

Heritage Research and Evaluation Report



10094 and 10096 Yonge Street - Jerry Smith Building

1860

Part of Lot 46, Concession 1, Vaughan Township

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

History

10094 and 10096 Yonge Street

The property at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street originated as part of Lot 46, Concession 1, Vaughan Township. The subject property is located on the west side of Yonge Street, north of Major Mackenzie Drive East, and within the boundaries of the historic village of Richmond Hill.

Land Registry records indicate that the 210-acre Lot 46, Concession 1, Vaughan Township was patented from the Crown in 1803 by the founder of Richmond Hill, Abner Miles.¹ The lot was part of his vast real estate holdings of approximately 2,000 acres in Markham, Vaughan, and Whitchurch townships. When Abner died in 1806, his son, James, acquired the family holdings. Abner and James Miles were both Presbyterians; while the congregation is said to have first met in Abner Miles' store and tavern on Yonge Street, it was James who started the settlement's first Sunday School in 1811, and later supported the erection of a frame church building on a five-acre parcel of Lot

¹ *Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book*, York Region, Concession 1, Lot 46, Vaughan Township (Richmond Hill).

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46 in 1821.² Following James Miles' death in 1844, his executors John and Elizabeth Arnold formally conveyed this five-acre parcel (later known as Lot 32 in the 1879 Gibson's Plan) to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church for £300.³

The Trustees of the church utilized a portion of the five acres in the same manner as clergy reserve or glebe lands that were allotted to churches as a source of income. Some of the church lands may have been initially leased for crops,⁴ and in the 1840s the Trustees divided the northeast corner of the church property into four building lots with Yonge Street frontage, which were leased out by the church as an additional source of income. The subject property is now located on what was once known as Church Lot No. 1.

The files of the Presbyterian Clerk of Session contain four early lease documents for these Church Lots. These documents indicate that early leaseholders were required to erect buildings on the land. It appears that Francis Dalby, a local innkeeper, was the first leaseholder for Church Lot 1, and that the lease was transferred to John & Henry Harrison, Markham stave manufacturers, in June of 1860.⁵ Archival newspaper notices and advertisements indicate that the subject building on Church Lot 1, which originally contained two storefronts, was completed by October 1860, when Alexander Scott, the editor and proprietor of the *York Herald* newspaper, moved his printing office and home to the subject building.⁶ From October 1860 to September 1861, leaseholders H. & J. Harrison advertised a store to let adjoining the *York Herald* office, described as being well-suited for a "millinery or watchmaker's shop."⁷ The second commercial unit was then rented by J. C. Wheeler, a "clock & watchmaker, jeweller & dentist" in October of 1861;⁸ Wheller was later joined in business by watchmaker Alex Henderson in December of the same year.⁹

Land Registry records indicate that on March 24, 1879, John Harrison and James and Ann Harrison (executors of Henry Harrison) assigned their lease of all 4,000 square feet of Church Lot 1 to Adelaide Maria Victoria Keebler, wife of Matthias H. Keebler, for \$800.¹⁰ The agreement included "the right to the buildings erected on said premises."¹¹

²Su Murdoch, "10094 Yonge Street." Prepared for the Town of Richmond Hill LACAC, 1998.

³*Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book*, York Region, Concession 1, Lot 46, Vaughan Township (Richmond Hill).

⁴Robert Stamp. *Early Days in Richmond Hill*, p.70.

⁵An undated early lease document from the Presbyterian Clerk of Session files references the sale of a lease for "Lot Number 1" held by Francis Dalby of the village of Elora, Wellington County, to John Harrison of Markham; a later 1879 lease agreement for Lot 1 between John and Henry Harrison and Mattias Keebler also refers to the prior lease dated June 25, 1860, between the Trustees of the Canada Presbyterian Church of Richmond Hill and John and Henry Harrison, Markham stave manufacturers.

⁶"Notice of removal," *York Herald*. Oct 12, 1860.

⁷"Small store to rent," *York Herald*. September 27, 1861.

⁸"Just arrived in town," *York Herald*. Oct 18, 1861.

⁹"Alex Henderson," *York Herald*. Dec 6, 1861.

¹⁰*Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book*, York Region, Concession 1, Lot 46, Vaughan Township (Richmond Hill).

¹¹"Lease agreement Number 506 (1879)" contained in Su Murdoch, "10094 Yonge Street." Prepared for the Town of Richmond Hill LACAC, 1998.

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Matthias Keefler was the editor, publisher and proprietor of the *York Herald* newspaper, who had taken over the business from Alex Scott in 1876.¹²

In June 1886 the Keefler lease of Church Lot 1 was renewed directly with the Trustees at a rate of \$15 per year, for a term of 21 years.¹³ In September 1895, Adelaide Keefler assigned the lease to William T. Storey for \$300.¹⁴ Storey, a carriage builder at the nearby Trench Carriage Works,¹⁵ lived and worked out of the subject building, and also rented space out to a visiting dentist from Toronto in the 1890s.¹⁶

On August 19, 1909, the Trustees leased the 4,000 square feet of Church Lot 1 to Jeremiah (Jerry) Smith for \$15 per year, for a term of 21 years.¹⁷ However, archival newspaper advertisements and notices reveal that Jerry Smith moved his business into the subject property in June of 1904, when he purchased “Mr. W. T. Storey’s shop and residence, opposite the Standard Bank.”¹⁸ Born and raised in Richmond Hill, Jerry Smith was an internationally renowned watchmaker, who lived and ran his business out of the subject property at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street from 1904 until his death in 1953. Early-20th-century photographs of the subject building (Figures 2 and 3) reveal its appearance during Smith’s early ownership, with his shop occupying the north storefront, and his family residence occupying the south portion and upper floor. Archival fire insurance plans from 1910 (Figure 5) and 1923 (Figure 6) also show that the building’s L-shaped footprint has remained relatively unchanged from the early 20th century.

Following Jerry Smith’s death in 1953, the Presbyterian Church Trustees sold Church Lot 1 to Smith’s executors, Leonard Henry Clement of Richmond Hill and Audrey Marie Poulton of Clarkson, for \$2 etc. in March of 1954.¹⁹ The property was described as the North 46 'of the East 100 'of Lot 32, Plan 481. In November of the same year, Audrey Poulton then sold the property to Jessie Yerex and Lucy Dickie for \$1 etc. The Yerex family renovated the building, described as a village “landmark” in the *Liberal*, in 1955,²⁰ and sold it to David H. M. McLean in 1960. McLean then re-sold the property to Frederick and Barbara Dorner in 1978.²¹

¹² “M. H. Keefler,” *York Herald*. June 23, 1876.

¹³ *Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book*, York Region, Concession 1, Lot 46, Vaughan Township (Richmond Hill).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ “Renovate landmark,” *Liberal*. Apr 15, 1955.

¹⁶ “Dr. W. Cecil Trotter, B.A. Dentist,” *Liberal*. May 27, 1897.

¹⁷ *Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book*, York Region, Concession 1, Lot 46, Vaughan Township (Richmond Hill).

¹⁸ “Convalescent,” *Liberal*. May 12, 1904.

¹⁹ *Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book*, York Region, Concession 1, Lot 46, Vaughan Township (Richmond Hill).

²⁰ “Renovate landmark,” *Liberal*. Apr 15, 1955.

²¹ *Ibid.*

The York Herald: Alexander Scott & Matthias Keefler

Richmond Hill's first newspaper, the *York Ridings Gazette and Richmond Hill Advertiser*, was established on June 12th 1857. Initially managed by William Trudgeon, an aspiring politician from East York, the paper was not a financial success, and its ownership and name changed several times over a short period, becoming the *British Tribune* in 1857, the *Commonwealth* in 1858, and finally the *York Herald* in 1859.²²

Initially under the ownership of Malcolm Macleod, the *York Herald's* motto was "Let sound reason weigh with us more than public opinion."²³ However, one of the paper's early editorials proved so controversial, that ownership was transferred to Alexander Scott in May of 1859. Scott acted as the editor, publisher, and proprietor of the paper, while also running a job printing business and dealing in books, stationery, and other paper goods. Born in Scotland in 1833, Scott immigrated to Canada sometime before 1859, settling in Vaughan. While it appears that Scott's printing office was originally briefly located a few doors south of the subject property on the west side of Yonge Street, Scott moved his home and business to the subject building at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street in October of 1860.²⁴

Scott married May Ellen Sanderson of Markham on December 29, 1860. The couple are recorded in the 1861 Census for Vaughan Township, with Alexander listed as a printer of Presbyterian faith, and May listed as a Methodist, born in the United States.²⁵ The couple is recorded as residing in a two-storey frame dwelling on Yonge Street, the subject property at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street. Despite continued financial difficulties, and a brief suspension of publication between 1863 and 1865, Alexander Scott edited and published the *York Herald* for nearly 20 years from 1860 to 1876.²⁶ Alexander, May and their six children moved to Barrie, Ontario sometime between 1876 and 1881, where Alexander resumed his business as a bookseller.²⁷

On June 1, 1876, the *York Herald* passed into the hands of Alexander Scott's successor, Matthias Keefler. Keefler was born in Nova Scotia in 1826 of German ancestry, and married Adelaide Keefler (nee Farquhar) before moving to Ontario. While Matthias Keefler is listed as a bookkeeper residing in Yorkville with Adelaide and their four children in the 1871 Census, the family moved to Richmond Hill to take over the *York Herald* in 1876. Keefler continued to publish the *York Herald* and to run a printing and stationery business out of the subject building at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street until 1890, when the family relocated to Weston.²⁸

²² William Harrison, "Our first newspaper," *Liberal*. Jul 2, 1908.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Notice of removal," *York Herald*. Oct 12, 1860.

²⁵ Canadian Census, 1861.

²⁶ William Harrison, "Our first newspaper," *Liberal*. Jul 2, 1908.

²⁷ Canadian Census, 1881.

²⁸ "The Herald Store," *York Herald*. Jul 31, 1890.

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As the editors and owners of the *York Herald*, a local newspaper recording events in Richmond Hill and beyond from the 1850s to the 1890s, both Alexander Scott and Matthias Keebler were highly significant early residents of the village.

Jerry Smith

Jerry Smith was born in 1873 at Edgeley (Jane Street and Highway 7), the son of Vaughan Township residents Samuel and Sarah (Snider) Smith. The Smith family originally immigrated about 1799 from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, to Vaughan. Jerry attended Edgeley Public School and Richmond Hill High School. "At age ten, he exhibited considerable energy and ingenuity in building inventive machines from household objects."²⁹ With an early interest in telegraphy, in 1892 he became an operator for the Grand Trunk Railway at nearby Concord Station, later serving at the Divisional Offices at Allandale near Barrie. After five years, he decided to become a watchmaker and attended the Canadian Horological Institute in Toronto.³⁰ He graduated in 1899 with a Diploma Grade A 1, the highest level of diploma awarded.

Jerry first settled in Brantford,³¹ but moved to Richmond Hill in 1900 to open a business in the Lorne Block at the northwest corner of Yonge and Arnold. On November 20, 1900, he married Effie May Hollingshead of Collingwood and they had nine daughters and one son. In 1904, the Smiths moved into the subject building where they were able to operate a watchmaker's business in the shop in the north section and live as a family in the south portion and upper floor. Jerry spent most of his life working with timepieces, winning worldwide acclaim and recognition for his skill and craftsmanship. Effie died on May 20, 1951, followed by Jerry on January 8, 1953. In his death, Richmond Hill is said to have lost a distinguished citizen.

Jerry Smith's obituary, published in the *Liberal* on January 15, 1953 notes:

*"In him were combined rich qualities of heart, and mind, and soul which made him unique and outstanding. More than fifty years in business in Richmond Hill he was a landmark of this village, and his integrity and workmanship brought honor and credit not only on himself and family but to the whole community."*³²

Architecture

Dating to 1860, the Jerry Smith Building at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street is a representative example of a mid-Victorian Gothic Revival architectural style and 19th-century mixed-use building typology traditionally found on main streets, which features storefronts at grade and residential uses above. While the building has seen a number of alterations over time, such as the removal of its front verandah and over-cladding with stucco panels, the subject building has retained many original elements, such as its original L-shaped form, 1 ½-storey massing, medium-pitched cross-gabled roof,

²⁹ Audrey Smith Koning and Mary Jane Celsie, *Jerry Smith, Richmond Hill's master watchmaker: A man in his time* (Richmond Hill, Ont: A. Koning, 1998).

³⁰ Su Murdoch, "10094 Yonge Street." Prepared for the Town of Richmond Hill LACAC, 1998.

³¹ "Well spoken of," *Liberal*. Feb 1, 1900.

³² "Renowned watchmaker Jerry Smith passes after half century in business," *Liberal*. Jan 15, 1953.

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orientation towards Yonge Street, flat headed window and door openings, and storefronts at grade, and it remains legible as a mid-Victorian Gothic Revival mixed use building.

The building at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street is a 1 ½-storey frame building with an L-shaped plan and a medium-pitched cross-gabled roof with east, south and west gable ends. Because of the building's location immediately adjacent to the M. L. McConaghy Centre (formerly Richmond Hill High School) which features a large setback from the street, the subject building's side (north) elevation is also highly visible from Yonge Street, and this elevation also features a central gable.

The building is of frame construction, and original wood clapboard siding has been recently (2019-2020) overclad with stucco panels. The building has flat-headed window and door openings, and all windows appear to contain modern vinyl units. While the recent exterior paneling has obscured the original window surrounds on the building's east and north elevations, wooden lugsills remain visible beneath two second-storey windows on the building's south elevation. The paired second-storey window openings in the front (east) and side (south) gable ends are likely original, as is the single window opening in the central gable on the building's highly visible side (north) elevation.

The house's principal (east) elevation features two storefronts at grade, both with contemporary display windows. These storefronts are accessed via five concrete steps running the length of this elevation.

The building also has a modern, flat-roofed, single-storey commercial addition on its south elevation, as well as an earlier gable-roofed, single-storey rear (west) addition. This addition predates 1910, as it appears in a fire insurance plan from this year (Figure 5).

Context

The Jerry Smith Building at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street is located on the west side of Yonge Street, north of Major Mackenzie Drive, and within the boundaries of the historic village of Richmond Hill. Surrounding the subject property, Yonge Street in Richmond Hill's village core features a predominantly fine-grained 19th and early-20th century commercial main street character, which is typified by fine-grained commercial and residential buildings with storefronts at-grade, typically built flush with the Yonge Street lot line. These commercial and residential buildings are also interspersed with landmark institutional/public buildings, including churches and schools. While the surrounding streetscape along Yonge Street does feature some later development typologies, including surface parking lots, commercial plazas and higher-density residential and mixed-use development, the predominant character remains that of a historic main street. Nearby properties contributing to this historical main street character include St. Mary's Anglican Church (10030 Yonge Street; 1872) the Presbyterian Church Manse (10058 Yonge Street; 1876), the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church and Cemetery (10066 Yonge Street; 1880), the M. L. McConaghy Public School (10100 Yonge Street; 1914), the Maxwell-Stanford House (10039 Yonge Street; c. 1860), the Matthew Carr House (10063 Yonge Street; c. 1870), the Trench

Carriage Works (10117-10123 Yonge Street; 1878-1882), and the Standard Bank (10111 Yonge Street; 1915).

The subject property is also part of a grouping of institutional buildings on the west side of Yonge Street between Major Mackenzie Drive and Arnold Crescent, erected on land originally donated by Richmond Hill's prominent Miles family in the 19th century. The subject property originated in the mid-19th century as one of four "Church Lots" with Yonge Street frontage within the five-acre Presbyterian Church lands donated by James Miles around 1821. The M. L. McConaghy Public School to the north, established as the Richmond Hill Public School in 1847, was also built on lands donated by Miles. The school's large setback from Yonge Street, originally used as a schoolyard for students, also allows high visibility of the Jerry Smith Building's side (north) elevation from Yonge 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 1860, the Jerry Smith Building at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street has design and physical value as a representative example of a mid-Victorian Gothic Revival architectural style and mid-19th-century mixed-use building typology typically found on historical main streets in Ontario. While the building has seen a number of alterations over time, it remains legible as a mid-Victorian Gothic Revival mixed use building due to its existing architectural elements, such as its original L-shaped form, 1½-storey massing, medium-pitched cross-gabled roof, orientation towards Yonge Street, flat headed window and door openings, and the presence of storefronts at grade.

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

N/A

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 Jerry Smith Building has historical value for its associations with Richmond Hill newspaper the *York Herald*, and its proprietors, editors and publishers Alexander Scott and Matthias Keebler. Scott owned and published the *York Herald* out of the subject building from 1860 to 1876, when he was succeeded by Keebler, who continued the business until 1890. Scott and Keebler also lived with their families in the residential unit above the printing office. As the editors and owners of the *York Herald*, a local newspaper recording events in Richmond Hill and beyond from the 1850s to the 1890s, both Alexander Scott and Matthias Keebler were highly significant early residents of the village.

Further, the subject building has historical value for its associations with internationally renowned Richmond Hill watchmaker Jerry Smith, whose business and home were located in the subject property for nearly half a century from 1904 to his death in 1953.

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.

N/A

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

The Jerry Smith Building has contextual value because its scale, form, and mid-19th-century architectural style and mixed-use typology are important in defining and maintaining the predominantly 19th- and early-20th-century main street character along Yonge Street in Richmond Hill's village core. The property also contributes to the historic character of Richmond Hill's village core more broadly, which is typified by a mixture of 19th- and early-20th-century small-scale residential and commercial structures along Yonge Street, and fine-grained residential built form located on side streets east and west of Yonge Street.

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

The Jerry Smith Building has further contextual value because of its physical, functional, visual, and historical links to its surroundings within a grouping of institutionally-owned buildings on the west side of Yonge Street between Major Mackenzie Drive and Arnold Crescent, erected on land originally donated by Richmond Hill's prominent Miles family

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in the 19th century. The subject property originated in the mid-19th century as one of four “Church Lots” within the five-acre Presbyterian Church lands donated by James Miles around 1821. The M. L. McConaghy Public School to the north, established as the Richmond Hill Public School in 1847, was also built on lands donated by Miles.

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

N/A

Maps and Photographs

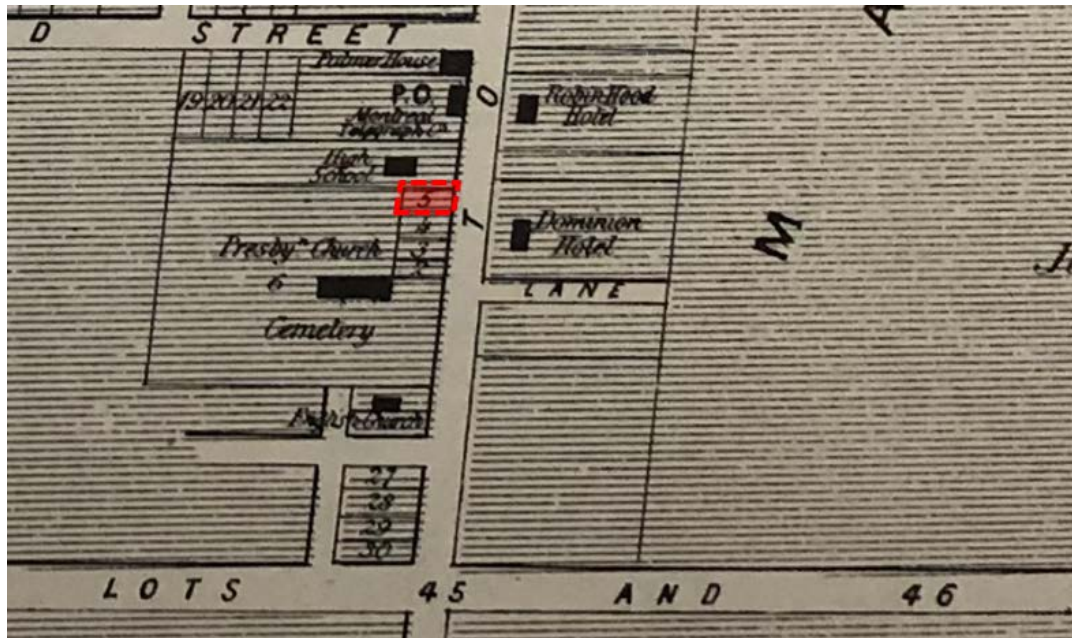


Figure 1 1878 Miles & Co. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York*, showing the approximate location of the subject property at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street in red, as one of the Presbyterian “Church Lots” on the west side of Yonge Street. Note the Presbyterian Church to the south and the Public School to the north. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection)



Figure 2 Early 20th century photograph of Jerry Smith's shop and residence at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street. At the time, Smith ran his watchmaking business out of the north storefront and lived in the south portion and upper floor of the building. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection)



Figure 3 Early 20th century photograph of Jerry Smith’s shop and residence at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street, showing its prominent side (north) elevation. (Source: *Jerry Smith, Richmond Hill’s master watchmaker: A man in his time*)

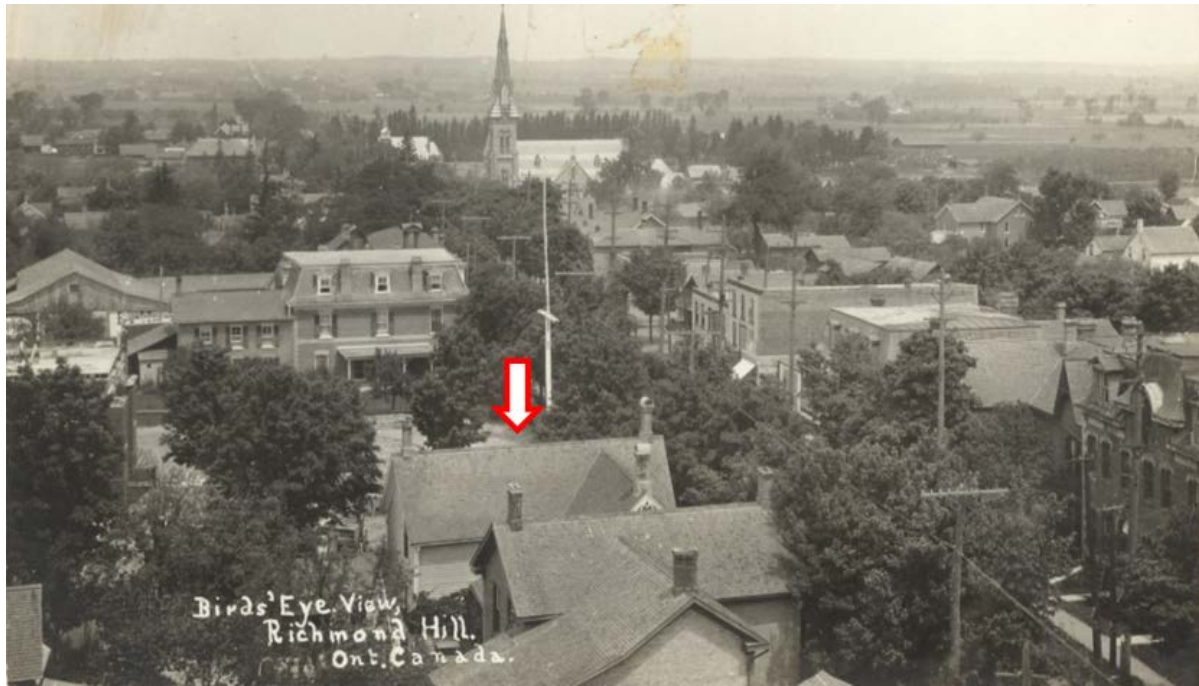


Figure 4 C.1910 photograph looking north up Yonge Street from the Presbyterian Church Spire, with the Jerry Smith Building at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street indicated. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection)



Figure 5 1910 Goad’s Fire Insurance Plan of Richmond Hill, with the approximate location of the subject property at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street in red. (Source: University of Toronto Library)

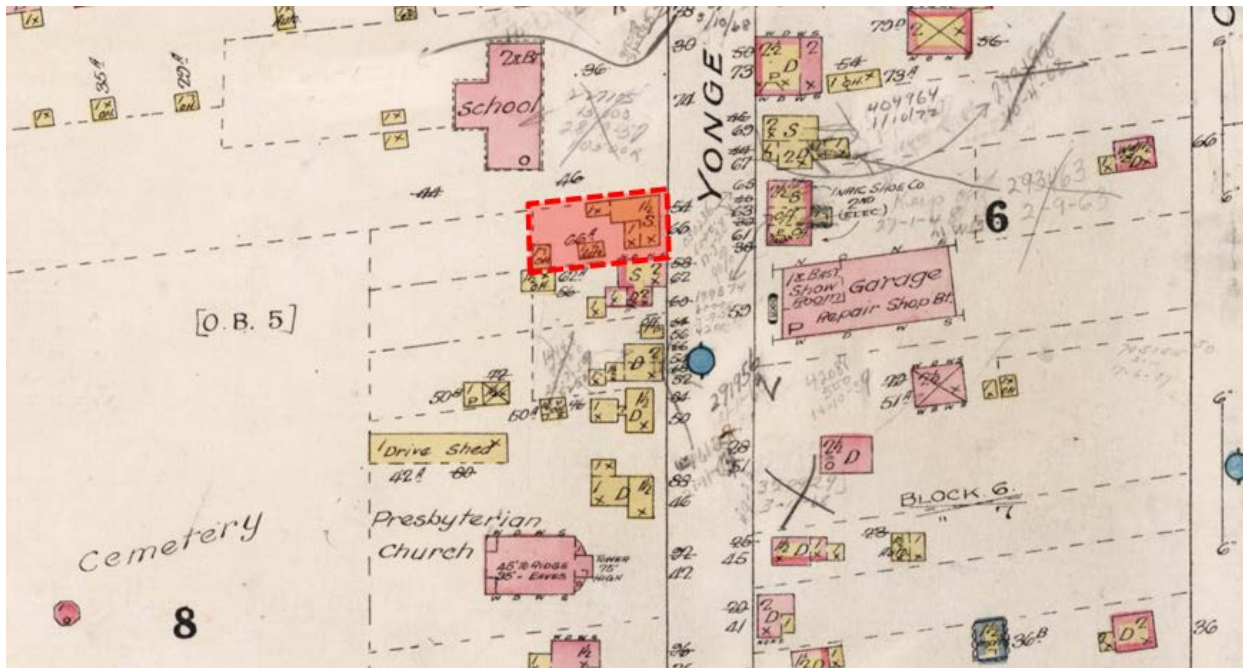


Figure 6 1923 Underwriter's Survey Bureau Limited Fire Insurance Plan of Richmond Hill, with the approximate location of the subject property at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street in red. (Source: University of Toronto Library)



Figure 7 1955 photograph of the Jerry Smith Building at 10094 and 10096 Yonge Street published in the *Liberal*. Note the building's distinctive "scroll" bargeboard trim and full-façade verandah with turned wooden posts and decorative brackets. (Source: *Liberal*, Apr 15, 1955)

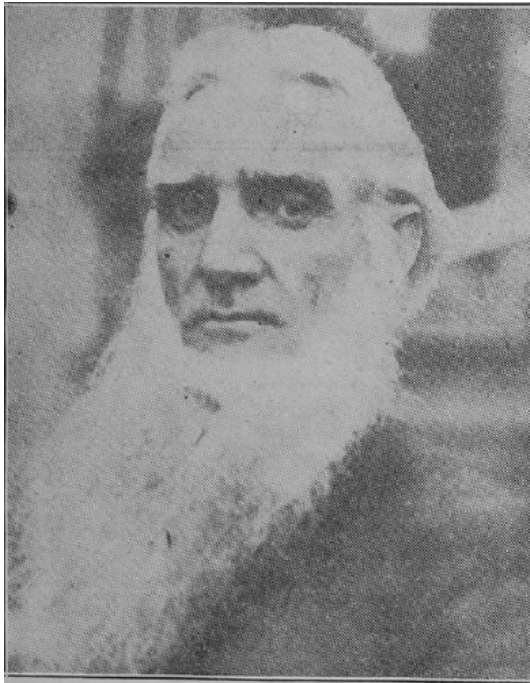


Figure 8 Photograph of internationally renowned Richmond Hill watchmaker Jerry Smith, from his obituary in the *Liberal*. (Source: *Liberal*, Jan 15, 1953)



Figure 9 Photograph of the Jerry Smith Building's front (east) elevation, looking west from Yonge Street. Note the building's 1 ½-storey massing, medium-pitched cross-gabled roof with front (east) gable end, flat headed windows, and storefronts at grade. (Source: HUD, 2024)



Figure 10 Photograph of the Jerry Smith Building's front (east) and side (north) elevations, looking southwest from Yonge Street. Note the building's 1 ½-storey massing, L-shaped plan, medium-pitched cross-gabled roof with front (east) gable end and north gable, flat headed windows, and storefronts at grade. (Source: HUD, 2024)



Figure 11 Photograph of the Jerry Smith Building's front (east) and partial south (side) elevations, looking northwest from Yonge Street. Note the building's 1 ½-storey massing, medium-pitched cross-gabled roof with front (east) and south gable ends, flat headed windows, and storefronts at grade. (Source: HUD, 2024)

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