

## COMMUNITY HISTORY

# Heritage house moves across town

BY FRED SIMPSON  
STAFF WRITER

The newest house on the block in Thornhill is also probably one of the oldest.

Built in 1860, the home was purchased by its new owners for a song.

"I've always loved historical homes," Merrill Stehlik says as she stands besides her home-in-progress on Clark Avenue. "This one is really unique and it's great to have it in Thornhill."

The object of her and husband Pierre's affection is a 3,000-square-foot clapboard Hoover House, which in its previous life, was located on the west side of Leslie Street in Richmond Hill, just south of the hamlet of Gormley.

It was dismantled last June and moved to its new Thornhill location three weeks ago by contractor Vic Snow, who specializes in dismantling and rebuilding homes.

"Heritage homes are so unique," continues Stehlik, brimming with enthusiasm. "All around, you have these new houses and they are all beautiful, but they are all the same."

The one-and-a-half-storey house, when complete, will contain four bedrooms and two bathrooms upstairs. A downstairs fireplace will be recreated to resemble the original. The front door is the same one that was hung in 1890, and the porch running along the front of the house is also from the original.

The home has a low-pitched bell-cast roof. The well-weathered white pine timbers are "just as sturdy as when they were first put up," says Stehlik.

The Stehliks' search for a heritage home came about by accident last December.

"I was having lunch with a friend and mentioned we were looking to move because the house we were living in was just too small and the other places we were looking at were so expensive," says Stehlik, mother of two children, Garrett, 3, and Connor, 1-1/2.

"This friend suggested we consider inquiring about some heritage homes that were being sold for a dollar, because they were threatened with being torn down.

"We decided it was for us. We decided to give our old house away and move this one here."

Enter Richmond Hill Heritage co-ordinator George Duncan, who is something of a white knight in his ongoing efforts to preserve endangered homes steeped in history.

"The house had been vacant for several years and was noticeably deteriorating from lack of



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Merrill Stehlik stands amid her home-in-progress.

paint," says Duncan.

Duncan describes the Stehlik dream home as a "rare example of a traditional Pennsylvania German architectural structure."

"This was a high-quality building with a beautiful timber frame and it hadn't been changed much on the outside," he says.

It was in 1811 that John Hoover and two of his brothers arrived from Pennsylvania, staked out a farm in Markham and built the home. It was the beginning of a succession of Hoovers, as subsequent owners of the house down through the years. A similar home, built by John Hoover's uncle, is now in the Markham Museum.

Describing the interior of the house, Duncan says, "You would come in the front door and find yourself in a very large kitchen/living room. Most of the business of the family would be conducted in that room. There would also be an area for cooking, either a fireplace or stove.

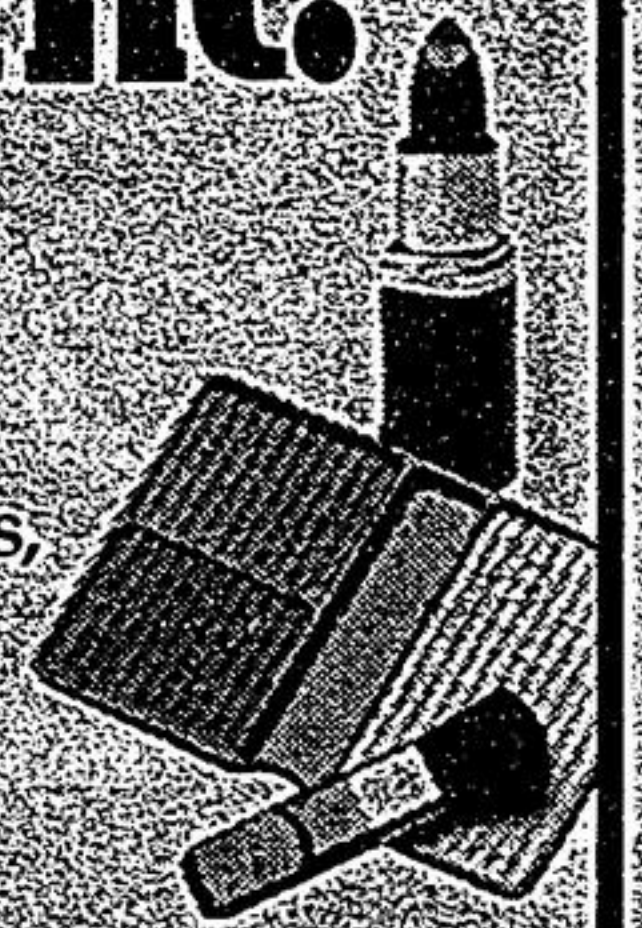
Off the main area, there would have been a small parlour in the front corner of the house for entertaining on special occasions. Right behind the parlour was the "best bedroom in the house," says Duncan.

"The reason the bedroom was there was because it was the warmest part of the house and closest to the fireplace."

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## Request For Public Comments on Proposed Submissions for Long-Term Care Centre Beds

York - 608 Beds  
RFP 99-021

On April 29, 1998, the Ontario government announced a \$1.2 billion expansion of Ontario's long-term care system. As a result of this initiative, proposals to develop new long-term care centre beds in York were requested.

The next phase of the process involves inviting the public to comment on the Applicants who have bid for the beds. If you or your group wish to comment on one or more of the applicants, you may do so at a public meeting or through a written submission.

The public meeting will take place at:

Tuesday, October 26, 1999  
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Ray Twinney Recreation Complex,  
100 Eagle Street W., Newmarket

For more information on this initiative, or to receive:

- A list of existing Long-Term Care centres in Ontario currently owned by the Applicants
- A list of Long-Term Care centres in your service area
- A list of Applicants in your service area
- A summary of each proposal, or
- Demographic information for your service area

Phone: (416) 327-7755 or 1-888-414-4774 or fax the number below.

Written submissions may be handed in at the public meeting, or sent before Tuesday, November 9, 1999 to:

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
RFP Coordinator, Central Region  
2195 Yonge Street, 10th Floor,  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1G2  
Fax: (416) 327-4486



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