

Statement of Significance

37 and 39 Centre Street West – William Proctor Double House

The William Proctor House at 37 and 39 Centre Street West is recommended for designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act as a property of cultural heritage value or interest, as described in the following Statement of Significance.

Description of Property:

The William Proctor House is a two-storey brick veneer semi-detached dwelling located at the northeast corner of Centre Street West and Elizabeth Street North, within historic Richmond Hill village.

Design and Physical Value:

Dating to 1891, the William Proctor Double House at 37 and 39 Centre Street West has design value as a rare representative example of semi-detached late-Victorian 'Bay and Gable' residential architecture in Richmond Hill. The 'Bay and Gable' style, which reflects Queen Anne Revival influences, has a distinctly urban character, reminiscent of the housing found in the late Victorian inner city neighbourhoods of neighbouring Toronto. However, this architectural style is rare in Richmond Hill. Features representative of this style category are the house's semi-detached form, the "mirror-image" composition of the front façades, steeply-gabled projecting bays on the house's front elevation, the paneled bargeboards, the single-coloured red brick cladding featuring decorative masonry detailing of different textures and designs, and decorative art-glass windows.

The William Proctor Double House also has design and physical value for the high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit displayed in a number of its features, including the decorative masonry stringcourses and 'basket-weave' brickwork on the house's south elevation, and the leaded art-glass window and door transoms on the south elevation. The original wood doors, windows, and paneled bargeboards with bullseyes also display a high degree of craftsmanship, and represent the wood finishes produced by the local Leslie Innes & Sons wood mill before the original mill was destroyed by fire in 1894.

Historical and Associative Value:

The William Proctor Double House at 37 and 39 Centre Street West was constructed in 1891 by local builder John L. Innes of the *L. Innes & Sons* firm. Leslie Innes & Sons were prolific builders and carpenters in Richmond Hill from the 1880s to the 1910s. The firm significantly contributed to the built form character of Richmond Hill village around the turn of the 20th century through their building projects, as well as the wooden finishes manufactured in their lumber mill, originally located on Richmond Street. The houses at 37 and 39 Centre Street West also display the wood finishes produced by the *L. Innes & Sons* lumber and planing mill before the original mill was destroyed by fire in 1894.

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Further, 37 Centre Street West has historical value for its direct associations with the Endean family and the Endean Nurseries business. Robert Endean moved into 37 Centre Street West with his family before 1929, and the Endeans owned the property until 1987. The award-winning Endean nurseries were an integral part of the successful horticultural industry that developed in Richmond Hill in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The Endeans landscaped all of the TTC Yonge Line subway stations with one million small trees and shrubs when they opened in 1954, and landscaped Highway 11 in Richmond Hill in the 1960s. Robert Endean was also a significant member of the Richmond Hill community. Apart from acting as manager of the Endean Nursery, he was vice-president of the Richmond Hill Horticultural Society, served on Richmond Hill's Municipal Council in 1924, was a member of the Richmond Hill School Board, and a leader in the Masonic Order.

Contextual Value:

Located on a prominent corner lot within the historic core of Richmond Hill village, the William Proctor Double House at 37 and 39 Centre Street West has contextual value as it defines, maintains, and supports the predominant fine-grained late-19th and early-20th century residential built form character of both Centre Street West and Elizabeth Street North.

Heritage Attributes:

Design and Physical Value

Heritage attributes contributing to the value of the property as a rare representative example of semi-detached late-Victorian 'Bay and Gable' residential architecture in Richmond Hill are:

- The scale, form and massing of the 2-storey semi-detached building;
- The roof form and finishes, including:
 - The cross-gabled roof of the front portion of the building featuring decorative bargeboards with bullseye blocks in the south, east and west gables, and gable-end brick chimneys atop the east and west gables;
 - The gambrel roof of the rear wing;
- The materials, with the red brick cladding and rubblestone foundation, and brick, wood, and glass detailing;
- The principal (south) elevations, which are organized as mirror images of each other and feature:
 - Two-bay front facades, with steeply-gabled projecting bays containing segmental and round-arched window openings with coloured leaded-glass transoms and sidelights; and
 - Raised entrances featuring paneled wooden front doors surmounted by segmental-headed coloured leaded-glass transoms;

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- All windows on the building's south, east, and west elevations, featuring brick voussoirs, wooden lugsills, and historical wooden units;
- The hipped-roof verandah on 37 Centre Street West's east elevation, supported by turned wooden posts and decorated with fretwork brackets with a stylized tulip motif.

Historical and Associative Value

Heritage attributes that contribute to the value of the property for its associations with prolific Richmond Hill builders L. Innes & Sons are:

- The house's late-Victorian 'Bay and Gable' architectural style and material palette, which reflect the work of L. Innes & Sons, builders; and
- The house's original wood finishes, produced in the L. Innes & Sons lumber and planing mill on Richmond Street, including:
 - Decorative bargeboards with bullseye blocks in the south, east and west gables;
 - Original wooden window units;
 - Original paneled wooden front doors surmounted by segmental-headed coloured leaded-glass transoms; and
 - The hipped-roof verandah on 37 Centre Street West's east elevation, supported by turned wooden posts and decorated with fretwork brackets with a stylized tulip motif.

Contextual Value

Heritage attributes contributing to the contextual value of the property as defining, maintaining, and supporting the predominant fine-grained late-19th and early-20th century residential built form character of both Centre Street West and Elizabeth Street North are:

- The property's scale, siting and orientation at the northwest corner of Centre Street West and Elizabeth Street North;
- The building's material palette, consisting of brick and rubblestone with wood, brick and glass detailing; and
- The subject property's architectural detailing in the late-Victorian Bay-and-Gable style.

Note: the early 20th century rear (north) sunroom addition and detached garage at 39 Centre Street West are not considered to possess heritage attributes.