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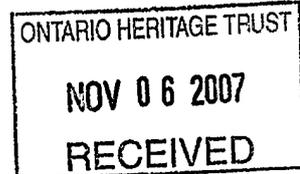


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REGISTERED MAIL

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 10137 WOODBINE AVENUE, TOWN OF MARKHAM, IN THE PROVINCE  
OF ONTARIO.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

TO: Ontario Heritage Trust  
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 10137 Woodbine Avenue, Markham,  
as a property of architectural and/or historic interest or value under  
Part IV of The Ontario Heritage Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter O.18.

A Statement of the Reasons for the Proposed Designation of  
Victoria Square Schoolhouse S.S. No. 6, 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 3<sup>rd</sup>  
day of December 2007.

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

November 1, 2007

## VICTORIA SQUARE SCHOOLHOUSE, 10137 WOODBINE AVENUE

### **Historical Background:**

The earliest known school in the crossroads community of Victoria Square was located on the east side of Woodbine Avenue, north of Elgin Mills Road. The location, Lot 26, Concession 4, was recorded in a list of *Common Schools in Markham Township*, December, 1834. The teacher was one John Peacock.

The Victoria Square school site was later moved significantly south of the hamlet, to Lot 21 at the south east corner of Woodbine Avenue and Major Mackenzie Drive. In 1847, George John Wonch, who received the Crown patent for the west half of Lot 21, Concession 4 in 1816, sold a small parcel of land to the District Council of the Home District. The size of this parcel was only 900 square feet, which was probably only as large as the building footprint of the school.

According to an 1855 map showing school sections in Markham Township, this new location placed the school at the centre of School Section No. 6, which included the area south of Elgin Mills Road all the way down to 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The second school site appears on the McPhillips map of Markham Township, 1853-54, and on Tremaine's Map of York County dated 1860.

The location of the Victoria Square School was changed again in 1863, when a one acre parcel of Lot 21, Concession 4 was purchased by the Trustees of School Section 6 from Thomas Frisby at a cost of \$300. John Wonch had sold the north 50 acres of Lot 21 in 1840, while retaining the southerly 50 acres of his Crown grant. The purchase of this one acre property by the Trustees either signified the construction of a new school at the north west corner of Lot 21, or the relocation of the old school building. In 1867, the former 900 square foot school site at the crossroads was sold to farmer William H. Wonch.

According to the Smith family of Victoria Square, the school building that was on the present site of S.S. No.6 prior to the construction of the existing school was moved across the road and became part of a barn complex on a neighbouring farm. Based on a photograph in the collection of Joan Smith, the gable roofed, clapboarded building appears to be a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century structure. This suggests that the school building of c.1847 was physically moved to the northern site when the location of the school was changed. This building was destroyed by fire many years ago along with the rest of the barn complex.

The present building at 10137 Woodbine Avenue was built in 1877. Its date of construction was marked on a wooden plaque on the front wall of the frame building, since covered over with modern claddings. An archival photograph in the collection of the Markham Historical Museum shows the school's exterior in 1885, with the teacher Joseph Perkins and his class.

The school served the community for 89 years, until it closed in 1966. The property was sold to the Butterworth family, who converted the building into a house. The former schoolhouse later became Ye Olde School Antiques and Gifts, and a photograph of it in this phase of its history appeared in a local newspaper in 1978. Some time after that date, the exterior was re-clad in a false Tudor motif, as it appears in the present day.

#### **Architectural Description:**

The former school was originally a one storey institutional building, but has been converted to a one and a half storey dwelling by the insertion of an interior second floor level within the existing structural walls. The building is of frame construction, and is rectangular in plan, with its gable end facing Woodbine Avenue. The structure rests on a masonry foundation consisting of fieldstone in some places, and modern concrete block in other places. There is a small cellar under the front part of the building. A shed-roofed porch, recent in age, shelters the front wall.

The roof is a steeply-pitched gable typical of the period of construction, with closed, overhanging eaves. A modern, shed-roofed dormer is located on the north roof slope, and skylights have been placed on the south roof slope. There is a masonry chimney at the west gable end, in place of the belfry that once existed in this location.

The exterior of the former schoolhouse has been re-clad two times: the first, some time in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with narrow clapboard, and more recently, with stucco panels, false Tudor half-timbering, and a band of barnboard-like wood at the second floor level. Beaded-edge vertical board siding, the original cladding visible in a photograph dated 1907, underlies this more recent material. The boards are painted in an oxblood red colour.

Original door and window openings, visible in historical photographs, still exist as partially infilled or enlarged door and window openings that correspond to the earlier state of the building. On the upper walls, new window openings have been inserted that do not relate to the original design of the former schoolhouse.

The interior has been substantially remodelled, with only the interior of a storage room at the west end of the building showing early material. In this space, a former cloak room or school storage room, beaded, vertical wainscotting can be seen as an indication of the original interior treatment. The wainscotting is about 5 feet high. A lath and plaster ceiling painted an olive drab colour can be seen upstairs, through an attic access hatch. Some doors, and the stairway railing, look like material salvaged from a home of the 1910s to 1920s period.

#### **Stylistic Analysis:**

The form of the Victoria Square Schoolhouse follows the classic one-room school design of Victorian Ontario. The basic form of a simple rectangular plan containing a single, large classroom and separate entrances and cloakrooms for boys and girls at one end was built in rural communities throughout the province during much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The

building materials and architectural style varied from place to place and according to the available financial resources, but the essential one-room schoolhouse design remained fairly constant.

Other typical features of the classic one-room schoolhouse included a belfry on the roof peak over the entrance doors, large windows on each side wall, and a chimney serving a wood stove. A plaque placed high on the front gable end wall stated the school section number and date of construction. Rural schools were usually located on one acre of land which provided room for a garden, outdoor privies, and a stable for horses.

Historical photographs show that the Victoria Square Schoolhouse once possessed all of the typical features of a rural school. Some details have been removed during renovations. Other details have been covered over and could be revealed again through restoration.

While many of Markham Township's rural schools were designed with Italianate architectural features (chiefly expressed in the use of round-headed door and window openings), the Victoria Square Schoolhouse had features associated with the Gothic Revival style. These features included Tudor label mouldings over the door and window openings and a Gothic-arched patterning of muntins within flat-arched openings. The steep gable roof and vertical wood siding are also features associated with the Gothic Revival.

**Context:**

Many of Markham Township's historic rural schools have survived closure and the urbanization of the modern-day Town of Markham. The Buttonville schoolhouse has been restored as a living history museum, slightly reoriented on its original site. Other former schools serve as community centres, churches or residences. The Dickson Hill schoolhouse was relocated to Black Creek Pioneer Village.

The Victoria Square Schoolhouse is one of the most altered of Markham's surviving rural schools, but it remains on its original site and is a reminder of the rural community that once existed in the area. In its current state, it takes a discerning eye to recognize the building's former function as a local schoolhouse. The former schoolhouse is one of the few remaining heritage buildings in the vicinity, other than the Wonch House that is now incorporated into a subdivision to the east.

The property contains a timber frame garage or stable, a smaller storage shed and a modern concrete block storage building.

### **Significant Architectural Attributes:**

Exterior, character-defining elements that embody the cultural heritage value of 10137 Woodbine Avenue include:

- simple rectangular plan
- one storey height
- beaded-edge tongue and groove, vertical board siding under modern cladding
- steeply pitched gable roof
- original door and window openings under modern cladding
- original school section date plaque under modern cladding
- original decorative details under modern cladding

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