

Heritage Vaughan Committee Report

DATE: Wednesday, February 28, 2024

WARD: 4

TITLE: PROPOSED DESIGNATION UNDER PART IV OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT OF 271 VALLEY VISTA DRIVE

FROM:

Haqing Xu, Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management

ACTION: DECISION

Purpose

To seek Heritage Vaughan Committee's support and recommend to the Committee of the Whole approval for the proposed designation of the property municipally known as 271 Valley Vista Drive, located on the west side of Bathurst Street and south of Major Mackenzie Drive (as shown on Attachment 1).

Report Highlights

- The report proposes the designation of 271 Valley Vista Drive, a 1-storey building of Regency Cottage style built circa 1824.
- The property holds physical, historical, and contextual cultural heritage value as described in the attached Statement of Cultural Heritage Value.
- The designation of this property meets the policies of the Vaughan Official Plan and the objectives and required criteria outlined in the *Ontario Heritage Act* by the Province of Ontario Regulation 9/06.

Recommendations

THAT Heritage Vaughan recommend Council approve the proposed designation as presented, subject to following conditions:

1. That Council approve the recommendation of the Heritage Vaughan Committee to designate 271 Valley Vista Drive in accordance with Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* R.S.O. 1990, c. O.18.
2. That Staff be authorized to publish and serve the Notice of Intention to Designate in accordance with the requirements under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario*

Heritage Act R.S.O 1990, c.O.18 to the Property Owner, the Ontario Heritage Trust, and published on the City Website.

3. If no objection is served on the City Clerk within 30 days of the date of publication of the Notice of Intention, Council shall pass a by-law designating 271 Valley Vista Drive and a copy of the by-law shall be served on the Owner and Ontario Heritage Trust and a notice shall be published on the City Website.

Background

Known as the Velie-Graham House, 271 Valley Vista Drive was evaluated as having significant architectural, historical and contextual value. Further research on the subject property has confirmed that the cultural heritage value of 271 Valley Vista Drive meets the criteria set out under OHA Regulation 9/06 for physical, associative and contextual cultural heritage value. A complete designation report that outlines these values is included herewith.

Previous Reports/Authority

Not applicable.

Analysis and Options

In June 2019, the *More Homes, More Choice Act*, 2019 (Bill 108) received Royal Assent. Schedule 11 of this Act included amendments to the *Ontario Heritage Act* ('OHA').

The Bill 108 Amendments to the OHA came into force on July 1, 2021, and include a shift in Part IV designations related to certain *Planning Act* applications. These changes affect Section 29(1.2) of the OHA which now restricts City Council's ability to give notice of its intention to designate a property under the Act within 90 days after the City Clerk gives notice of a complete application.

Bill 23 (the *More Homes Built Faster Act*, 2022) Amendments to the OHA that came into force on January 1, 2023 mandates municipalities to remove properties from the heritage register under Section 27 if they do not pass a by-law designating the property on the second anniversary of the bill coming into force (January 1, 2025)

In light of this new legislation, it is imperative for City of Vaughan staff to identify cultural heritage properties that are currently Listed under Section 27 of the OHA or identified as a property of interest to be evaluated as a candidate for designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the OHA. The Province has amended O. Reg. 9/06 under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, which establishes nine provincial criteria for determining whether a property is of cultural heritage value or interest if it meets two or more of the nine criteria.

As set out in Vaughan's Official 2010 Plan, the City of Vaughan states that it is the policy of Council to:

6.1.1.1. To recognize and conserve cultural heritage resources, including heritage buildings and structures, Cultural heritage landscapes, and other cultural heritage resources, and to promote the maintenance and development of an appropriate setting within, around and adjacent to all such resources.

6.1.2.6. That the City shall use criteria established by Provincial regulation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* for determining cultural heritage value or interest and for identifying and evaluating properties for listing in the Heritage register and for designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. The City may further refine these criteria and provide guidelines for their use through the Vaughan Heritage Conservation Guidelines.

6.1.2.7. Any property worthy of designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* that fulfills one or more of the criteria identified in policy 6.1.2.6 will be considered to possess cultural heritage value.

6.2.1.1. To make full use of the provisions of Provincial legislation, such as the *Ontario Heritage Act*, *Planning Act*, *Municipal Act* and *Environmental Assessment Act*, to protect and conserve cultural heritage resources in Vaughan.

Following a thorough examination of archival documentation, and after a documented site visit, staff finds that the subject property holds cultural heritage value and meets the criteria set out under the *Ontario Heritage Act* by the Province of Ontario Regulation 9/06 for the categories of design/physical, historical/associative and contextual value.

Designation Comments

ADDRESS: 271 Valley Vista Drive

LEGAL: Part of Lots 19 & 20 Concession 2 Vaughan, described as Parts 18-22, 31-33 65R-28521; subject to an easement over Part 20, Plan 65R28531 for Parts 2-17, 23-30, 34-49, Plan 65R-28521 & Part 1, Plan 65R-15585 as in YR764533; subject to an easement on Part 32, Plan 65R-28521 for Parts 2-17, 23-30, 34-39, Plan 65R-28521 as in YR764534; together with an easement over Part Lot 19, Concession 2 (Vaughan), described as Parts 24, 25, 27 & 30, Plan 65R-28521 as in YR764532; together with an easement over Part Lots 19 & 20, Concession 2 (Vaughan), described as Parts 2-17, 23-30, 34-30 all inclusive, Plan 65R-28521 as in YR764532; City of Vaughan.

EVALUATION UNDER O.REG 9/06 CRITERIA

Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the *Ontario Heritage Act* establishes nine criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the OHA if it meets two or more of these criteria. The following evaluation tables identify the application of each criterion as "N/A" (not applicable) or "X" (applicable) to the property, with explanatory text below.

1. DESIGN OR PHYSICAL VALUE

The property has design value or physical value because it	
▪ is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method	X
▪ displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	X
▪ demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	N/A

271 Valley Vista Drive, known as the Velie-Graham House, is a Regency Cottage style 1-storey stucco-clad structure originally built between 1824-1829, and with a south addition built circa 1950. The square footprint building is built on a dry-laid stone foundation. It has a central hall, with a framed single door with classical surround and sidelights facing to the north and south at the ends of a central hall, the visual connection between the north and south entrance doors is a feature of this building. On either side of these entrances are large windows, forming a central 3-bay form.

The subject property also hosts a large barn displaying an unusually-pronounced extending point off the roof. Built on a cement foundation and clad in board and batten siding, it is an interesting example of a mid-20th century barn, built with contemporary materials but within the existing scale of the other buildings on Brook Farm.

2. HISTORICAL OR ASSOCIATIVE VALUE

The property has historical value or associative value because it	
▪ has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	X
▪ yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	X
▪ demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	N/A

The main house at 271 Valley Vista Drive is set back far from lot boundary and was likely built from the trees on the property – not unusual for the time and the style of cottage, as many houses of the era were initially built far into their lots. The subject property was owned and operated first by the Velie family between the turn of the 19th century until 1864, when the property was sold to the Graham family. During this period, the 100-acre farm produced agricultural goods as well as sawn wood products from the sawmill on site. Under the Graham family ownership (until 1936), wood products were eliminated, and the sawmill was removed; an orchard was temporarily planted, but the Graham family were better known for their livestock. The last ownership exchanged occurred in 1936, then the farm changed name to Brook Farm, was amalgamated into the larger Don Head Farms, and later further absorbed into the Southbrook Farms and became the namesake for Southbrook Wineries, a VQA Ontario winery. The farm transitioned from livestock to produce in the 1970's and also developed some agritourism events. Parts of the property continue to be farmed today.

3. CONTEXTUAL VALUE

The property has contextual value because it is	
▪ important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area	X
▪ physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings	X
▪ a landmark	N/A

271 Valley Vista Drive, the Velie-Graham House, is physically and historically linked to the area, and the original main building remains unaltered since its construction in 1824. A key consideration was to ensure that the house's positioning was picturesque, and both fit into the landscape but also provide agreeable views around it. This house was located on a high point but near the remaining wooded area and stream. It incorporated large windows to capitalize on this view and built so that anyone standing in the central hall would be able to look at the fields in either direction from inside the house. John Velie and his bride would have built this house in the 1820's not as a temporary log cabin to meet settlement requirements, but as a carefully considered construction that allowed them to admire their surroundings and to ensure the house emulated the picturesque style in the more settled areas to the south.

The house, barn and stone structure all relate to the property's evolution and relates to Vaughan's agricultural history. The trees and vistas from the house, particularly to the south over the passive parkland provide a glimpse into the pre-contact and historical land features and domestic gardening. The combination of these elements showcases the merit of the subject property, just as much as the architectural value.

Financial Impact

There are no Financial Impacts associated with this report.

Operational Impact

There are no Operational Impacts associated with this report.

Broader Regional Impacts/Considerations

There are no Regional impacts or considerations for this application.

Conclusion

Staff finds that, as examined from archival documentation, the subject property holds cultural heritage value and meets the criteria as set out under the *Ontario Heritage Act* by the Province of Ontario Regulation 9/06 for the categories of design/physical, historical/associative and contextual value.

The Development Planning Department is satisfied the proposed designation of 271 Valley Vista Drive conforms to the policies of the Vaughan Official Plan and the objectives and criteria of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Accordingly, staff can support a Heritage Vaughan recommendation for Council approval of the proposed designation of 271 Valley Vista Drive under the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

For more information, please contact: Katrina Guy, Heritage Coordinator, ext. 8115.

Attachments

- Attachment 1 – 271ValleyVista_Location Map
- Attachment 2 – 271ValleyVista_Statement of Cultural Heritage Value
- Attachment 3 – 271ValleyVista_Historic Maps
- Attachment 4 – 271ValleyVista_Building Photos

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