

RE: ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVANCY OF ONTARIO (ACO)
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ELM BANK, 19 AND 23 JASON ROAD

As part of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario *Preservation Works!* program, ERA Architects Inc. was requested to under take a survey of 19 and 23 Jason Road, known collectively as “Elm Bank”. The purpose of this letter is to provide recommendations regarding the future preservation and recognition of these properties just west of Albion Road on the northern bank of the West Branch Humber River. Specifically, this report relates to the legal framework associated with the protection of this property as a heritage resource.

BUILDING HISTORY

The subject properties are currently owned by Michael Fitzgerald who is a descendant of the Grubb family, one of the earliest families to first settle Etobicoke. The history of this family and its properties is well documented in such sources as *The Grubb Pioneers of Etobicoke* by Janet Grubb Fitzgerald, *The Story of Etobicoke* by Robert A. Given and *Etobicoke: from Furrow to Borough* by Ester Heyes.

John Grubb of Edinburgh, Scotland moved to Canada with his son William and wife Janet Bain in 1831. When he arrived he purchased 100 acres of Concession B, Lots 30 and 31 of Etobicoke Township. Here he established the “Brae Burn” and “Elm Bank” farms along the West Branch of the Humber River. The buildings of 19 and 23 Jason Road are remnants of the later.

John Grubb became instrumental in the development of the village of St. Andrew located just north of the site, later known as Thistletown. He was involved in the construction of two plank roads, the foundation of today’s Albion and Weston Roads, the subdivision of the village, and served as the community’s Magistrate for Etobicoke on the Home District Council.¹

Hand-written archival material relating to the family’s affairs has served as the basis for much of what is published on the property. These items are currently kept on site and may date back as early as the 1830s. An archivist should examine these items in order to determine their potential value. We recommend contacting Karen Teeple of the City of Toronto archives at (416) 397-7393. Often tax incentives exist for donations of particular value.

¹¹ A thorough history of the Grubb family can be found in *The Grubb Pioneers of Etobicoke* compiled by Janet Grubbe FitzGerald, Pro Familia Publishing, Toronto: 2001.

SITE REVIEW

ERA completed a site visit of Elm Bank on October 23, 2006. It is not intended to be a thorough building condition analysis, but rather a review for the current owner to understand how best to approach the preservation of these significant heritage buildings.

19 and 23 Jason Road are located on the western part of Lot 30, Concession B, Etobicoke Township. They currently occupy two severed lots on the south side of Jason Road but share the same owner. 23 Jason Road is the northern most building, facing Jason Road with a setback of approximately 60 metres. 19 Jason Road is situated immediately behind #23 to the south and is not clearly visible from the road. Accessed by a gravel drive along the west side of #23, its principal façade faces south towards the river and ravine.

23 JASON ROAD

Constructed of ledgestone from the adjacent riverbed, the principal façade of 23 Jason Road faces north to the existing roadway. While its rectangular plan is typical of early Ontario houses, its asymmetrical façade, the lack of central hall plan, varying floor levels, and truncated second story windows make it a unique building.

23 Jason Road is thought to have been built between 1802 and 1820, prior to the arrival of the Grubb family. This period is marked by the year the Crown first patented the land in 1802 and the building's paned window design that was prominent in Ontario homes prior to 1820. Histories of the family suggest that the building may have been where the Grubb family resided in 1834 until construction of 19 Jason Road was complete and that it later became servants' quarters.²

NOTED CONDITIONS

- A number of alterations have been made to the interior of the building including a dropped ceiling in the main living room.
- The definition of rooms using varying floor levels make it difficult to understand the original use of the building as its patterns do not necessarily conform to those of residential use.
- Stone jutting out from the walls of the basement suggest some sort of shelving may have existed and could give clues to the building's past use.
- A modern brick chimney has been installed on the south side.
- There is evidence of repair to the stonework on all four elevations.
- The current windows are a defining feature of the building but have warped leaving open gaps or some windows inoperable.
- An interior well remains in the basement and is an interesting historical feature.

² Ibid., Janet Grubb FitzGerald

19 JASON ROAD

19 Jason Road was built by John Grubb upon his arrival to Canada in 1834. It is a ledgestone house built in the Regency style. Situated immediately south of # 23 it sits atop the sloping ravine of the West Branch of the Humber River. Its principle façade faces the river to the south, taking full advantage of its picturesque siting within a well-wooded lot.

The building's rectangular plan, storey-and-a-half height, low-pitched hipped roof, and simple rectangular window moldings are typical of a Regency Cottage in Ontario. Historical renderings of the home indicate that the building originally had four gabled dormers facing each direction. The dormers were replaced by two long shed dormers to the north and south. The building's casement windows, door opening and rectangular transoms remain a defining feature of the south façade and are now shaded by a reconstruction of the home's original verandah that extends the entire length of the principal façade.

NOTED CONDITIONS

- 19 Jason Road is in good condition.
- Repairs have been undertaken to the stuccoed south façade and some stonework.
- Second storey windows have been replaced, first storey windows are in sound condition.
- Structural beams in the basement are well finished, exhibiting skilled craftsmanship.
- A connection between 19 and 23 Jason Road, evident in historical renderings and along exterior walls has been removed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSERVATION

DESIGNATION

The houses of 19 and 23 Jason Road, and associated properties 32 and 34 Jason Road, are currently “listed” on the City of Toronto’s Inventory of Heritage Properties. Inclusion on the inventory as a “listed” property indicates that the City of Toronto would like to see the heritage attributes of these properties preserved and that Heritage Preservation Services is involved when applications for municipal permits or approvals are made for the properties.

Of the roughly 7,400 properties on the City’s Inventory, 19 and 23 Jason Road are among approximately 18 built between 1806-1830. Based on our site review and recorded histories of the properties it is clear that 19 and 23 Jason Road represent some of the oldest buildings in the City of Toronto.

While “listing” serves as an administrative standing, roughly 2,000 of the 7,400 properties on the City’s inventory are “designated” under the Ontario Heritage Act. Under provincial legislation and a municipal by-law this status recognizes the importance of a property to the local community, protects the property’s cultural heritage value, encourages stewardship and conservation, and promotes an understanding of the property.

Designation provides greater protection of a heritage property from demolition but **does not stop the property owner from making alterations or changes to the property**. Like a “listed” property, Heritage Preservation Services staff review applications to alter the property as part of the normal building permit application process, however designation gives City Council the legal authority to ensure alterations are appropriate to the property’s heritage character.

Attachment 1. is a list of the properties built between 1806-1830 included on the City’s inventory. Over 50% of these properties are “designated”. Given the age, integrity, and context of 19 and 23 Jason Road, we suggest that the owner should consider requesting the City designate his properties. Reasons for designation may include their historical relationship to development along the Humber River, their architectural significance as examples of early Ontario development, and their unique rural siting.

The City’s entire Inventory of Heritage Properties can be viewed at http://www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/heritage_properties_inventory.htm.

In addition, to greater protection, designation makes properties eligible for heritage grants. The Toronto Heritage Grant Program provides grant funds of up to 50% of the estimated cost of heritage conservation work to designated residential properties to a maximum of \$10,000. This program has proven to be a success and it is expected that it will be renewed as part of the City's annual operating budget. Upon approval all designated properties will be notified of their eligibility to apply for funds and given details for the application process.

We are aware that some critics argue heritage designation negatively affects the monetary value of a property. It is our experience this is not the case and refer property owners to two articles that outline the benefits of such protections.

Robert Shipley, "Heritage Designation and Property Values: Is there an Effect?" The International Journal of Heritage Studies Vol. 6 (2000).

Randall Mason, "Economics and Historic Preservation: a Guide and Review of the Literature." The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program (2005).

For further information on designating a property within the City of Toronto contact:

City of Toronto Heritage Preservation Services
416-338-1077 or 416-338-1078.
Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
E-mail: heritagepreservation@toronto.ca

HERITAGE EASEMENT AGREEMENT

A heritage easement agreement is another tool used by the City to ensure a property's preservation. It is an agreement that is entered into between the property owner and the City and registered on title. A Heritage Easement Agreement identifies elements of a building which are to be retained in perpetuity and may also set out permitted alterations and development.

City Council recently approved Phase 2 of a new tax incentive program for 2007. The roughly 230 eligible properties hold a designated status and heritage easement agreement on title, and pending approval of the City's operating budget in the March 2007 will be eligible for part of 8.5 million dollars in tax credits.

The City expects that this program will continue to grow and become an important incentive for the preservation and conservation of the City valued heritage resources. The Owner of 19 and 23 Jason Road may wish to consider entering into a heritage easement in order to become eligible for this program and as a mechanism for preserving the historic character of these properties.

RESTORATION/REPAIR

At our practice we are well aware of the need to keep heritage buildings efficient and viable, while encouraging property owners to respect the materials, detail and general appearance of their heritage property.

In our survey of the subject properties we have identified that there is an immediate need to address the deterioration of some windows at 23 Jason Road and recommend that a defining feature of the building, the windows should be carefully repaired.

As well, repair to the roughcast stucco and stone mortar are part of routine maintenance on both 19 and 23 Jason Road. We observed that some earlier masonry repairs were not very well executed.

We recommend that any project undertaken on either building should be executed by someone sensitive to the trade. We would gladly recommend individual contractors who specialize in such work as windows, mortar, carpentry, etc.

For further information on approaches to restoration and conservation refer to Parks Canada's *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, http://www.pc.gc.ca/docs/index_e.asp.

PLANNING

Recent changes to the Ontario Heritage Act and the Provincial Policy Statement demonstrate a shift towards recognizing the importance of context in heritage conservation.

The buildings of 19 and 23 Jason Road currently occupy two separate wooded lots owned by the same individual. We suggest that the property owner consider merging these lots to better reflect the physical and historical relationship of the two buildings as well as their siting along the river and roadway. We expect that a larger property would create a greater potential for resale, as well as better ensuring the preservation of both historic structures.

Copies of the Ontario Heritage Toolkit, the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, A Guide for Municipalities on Heritage Property Tax Relief and the Identify, Protect and Promote guide have been included with this report.

If desired, we would be pleased to assist in the heritage designation of the property and / or negotiating a Heritage Easement Agreement. As well, we would be happy to provide the names of well-qualified tradesman to undertake future repairs.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael McClelland', positioned above a horizontal line.

Michael McClelland

City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties, 1806-1830

Year	Address	Building Type	Ward	Reason	Details
1806	480 LAKESHORE AV	Public	28	Architectural Historical Contextual	Gibraltar Point Lighthouse; 1806, Thomson, mason; Hanlan's Point -adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973
1806	TORONTO ISLANDS	Public	28	Architectural Historical Contextual	Gibraltar Point Lighthouse; 1806, Thomson, mason; Hanlan's Point -adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973
1807	469 BROADVIEW AV	Residential	30	Architectural	John Cox house; possibly constructed before 1807, addition in mid 1800's, late 19th century addition, Edward Langley of Langley, Langley and Burke -adopted by City Council on Nov. 23, 1981 -Designation By-Law passed by City Council on Sept. 18, 1995
1813-15	100 GARRISON RD	Public	19	Architectural Historical Contextual	Fort York, 1813-15, Royal Engineers - adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973 Part of the Fort York Heritage Conservation District DESIGNATION BY-LAW PASSED BY CITY COUNCIL on May 21, 1985
1817	317 DUNDAS ST W	Residential	20	Architectural Historical Contextual	The Grange, 1817 (part of the Art Gallery of Ontario) -adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973 DESIGNATION By-Law passed by City Council on February 25, 1991
1820	72 OLD BURNHAMTHORP E RD		3		Mercer House, c.1820; DESIGNATION BY-LAW PASSED BY ETOBICOKE CITY COUNCIL on Feb. 16, 1976; Heritage Conservation Easement Agreement May 3, 1989
1822	160 QUEEN ST W		20	Architectural Historical	Sir Wm. Campbell House, 1822, part of 330 University Ave. -adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973
1824	4169 BATHURST ST		10		John Bales House, circa 1824; DESIGNATION BY-LAW ENACTED BY NORTH YORK CITY COUNCIL on June 22, 1994
1824	17 MANORPARK COURT		33		George S. Henry House, circa 1824, later additions; DESIGNATION BY-LAW ENACTED BY NORTH YORK CITY COUNCIL on Jan. 18, 1995
1825	252 ADELAIDE ST E	Financial	28	Architectural Historical Contextual	Bank of Upper Canada; 1825-27, attrib. W.W. Baldwin; alterations and additions 1872-76 for de la Salle Institute, H. Langley; Also 4th Post Office 1833-34, John Richards, contractor - adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973 DESIGNATION BY-LAW PASSED BY CITY COUNCIL on Nov. 26, 1975 (Ontario Heritage Foundation Easement Agreement, Reg. on August 14, 1980)

1825	1000 MURRAY ROSS PKWY		8		Black Creek Pioneer Village: Daniel Stong's Grain Barn, 1825; Townline Church Cemetery, 1845; Flynn's Boots & Shoes Shop, circa 1858; Stong's Second House, 1832; Daniel Stong's Piggery; Daniel Flynn House, 1858; First Settler's House, 1816; Hisey Farm Buildin (Saddlery & Harness Maker's Shop, 1832.
1829	130 QUEEN ST W	Public	27	Architectural Historical Contextual	Osgoode Hall: East Wing, 1829-32, John Ewart; West Wing and alts. to East Wing, 1844-46, Henry Bowyer Lane; grounds laid out in 1843, J.G. Howard; centre rebuilt in 1857, Cumberland & Storm; First Law School addition, 1880, William Storm; Second Law School addition, 1889, William Storm; add. 1897, Burke & Horwood; 3 story add., 1910; add. 1925, Vaux Chadwick & Bryan Chadwick, Wm. Bruce, sculptor; Third Law School addition, 1937, Saunders & Ryrrie; Fourth Law School addition, 1956, Mathers & Haldenby, at Chestnut St. through to University Av. -adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973 DESIGNATION BY-LAW PASSED BY CITY COUNCIL on September 10 90 and 11, 1990
1830	5 DRUMSNAB RD	Residential	27	Architectural Historical Contextual	South Rosedale "Drumsnab", William Cayley, 1830; add. William Thomas, 1856; add. Eden Smith, 1908 -adopted by City Council on June 20, 1973; Part of the South Rosedale Heritage Conservation District, enacted by City Council on Feb. 7, 2003
1830	4700 KEELE ST		8		Jacob Snider House, circa 1830, relocated to site
1830	180 UNIVERSITY AV	Residential	20	Architectural Historical	Bishop's Block; c.1830, later known as the Pretzel Bell Tavern; formerly known as 192 Adelaide St W -adopted by City Council on June 2, 1978 DESIGNATION BY-LAW PASSED BY CITY COUNCIL on Feb. 4, 1980; Heritage Easement Agreement registered as Instrument No. CA137380

Site Images

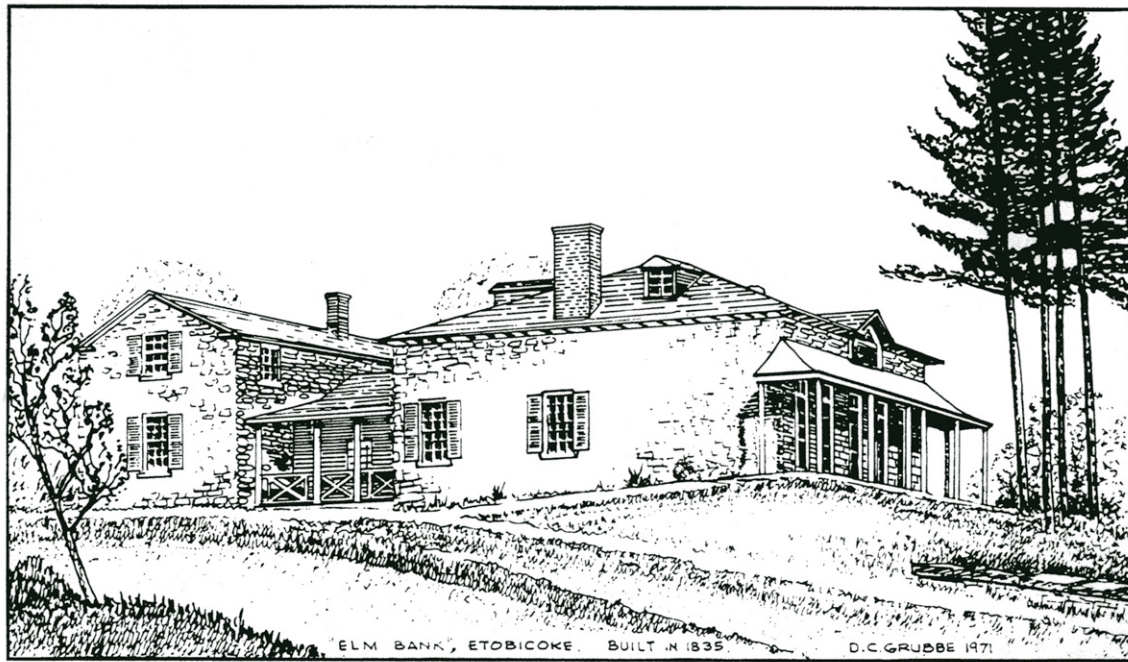


Figure 1. Rendering of Elm Bank drawn by David C. Grubbe in 1971.



Figure 2: Main façade and south elevation of 23 Jason Road



Figure 3: Main entrance of 23 Jason Road



Figure 4: Main façade and north elevation of 19 Jason Road



Figure 5: Rectangular windowpanes along the roughcast south façade of 19 Jason Road



Figure 6: View looking south from 19 Jason towards West Branch of Humber River