



This house, which still stands on Orchard St. in Markham, was built in 1887 by William Robinson Junior. The builder was the grandson of William Robinson Senior who came to Markham as a pioneer in 1810. The house was inhabited by Mr. Robinson's descendants until 1967.
Astri Taim

Two Robinson houses survive in Markham

By Marilyn McKelvey

First in a series of articles on buildings in the Town of Markham

The house at 1 Orchard Street in the village of Markham was built by a member of one of Markham's pioneer families, the Robinson family. It is one of the two Robinson houses which has survived from the 19th century.

William Robinson, Junior built the house in 1887 to house his wife, Elizabeth nee Reesor and their eight children. William was a grandson of the pioneers William Robinson, Senior and his wife, Elizabeth nee Willson. They came to settle in Canada from the United States, first in Muddy York (Toronto) in 1805 and then moved to Markham Township in 1810.

Many of the Robinson men were tanners by trade, including William Senior and William Junior's father, John. The Robinson tannery in Markham is believed to have been the first outside of Toronto. William Jr. was a farmer however, tending the part of the Robinson property that was in Lot 13, Con-

cession VIII, east of Highway No. 48 and north of Parkway Avenue. On William Jr.'s death in 1922, the land was farmed by his son, James. In the 1930's, the farm lands were severed from the property on which the house stands and it was sold to A.R. Lewis and his son to farm. And, in the 1950's, some of his land was subdivided into residential lots and the lane leading into the Robinson House was paved and called Parkway Avenue.

The architectural style is called Loyalist vernacular due to the symmetrical placement of the windows and the front door in the principle facade. The house is three bays wide with the door and portico in the central bay.

The red brick is highlighted with yellow brick which decorates the corners and windows and marks the division between the two floors with a line of bricks called a string course.

The front door is particularly interesting. At each side there are recessed sidelights with glazing in the upper section and molded panels below. Above the door the window is called a transom and its central section is distinguished by large brackets. Another reason for setting the architectural style as Loyalist vernacular is the square headed shape of the transom; on a true Loyalist doorway in houses of an earlier vintage there would be an elliptical fan transom.

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Committee names heritage homes

By Marilyn McKelvey

One of the newest committees appointed by the Council of the Town of Markham is called the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee (L.A.C.A.C. for short). The council, acting under the authority given to it by the province's Ontario Heritage Act, has appointed eleven members to serve on this voluntary, non-paid committee.

The L.A.C.A.C. committee has been appointed to help council implement the Heritage Act. The act empowers council to take various conservation measures, including designation of individual heritage properties and conservation districts.

The committee has hired Marilyn McKelvey, a heritage planner, to give it general guidance and to assist with the research, evaluation and selection of properties for designation. She is also working on a public awareness program to publicize the results of the committee's work. The three local newspapers which serve the area are being given write-ups on various buildings in the town — different buildings to different papers. This article will be the first in a series of articles on the heritage which can be found in the old villages of Markham, Dickson Hill, Locust Hill, Milnesville, Cashel, Almira and in the surrounding rural areas.

The first task of the committee has been to identify Markham's heritage. Heritage is defined to mean any building or group of buildings that give a sense of the past. The distinctive architecture of the building may do this or it may be the history associated with the residents of the building which gives it a heritage 'flavour'.

There are some buildings which do not have outstanding architectural merit and their history may be of little general importance, but when grouped together, these same buildings can evoke a sense of the past also. These buildings are said to have environmental importance and Markham has many of these groupings.

The committee began its inventory of Markham's heritage in August, 1976 and through the summer of 1977, it was aided by Fine Art students Astrid Taim and Lyn Stubbs. Their work consisted of photographing any building thought to have heritage value, researching its history, developing an architectural description and determining its legal address. All this information is necessary before the committee can decide whether to recommend to council that a particular building be designated under Part IV of the Heritage Act. This work is being continued this fall by Mrs. McKelvey and the committee.

The committee is currently recommending the designation of eight buildings. It is interesting to note that three of these buildings are owned by committee members themselves. Another 31 buildings are being prepared for designation. Designation means that the owner of a designated property is permitted to alter that property if the proposed alteration will not affect the reasons the property was designated. Indeed, maintenance and repair of the building which increases its life will be encouraged and financial assistance may be made available from the federal, provincial and municipal governments and heritage foundations depending on the importance of the building.

designations may increase the property's market value.

Also, it should be realized that designation applies only to the external portion of the building and the owner can do whatever he wants with the interior.

If an owner objects to the designation of his property, he may appeal his case to the Conservation Review Board and to council.

At least 56 L.A.C.A.C. committees have been appointed in Ontario and a few hundred buildings have been designated. In some areas, designation is becoming sought after for it appears that

designations may increase the property's market value.

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