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June 26, 2001

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

Re: By-Law #2001-150 – To Designate Property as being of  
Historic and/or Architectural Value or Interest  
12 Buttonville Crescent West - The William Morrison House  
and Cobblers Cottage

This will advise that Council at its meeting held on June 12, 2001 passed By-law 2001-150, to designate "The William Morrison House and Cobblers Cottage", 12 Buttonville Crescent West, as being of historic and/or architectural value or interest.

A registered copy of the by-law is attached for your information.

Yours truly,

  
Sheila Birrell  
Town Clerk

Encl.

SB/jik

c: The Ontario Heritage Foundation  
Mr. R. Hutcheson, Heritage Planner

✓  
Sh.  
July 11/01





## 2001-150

A by-law to designate a certain property as being of  
Historic and/or Architectural Value or Interest  
The William Morrison House and Cobblers Cottage

WHEREAS Pursuant to Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, the council of a municipality is authorized to enact by-laws to designate a real property, including all the buildings and structures thereon, to be of historic and/or architectural value or interest;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Markham has caused to be served on the owner of the lands and premises at:



and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, notice of intention to designate The William Morrison House and Cobblers Cottage, located at 12 Buttonville Crescent West, Markham, and has caused such notice of intention to be published once in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality;


AND WHEREAS the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule "B" attached hereto and forming part of this by-law;

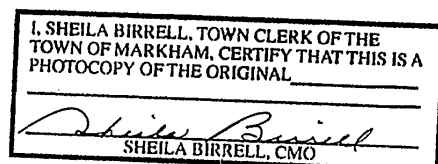
NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWN OF MARKHAM HEREBY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. THAT the following real property, more particularly described in Schedule "A" attached hereto and forming part of this by-law is hereby designated as being of historic and/or architectural value or interest:  
  
The William Morrison House and Cobblers Cottage  
12 Buttonville Crescent West  
Town of Markham  
The Regional Municipality of York
2. THAT the Town Solicitor is hereby authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule "A" attached hereto in the property Land Registry Office.

READ A FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD TIME AND PASSED THIS  
12<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JUNE, 2001.

  
SHEILA BIRRELL  
TOWN CLERK

  
DON COUSENS  
MAYOR



## **SCHEDULE 'A' TO BY-LAW 2001-150**

In the Town of Markham in the Regional Municipality of York, property description  
as follows:

PART LOT 14, CON. 3 *as in R 374473*  
TOWN OF MARKHAM  
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

## SCHEDULE 'B' TO BY-LAW 2001-150

### STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

The William Morrison House and Cobblers Cottage are recommended for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act because of their historical, architectural and contextual significance.

#### Historical Reasons

The property at 12 Buttonville Crescent West contains two significant vernacular historic buildings: the William Morrison House, built c.1840 and the Cobblers Cottage, built 1848. The homes are among the oldest surviving residences built in the hamlet of Buttonville.

#### History of Settlement of Buttonville

Buttonville was part of the lands originally settled by Germans who were led to Markham Township in 1794 by William Berczy (1748-1813). Seven Berczy settlers were assigned lots along the 4<sup>th</sup> Line (Woodbine Avenue) in Lots 11 through 15: George Longhorns (Lot 12, Concession 3), Ulson (Lot 13, Concession 3), Schmidt (Lot 14, Concession 3), Daniel Tierce (Lot 11, Concession 4), Schutze (Lot 13, Concession 4), Schultze (Lot 14, Concession 4) and Burhmester (Lot 15, Concession 4). Only the Schutze family, through marriage of Captain George Schutze's daughter Mary Anne to John Stiver (1795-1879) continued in the area into the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

Two families founded the hamlet of Buttonville, the Willcocks-Baldwin family and the Button family. They acquired land from the original Berczy settlers in the 1800's. John Button (1772-1861) purchased lots from Johann Schultz, Johann Buhrmester and Johann Ulson in 1808, 1809 and later. Lot 15, Concession 3 was acquired as a Clergy Reserve.

William Willcocks, bought Lot 14, Concession 3, from Franz Schmidt in 1804, and acquired Lot 15 as well. Shortly thereafter, he established a sawmill and a house on the south bank of the Rouge River, on the west side of Woodbine Avenue. Willcocks, was a magistrate residing in York (Toronto). He was York's first postmaster and was the Mayor of Cork, Ireland in 1792-95. As an absentee landlord, Willcocks had his Irish friend, Captain John Large, run the operation at Millbrook, the name given to Willcocks' property.

With declining timber reserves and the consequent need for diversification, it was the custom to have saw and grist mills incorporated in the same building or placed near to one another. By 1842, Willcock's grandson, the Honourable Robert Baldwin, who had inherited the lands on the west side of Woodbine Avenue, had a frame grist mill constructed on the opposite bank of the river, presumably from lumber sawn at the sawmill. Local histories refer to it as the Venice Grist Mill. Robert Baldwin is remembered as the leader of the Upper Canadian Reformers, who with Louis Lafontaine, leader of the Reformers in Lower Canada, established responsible government in Canada.

Though it is certain that the Baldwins never actually lived on the property, it is known through their correspondence that they did come from Toronto to stay in the area from time to time.

With a thriving grist mill and an economic boom underway in Canada, Baldwin and Button decided to pursue a subdivision project on either side of Woodbine Avenue. John Button, and William Morrison, possibly an associate of Baldwin's, co-operated in laying out a plan for a hamlet to be called "Millbrook". The lots were to be laid out in two tiers with the most desirable lots fronting onto Woodbine Avenue (Then called Willcocks Street in honour of Baldwin's grandfather), and secondary lots fronting onto two crescents.

In August 1842, Button wrote Baldwin the following letter regarding a change in lot prices:

*"Sir I send you a few lines concerning our village lots instead of asking 50 dollars for the front lots a piece and 40 for the reserve lots...if you think proper we will put the front lots at 45 or 40 and the reserve lots at 35 or 30..."*

While they were planning on sales in 1843, the first lot sold was to Christopher Collins, a miller, in 1845 (Baldwin's property). Button sold the next lot in 1848.

In March 1849, Button and William Morrison urged Baldwin to use his influence in getting a post office for Millbrook. When the post office did open in 1850, however, it was given the name Buttonville, most likely because a Millbrook post office in Cavan Township, near Peterborough, was already in business. William Morrison earned the distinction of becoming the first village post master (despite his recorded inability to read or write),

Buttonville prospered in the following decades. Its population climbed from about 50 in 1857 to 87 in 1870 to a peak of 200 in 1881. In 1892, when there were about 155 residents, Buttonville boasted: a flour mill (the grist mill), a combination post office and general store, another general store, the brick Methodist church, the brick St. John's Lutheran Church, (under construction), a carriage shop, two blacksmith's shops, a boot and shoe shop and an apiary.

Unfortunately, new technologies and shifts in economic trends brought about a decline in the population from about 1890 onwards to a low of 50 people in 1907. The population would remain stable for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, but would not approach its 1881 high-point until new residential subdivision development began in the vicinity over 100 years later.

#### Morrison House

The William Morrison House sits today on its original site at 12 Buttonville Crescent West. It is believed to have been built c.1840 and the earliest recorded owner was William Morrison who is documented as purchasing the property from the Hon. Robert Baldwin in 1852. It is believed that the house may have, at one time, been a millworker's cottage.

In the Census of 1851, William Morrison is listed as a farmer, aged 44 living on Lot 14, Concession 3 in a one storey frame house with his wife Eliza Ann, and children: Phoebe Ann, aged 19; George, aged 15; Edwin, aged 13; Electia, aged 9; Christopher, aged 6; William, aged 3; and Mary aged 1.

In 1859 the property was sold by Morrison to John Fierheller for £50. Three months later, Fierheller sold the property to Henry Hart for £52.10.0. Hart is listed in the 1861 Directory as a Labourer by trade. In the 1861 Census, Hart is listed as being 41 years of age, living in a frame

1 ½ storey house with his wife Sarah, aged 25 and children Peter, aged 11; Frances, aged 7; Mary, aged 5; Erskine, aged 3; Edgar, aged 2; and John, less than 1 year old. The family were all born in Canada West and were listed as being members of the Wesleyan Methodist faith.

There is no record of the Hart family in Markham Township in the 1871 Census. In 1876, Henry Hart sold the property to John Reecken for \$200. In 1885, Reecken sold the property to Robert Mackrell for \$250. Later, the house was occupied by the Nicholls family.

In recent years the Morrison House was purchased by the [REDACTED] family, who are currently undertaking a restoration of the home.

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### Cobblers Cottage

Cobblers Cottage, built c.1848 is another of Buttonville's earliest dwellings. Until it was relocated in the 1980s, the house was originally located one village lot to the east, across Buttonville Crescent West where it fronted onto Woodbine Avenue.

The property on which the house originally stood was the first village lot sold in Buttonville, when Christopher Collins, a miller purchased the property from Robert Baldwin in 1845 (registered 1846) for £17.10.0. It is believed that the house dates from Collin's ownership of the property. The dwelling may have originally served as Collin's home, or may have been rented to mill workers.

In 1851, the property was sold by Collins to John Hunter for £100. The increase in land value by £83.00 is a good indication that the house was built during Collins' ownership of the property. It is not known whether Collins ever resided on the property, however, Hunter is listed as residing on Lot 14, Concession 3 in Roswell's Directory of Toronto and County of York for 1850-51. The Hunter's were presumably residing in the Buttonville vicinity prior to the sale as in the 1851 Census they are listed as residing in a one storey log home on Lot 14, Concession 4. John is listed as a farmer, aged 44. His wife is listed as Mary Ann (Hunt) aged 37. Their seven children are listed as follows: William, aged 16; John, aged 13; Ann Amelia, aged 8; Mary, aged 7; Joseph E, aged 5; Christopher, aged 3 and Jane Elizabeth, aged 1. The Hunters had one servant living with them, a Mary J. Armstrong, aged 19, who was born in Ireland. By the time of the 1861 Census, the Hunters are shown as residing on the opposite side of Woodbine Avenue, this time in a brick house. It is possible that they rented the house on the west side of Woodbine Avenue to tenants. Given the historic name of the house "Cobblers Cottage", it is possible that an early tenant was shoemaker James Davidson, a native of Scotland, aged 32, who is listed as residing in a frame, 1½ storey house on Lot 14, Concession 3 in the 1861 Census.

In 1867, the property was sold by Hunter to Daniel Quantz for \$200. It is believed that Quantz purchased the property for his son, Alfred Quantz, who is shown in the 1871 Census as a 33 year old carpenter residing in the house with his wife Amelia (Moore) and children Frederick, Ernest and Walter. Both Alfred and Amelia were born in Ontario, however Alfred was of German origin, whereas Amelia was of Irish origin.

The house stood virtually unaltered for over a century until its relocation in 1986 to the lot immediately on the opposite side of Buttonville Crescent West to make way for the relocation of the Alexander Brown House.

### Architectural Reasons

#### Morrison House

The Morrison House, which is currently undergoing restoration, is a good example of a vernacular worker's cottage constructed in the middle part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Large beams and planks used in its construction are a testament to the scale of the trees that were once in the vicinity. Architecturally the house is significant as a rare example of early industrial (mill-workers) housing.

The Morrison House is one 1½ storeys in height with a three bay facade, a central doorway and returned eaves. The house would have originally been clad in clapboard, which was covered with insulbrick in about the 1940s. The roof of the house features two paired dormers which were added at some point in the 1980s or 90s.

Although of relatively modest scale, the end gables of the house feature returned eaves. The south side elevation has two windows on the lower level and a single widow in the gable. On the north elevation, the only window is in the gable.

The current windows are of a 1/1 pane division. Originally, they were most likely of a 6/6 pane division with true divided lights and real muntin bars.

The door surround which is currently undergoing restoration likely originally featured plain pilasters at either side with a simple pediment above.

It is probable that the house had at least one, if not two, gable end chimneys.

The current modern door is a later addition. Originally the house probably had a solid four or six panelled door.

An unusual feature with respect to the house is its strange alignment at the north-east corner of the lot. This may indicate that the house was built prior to the subdivision of the village lots in the 1840s.

### Cobblers Cottage

Cobbler's Cottage, which is currently undergoing restoration, is a good example of a vernacular workers cottage constructed in the middle part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Large beams and planks used in its construction are a testament to the scale of the trees that were once in the vicinity. Architecturally, the house is significant as a rare example of early rural hamlet housing.

The house features an asymmetrical three bay façade with an off centre doorway flanked by 2/2 windows. The door surround is simple and unadorned. The siding on the house is a narrow clapboard, finished with corner boards. Local history records that the house remained unpainted until 1889 and was then painted with whitewash.

The existing 2/2 windows are likely replacement of original multi-pane windows.

Historical photographs taken at the turn of the century appear to show that the house at one time had a full width veranda across the front facade.

Historical photographs show that the house had one gable-end chimney on the south side of the house. It is possible that the house also had a north end chimney.

The house features a typical, early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, solid wood front door.

### Contextual Reasons

The William Morrison House and Cobblers Cottage exhibit a strong contextual significance as important elements of the historic hamlet of Buttonville. Together with the other frame houses in the vicinity, the house provides a sense of the former rural hamlet of Buttonville. The structure is an important contributor to the Buttonville Heritage Conservation District Study Area.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

The owners of the property have agreed to allow the Town of Markham to designate the William Morrison House and Cobblers Cottage under the Ontario Heritage Act and register such title against the title of the lands.