

Heritage Research and Evaluation Report



9853 Leslie Street – Patrick & John Kelly House

C. 1876

Part of Lot 20, Concession 3, Markham Township

Prepared by: Heritage & Urban Design, Planning & Building Services, 2024

History

The Hamlet of Headford

The subject property at 9853 Leslie Street is located on what was originally Lot 20, Concession 3, of Markham Township. Prior to colonization and settlement, the land now containing the subject property was inhabited by the Anishnaabe, Haudenosaunee, and the Huron Wendat First Nations. Following the Toronto Purchase in 1787, the area was subdivided into townships, concessions, and lots.

The story of Headford begins with the arrival of John Cleaver Burr on Lot 20, Concession 3 of Markham Township in 1832. Burr purchased land at the southeast corner of Leslie Street and Major Mackenzie Drive East with the idea of building a grist or flouring mill on the Rouge River. An agricultural community of Pennsylvania Germans

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and Berczy settlers was already long established in the area, providing a ready source of customers for his new enterprise.¹

The original Headford Mill on the east banks of the Rouge River was built in 1832. After only six years, John Burr sold the operation to his brother, Rowland Burr, the noted York County builder and millwright. Rowland improved and enlarged the mill and millpond dam.² When the mill was in operation, the Headford Mill Lane ran east from Leslie Street along the boundary between Lot 19 and 20 and continued across the millpond dam via a bridge, connecting to the mill property on the east side of the river (Figure 3). This original mill lane still exists as a private access road directly south of the subject property at 9853 Leslie Street. With the bridge long demolished, the lane now terminates at the west bank of the Rouge River.

In addition to his building and milling specialties, Rowland Burr was both a visionary for his time and an ambitious entrepreneur. Beginning in the 1840s, he began to sell off small building lots within Lot 20 on the east side of Leslie Street, north of the mill lane. These lots, intended for the cottages and businesses of local tradesmen, formed the centre of a new hamlet known as Headford. The origin of the name relates to the characteristics of the Rouge River in this area. A "ford" is a shallow place where a river can be crossed. Over time, properties located on both sides of Leslie Street on Lots 18, 19 and 20 became part of the hamlet of Headford.

Over the years, the Headford Mill saw many owners. John Eyer added a woollen mill to the complex in 1861, which operated until 1872. The last operator of the Headford Mill was David Hislop, a Scottish immigrant who became the owner in 1874. The milling operation obviously prospered, enabling Hislop to replace the earlier mill owner's house with a prestigious brick residence in 1877, built by celebrated local masons Patrick and John Kelly. While this Victorian Picturesque style house was demolished in 2022, the stone foundation of the Headford Mill still exist on the east banks of the Rouge River, south of Major Mackenzie Drive East.³

After many years of prosperity, old Markham Township's grist milling industry went into decline in the early 20th century when the Canadian west was opened for settlement and agriculture. To make matters worse, a particularly strong spring rainstorm washed out the millpond dam at Headford in 1912. Converted to a chopping mill, the Headford Mill operated under gasoline power until it closed forever in 1916. According to local tradition, the mill was eventually dismantled and sold for lumber.⁴

¹ George Duncan, "The Hamlet of Headford: A self-guided tour presented by the Richmond Hill LACAC." 2000.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

9853 Leslie Street

The property at 9853 Leslie Street originated as part of Lot 20, Concession 3, Markham Township. The subject property is located east of Leslie Street and south of Major Mackenzie Drive East, within the former hamlet of Headford in Markham Township. While the property has a Leslie Street address, it does not front onto Leslie Street, but rather onto a private access road running along its southern boundary, which was formerly the Headford Mill Lane connecting Leslie Street to the mill on the east side of the Rouge River. With the mill long decommissioned, the lane now terminates at the west bank of the Rouge River.

Land Registry records indicate that the west 100 acres (half) of Lot 20, Concession 3, Markham Township were patented from the Crown in 1808 by one of the Berczy settlers, Peter Holtz.⁵ The parcel was then sold by Martha Holtz to Isaiah Willmott in 1826. John Burr purchased the west half of Lot 20 in 1832 for £400, and Burr erected a dam and grist mill on the banks of the Rouge River running through the property.

In 1838, John Burr sold 20 acres of the west half of Lot 20 to his brother, Rowland Burr, the noted York County builder and millwright, for £250.⁶ Rowland improved and enlarged the mill and millpond dam.⁷ In early Ontario, the establishment of a mill invariably drew tradespeople and settlers to the area, and Rowland Burr also severed numerous building lots along Leslie Street and Headford Mill Lane during the 1840s, ranging from ½-acre to 14-acres in size,⁸ to accommodate the growing community.

While Patrick Kelly is known to have owned and resided on a nearby property on Leslie Street from as early as 1852,⁹ he purchased the subject property on Headford Mill Lane, described only as “Part 1 acre” of Lot 20 in Land Registry records, from Francis Bowes in October of 1871 for \$430. When Kelly purchased the property, it contained a pre-existing frame dwelling, believed to have been constructed in the 1840s.¹⁰ Archival evidence suggests that Patrick Kelly built the existing brick dwelling on the subject property around 1876. This construction date is supported by two pieces of archival evidence: first, a rise in John Kelly’s assessed property value from \$320 in 1875 to \$500 in 1876¹¹; and second, the fact that John Kelly sold his first property on Leslie Street in 1876¹², likely because his new brick dwelling on Headford Mill Lane was ready for occupancy.

⁵ *Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book*, York Region, Concession 3, Lot 20, Markham Township.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Su Murdoch Historical Consulting, “9853 Leslie Street: Patrick Kelly Residence.” Prepared for the Town of Richmond Hill LACAC, 1997.

¹¹ *Assessment Roll for the Township of Markham*. Markham Township, 1874-1877.

¹² *Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book*, York Region, Concession 3, Lot 20, Markham Township.

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While no description of the Kelly home survives from the 1881 Census, by 1891 the Kelly family, including masons Patrick (56) and John (24) Kelly, was residing in a two-storey brick dwelling with seven rooms, a description matching the subject building at 9853 Leslie Street.¹³ Also on their property was a vacant two-storey wood house with five rooms, likely the c. 1840s frame house that predated Kelly's ownership. Patrick Kelly continued to reside in the family home following the death of his son John and daughter-in-law Annie, in 1898 and 1897, respectively. The 1901 Census, which was recorded in the Spring of that year, lists Patrick Kelly (82) residing with grandson Herbert (9) and a lodger John, in the family home in Headford. Patrick Kelly died on October 10, 1901 "at the residence of his son-in-law, Mr. William Cosgrove, 2nd con Markham."¹⁴ Kelly's estate was left to his daughter Mary Anne Cosgrove, wife of William Cosgrove, a Markham farmer.

It is not known who resided in the subject dwelling following Patrick Kelly's death in 1901. Following Mary Anne Cosgrove's death in 1925 and William Cosgrove's death in 1942, the executors of William Cosgrove's estate sold the property to Robert and Ellen Potter in March 1950 for \$6000. In July of the same year, the Potters sold the property to Ian and Marguerite Grant for \$6700, who resold in 1952 to James H. Greenwood for \$2 etc. In 1953, Greenwood sold the property to Helen R. Terry for \$12000, and it was subsequently granted to Benjamin R. Terry in August of 1968.¹⁵

Historical aerial imagery reveals that the c. 1840 frame dwelling once located east of the Patrick Kelly House on the subject property was demolished between 1999 and 2002.

Patrick and John Kelly

According to the 1901 census, Patrick Kelly immigrated to Canada from Ireland in 1847 at about aged 28. It is likely that he trained as a stone mason and bricklayer in Ireland and began to practice his trade in Markham Township shortly after arriving in the Headford area about 1852.¹⁶ The Kelly family, comprised of Patrick, 37, his wife Bridget, 25, and their children Mary, 8, and John, 4, are recorded as living in Headford in the 1861 Census.¹⁷

Patrick's son, John, was born in Headford around 1857¹⁸ and also trained as a mason. John would have been around 19 when the subject dwelling at 9853 Leslie Street was built, and he was likely apprenticing with his father at this time. The 1881 census reveals that Patrick, Bridget, Mary Ann, and John lived in the Kelly household in Headford, with Patrick and John both listed as masons. In 1891, the household

¹³ *Census of Canada*, 1891.

¹⁴ "Deaths," *Liberal*. Oct 10, 1901.

¹⁵ *Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book*, York Region, Concession 3, Lot 20, Markham Township.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Census of Canada*, 1861.

¹⁸ *Census of Canada*, 1881.

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consisted of Patrick, a widower, John and his wife Annie, and their son Francis. Patrick and John were, again, both listed as masons.

During the 1880s and 1890s, Patrick and John Kelly built a great number of buildings in Headford, Markham, Richmond Hill, and Toronto, and their skilled masonry work brought them much acclaim. An article in the *Liberal* on October 10, 1889 states:

“That energetic builder, Mr. John Kelly of Headford, is making things hum in this section. He has put up an astonishing number of buildings this season, notably John Palmer’s two houses on Yonge St., Reuben Pugsley’s house at Eglinton, Adam Henrick’s at Headford, Wm. McGill, Markham Tp., John Ellson, Buttonville, Wm. Rundle, Markham... The houses are mostly of brick, and the style and finish of the great majority of them reflect great credit on Mr. Kelly’s ability as a builder.”¹⁹

Tragedy struck the Kelly family in 1897 when Mrs. John Kelly, aged 30, died at Tottenham.²⁰ Soon after this, John Kelly died at age 43 in November of 1898.²¹ The couple left behind two young sons, Francis and Herbert, and were both buried at the Roman Catholic cemetery in Thornhill.

In 1901, Patrick Kelly, still a mason, had his grandson Herbert, aged 9, and a lodger John [Branne] living with him at the family home in Headford. Patrick Kelly died on October 10, 1901. He was 80 and was buried at the Thornhill cemetery. His estate was left to his daughter Mary Ann Cosgrove, wife of William Cosgrove, a Markham farmer. He gave \$50 each to his grandsons, Patrick John Francis and Herbert, both sons of Patrick's late son John.²²

As skilled masons and builders working throughout York County in the late 1800s, Patrick and John Kelly were instrumental in the development of Headford during an era of prosperity in the community during the latter half of the 19th century.

In addition to the subject dwelling at 9853 Leslie Street, Patrick and John Kelly are attributed with the brickwork of the William Munro House at 9835 Leslie Street (c. 1875), the Headford Church at 9550 Leslie Street (1882), 9838 Leslie Street (c.1885, demolished), the Adam Henricks House at 1600 Major Mackenzie Drive East (1889), the David Hislop House at 1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East (1877, demolished), and the Richmond Hill High School at 10268 Yonge Street (1897). There are, undoubtedly, other unidentified examples of their work in the vicinity.

¹⁹ “Building notes,” *Liberal*. Oct 10, 1889.

²⁰ “Obituary notice,” *Liberal*. Jun 10, 1897.

²¹ “Headford,” *Liberal*. Nov 10, 1898.

²² Su Murdoch Historical Consulting, “9853 Leslie Street: Patrick Kelly Residence.” Prepared for the Town of Richmond Hill LACAC, 1997.

Architecture

Dating to circa 1876, the Patrick & John Kelly House at 9853 Leslie Street is a representative example of the late-Victorian Gothic Revival architectural style, which was prevalent in Ontario from the mid-19th to early 20th centuries.

The dwelling at 9853 Leslie Street is a 1 ½-storey, dichromatic brick building with an L-shaped plan. The house is oriented to face south towards the former Headford Mill Lane (now a private access road) and features a complex medium-pitched cross-gabled roof form. In addition to south, east, and west gable-ends, the roof also features a steeply-pitched central gable inset with a single lancet-arched window on the ell of its south elevation.

The house features a cut-stone foundation, which appears to have been parged sometime after 2013. The building's south, east, and west elevations are clad in mixed red/orange brick laid in common bond, with playful buff brick detailing. The rear (north) elevation, being of lesser visual importance when approaching from along the Headford Mill Lane to the south, is clad in buff brick only. The north elevation features a non-original central doorway added sometime after 2014, and exterior chimney. The variegated colour of the house's red/orange brick was a common result of the technological inability to maintain consistency in brick composition and firing temperature. In the 1870s, the mottled effect was either accepted as normal or evened out with the application of a red or buff dye. The widespread mottling in brick colour suggest that the dye, if used, has weathered off over time. The house's buff brick detailing includes a projecting building base, just above the foundation, brick quoining, decorative brick banding in different patterns, radiating door and window voussoirs, and decorative lozenges in the east and west gable-ends as well as the central gable on the south elevation.

The building features segmental-arched window and door openings, with wood lugsills, and buff brick radiating voussoirs. There is also a lancet-arched window within the central gable on the house's south elevation, with a wooden lugsill and buff brick voussoir. The house's principal (south) elevation features a two-storey canted bay window with a hipped roof, whose corners are accented with vertical bands of paler orange brick. The house's main entrance is located within the ell on the building's south elevations, and features a doorway with a transom. Markings on the brick above the main doorway indicate that there was once a bellcast verandah located in the building's ell. All window and doors units appear to be modern replacements.

The subject dwelling also has a one-storey gable-roofed frame addition on its east elevation.

Context

The Patrick & John Kelly House at 9853 Leslie Street is located east of Leslie Street and south of Major Mackenzie Drive East, within the former hamlet of Headford in Markham Township. While the property has a Leslie Street address, it does not front onto Leslie Street, but rather onto a private access road running along its southern

boundary, which was formerly the Headford Mill Lane that connected Leslie Street to the mill on the east side of the Rouge River. With the mill long decommissioned, the lane now terminates at the west bank of the Rouge River.

The surrounding Hamlet of Headford was an agricultural and milling community that prospered during the mid-to-late-19th century around the intersection of Leslie Street and Major Mackenzie Drive East. The Rouge River, the source of power for Headford's early mills and industry, is located east of the subject property.

Although the surrounding context has been significantly altered by the development of contemporary residential subdivisions to the west and northeast of the subject property, as well as large industrial parks to the south, a cluster of Headford's 19th century built form still remains around the intersection of Leslie Street and Major Mckenzie Drive East. This built form is typified by the Gothic Revival architectural style popular in the late 19th century. Surviving buildings and properties that contribute to the Historical character of Headford include the Headford Church and Cemetery at 9550 Leslie Street, the William Munro House at 9835 Leslie Street, the Patrick Kelly House at 9853 Leslie Street (the subject property), the John Montgomery House at 9875 Leslie Street, the Jacob Horner House at 32 Love Court, the Cyrus-Mapes House at 31 Love Court, the Adam Henricks House at 1600 Major Mackenzie Drive East, and the Horner Cemetery at 9950 Leslie Street.

Compliance with Ontario Regulation 9/06 – Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06, the prescribed provincial *Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest* under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. There are a total of nine criteria under O. Reg. 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

Criteria applicable to the property are outlined below, along with explanatory text.

1. The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.

Dating to c. 1876, the Patrick & John Kelly House at 9853 Leslie Street has design and physical value as a representative example of the late-Victorian Gothic Revival architectural style. The building has retained its original 1 ½-storey scale, form, massing and southern orientation towards the former Headford Mill Lane (now a private access road). The building has also retained many original architectural details that are representative of the late-Victorian Gothic Revival style including its L-shaped plan, medium-pitched cross-gabled roof with additional central gable inset with a lancet-arched window on its south elevation, red/orange-brick cladding with decorative buff brick details, segmental-headed windows and doors, two-storey canted bay window with hipped roof on its south elevation, and south-facing principal entrance with transomed doorway.

2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.

The Patrick & John Kelly House also has design and physical value for the high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit displayed in its elaborate dichromatic patterned brickwork, attributed to significant Headford bricklayers and masons Patrick and John Kelly, who built, owned, and resided in the house from the 1870s to the early 1900s. Brick detailing at the Patrick & John Kelly House includes a projecting buff-brick building base, quoins, window and door voussoirs, decorative brick banding in different patterns, and decorative lozenges in the east and west gable-ends as well as the central gable on the south elevation.

3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.

N/A

4. The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.

The subject property has historical and associative value as the former residence of Patrick and John Kelly, who were both significant local masons in Headford during an era of prosperity in the hamlet during the late 19th century. Patrick Kelly moved to Headford in the 1850s, and the Kelly family owned and occupied the subject dwelling from the 1870s to the early 1900s.

5. The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.

N/A

6. The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.

The Patrick and John Kelly House also has historical value because it reflects the work of celebrated Headford bricklayers and stonemasons Patrick and John Kelly. As skilled masons and builders working throughout York County from the 1850s to the late 1890s, Patrick and John Kelly were instrumental in the development of Headford during an era of prosperity in the community during the latter half of the 19th century.

In addition to the subject property, Patrick and John Kelly are attributed with the brickwork of the William Munro House at 9835 Leslie Street (c. 1875) the Headford Church at 9550 Leslie Street (1882), 9838 Leslie Street (c.1885, demolished), the Adam Henricks House at 1600 Major Mackenzie Drive East (1889), the David Hislop House at 1621 Major Mackenzie Drive East (1877, demolished), and the Richmond Hill High

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School at 10268 Yonge Street (1897). There are, undoubtedly, other unidentified examples of their work in the vicinity.

7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.

The Patrick & John Kelly House has contextual value because its scale, form, and Gothic Revival architectural style are important in defining and maintaining the remaining historical 19th-century character of the hamlet of Headford.

8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

The Patrick & John Kelly House has existed in its current location since c. 1876, when it was erected as the Kelly family home on the former Headford Mill Lane in the hamlet of Headford. As such, the subject dwelling retains long-standing and significant physical, visual and historical links to its surroundings, including to significant natural features such as the Rouge River and Headford Valley lands to the east, as well as built features such as the former Headford Mill Lane (now a private access road) to the south. The subject property also has long-standing and significant physical, visual, and historical links to the former milling and agricultural community of Headford.

9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.

N/A

Maps and Photographs



Figure 1 Aerial image showing the approximate location of the subject property at 9853 Leslie Street. Note that the property does not front onto Leslie Street, but rather onto a private access road that was formerly the Headford Mill Lane leading to the mill on the east side of the Rouge River. (Source: RH GeoHub).



Figure 2 1853-54 McPhillips Map of the township of Markham, showing the approximate location of the subject property at 9853 Leslie Street. Note that at the time development in Headford was concentrated to Leslie Street and the Headford Mill Lane running south of the subject property. (Source: York University Digital Library).

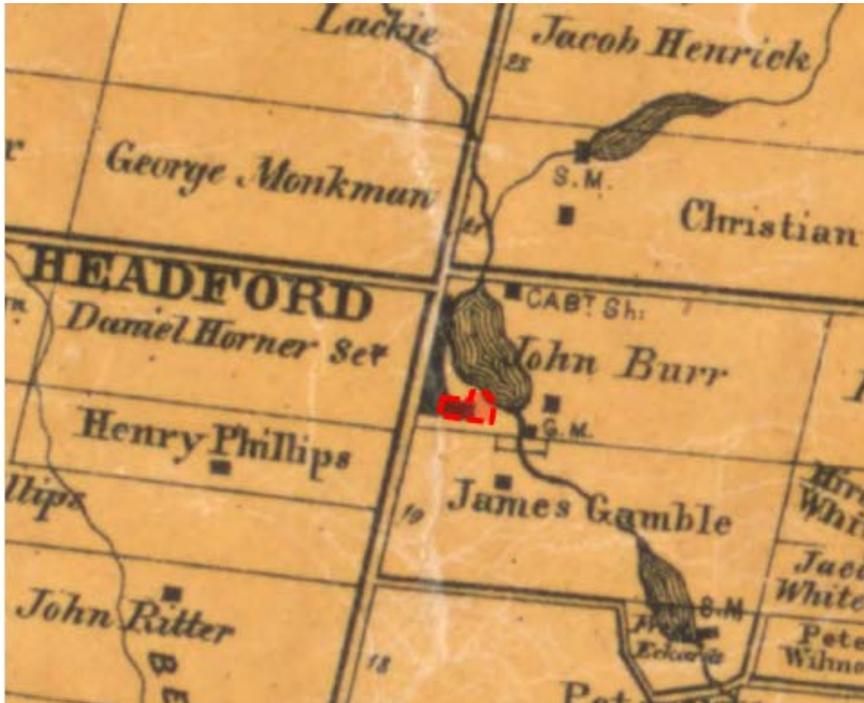


Figure 3 1860 Tremaine's Map showing the approximate location of the subject property at 9853 Leslie Street. Note that at the time development in Headford was concentrated to Leslie Street and the Headford Mill Lane running south of the subject property. (Source: University of Toronto Ontario Historical County Maps Project).



Figure 4 1878 Miles & Co. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York*, showing the approximate location of the subject property at 9853 Leslie Street. Note that at the time development in Headford was concentrated to Leslie Street and the Headford Mill Lane running south of the subject property. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection).

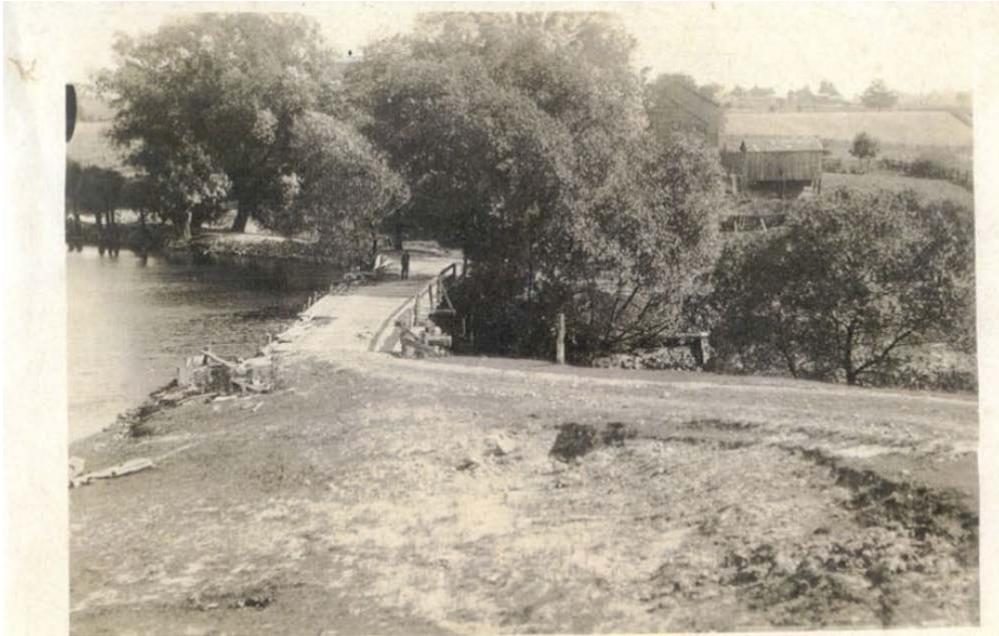


Figure 5 Early 20th century photograph of the Headford Mill Lane, which led east from Leslie Street to the Headford Mill, crossing over the mill pond dam via a bridge. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection).



Figure 6 Photograph of the south (front) and partial west elevations of the Patrick & John Kelly House at 9853 Leslie Street. Note the building's 1 ½ storey massing, L-shaped plan, medium-pitched roof with gables, dichromatic brickwork, segmental and lancet-arched windows, and the two-storey canted bay window with a hipped roof. (Source: HUD, 2024).



Figure 7 Photograph of the Patrick & John Kelly House's front (south) elevation. Note the building's 1 ½-storey massing, medium-pitched cross-gabled roof with steep central gable on the building's ell inset with a lancet-arched window, playful dichromatic brickwork, segmental arched windows, projecting two-storey bay window with hipped roof, and transomed main entrance. (Source: HUD, 2024).



Figure 8 Photograph of the Patrick & John Kelly House's west (side) elevation. Note the building's 1 ½-storey massing, medium-pitched cross-gabled roof, playful dichromatic brickwork including quoining, banding, lozenges, and voussoirs, and segmental arched windows. (Source: HUD, 2024).



Figure 9 Photograph of the Patrick & John Kelly House's west (side) and rear (north) elevations. Note the building's 1 ½-storey massing, medium-pitched cross-gabled roof, playful dichromatic brickwork including quoining, banding, lozenges, and voussoirs, and segmental arched windows. Also note that the house's north elevation, being of less visual importance when approaching the house along the former Headford Mill Lane to the south, is clad entirely in buff brick. (Source: HUD, 2024). (Source: HUD, 2024).



Figure 10 View of the Patrick & John Kelly's west (side) elevation, looking east from Leslie Street along the former Headford Mill Lane (now a private access road). Note the surrounding context including natural features such as the Headford Valleylands and Rouge River to the east (in the background). (Source: HUD, 2024).

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