



An agency of the Government of Ontario



Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

This document was retrieved from the Ontario Heritage Act Register, which is accessible through the website of the Ontario Heritage Trust at **[www.heritagetrust.on.ca](http://www.heritagetrust.on.ca)**.

---

Ce document est tiré du registre aux fins de la *Loi sur le patrimoine de l'Ontario*, accessible à partir du site Web de la Fiducie du patrimoine ontarien sur **[www.heritagetrust.on.ca](http://www.heritagetrust.on.ca)**.



**RECEIVED**

CORPORATE SERVICES COMMISSION  
*Clerk's Department*

**MAY 24 2001**

REGISTERED MAIL

**CONSERVATION REVIEW  
BOARD**

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

AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LAND AND PREMISES, KNOWN MUNICIPALLY AS  
5884 16<sup>th</sup> AVENUE, TOWN OF MARKHAM, IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

TO: The Ontario Heritage Foundation  
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Recreation  
400 University Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, Ontario  
M7A 2R9  
Attention: Ms. Rita Caldarone

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 5884 16<sup>th</sup> 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 The Wismer-Lunau House is attached.

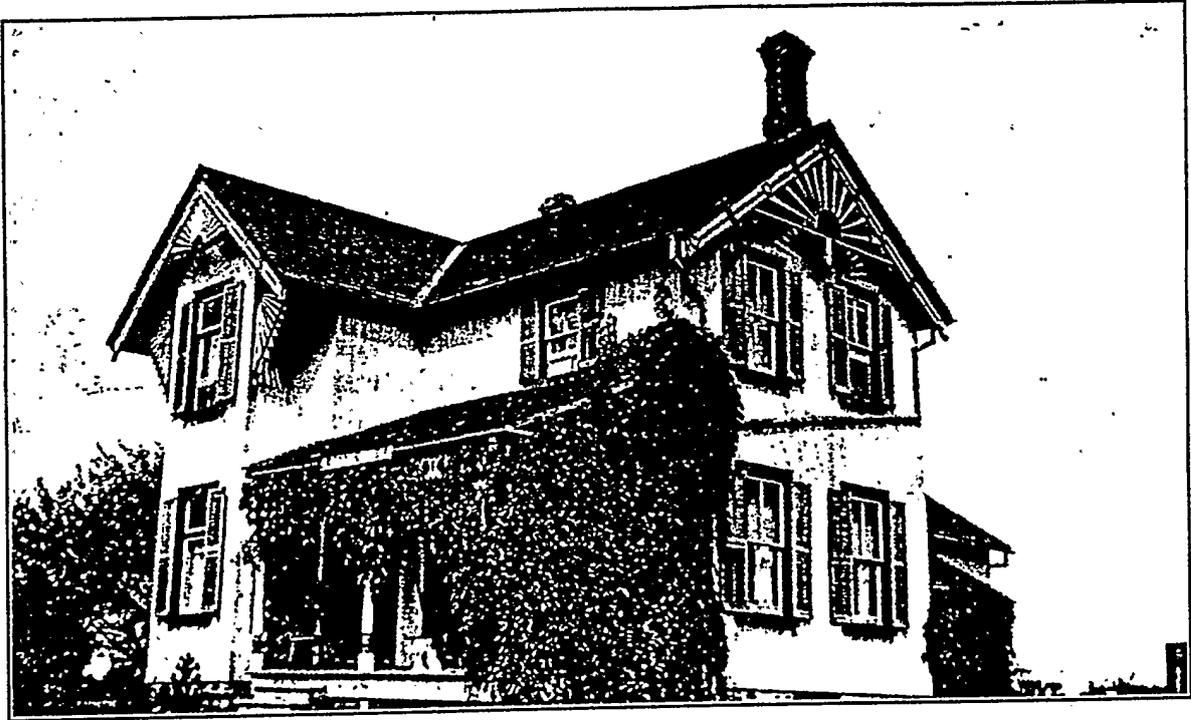
NOTICE OF OBJECTION to the designation may be served on the Town Clerk within thirty (30) days, or before 4:30 p.m. on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of June, 2001.

Town Clerk  
The Corporation of the Town of Markham  
101 Town Centre Boulevard  
Markham, Ontario L3R 9W3

May 22, 2001



HERITAGE DESIGNATION PROPOSAL



**THE WISMER-LUNAU HOUSE**

5884 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue,  
Markham Heritage Estates  
Part lot 16, Concession 7  
Community of Mount Joy

Prepared For: Heritage Markham

Prepared By: Michael Seaman  
Planner: Heritage and  
Conservation

## STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

The Wismer-Lunau House is recommended for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act because of its historical, architectural and contextual significance.

### HISTORICAL REASONS

The house at 5884 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue was built in 1899 by Jessie Hoover Raymer for Mr. and Mrs. Elijah Wismer of Mount Joy.

Jessie Hoover Raymer (1857-1952), the builder of the house was the fifth child of Christian Raymer (1825-1885) and Nancy Hoover. He was the great grandson of the Pennsylvania German Mennonite, Peter Reesor, who settled in Markham Township in the early 1800s. Jessie Raymer was born in Pickering Township and became a well known carpenter in Pickering and Markham Townships. He was married in 1879 to Martha Connor, with whom he had five children and eventually moved to Vancouver, British Columbia, where he died in 1952.

Elijah Wismer was the son of David Wismer Jr. and Mary Toman. David Wismer Jr. was born in 1807, one year after his father David Wismer, a Pennsylvania German Mennonite, had come to Canada from Pennsylvania, where he settled on a 500 acre farm.

Elijah Wismer was born in Markham in 1848. According to the 1881 Census, Elijah was a farmer, aged 33 on the property at Lot 16, Concession 7e in that year with his wife, Susannah (Strickler) aged 28 and their children Charles W. aged 8 and Ella, aged 5. Also living on the property was Ellen Caley, an Irish servant of the Wismer family.

Susannah Wismer was the daughter of Daniel and Christine Byer Strickler, whose Quaker ancestors came from Berne, Switzerland. They had arrived in North America from Holland in 1708 with a number of Palatinate Germans under the leadership of Conrad and Jacob Wismer. Initially settling in Pennsylvania, the family soon moved to Markham.

The Wismers (in Sarah's name) had purchased part of the east ½ of the property in 1878 from Daniel Strickler for \$2000. Strickler had began acquiring property on Lot 16, Concession 7 in 1849, when he purchased 50 acres from Alexander Hunter. Hunter in turn had obtained the Crown patent for the property in 1845.

In 1891, Elijah purchased a further 50 acres of the West ½ of the East ½ from Mary Wilson. It is presumed that Wismer, then aged 43, was acquiring the parcel to both establish their farm and plan for their retirement.

In 1899, the Wismers had an elaborate new frame house built in the then popular Queen Anne Style near the community of Mount Joy.

Elijah Wismer lived for over 20 years in this home, before passing on Christmas Day 1922, at the age of 75 at the home of his son in Toronto. According to his obituary, he had been confined to bed with an arthritic illness for much of the last 10 years of his life. Two years previous

however, he was able to celebrate along side his wife, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their marriage. By all accounts this was an eventful family reunion of the descendants of this early Markham Pioneer family, and was probably held at the homestead at 5884 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. His wife, Susannah passed away ten years later in 1935, when she was in her 82<sup>nd</sup> year. According to her obituary, Susannah Wismer was an active traveller in her later years, travelling five times across the continent to visit and reside with her children, who had settled in Alberta and the United States.

After the passing of the Wismer's, the farm on Lot 16, Concession 7, with its large bank barn and elaborate Queen Anne style house known as "Bonnie View", was acquired by the Lunau family, who themselves were descended from Joachim Lunau, a Markham Pioneer and Berczy settler. Despite the adversity of having a severe disability, diabetes, The Lunau's son, John, born in 1930, went on to become one of Markham's most well known citizens. In fact, in his later years he was affectionately known as "Mr. Markham" for his work in preserving and recording the history of the community.

From his boyhood years, John Lunau collected and recorded the history of the community from his home at "Bonnie View". He established his own personal museum in the back yard in a reconstructed Ice Cream parlour, and in the late 1960s was the driving force behind the establishment of the Markham Historical Society, of which he was first president and the Markham Museum, for which he was curator for almost two decades. From 1975 until 1987, John Lunau served as historical advisor to Heritage Markham (L.A.C.A.C.). In the late 1980s, John Lunau helped to establish Canada's first ever heritage subdivision for relocated heritage homes, when he and his mother Aileen sold a large portion of their property to the Town of Markham in order to establish the Markham Heritage Estates subdivision. His passion for history and heritage can be seen as a primary reason why Markham, despite its extensive growth over the past 50 years, has always retained a strong sense of its history and a desire to preserve its heritage.

John Lunau was also extensively involved with the Markham Fair, and was a long time trainer of the NHL Old-timers hockey team.

John Lunau passed away in 1994, after helping to plan the Markham Bicentennial Celebrations. His mother, Aileen (Lewis) Lunau, continued to live on the property until her death in her 92<sup>nd</sup> year, in 1999.

When the Lunau property became available for sale in 2000, the Town of Markham purchased the remaining Lunau parcel including the "Bonnie View" house in order to expand the Markham Heritage Estates Subdivision. The Bonnie View house, which is the subject of this designation report, is intended to be sold to a new purchaser, and restored to its original appearance, according to the guidelines of the Markham Heritage Estates Subdivision.

#### ARCHITECTURAL REASONS

The Wismer-Lunau house or "Bonnie View" is an excellent example of a wood frame, Queen Anne Styled farm dwelling, constructed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Although altered in recent years, much of the original fabric of the structure remains.

The house, built in 1899, stands two storeys in height in an L-Shaped plan with a box bay to the left of the front facade.

An outstanding feature of the house is its sunburst pattern trim, and Queen Anne Style dentile work in the front and east side gables. According to early 20<sup>th</sup> Century photographs, most of this remains from the time that the house was built. In the historical photographs, the sunburst pattern and dentiles were highlighted with alternate dark and light paints. The detailing on the east side, while still elaborate, is slightly different from the detailing on the front elevation. Colour analysis of the existing wood detailing should reveal the colour pattern used on the house.

Until 1939, the house featured a veranda on the front of the house. This veranda was one of the most elaborate in Markham, with circle detailing, elaborate turned posts and brackets, set above a wooden base, which was decorated with lattice. Although the veranda is now gone, a wooden post survives in the basement as a supporting beam. Any restoration of the house could use this post to accurately replicate the original veranda. As with the wooden trim, the veranda was highlighted with alternate dark and light paint colours. Colour analysis of the remaining porch post should give some indication of the original colour scheme of the house. An interesting feature of the porch, as outlined in historic photographs, is the house name "Bonnie View" set in the centre.

In 1939, the porch was removed and an addition constructed in its place. It is believed that the original front door was simply moved forward, and remains today.

The windows on the front box bay are 1/1 windows with a rose coloured transom window. The remainder of the windows on the house are 2/2, double hung. These appear in 3 different sizes. Large - on the lower elevations, Medium - on the upper east side elevation, and Small - on the upper west elevation, and immediately above the porch.

All windows on the front and side elevations feature shutters, which were likely originally painted shutter green.

Although removed, the house originally featured gable end chimneys, built of red brick, with corbelled tops.

The house was originally clad in vertical, tongue and groove board, which was popular for Markham homes at the turn of the century period. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the house was clad in vinyl siding. It is believed that the original wood siding, still exists beneath the vinyl siding.

The house features a sturdy foundation, made of local brown fieldstone.

In about the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, a large addition was constructed (or enlarged) at the rear of the dwelling.

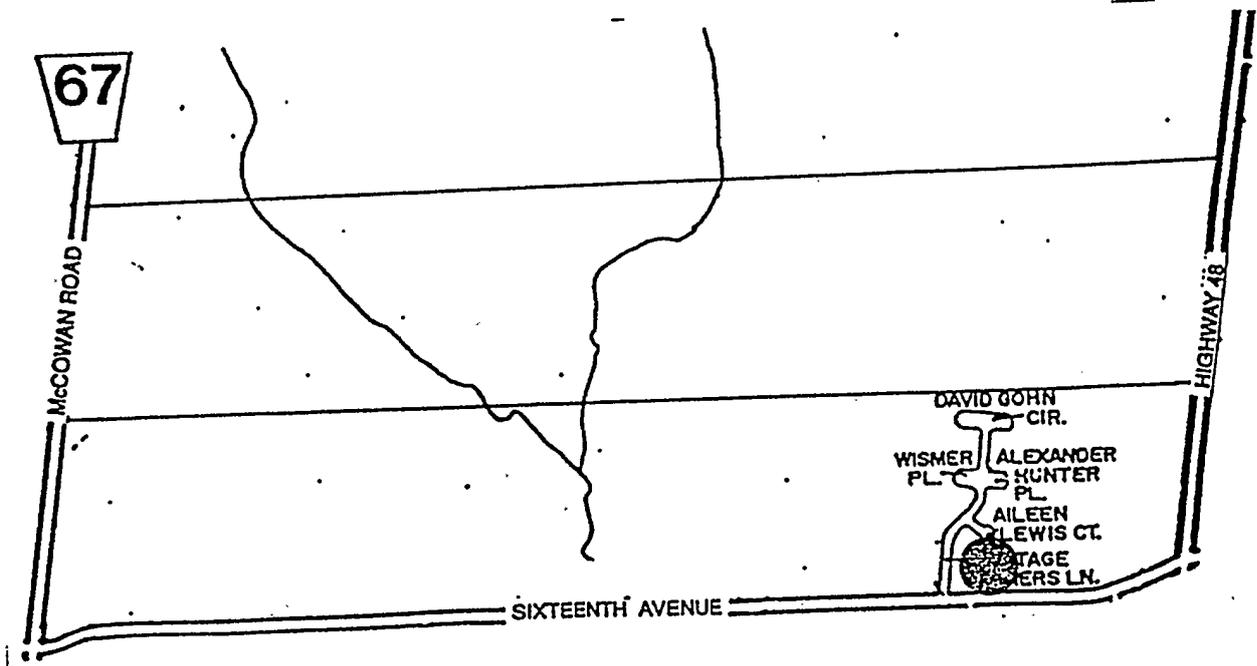
### CONTEXTUAL REASONS

The Wismer-Lunau House is of contextual significance as an important heritage landmark at the northern entrance to the Markham Village Heritage Conservation District and at the gateway to the Markham Heritage Estates subdivision.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Wismer-Lunau House is owned by the Town of Markham. Since the Town intends to sell the Lunau House to individuals who will restore it, the designation of the house will help the Town to ensure the restoration is carried out according to approved heritage principles, and will enable the future owners to draw upon financial assistance programs which are available from the Town and the Province to designated property owners.

### SITE LOCATION



**BUILDING LOCATION**  
5884 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue

## IDENTIFICATION

Property: The Wismer-Lunau House  
5884 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Legal Description: Lot 16, Concession 9, Markham

Owner: Town of Markham

Date of Construction: c.1899

Style of Architecture: Queen Anne

Type of Structure: Farm Residence

Number of Storeys: 2

Exterior Wall Material: Originally vertical wood siding

Special Features: Sunburst pattern and Queen Anne ornamentation  
Rose coloured transom windows  
Louvered wood shutters  
2/2 windows, original front door  
Unusual box bay feature