

## Statement of Significance

### 32 Richmond Street – William Harrison Rental House

The William Harrison Rental House at 32 Richmond Street 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 Harrison Rental House is a 1 ½-storey, brick-clad building located on the south side of Richmond Street, just west of Yonge Street. The property is located within the historic village of Richmond Hill.

#### Design and Physical Value:

Dating to 1881, the William Harrison Rental House at 32 Richmond Street has design and physical value as a good representative example of late-Victorian Ontario Gothic Revival architecture in Richmond Hill. The building has retained its original scale, form, massing and orientation on the south side of Richmond Street. The building also retains many original architectural details that are representative of the Ontario Gothic Revival style including an asymmetrical floor plan, steeply pitched cross-gabled roof with gingerbread bargeboard trim, decorative dichromatic brick-work, and gothic-arched windows with original wooden window units featuring decorative tracery.

The William Harrison Rental House also has design and physical value for the high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit displayed in a number of its features, including its elaborate dichromatic patterned brickwork featuring red brick quoining, stringcourses, and banding, gingerbread bargeboard trim, and original wood window units with Y-shaped tracery.

#### Historical and Associative Value:

The William Harrison Rental House has historical value for its direct association with William Harrison. Harrison was Richmond Hill's second Reeve, owner and operator of a significant saddle-and-harness-making business, and one of the village's first local historians. William Harrison built the dwelling in 1881, and rented it out as an income property for nearly 20 years. As a local business owner and active citizen involved in establishing and leading many of the village's early organizations and societies, William Harrison was a significant member of the community who contributed to the development of Richmond Hill in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### Contextual Value:

The William Harrison Rental House has contextual value because it is important in defining maintaining, and supporting the fine-grained late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> century residential character of both Richmond and Elizabeth Streets, and the historical character of Richmond Hill's village core more broadly.

The William Harrison Rental House also has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, historically, and visually linked to its surroundings within “Harrison’s Corner,” a cluster of buildings located at the southeast corner of Richmond and Elizabeth Streets owned by William Harrison in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Other surviving properties in “Harrison’s Corner” include the adjacent Clara Harrison Rental House at 42 Richmond Street (c. 1875), as well as the William Harrison Speculative House at 17 Elizabeth Street North (1885), with which it shares a particularly strong contextual link, expressed through a similarity of materials, style, and form.

### **Heritage Attributes:**

#### **Design and Physical Value**

The heritage attributes that contribute to the value of the property as a good representative example of late-Victorian Ontario Gothic Revival residential architecture in Richmond Hill are:

- The scale, form and massing of the 1 ½-storey building with an L-shaped plan;
- The roof form and finishes, including:
  - The steeply-pitched cross-gabled roof featuring gingerbread bargeboard trim at the north, east and west gable-ends;
- The buff-brick cladding, laid in stretcher bond, with red stained-brick detailing, including projecting building base, stringcourses, banding, quoining, and radiating voussoirs;
- The windows, including:
  - Segmental-arched window openings at the first storey, with radiating brick voussoirs, wooden lugsills, and historical wood window units with a two-over-two configuration;
  - Gothic-arched window openings at the second storey, with radiating brick voussoirs, wooden lugsills, and historical wood window units with a two-over-two configuration and Y-shaped tracery;
  - The projecting hip-roofed bay window on the principal (north) elevation, with gingerbread trim at the eaves; and
  - The small gothic-arched window above the front verandah, with historical wing-tipped wooden shutters;
- The raised principal entrance located in the building’s ell, featuring a doorcase with a paneled wooden door and sidelights, and sheltered by a hip-roofed verandah on wooden posts.

### Historical and Associative Value

The heritage attributes that contribute to the value of the property for its associations with William Harrison are:

- The house's scale, siting, and orientation on the south side of Richmond Street, in close proximity to several other properties owned by Harrison in "Harrison's Corner"; and
- The house's late-Victorian Ontario Gothic Revival architectural style and material palette, popular at the time Harrison erected the subject dwelling in 1881.

### Contextual Value

Heritage attributes contributing to the contextual value of the property being functionally, historically, and physically linked to its surroundings as part of "Harrison's Corner" in the historic village of Richmond Hill include:

- The house's scale, siting and orientation on the south side of Richmond Street, between Yonge Street and Elizabeth Street North; and
- The house's material palette and architectural detailing in the late-Victorian Ontario Gothic Revival style, which contribute to the historical character of Richmond Street and Richmond Hill's Village Core more broadly.

Note: the house's later rear (south) addition is not considered to possess heritage attributes.