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21 -07- 2004

IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, R.S.O.  
1990, CHAPTER O.18;

AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LAND AND PREMISES IN CON 4 PT LOT 31,  
KNOWN MUNICIPALLY AS 3010 19TH AVENUE, TOWN OF MARKHAM, IN  
THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

TO: Ontario Heritage Foundation  
10 Adelaide Street East  
Toronto, ON M5C 1J3  
Attn: Catherine Axford, Chairman's Executive Assistant

TAKE NOTICE THAT the Council of The Corporation of the Town  
of Markham intends to designate the property, including land and  
building, known municipally as 3010 19th Avenue, Markham, as a  
property of architectural and/or historic interest or value under Part  
1V of The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18.

A Statement of the Reasons for the Proposed Designation of  
Schoolhouse No. 7, is attached.

NOTICE OF OBJECTION to the designation may be served on the  
Town Clerk within thirty (30) days, or before 4:30 p.m. on the 19th  
day of August 2004.

Sheila Birrell, Town Clerk  
The Town of Markham  
101 Town Centre Boulevard  
Markham, ON L3R 9W3

July 20, 2004

## **STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DESIGNATION**

The Schoolhouse, located at 3010 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, is recommended for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act because of its historical, architectural and contextual significance.

### **Historical Reasons**

The first recorded schoolhouse serving School Section No. 7 was located on Lot 30, Concession 4, at the south east corner of present day Woodbine and 19<sup>th</sup> Avenues. This school, built on the farm of Richard Lewis, appears on the McPhillips map of 1853-54 and also on a map of Markham Township school sections dated 1855. School section No. 7 served the community of northern Victoria Square and also Gormley's Corners, a crossroads hamlet named for James Gormley in 1854. Interestingly, Gormley was an early teacher at S.S. No. 7, and became Gormley's first Post Master, as well as a store-keeper and auctioneer.

The school was built in the midst of a thriving community of Pennsylvania-Germans of the Tunker faith. In early lists of Common Schools in Markham Township, no school is recorded at this particular crossroads, but in the 1830s there were schools in the vicinity in the communities of Almira and Victoria Square that may have served some of the local population. Historical research on Markham's Pennsylvania German Tunkers has suggested that this group of people probably had their own system of education prior to the formal establishment of Common Schools.

By 1860, the location of the schoolhouse serving School Section No. 7 had changed to the south west corner of the John Steckley farm on Lot 31, Concession 4, on the north side of 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A quarter acre parcel was purchased by the Trustees of S.S. No. 7 from Christian Steckley in 1869. It is not known why the location was changed. In 1874, an additional quarter acre was purchased to expand the school site. In 1902, the present brick schoolhouse was constructed to replace an earlier building. Another classroom, a flat-roofed frame wing, was added after the Second World War.

Lot 31, Concession 4 (the site of the school house at 3010 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue) was originally patented by Elizabeth Fisher (Oberholtzer), wife of the late Jacob Fisher. (It appears that Jacob Fisher passed away before his settlement duties were complete and that Elizabeth received the patent to the full 200 acres in Dec. of 1804.)

In 1796, it appears that the families of the Oberholtzers, Cobers, Fishers and Steckleys may have traveled together from Somerset County Pennsylvania, in Conestoga wagons, as part of a group of 22 people. They stopped in Niagara Falls for a time and then traveled on to settle in Markham and Vaughan Townships. They were related through marriage and were part of the early group of Pennsylvania German Tunkers or River Brethren (an Anabaptist sect related to the Mennonite faith) who settled in Markham Township at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Although Christian Steckley received a location ticket to Lot 28, Concession 10, for which he received the patent in 1805, the Berczy Census of 1803 lists Steckley with his wife Magdalena and their six children as living on Lot 31, Concession 4. It is possible that Elizabeth Fisher resided with her parents in Vaughan for a time as she is not listed as residing here. From 1803 to 1843 Steckley also leased the land south of here, Lot 30, Concession 4, from the Crown. In 1816 Lot 31 was sold to Christian Steckley Jr., his oldest son, for 500 pounds.

By 1840 the full 200 acres was willed to John Steckley, the eldest son. After John's death in 1865, his wife, Nancy, sold the East ½ 100 acres to James Gormley for \$8000. James Gormley, an Irishman, married Margaret Steckley, whom he met while teaching at S.S. No. 7.

The west part of Lot 31 was subsequently divided into smaller lots and passed down through the Steckley daughters who married into the Eyer, Doner and Wideman families. In 1874, John Doner purchased the west 74 acres of Lot 31 from John Eyer. This property wrapped around the quarter acre school site sold by Christian Steckley to the Trustees in 1869. As noted earlier, the Trustees purchased an additional quarter acre in 1874, this time from John Doner and his wife.

#### Architectural Reasons

The Schoolhouse located at 3010 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a typical example of the classic one-room schoolhouse form. The pointed-arch windows on the front add a touch of Gothic Revival style to an otherwise utilitarian structure. Instead of the typical separate girls and boys entrances seen on many examples of rural schools, S.S. No.7 has a central door on its front façade, containing comparatively modern double doors. Also, the belfry one would expect to see on a rural school is absent, but may have existed at one time. The large, upright rectangular window openings on the sidewalls have been partially infilled and reglazed, but in their original form would have allowed much light and fresh air to enter the classroom.

Although the structure has been altered for residential use, much of its original form and structure are intact. The single storey school is rectangular in plan and 3 bays across by 3 bays deep. The building was constructed of red brick in a common bond and is set on a foundation of rough cut fieldstone arranged in irregular courses. All the window openings have moulded wood brickmoulds, radiating brick voussoirs, and lugsills. The easternmost window on the south wall has been converted to a door. The gable roof is of a medium

pitch with plain projecting eaves and verges. There is a single-stack brick chimney at the east gable end. The front entrance is centrally located on the gable end and has rectangular double leaf doors. The concrete stoop at the entrance has a gabled hood supported by simple brackets. There is a basement entrance at the rear of the building, which is enclosed with a small gable roofed brick cellarway.

This particular one room school building is unusual in that it exhibits a more reserved style than other remaining examples in Markham. This is a reflection of the changing tastes at the turn of the century towards simplicity in architectural form. The datestone, indicating the year 1902, is located above the front entrance.

#### Contextual Reasons

Schoolhouse #7 exhibits contextual significance for its association with the historic agricultural community surrounding the hamlets of Gormley and Victoria Square. The one room schoolhouse supported the educational needs of children living on the farms in this vicinity for many generations, until the advent of central schools and bussing in the 1960s.

#### Significant Heritage Attributes:

1. Rectangular plan;
2. Red brick walls with radiating voussoirs over openings;
3. Fieldstone foundation;
4. Poured concrete front stoop with concrete railings;
5. Datestone in front gable;
6. Front door opening for double leaf door;
7. Gable roofed, bracketed canopy over front door, with its wooden tongue and groove gable wall siding and wooden brackets, soffits and fascias;
8. Front Gothic Revival window openings with multipaned wood sash;
9. Side window openings with tall, upright rectangular form;
10. Projecting window sills;
11. Gable roof with projecting eaves, wood soffits and fascias, and bedmould;
12. Single stack brick chimney;
13. Rear cellarway cover with its brick walls and gable roof.