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2003

February 24, 2003

Catholic Cemeteries - Archdiocese of Toronto
4950 Yonge Street, Suite 206
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K1

Attention: Executive Director

Dear Sir:

Re: By-law 2003-29 - To designate a certain property as being of
historic and/or architectural value or interest - "The Robert
Milroy House" - 7111 Reesor Road

This will advise that Council at its meeting held on January 28th, 2003,
passed By-law 2003-29, which designated the "Robert Milroy House",
7111 Reesor Road, as being of historic and/or architectural value or
interest.

A copy of the by-law, with the pertinent registration data, is attached for
your information.

Sincerely,



Sheila Birrell
Town Clerk



Encl.

SB/jik

c: The Ontario Heritage Foundation
Mr. R. Hutcheson, Manager, Heritage Planning
Mr. Michael Wren, Miller Thompson, 2500, 20 Queen Street
West, Toronto, Ontario M5H 3S1



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BY-LAW 2003-29

A by-law to designate a certain property as being of
Historic and/or Architectural Value or Interest
The Robert Milroy House

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 owners of the lands and premises at:

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Attention: Executive Director

and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, notice of intention to designate The Robert Milroy House, located at 7111 Reesor Road, 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 Robert Milroy House
7111 Reesor Road
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
28TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2003.

"Sheila Birrell"

SHEILA BIRRELL, TOWN CLERK

"Don Cousens"

DON COUSENS, MAYOR

SCHEDULE 'A' TO BY-LAW 2003-29

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

PART OF LOTS 1 AND 2, CONCESSION 10, BEING PART 1, PLAN 65R-24320
TOWN OF MARKHAM
REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

SCHEDULE 'B' TO BY-LAW 2003-29

STATEMENT OF REASONS FOR DESIGNATION

The Robert Milroy 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 7111 Reesor Road was built c.1833, with several later additions dating to the 1870's, on land that had originally been granted to Lt. Col. William Jervois on Oct. 12, 1816. Jervois's patent was rescinded Sept. 25, 1817. Richard Strange acquired a patent for the full 200 acres on Jan. 12 1833. One year later, on Jan. 24, 1834 the property is sold to Robert Milroy (various spellings exist over time i.e. Mulroy, Millroy) for 344 pounds. This property remained in the Milroy family until 1974 when it was expropriated by the Ministry of Housing for future airport lands.

Robert Milroy, b.1791 d. Nov. 18, 1854, came to Canada with his wife Anne, from Kirkcowan in Wigtown, Scotland in 1827, where they had operated a woollen mill. Their three children, a son James, b.1823 and two daughters Agnes, b.1826 and Celia accompanied them. Research indicates that the family was most likely on this property prior to them purchasing it in 1834. They may have leased it from the owner Richard Strange, at that time.

Robert Milroy built a sawmill in the late 1830's, which survived until 1924 when it was destroyed by fire. It appears that about this time the Milroy family resided in a 1-½ storey log building. The mill was constructed where the river crosses the townline on the banks of the Little Rouge at Concession 10, opposite the present site of Cedar Grove Park. The Community Lot (park) was the log yard where farmers drew their logs. This was usually well filled with logs, which were sawed for lumber during the late winter. The 10th concession had to jog east beside the millpond to reach the Scarborough Town Line (Steeles Ave.). The mill's waterwheel powered a "muley" or whipsaw. In 1846 the sawmill lands of 9 acres were sold to John Reesor (w ½ 9 acres) his son Simeon Reesor takes over the mill in 1856. The Hamlet of Cedar Grove developed out of the mills set up along the Little Rouge River.

The 1853 Assessment Roll lists Robert Milroy farming the 137-acre property with 135 acres under cultivation, owning three horses and three cattle. At this time James, his eldest son has title to the East part of 50 acres. Robert Milroy died Nov. 18, 1854 and is buried at the Cedar Grove Mennonite Cemetery with his wife Anne. By 1855 there is a significant increase in the total value of personal property, from 49 pounds to 100 pounds. This may be about the time when an addition is added onto the family home. It appears that James, the eldest son continues to reside with his mother and four siblings in the house located on this property. In 1859, the 137-acre parcel was divided into the west part 68-½ acres, which goes to John, the youngest son, who also inherits the family home. The middle part, 68 ½ acres went to Robert the middle son (1834-1862) who was married to Elizabeth Reesor. Robert Jr. died when he was 28 years old leaving his wife and year old son, also named Robert. James and Robert Jr. built new homesteads to the east.

In 1857 the Zion Presbyterian Church was constructed at the rear (east) of Lot 1, Concession 10 on land donated by James Milroy. This early frame structure was replaced in 1890 by a red brick church, which remains on site today as the Zion United Church. The extended Milroy family made up much of the early congregation of the church.

The 1861 census shows John and his wife Mary Anthony living in the house with his widowed mother Ann and two children. By 1885, John controlled the original 180 acres, which he divided again in order to set up his three sons Alexander, Robert and Arthur. Author's son, Stanley, became owner of the west part in 1952 and in 1977 he was still residing in the Milroy family home and farming the land. Descendants of this early Milroy family continued to farm this tract of land for over 150 years.

Architectural Reasons

The Robert Milroy House located at 7111 Reesor Road is an excellent example of a rural Markham Township farmhouse built c.1833 with later additions in the 1870s and early 1900s. The house represents the simple, functional tastes of the early European settlers

The Milroy House is 1-½ storeys in height with a symmetrical 3-bay façade. The windows on the house are wood; double hung of either a 1/1 or 2/2 pane division. It is probable that the windows on the original front section of the building were originally of a 6/6 pane division. The Milroy House has a stone foundation with board and batten cladding.

According to family story, at sometime in the 1870s, the eastern addition to the house was moved eastward and a new, Gothic Revival Styled 2 storey addition was built in between the two. The middle addition features a peaked gable and a verandah with turned posts and decorative brackets. The enhanced architectural detailing on this part of the house represents the changing architectural tastes in the 3rd Quarter of the 19th Century and most likely the fact that the Milroy farm had become more established and the family was able to devote more energy to decoration.

On the north side of the house, the addition features a wall dormer, which was constructed to add additional room in the second storey. It is possible that the family may have built a full verandah on the front elevation at this time, however this appears to have been removed circa 1920s when the current enclosed front porch is believed to have been added.

The original addition to the east of the c.1870s addition is a 1-storey kitchen room, typical of early Markham architecture with a verandah roof, which is a continuation of the main roof. To the east of the kitchen addition is a wood shed carriage house addition, also clad in board and batten with a decorative turned diagonal 4-paned window in the gable. The small paned windows seen in the kitchen addition and the woodshed addition provide evidence that the house at one time had multi-paned windows throughout.

To the south of the woodshed addition is a milk house, which is today used as a doghouse. As with other dairy farms in the area, it is possible that once constructed, the milk house did not provide sufficient temperature control and as a result a second milk house was built in the barn. The milk house is believed to have been built circa 1900 and is clad in narrow clapboard.

Immediately to the north of the dwelling is a small, stucco-clad outbuilding in some state of disrepair. It is possible that this building served at one time as either a residence for farm workers or as a smokehouse.

Overall, the Milroy house is an excellent example of an early Markham township farmhouse, occupied by one family for 150 years, which was extended over the years as the fortunes of the farmstead increased. The house is also an excellent example of a board and batten house which entails one of the rarer uses for wood siding on residential dwellings in the 19th Century (typically board and batten was used primarily for additions and outbuildings).

Contextual Reasons

The Robert Milroy House is of contextual significance as one of the earliest farmhouses in the southern part of the Township. Together with other houses in the vicinity, the house provides a sense of the historic agricultural tradition in the area. The house forms part of the greater community of Cedar Grove and is part of the remaining remnants of rural farmhouses that were prevalent in this area. It is a reminder of the community surrounding the Zion United Church and cemetery, located on land, which was donated by the Milroy family, Scottish Presbyterians who settled on this property. Together with the nearby Robert Milroy Jr. House, the Robert Milroy House also forms part of an historic family grouping.