

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT 107 HALL STREET (HOLMWOOD)

We are delighted that this lovely old family home with such a rich history will be preserved and lived in again.

We want to emphasize that while we are interested in the next chapter for Holmwood

a) it was sold by the family several years ago in an entirely pleasant transaction with good will on both sides and

b) we are no longer residents of Richmond Hill and again while interested in the town, we are in no position to make any demands!

We understand the heritage champions reject the idea that the house be rotated. The rotation would result in the current east facing wall facing west and upon entering one would face the staircase to the second floor.

From our perspective, having been in and out of the house for many years for myriad reasons and for family gatherings and larger parties, the existing entrance way (facing west) has functioned extraordinarily well.

The house, moved to its current site in 1970, was simply moved sideways from its original site on to the high school playing field and then moved west on the high school property and back on to the Langstaff property where it sits today. This move required a "new" front entrance to be created which Dr. Jim Langstaff, a highly skilled carpenter and woodworker, undertook with his characteristic attention to detail and interest in historical integrity. I believe Napier Simpson, a nationally prominent Canadian architect noted for work on heritage buildings consulted with Jim Langstaff on this venture. (Mr. Simpson was involved in several high-profile projects, including the rehabilitations of Mackenzie House, Colborne Lodge, and the buildings at Fort York. He served for many years as a member of the Toronto Historical Board, the precursor to Heritage Toronto.) The replacement door, sidelights, fanlight and all surrounding trim and millwork were sourced from a home on Warden Avenue which was being demolished. It had been built only a year earlier than the Langstaff house.

Two pictures of the house, one giving prominence to the new entrance are found in the book "Rural Roots - Pre-confederation Buildings of the York Region of Ontario". This book describes the home as the most impressive early building left in Richmond Hill.

Back to the new entrance way and living with it. I would offer that on entering the spacious hall with its wide plank floor boards, outstanding trim and millwork and flooded with natural light, there are many, many design elements that draw the eye. In my opinion the fact of the stair case facing east does not detract from this gracious

entranceway.

It was typical when Barbara Langstaff was the chatelaine of the home to have the Christmas tree in the hall and preside over gift giving there. I remember parties where a great soup tureen placed on the long hall table provided a cup of soup to a large gathering before proceeding to a buffet in the dining room. Bear in mind that this is not a mean little passageway but a wide gracious space.

I sold real estate for many years in Richmond Hill and took a particular interest in the early homes and indeed participated in the sale of many. Perhaps this experience gives me some licence to offer the view that rotating the house as is proposed, would add negligible benefit and indeed remove a building feature that adds to the interest of the home and preserves an example of Dr. Jim's craftsmanship and love of his ancestral home.

Judy and Bruce Langstaff