

# **STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE**

## **DESCRIPTION**

Municipal Address: 8785 Dufferin Street

Legal Description: Concession 2, Lot 12

Brief description: 1-storey structure with shiplap siding

## **OVERVIEW**

The cultural heritage value of the property known as 8785 Dufferin Street 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: Cober Dunkard Church

Date Built: 1888

Location: east side of Dufferin Street, north of Confederation Parkway

Condition: good

## **DESIGN OR PHYSICAL VALUE**

The structure located at 8785 Dufferin Street is a one-storey frame church that was built in 1888. *A History of Vaughan Churches* describes the structure as being unique, the last of its kind in Vaughan. Measuring approximately 36 feet by 60 feet, it was built in the plain style of the “meeting house.” The reasoning for the selection of the style, was for the church to be an embodiment of the congregation’s faith and values, which focuses on simplicity, piety, and spirituality. Nicholas Cober junior was the main carpenter, and he was assisted by neighbouring families including the Keffers, Bakers, Reamans, Wingers, and various others.

The church is a small structure, with the main entrance facing Dufferin Street. The front elevation has a single door at the center, with stone slab steps leading to it. The north and south walls each contain three windows that are evenly spaced, and they have nine over six panes of glass. Located at back of the structure is a door that is off-centre. The cladding is shiplap siding sourced from the local first growth white pine in this area and was historically always painted white.

A drive shed, also located on the property, is set back from the church: it is a rectangular shaped frame structure constructed with vertical plank siding – it is not painted. The purpose of the drive shed was to shelter horses and buggies; it helps to give insight into the means of transportation of those who attended the church during the time it was built. The automobile would later eliminate the historic need for this a structure.

## **Historic and Associative Value**

The subject property located on Concession 2 Lot 12 has a long association with the Cober (Cover) family who were German-Pennsylvanian; they were one of the first families to settle in Vaughan. A source of evidence which signals the length of time the Cober family has been located in Vaughan is an inscription found in the Baker-Cober cemetery which states that states, “*of the first settlers on Yonge Street they were the fifth family.*” The cemetery was in use prior to the construction of the church, with the earliest known burial dating back to 1839.

The land for the cemetery was donated by brothers-in-law Peter Cober and Michael Baker. Many of Vaughan's earliest settlers are buried in the cemetery, including members from the Baker, Cober, Reaman, and other families.

From 1860 to 1878, the property was owned by Peter Cober. Built in 1888, The Cober Dunker Church was described as being located by the neighbouring cemetery and the woods. Upon completion of the church, the first service was held on October 21, 1888. The service was led by Rev. Fred Elliot, and it has been documented that one of the hymns that was sung in the service was "Blow ye the trumpet, blow." Up until 1860 services were held in German, after which Peter Cober began introducing preaching in English. Singing in German at the end of each service continued to be a custom until 1916.

While the main carpenter was Nicholas Cober junior, he was assisted by neighbouring families. These families included the Bakers, Keffers, Reamans and various others. This helps to showcase the collaborative nature of the community and to signify the importance of religion. Moreover, not only was the church built on the land of the Cober family, but Peter Cober was also involved in the church. An archival record indicates that Peter Cober was a minister around 1830 and became a bishop in 1840. Furthering his involvement, he made five trips to Pennsylvania as means to further the interest of the church.

Prior to the building of the church, services were held in the homes the family members who were part of the congregation. The members, which comprised of families that came from Somerset and Lancaster counties in Pennsylvania around 1800. The organization of the congregation dates back to 1808, when there was fifteen members. The families included Baker, Doner, Heise, and Steckley. Overtime, additional families would include the Bennet, Cober, Reaman, and several other families. The rotation of meetings would take place at sixteen different homes, and occurred over a span of sixty years. They were known as the River Brethren or "Tunkers." In 1904, they were known as the "Brethren in Christ." *Canadian German Folklore: Pioneer Hamlets of York* discusses that due to limited social contact and the journey of travelling, the meetings were something to look forward to. It could then be understood that these meeting created a sense of community.

### **Contextual Value**

The Cober Dunker Church is located on the east side of Dufferin Street. *Canadian German Folklore: Pioneer Hamlets of York* documents the placement of the church on the hill, how it overlooked the surrounding area, and how the location of church amongst the trees was considered to be beautiful and quiet. In addition, *A History of Vaughan Township* also describes the location of the church as being amongst beautiful pine trees, and almost surrounded by the nearby Vaughan woods.

Although the surrounding area has become residential and commercial, both the church and drive shed historically represents a way of life during the time-period they were built. The church and drive shed serve as a connection to the early pioneer living within Vaughan. These elements support the understanding about the history and development of Vaughan, which is just as important as the building's architectural value.

## **SUMMARY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE**

### **Physical/Design Value**

#### Church:

- ☐ Simple one-storey frame structure
- ☐ Shiplap siding, painted white, that was sourced from local first growth white pine
- ☐ Six windows – three on either side of the structure
- ☐ Gable roof
- ☐ Stone foundation
- ☐ Brick chimney
- ☐ The structure is the last of its kind in Vaughan

#### Drive Shed:

- ☐ Rectangular shaped frame structure constructed with vertical plank siding

### **Historical/Associative Value**

- ☐ the congregation goes as far back as 1808
- ☐ Peter Cober was a minister in the 1830s and became a Bishop by 1840
- ☐ land was donated by Peter Cober (1888), same as the cemetery (1839)
- ☐ the building was built by Peter's son, Nicholas Cober Jr.

### **Contextual Value**

- ☐ this church building has served as a landmark since its inception
- ☐ the subject property is contextually linked to Vaughan's history, and the evolution of the community development in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES**

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