

## **STATEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE**

### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

ADDRESS: 6335 Rutherford Road

LEGAL: Lot 15, Concession 9

### **OVERVIEW**

The cultural heritage value of the property known as 6335 Rutherford Road meets the criteria set out by the *Ontario Heritage Act* under Province of Ontario Regulation 9/06 for the categories of historical/associative, design/physical and contextual value.

Name: former Elder's Mills School, S.S. No. 15

Date Built: 1872; addition 1956

Condition: Good

### **ARCHITECTURAL VALUE**

The subject property located at 6335 Rutherford Road consists of the former Elder's Mills School. Also known as School Section 15 (S.S No.15.). The structure is an example of a rural Ontario schoolhouse, and has been built utilizing elements from different architectural styles.

The original portion of the school was built in 1872, and has classical characteristics. There are symmetrical and balanced elements with the arrangement of the windows. The windows on the south facing and west facing elevations have remained balanced and evenly spaced. The windows on the east facing elevation, remain leveled, and are closer together to accommodate the addition at the front of the building. Archival photos indicates that the original entrance doorways, prior to the addition, were evenly spaced and balanced. The cornice returns were incorporated into the ends of the gable at the front and rear of the building. This element is connected to the neoclassical style.

The addition to the front of the structure (which faces Rutherford Road) was built in 1956, and is reflective of the mid-century modern style that was appearing during the post war years. Along with schools, some of the other structures built in the mid-century modern style were libraries, malls, and other civic buildings. The style was known for being low, long, and for permitting lots of light through the incorporation of large windows. Applications of these elements have been incorporated at the former school. The addition to the building is rectangular in shape, and is longer on one side of the structure. There is also a band of windows at the front of the addition, and a doorway that is not centrally placed.

Although there have been changes to the building, there are still features of the original structure that remain. The bricks have been covered, and the building now has white and grey colour palette. However, the quoins still remain, which are now grey. The date stone containing "1872," which commemorates the year the school was built, is still visible on the original section of the former school. The belfry is also located upon the front gable roof of the original building.

### **HISTORICAL/ASSOCIATIVE VALUE**

The subject property located at 6335 Rutherford Road, shares a connection to the Jeffery Family, who were one of the early families in the Elder's Mills area. Several members of the Jeffery family were involved within Vaughan, and the wider community. Alfred Jeffery served as a Councillor (1856, 1858, 1861, 1863), and Deputy Reeve (1859, 1860, 1862, 1864). Twins Richard Thomas Jeffery (1880–1960) and John James Jeffery (1880–1956), would go on to attend the Elder's Mills School, and later worked for Ontario Hydro. Richard T. would become Chief Engineer for Ontario Hydro, and John was his assistant. *Remembering Elder's Mills* states that Richard T. came out of retirement to

oversee the new hydro plant that was being built in Niagara after World War II. He would also give a tour of the site to, then Princess Elizabeth, and Prince Phillip in 1951. John Jeffery (1844–1919) was a Veterinary surgeon, and who would look after the animals within the community. John Jeffery was also the son of Richard Jeffery (1818–1872), who was the owner of the subject property; Lot 15, Concession 9.

Richard Jeffery sold a small portion of his property, located Lot 15, Concession 9, to the Commissioner of Education for two pounds in 1843. Prior to the existing structure, there was a log building that served as the school. Built in 1843, the log school had one entrance. The interior of the school had benches and desks on either side of the room, a small blackboard, and a big box stove at the centre of the room. In addition, girls were on one side of the room, while boys were on the other side of the room. The younger children sat on benches located at the center of the room in order to be closer to the heat. With regards to attendance, boys usually attended school in the winter months, due to their helping on the farm in the summer months.

On Sundays the log school building was also used as a church. Two Presbyterian groups, the Auld (Old) Kirk Presbyterians and United Free Presbyterians, would alternate Sundays. Resources have indicated that issues developed between the two groups, and the United Free Presbyterians were locked out of the building by the Auld Kirk Presbyterians. As a result, the United Free Presbyterians held services in Archie Somerville's (Summerville) Barn, located in the tenth concession, until they built a church of their own. The utilization of the log school building as a church, helps to showcase the multipurpose use of the structure in relation to the needs of the community.

The site for the new school was also purchased from Richard Jeffery and his wife Barbara, on the same lot, for two hundred dollars in 1872. Additionally, the new schoolhouse was made of brick. Access to the building was done through two entrances, and there were two cloakrooms. With regards to the seating arrangements, the desks were now two students to a desk. The blackboards were built to span the width of the room, and they were situated between the windows of the side walls. There was also a stove, which was located at the back of the room. To celebrate the opening of the school, a dance was held in the schoolhouse. Moreover, other events were also held at the school. Some of these events included sporting matches against other schools, spelling bees, and Christmas concerts. This helps to give insight into the socializing that occurred outside of academic lessons, and how various types of events brought the community together.

Over time changes were made to the school. In 1934, Hydro was installed. Increased enrollment also influenced changes to the school building. An archival document states that there were fifty-five students and two teachers. In 1956, a new room addition was added to the northern portion of the building. By 1965, Grades 1 to 6 remained at Elder's Mill, while Grades 7 and 8 were taken by bus to Kleinburg. It could be understood that the growth and development of the community were contributing factors to these changes.

After serving the community for many years, the school was closed in 1967. An archival document states that the Elder's Mills School had been one of the four remaining country schools located on the west side of Vaughan Township. As a result of the closure, the students that had attended the Elder's Mills School went to either Kleinburg or Pine Grove schools. Sometime in 1967 a new school, Mackenzie Senior School, was opened, which was for Grades 6, 7, and 8.

Upon the closing of the school, the building served other purposes. When the school and property were later sold, the structure was converted into a residence. The building currently operates as a church (Bethel Christian Centre/Woodbridge Pentecostal Church), and the brick is now covered. The change in use of the building over the years highlights how the structure has been adapted to the changing needs of the community.

## CONTEXTUAL VALUE

The property located at 6335 Rutherford Road is historically and visually linked to its setting, and is a longstanding feature in the area. The existing structure is a representation of the lands once owned by the Jeffery family who were early settlers in Vaughan; within the Elder's Mills area. The former Elder's Mills School, which is visible from the road, is a reflection of the education system during the time it was built. From its purpose as a school, a residence, and its current use as a church, the structure has been utilized to support the changing needs of the Vaughan community over the years. It is here that the merit of the structure lies, just as much as in the architectural value.

## SUMMARY OF HERITAGE ATTRIBUTES

### Architectural Value

- ☐ "1872" date stone is visible and located at the front of the building
- ☐ Belfry
- ☐ Quoins
- ☐ Cornice returns on the 1872 section
- ☐ Front gable roof on the 1872 section
- ☐ Flat roof on the 1956 addition

### Historical Value

- ☐ The structure served as the school within the Elder's Mills Community from 1872–1967
- ☐ Existing structure was built in 1872, and the addition was added in 1956 due to increased enrolment
- ☐ Associated with the Jeffery family

### Contextual Value

- ☐ Structure is historically linked to the Lot and Concession it was built upon
- ☐ The building is visible from the road

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