

Statement of Significance

27 Church Street North – Drs. Rolph and Lillian Langstaff House

The Drs. Rolph and Lillian Langstaff House at 27 Church Street North 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 Drs. Rolph and Lillian Langstaff House at 27 Church Street North is a 2-storey frame building with a generally rectangular plan and side-gabled roof located on the east side of Church Street North, between Centre Street East and Dunlop Street. The property is located within the historic village of Richmond Hill.

Design and Physical Value

Dating to circa 1938, the Drs. Rolph and Lillian Langstaff House at 27 Church Street North is a representative example of Colonial Revival residential architecture in Richmond Hill. The Colonial Revival style, which emerged in Canada in the 1910s, was particularly popular for residential architecture in the 1930s. The Colonial Revival style holds additional significance for the Langstaff family, as their family homestead on Yonge Street, Holmwood (1849; now located at 107 Hall Street), features Colonial Georgian architecture. The house at 27 Church Street North has retained many of its original architectural details expressing the Colonial Revival style, including its generally rectangular plan with attached garage, side-gabled roof with dormers, wide shingle cladding arranged in horizontal rows, the balanced asymmetrical composition of its front façade, the off-centre doorway with classical doorcase, and six-over-six window units.

Historical and Associative Value

The Drs. Rolph and Lillian Langstaff House at 27 Church Street North has historical value for its direct associations with significant Richmond Hill doctors and community members Rolph and Lillian Langstaff. Dr. Rolph Langstaff began practicing medicine in Richmond Hill when he took over his father's medical practice in 1891. In 1905, his wife Dr. Lillian Langstaff, joined the family medical practice, with Dr. Lillian specializing in women's health and pediatrics. Together, Drs. Rolph and Lillian Langstaff made significant contributions to the local community through their medical practice, which spanned over 50 years, as well as their involvement in multiple community organizations throughout most of their lives. Dr. Rolph Langstaff was responsible for introducing the pasteurization of milk and the chlorination of the local water supply in Richmond Hill, and held the role as local Public Health Officer from 1936 to 1945. Dr. Lillian Langstaff was an influential member of the local community, and a pioneer in women's medicine in Ontario. She was known for her role as physician at the Concord women's jail farm for over 20 years. She was also involved in the Richmond Hill Canadian Red Cross during the First and Second World Wars, was one of the first

Page 2

members of the Richmond Hill Horticultural Society, an honorary member of the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, and established the first local association of the Girl Guides in Richmond Hill. During her retirement, she hosted many events for the Girl Guides, Richmond Hill Naturalists, and Horticultural Society at her home and garden at 27 Church Street North.

Contextual Value

The Drs. Rolph and Lillian Langstaff House at 27 Church Street North has contextual value because its scale, form, and 1930s Colonial Revival architectural style are important in defining and maintaining the predominantly early-20th-century residential character of the surrounding streetscape on Church Street North, as well as that of the surrounding residential area east of Yonge Street and north of Major Mackenzie Drive, which was largely developed in the early 20th century.

The subject property also has contextual value for its physical and historical links to its surroundings as part of a large 10-acre lot owned by James Langstaff at the northeast corner of Church Street North and Centre Street East, which he purchased in 1869. The subject property was owned by the Langstaff family from 1869 to the early 21st century, and is linked to surrounding properties also owned by the Langstaffs, including the James Langstaff Rental House at 39 Church Street North (c. 1880) to the north.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

The heritage attributes that contribute to the value of the property as a representative example of Colonial Revival residential architecture in Richmond Hill are:

- The scale, form and massing of the 2-storey building with an irregular plan, comprised of a rectangular main portion with projecting gabled bays on the west and north elevations;
- The medium-pitched side-gabled roof with gabled dormers on the front (west) elevation;
- The building's painted shingle cladding, arranged in wide horizontal rows;
- The balanced, but asymmetrical three-bay composition of the building's front (west) elevation;
- The flat-headed windows with six-over-six units;
- The main entrance on the west elevation, with a flat-headed doorway, classical doorcase, and paneled door with two glass lights at the top;
- The attached double garage, featuring:
 - A side-gabled roof, which connects to the main house to provide a covered exterior walkway to the rear garden;
 - Paneled garage doors, each with a top row of six lites;

Page 3

- The colonnade of three columns within the overhang of the garage roof;
and
- The exterior brick chimney on the south elevation.

Historical and Associative Value

The heritage attributes that contribute to the value of the property for its associations with Drs. Rolph and Lillian Langstaff are:

- The house's scale, orientation, and location on the east side of Church Street North;
and
- The house's Colonial Revival architectural style and material palette.

Contextual Value

The heritage attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property for defining and maintaining the early-20th-century character of the surrounding streetscape on Church Street North, and for physical and historical links to its surroundings are:

- The house's scale, siting, and orientation on the east side of Church Street North;
and
- The house's early-20th-century Colonial Revival architectural style and material palette.

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