

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – JANUARY 12, 2010**

### **HERITAGE CLEARANCE APPLICATION, 12000 HIGHWAY 27 (HAMBLY HOUSE)**

#### **Recommendation**

Heritage Vaughan Committee recommends:

1. That the Heritage Clearance application for the demolition of the structure located at 12000 Highway 27 be approved, and;
2. That the owner salvage the original entranceway, in its entirety, and deliver to the City's storage facility for the purposes of reuse.

#### **Contribution to Sustainability**

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions, Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan:

- 4.1 To foster a city with strong social cohesion, an engaging arts scene, and a clear sense of its culture and heritage.

#### **Economic Impact**

There is no economic impact associated with this report.

#### **Communications Plan**

The owner will be advised of any decision of Council.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to review the Heritage Clearance application for the demolition of the structure at 12000 Highway 27.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

The property owner has submitted a Heritage Clearance Application to demolish the stone structure located at 12000 Highway 27, in the City of Vaughan. A site visit was conducted to assess the condition of the structure on the subject property, and the historic and contextual significance of the site was examined. At the 18 November 2009 meeting, Heritage Vaughan reviewed the Heritage Clearance application and recommended the demolition of 12000 Highway 27. The Heritage Vaughan Committee is a statutory committee of Council and makes recommendations as it relates to heritage matters and to matters as authorized under the Ontario Heritage Act. Heritage Clearance applications are issued through the Cultural Services office and allows applicants to proceed to the Building Standards Department for a formal Demolition Permit application which is considered and issued by the said department.

The Hambly House at 12000 Highway 27 is included in the *Listing of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Value*, in the City of Vaughan's *Register of Property of Cultural Heritage Value* as per Part IV, Subsection 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act (as approved by Council on June 27, 2005). 12000 Highway 27 is not individually designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act and is not designated as part of a heritage conservation district under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. Under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, the demolition of "Registered" structures must be reviewed and approved by Council.

The subject property is located on the north half of lot 9 of concession 34, in the City Vaughan, on the West side of York Regional Road No. 27 between King-Vaughan Road and Kirby Road. The subject building is a representative example of a small 1 ½ storey fieldstone Ontario Georgian farmhouse with side gabled metal roof and small, wing and tail style kitchen addition. The structure retains its original Georgian entranceway, and a full set of 2/2 wood windows that, while in good condition, are not original to the building. Although elegantly proportioned, many of the diagnostic decorative features, such as the verandah, original roofing and cornice details have been removed.

The north half of lot 9, concession 35 is a 100 acre lot that was subdivided from the south half in the mid 19th century. In the 1860 York County Tremaines Map this property is noted as being owned by William McCutcheon, however no building is depicted on the lot. Later in the 1878 York County Historical Atlas the property is depicted as being a working farm with a farmhouse, owned by Edwin Hambly. In addition to being a farmer, Edwin Hambly was also the Superintendent of the Mount Lebanon Public School, erected in 1876 on the West end of Lot 31, Con. 8. George Irwin, son of William Irwin bought the North ½ of Lot 34 Con. 9 in 1940. Murray Irwin lived on north ½ of Lot 34 after George. William Irwin's granddaughter, Merle Hambly, is a prominent Vaughan area historian and contributed to the completion of *A History of Vaughan Township*.

While a building of such excellent character and design would be expected to be in much better condition, there are several factors that have contributed to its advanced state of decay and that work against its continuous use and preservation.

The loss of original characteristic features, such as the trim, roof, cornice and verandah significantly detracts from the cultural heritage value of the home. Many of these features have been removed, or replaced by unsympathetic or in some cases, failing modern equivalents. These features include the following:

- Many of the original diagnostic decorative features, such as the verandah, original roofing and cornice details have been removed.
- On the front elevation above the window trim is a horizontal line of wood blocks in the place of fieldstone. This indicates that there was probably a verandah along the front elevation at one point. It is also possible that the verandah and missing front step were never installed. Tax law of the time required that property taxes were only to be paid on finished homes, by leaving these elements incomplete the owner could avoid paying taxes on the structure.
- Most of the masonry, laid in the Scottish style mortar technique, with local fieldstone and locally produced lime mortar is original. There are off-colour patches where inexpert attempts to fix spalling stone has been attempted with unsympathetic materials.
- The roof, soffits, eaves, eaves troughs and cornice have recently been removed or replaced, although they appear to be failing due to neglect.
- There are two winged additions on the rear elevation, a "summer kitchen" addition off of the main kitchen and a small storage space off of the summer kitchen addition. These are both clad in plastic siding, although they would have originally have been clad in wood siding.
- The 8/6 wood windows would have been installed to more closely match the original windows, and are notably different than the 2/2 windows that appear today. This supports the interpretation that the 2/2 windows are not original.
- The small 1/1 kitchen window appears to have been a later addition. Different mortar can be seen around the smallest window where stone had been removed and replaced when the window was installed.
- What would traditionally be the parlour has been converted into a bathroom.

Secondly, the subject building has unfortunately been left empty for a significant amount of time. The building has been left unheated during the winter months and is improperly ventilated. Such exposure to the elements has led to extensive moisture damage throughout the majority of the structure. This long term neglect and disuse has accelerated the decay process, and has negatively affected the condition of the heritage property. These elements include the following:

- The masonry is in poor condition in particular the at north elevation. The underlying secondary brick wall is exposed in several places, and is also deteriorating. Like the South elevation, the masonry is notably less coursed and regular and the windows are asymmetrical.
- Lathe and plaster walls intact in some places, but severely water damaged in others.
- Summer kitchen and main kitchen in very poor condition; both have been unsympathetically altered.
- Wide pine, possibly original, flooring in upper level is water damaged save for a few sections.
- Upper level walls and ceilings are severely water damaged.
- Although it was not possible to enter the attic area, it is evident there is persistent moisture penetration through the metal roof. Mould is present throughout the structure.
- First floor dining room floor had puckered; the entire structure was slanting inwards.
- Although it was not possible to enter the basement, as the stairs were rotted to the point where they were unsafe, observations were made from the ground floor looking down the basement stairwell.
- The basement walls and concrete floor appeared very wet, but not flooded. A large crack throughout the poured cement could be seen from the top of the stairs.
- Newer metal support post installed in the basement where the wooden floor beams were sagging is evidence of some wood post and beam substructural instability.
- The rubble stone foundation walls require extensive repair.

There are several indications that the subject building, while well-crafted, was not built to the same standard as many of the other buildings of its time. These include the following features:

- Brick lintels on the front elevation and wood lintels on the side elevations indicate that the builder could not afford, or was unwilling to pay for higher quality materials.
- Red brick trim is common in York County and the more desirable limestone lintels would have had to have been imported from Kingston. Farmers who could afford to have the smooth limestone imported would, but those who could not would use the local red brick.
- The use of wood on the exterior masonry has contributed to the moisture damage and long term decay of the building envelope. It is evident from the quality of the original building materials that the masonry was not as good as it could have been.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

In consideration of the strategic priorities related to Vaughan Vision 2020, the report will provide:

- **STRATEGIC GOAL:**  
Service Excellence - Providing service excellence to citizens.
- **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:**  
Preserve our heritage and support diversity, arts and culture.

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council, and the necessary resources to implement this program have been allocated and approved.

### **Regional Implications**

N/A

### **Conclusion**

The property owner is requesting consideration to demolish all structures located at 12000 Highway 27, City of Vaughan. The property is not designated under the Ontario Heritage Act, but is identified as a Registered property of potential heritage interest. While the subject building is a representative example of a small 1 ½ storey fieldstone Ontario Georgian farmhouse, there are several factors that have contributed to the advanced state of decay and that work against the continuous use and preservation of the building. These factors include the loss of original characteristic features, the extent of time that the building has been left empty, unheated and improperly ventilated, the need for extensive foundation repairs, and uncertainties regarding the overall structural stability and safety of the site. Long-term neglect and disuse has accelerated the decay process, and has negatively affected the condition and long term viability of the property.

### **Attachments**

1. Photographs of 12000 Highway 27

### **Report Prepared By**

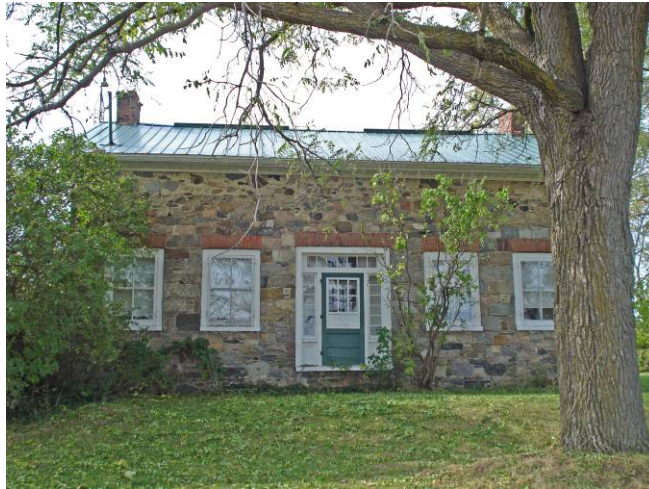
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Respectfully submitted,

John Mifsud  
Chair, Heritage Vaughan Committee



**Figure 1 Southeast Corner of 12000 Highway 27, As Viewed from the Laneway**



**Figure 2 Front Elevation of 12000 Highway 27**



**Figure 3 Rear Elevation of 12000 Highway 27**





**Figure 4 Northern Side Elevation of 12000 Highway 27**



**Figure 5 Southern Side Elevation of 12000 Highway 27**



**Figure 6 Secondary Stone Masonry Wall Exposed on the Southern Side Elevation**



**Figure 7 Exposed Lathe and Plaster on First Floor, Severely Water Damaged**



**Figure 8 Upper Floor Water Damage, Through Attic and Down Walls**



**Figure 9 Large Crack in Basement Poured Concrete Floor, Recent Metal Support Post**





**Figure 10 Spalling chimney with little remaining mortar, held together with chicken wire.**



**Figure 11 Failing stone masonry foundation.**