This tree was standing when the Huron Villagers lived in Seneca Heights.

Chief Alan visits Village Site/Burial Ground



- Much has happened since the October 28 hearing
- **Outside of this severance**, there was a genuine interest for us to learn more about the land on which we reside and **to hear from the Indigenous community**
- With the assistance of our MPP, Michael Tibollo, who was the previous Minister of Culture, we have had several meetings regarding our unique area
- Chief Alan recently visited with residents of Seneca Heights and took a walking tour of our neighbourhood. Here he is at the 1520 village site, near the burial site. He gave his insights on the site and reflected on the past and present.
- In his opinion, due to the size of the village, he believes there are 100s of human remains up in this area. This coincides with what the late archaeologist, Shelley Saunders, estimated (between 185-696 individuals) in her report in 1985 (as we heard at the first hearing).
- We passed all relevant archaeology reports and accompanying sensitive photos to the Chief. He will pass them onto his friend, Chief Remy Vincent, of the Huron Wendat Nation, in Wendake, Quebec. They are in consultation.



Seneca Heights deserves better mitigation

This area is not getting the careful mitigation it requires.

From the very beginning of this application, the residents felt there were missteps.

Starting with the **premature recommended approval** by the city of an **incomplete application** (with only a standard clause) without the **necessary** archaeological assessment report originally, **until pressed by residents** to investigate further. The last minute inclusion of the archaeological assessment in the revised staff report 2 days before the October 28 hearing, **though welcome, eroded public trust and raised “doubts about the process”**.

The **onus should not rest with residents to advocate** for something that was clearly needed as the subject lands:

- are within 200m a registered Late Woodlands Site
- retain archaeological potential
- are 146m from the Humber River (300m from a water source)
- approx. 300m from a known burial site
- **may** fall within the Ossuary Potential Model (**Irwin Heritage assessment report**)



Irwin Heritage Assessment of Stage 1

“It is clear that the Study Area retains archaeological potential owing to the environmental setting of the Study Area in and the proximity of registered archaeological sites. As such, portions of the Study Area retain archaeological potential and **should be subject to a Stage 2 Archaeological Assessment** (Map 6).”

- This should have been clear from the very beginning during a pre-consult between city and applicant
- Neither the “standard clause” nor the “laptop exercise” of a Stage 1 was sufficient in this case

- **Better mitigation needs to happen in this area**
- **Seneca Heights has not received the proper mitigation it deserves
(not without intervention from residents)**
- **How this file should have been handled was in the Region's Archaeological Master Plan all along (complete with flowcharts & wording to guide a situation such as this)**
- **It is unacceptable that residents should need to bring anything to the attention of city staff**

Figure 18 below, outlines the integration of the development review and archaeological assessment processes.

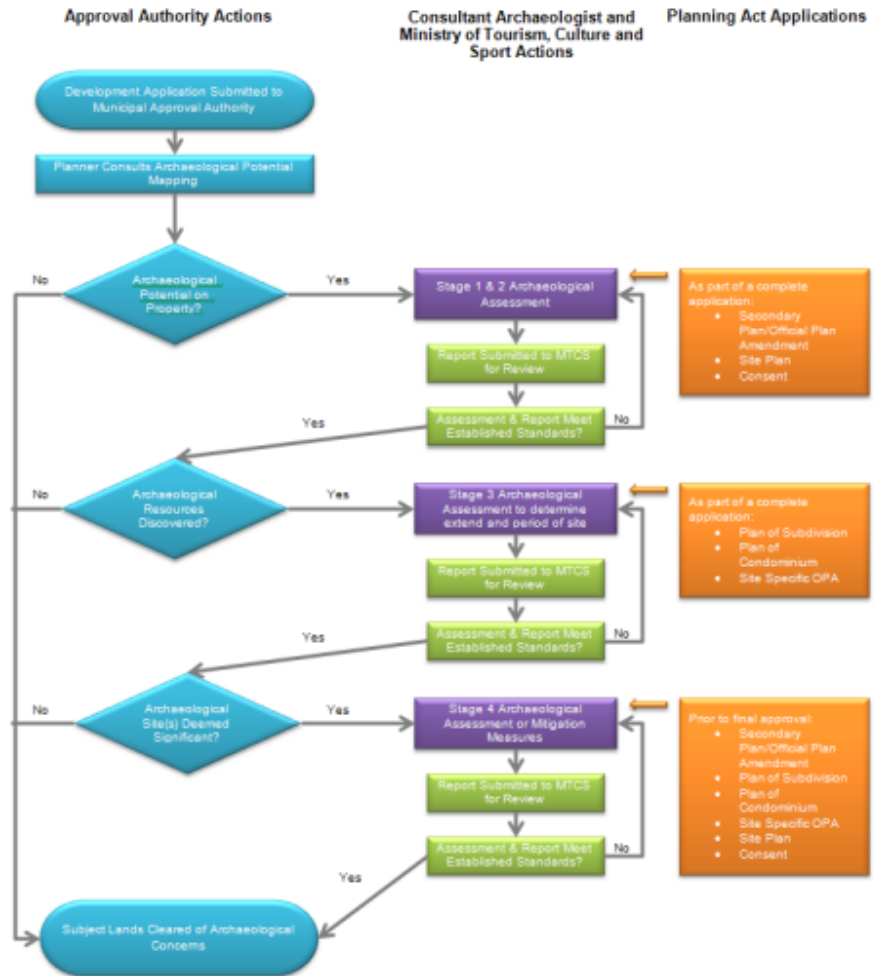


Figure 16 - Integration of the Development Review and Archaeological Assessment Processes

“Doubts about the process” at the city:

When process is not followed

- Archaeological assessment was clearly needed **before** the application was submitted to the city
- **Pre-consultation** should have identified the need for this archaeological assessment
- Assessment should have been completed and subject lands cleared of archaeological concerns (**report submitted as part of the application**) as per the Region’s Master Plan
- City **prematurely recommended approval** even when concerns about a lack of an archaeological assessment were brought forward by residents
- archaeological assessment was thrown in **2 days before the hearing in October**
- **the public hearing** took place before the report was in; committee members were supposed to vote on this **without** the report in front of them
- originally, only a **blanket standard clause** was included as the **sole cultural heritage recommendation** and at the hearing it was indicated that only a **STAGE 1 “laptop exercise”** is necessary (which we feel didn’t age well); **because the Indigenous community wants monitoring of demolition/construction and notification before it begins as recommended in the completed archaeological assessment by Irwin Heritage**

Appendix B - Template for Conditions and Comments

To be used in areas of Archaeological Potential for the following applications:

- Consent to sever land
- Condition of draft plan approval for subdivision
- Comments with appropriate wording for requiring further archaeological clearances

WORDING FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONDITION

If an archaeological assessment is required as a result of the review of the Management Plan archaeological potential map, planning staff will recommend that an archaeological assessment be made a condition of approval of the development application. The assessment would be completed and submitted as part of the application (already required in the case of Plans of Subdivision). The condition should read:

The proponent shall carry out an archaeological assessment, in accordance with the *Standards and Guidelines for Consultant Archaeologists* published by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport as amended, superseded or replaced, of the entire development property and mitigate, through preservation or resource removal and documentation, adverse impacts to any significant archaeological resources found. No demolition, grading or other soil disturbances shall take place on the subject property prior to the approval authority confirming that all archaeological resource concerns have met resource conservation requirements of the Province.

The archaeological assessment will be completed by a consultant archaeologist, licensed by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport under the provisions of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as amended, superseded or replaced; and any significant archaeological sites found will be properly mitigated (avoided or excavated), prior to the initiation of construction, servicing, landscaping or other land disturbances.

York Region's Archaeological Master Plan

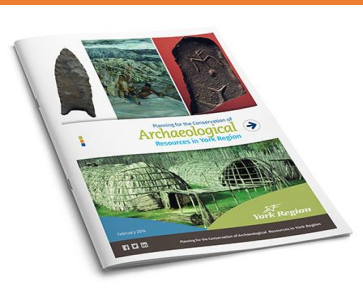
At the hearing, it was mentioned that a consent to sever land doesn't usually require an archaeological assessment. Just because something may be *standard practice* doesn't mean it's *standard policy*.

According to the Region's Master Plan, in areas of Archaeological Potential, for an application to **consent to sever land**, a **standard clause is not sufficient**. The assessment would be completed and submitted **as part of the application**.

The wording is provided for the staff to use in their reports for areas of archaeological potential for applications to sever land.

Intent of pointing out inconsistencies in the process at the city level (in not conforming with the Region's Archaeological Master Plan) is not to point fingers, but rather:

To advocate for better mitigation in the future should a similar situation arise (not just in Seneca Heights) but anywhere that requires it



Rationale for better mitigation



Seneca Heights deserves better mitigation and careful attention for the following reasons:

- it is within 1000m of a Late Woodlands site (**larger than usual buffer, heightened potential for human remains**)
- retains pockets of **archaeological potential**
- approx. 200m from a water source & approx. 300m from a known burial site
- **may** fall within the Ossuary Potential Model (**not clearly defined** Ossuary Potential mapping)
- **the Ministry (Archaeology department)** is clarifying who updates the maps as they are not entirely sure *** they are looking into this and we are waiting to hear back from our contact

The Ossuary Potential Model recommends that lands within 1000m of a known Indigenous village site, for which no associated ossuary has been identified, and within 300m of a water source, be subject to special monitoring measures -- York Region's Master Plan (page 47) & Irwin Heritage Archaeological Assessment report

Most ossuaries will be located within 1000m of their associated village and also within 300m of a water source.

Indigenous Consultation – Archaeological Assessment Recommendation

- In the archaeological report completed by Irwin Heritage, it was stated that the Indigenous community recommends **archaeological monitoring and notification/consultation**
- **Even in the absence of archaeological resources after a Stage 2, the Indigenous recommends monitoring**
- This is interesting and speaks to the significance of the area.
- It is noteworthy, that **there would never have been an opportunity for the Indigenous community to even be consulted without the advocacy for the archaeological assessment**
- As indicated in the York Region Archaeological Plan (pg.44), **monitoring is only undertaken in specific circumstances**
- “This could include lands within the Ossuary Potential Area, or properties where other information **suggest the presence of archaeological resources** that could not be detected through traditional Stage 2 processes.” (Region’s Master Plan)
- So the implication here is that a **“blanket standard clause”** seems **insufficient** (particularly to the First Nations)
- **The archaeological assessment results (Indigenous recommendation for monitoring even in the absence of resources) validate** what the residents were trying to convey last October at the first premature hearing:

This is an area that requires **cultural sensitivity, careful attention & mitigation**

Seneca Heights is unique and special....





Fondly referred to as the “Television House” – Architect, Jerome Markson (1950s)

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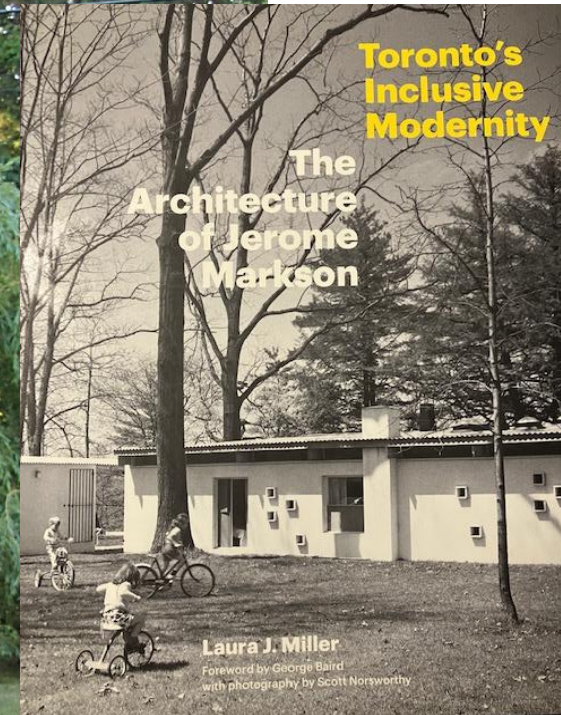


“The Barclay House’, 1955, Architect, Jerome Markson – 2012 Award Winning Mid-century Modern Design



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“The House with the 5 Mile view” -- Designed by architect, Michael Bach, 1958



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“The Smith House” – Architect, Jerome Markson, 1954 (one of the first houses in Seneca Heights)
The descendants of Jack Grant, the visionary developer, are still in residence here.

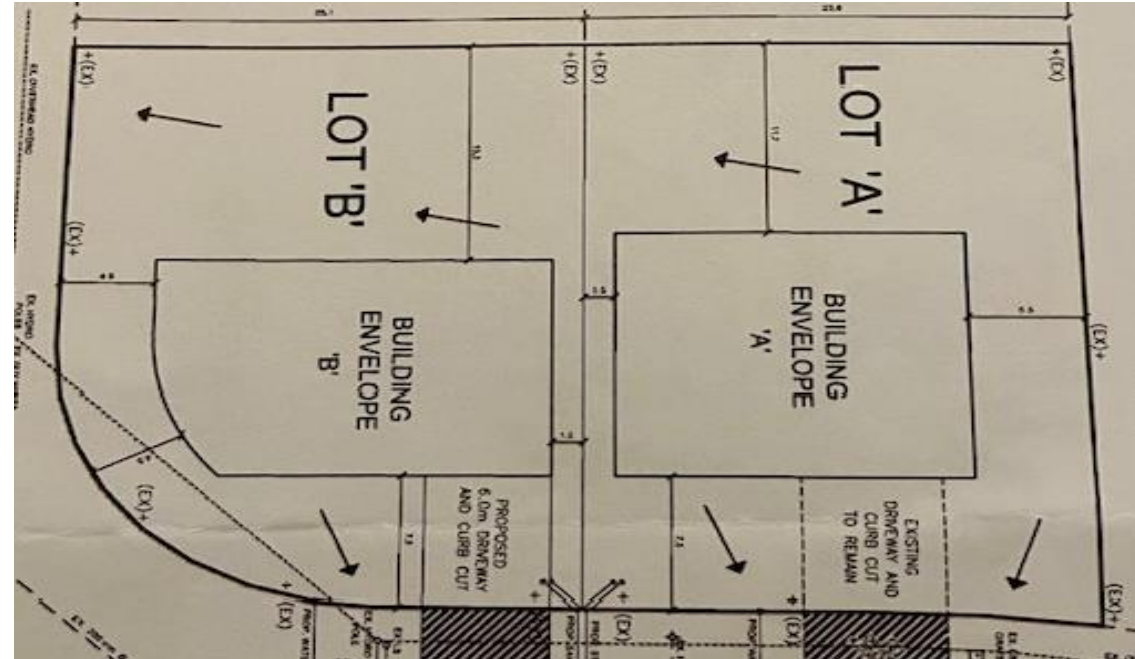


“The House with the 300 year old oak tree” – Wigwoss & Monsheen

Northwest corner (Tayok & Monsheen) Subject Lands: 160 Monsheen Drive



Sever land to facilitate the future
construction of two houses on this corner lot



Do you honestly think this severance
conforms to this mature, unique area?



Southeast corner of Tayok & Monsheen

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Northeast corner of Tayok & Monsheen

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Southwest corner of Tayok & Monsheen

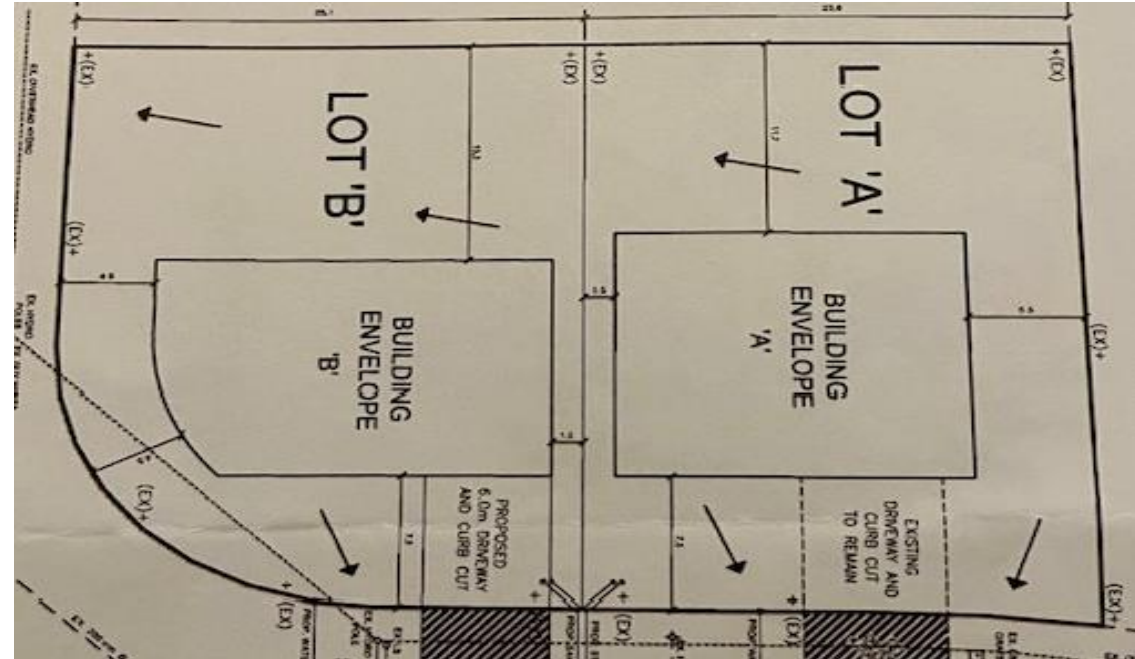
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Northwest corner (Tayok & Monsheen) Subject Lands: 160 Monsheen Drive



Removing 9 trees

Sever land to facilitate the future
construction of two houses on this corner lot



Do you honestly think this severance
conforms to this mature, unique area?

Sources -- Links

[Archaeological Assessments \(vaughan.ca\)](#)

[Planning for the Conservation of Archaeological Resources in York Region](#)

[Regional Official Plan | York Region](#)

[1 \(vaughan.ca\)](#)

City of Vaughan Official Plan Archaeological and First Nations Policy Study
Prepared for: City of Vaughan Policy Planning and Urban Design Department,
2010