

Heritage Research and Evaluation Report



10231 Yonge Street - Hume House

c. 1840s

Part of Lot 47, Concession 1, Markham Township

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

History

Contextual History

The Hume House at 10231 Yonge Street is a circa 1840s timber-frame vernacular structure located in the City of Richmond Hill's historic village core. Prior to colonization and settlement, the land 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. 10231 Yonge Street is located within the former Lot 47 Concession 1 in Markham Township, which is associated with a period of intense early development within the village along Yonge, Centre, Church, and Dunlop Streets from 1810 to 1850. At the time of its construction, the Hume House was part of the budding Richmond Hill community, surrounded by small-scale lots and early-19th century structures. Over time, the subject property has been referred to as Lot 47 Concession 1, Lot 38 on 47, 10231 Yonge Street, and Judge's Plan 10030 Lot 9.

10231 Yonge Street

The first owner of Lot 47 Concession 1 in Markham Township was Andrew Davidson, who was granted 190 acres by the Crown in 1802. Land registry records show that the full 190 acres passed hands several times in the early nineteenth century - it was sold to John H. Hudson in 1804, to William Allan in 1805, to Samuel S. Wilmott in 1808, to Jabez Lynde in 1817, and then to Amos Wright in 1832. After 1832, Amos Wright subdivided the lot and sold off smaller part-lots along Yonge Street to facilitate the development of the growing village. A part lot was sold to Aaron Campbell sometime before 1845. According to land registry records, Aaron Campbell sold the ½ acre property to Aza F. Reid in 1845, who then granted the lot to Thomas Wilson in 1859.¹

According to Su Murdoch Historical Consulting, Reid was the most likely owner to build the subject building.² According to land registry records, Thomas Wilson purchased the ½ acre property for £137.10 in 1859, and Murdoch argues that a lot of that size, sold for that price in Richmond Hill in the mid-nineteenth century, would already have had a structure on it. Further, local tradition states that Dr. Aza Reid purchased the Yonge Street property for his son William's cabinet making business. Tax assessment rolls substantiate William's presence on the property – in 1853, William Reid, a cabinetmaker, is listed as a householder (tenant) on a ½ acre property on lot 47 owned by Dr. Reid.³ Therefore, the subject structure was either built by Aaron Campbell between 1832 and 1845, or it was built by Dr. Reid sometime between purchasing the property in 1845 and William Reid's tenancy in 1853.⁴

In 1859, the same year that he bought it, Thomas Wilson sold the subject property to Abraham Law.⁵ However, as Law resided at Richmond Villa at the northwest corner of Yonge and Richmond at this time,⁶ it is unlikely that Law ever occupied the subject property himself. Records also list Law as a non-resident owner of lot 47, Markham Township during his period of ownership between 1859 and 1876. As tax assessment rolls do not name any tenants on the property under Law's ownership, the lot's use during this period remains unknown.⁷

In 1876, Isaac Crosby purchased the front part of the subject lot from Abraham Law. The Crosby family owned the Fire Proof Store directly south of the subject property, and archival sources indicate that they likely rented out 10231 Yonge Street to various tenants. One of the tenants was Mrs. Anderson in 1866. According to the *York Herald*, a fire broke out on Yonge Street in 1866 and burned down several structures, including the Crosby store. The *Herald* says that the "house north of Mr. Crosby's, occupied by Mrs. Anderson"⁸ was damaged, but not burned down, in the blaze. Another tenant was

¹ *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 47, Concession 1, Markham Township.

² "The Reid-Law-Hume Building." *Su Murdoch Historical Consulting*, 1998.

³ *Assessment roll for the township of Markham, 1 concession*. Markham Township, 1853.

⁴ "The Reid-Law-Hume Building." *Su Murdoch Historical Consulting*, 1998.

⁵ *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 47, Concession 1, Markham Township.

⁶ Stamp, Robert M. *Early Days in Richmond Hill: A History of the Community to 1930*. Richmond Hill: Richmond Hill Public Library Board, 1991.

⁷ "The Reid-Law-Hume Building." *Su Murdoch Historical Consulting*, 1998.

⁸ "Destructive fire in Richmond Hill." *York Herald*, April 20 1866.

William Storey, who occupied the property around 1879 to 1881. According to the *York Herald*, Storey was having a verandah added to his house in May 1879. In February of 1880, the *Herald* stated that Mr. Crosby had finished making improvements on the frame house north of his store, which was occupied by William Storey.⁹ Storey is also listed as a tenant on lot 38 on 47, the subject property, in the 1881 voter's list.¹⁰

According to the 1891 voter's list, John Claffey was another tenant on lot 38 on 47. Census records confirm Claffey's location on the subject property, listing him as living in a wooden one-storey,¹¹ seven-room dwelling, matching the subject structure's description.¹² Claffey appears to have left the property by 1897, according to voter's lists.¹³ The fourth tenant to rent the property from the Crosby family appears to be Alexander Hume, who is listed in voter's lists as a tenant on lot 38 on 47 from 1891¹⁴ to 1897.¹⁵ Census records confirm that the Hume family were tenants on lot 38 on 47.¹⁶

Sometime between 1876 and 1902, Isaac Crosby transferred ownership of lot 38 on 47 to his father, Parker Crosby. In 1902, Alexander Hume's wife, Electa Ann Hume, purchased the subject property from Crosby.¹⁷ Electa Hume and her husband, Alexander Hume, were the most recent tenants on the property, and likely resided in the house from their tenancy in 1891 to their purchase in 1902. After Electa Hume's death, her husband Alexander Hume remarried and, in 1924, listed his second wife, Mary Hume, as the property's joint tenant. Census records confirm that the Hume family used this structure as a residence. In the 1921 census, Alexander Hume is listed as the owner of a wooden house. In 1931, Alexander and Mary Hume are listed as the owners of a 6-roomed wooden house.¹⁸

In 1945, the property was purchased by Irene Hoover. According to land registry records, the property was now referred to as Lot 9 Judge's Plan 10030, matching the subject property's current legal description.¹⁹ According to advertisements in *The Liberal*, Hoover used the property as a tea room.²⁰

⁹ "Building up the village." *York Herald*, February 26 1880.

¹⁰ *List of Voters for the Village of Richmond Hill*, Richmond Hill: Liberal Printing and Publishing House, 1881.

¹¹ Descriptions for the subject dwelling are inconsistent – the structure can be called a 1 or 1 ½ storey structure, depending on the source.

¹² *Census of Canada*, 1891.

¹³ *List of Voters for the Village of Richmond Hill*, Richmond Hill: Liberal Printing and Publishing House, 1897.

¹⁴ Records show that Claffey and Hume rented the property concurrently in 1891. It is unknown how the property was split between the two residents.

¹⁵ *List of Voters for the Village of Richmond Hill*, Richmond Hill: Liberal Printing and Publishing House, 1891, 1894, 1896, 1897.

¹⁶ *Census of Canada*, 1901.

¹⁷ *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 47, Concession 1, Markham Township.

¹⁸ *Census of Canada*, 1921, 1931.

¹⁹ *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 47, Concession 1, Markham Township.

²⁰ "The Fireside Tea Room." *The Liberal*, November 29 1945.

Hume Family

The Hume family was the most prominent family to own the subject property at 10231 Yonge Street, occupying the house from the 1890s until 1945. Alexander Hume, along with his first wife, Electa, and his second wife, Mary, were exceptionally active members of the Richmond Hill Community and were commended throughout their lives for their respective contributions to Richmond Hill's governance, Horticultural and Epworth societies, local business community, and music scene.

Alexander was born in Glasgow in 1858, emigrated to Canada in 1872, and moved to Richmond Hill as a young man in 1879.²¹ In 1885, he married Electa Hewison.²² After Electa's death, Alexander married Mary Trench in 1922.²³ The Hume family lived on the subject property for over fifty years, first renting the property around 1891, then purchasing it in 1902, and finally selling it in 1945.

Alexander Hume was a remarkably accomplished individual who began his career as a tailor. In his younger years, Alexander worked for various employers. In 1886, Alexander worked for Mr. Trevethan's tailoring shop in Richmond Hill,²⁴ and in 1888 moved temporarily to Lindsay to work for a local tailor.²⁵ By 1890, Alexander had returned to Richmond Hill, where he resided in the subject building at 10231 Yonge Street, and ran his tailoring business out of nearby properties on the east side of Yonge Street. Alexander retired from tailoring in 1915 to focus on other interests.²⁶

In addition to his business success, Alexander was president of the Epworth League,²⁷ Public Library Board Member,²⁸ librarian,²⁹ notary public,³⁰ village auditor,³¹ and, most notably, village clerk. Alexander was the Village of Richmond Hill's second clerk since its incorporation, and remained in office from 1905 until 1942. At the beginning of his term, Richmond Hill was a small village, and the clerk job was part-time.³² As the village grew and the job became more demanding, Alexander moved away from the tailoring business to focus on his clerk responsibilities. By his retirement, Alexander was remembered by local newspapers for the deep devotion and integrity he brought to his work and for his outstandingly long term in public office.³³

Alexander and his wife, Electa Hume, were deeply involved in Richmond Hill's musical circles. According to articles from *The Liberal* and the *York Herald*, Alexander became

²¹ "In years gone by." *The Liberal*, August 11 1966.

²² "Personals." *The Liberal*. September 10 1885.

²³ "Marriages." *The Liberal*, January 12 1922.

²⁴ "Tailoring department." *The Liberal*, February 25 1886.

²⁵ "Society notes." *The Liberal*, September 6 1888.

²⁶ "Announcement." *The Liberal*, June 24 1915.

²⁷ An Epworth League is a Methodist youth group. "Societies." *The Liberal*, June 1 1893.

²⁸ "Do you remember." *The Liberal*, April 12 1928.

²⁹ "Richmond Hill library in operation over 100 years." *The Liberal*, February 12 1953.

³⁰ "A.J. Hume." *The Liberal*, April 4 1918.

³¹ "Village Council." *The Liberal*, July 6 1905.

³² "New clerk duly sworn in office." *The Liberal*, February 5 1942.

³³ "A.J. Hume, clerk for 37 years, is retiring Jan. 31." *The Liberal*, January 15 1942.

involved in local concerts from his arrival in 1879, and was heavily praised for his “rich baritone voice.”³⁴ He played the mouth organ,³⁵ was part of a male choral quartette,³⁶ performed countless vocal solos,³⁷ and was the Methodist church choir leader until 1917³⁸ and the Richmond Hill bandmaster for 15 years.³⁹ Likewise, Electa was a longtime organist at the Methodist church, starting her post sometime before 1882⁴⁰ and stepping down in 1917.⁴¹

Alexander’s second wife, Mary, was equally involved in Richmond Hill life. According to *The Liberal*, Mary was a teacher at the public school before marrying, and held various teaching posts from sometime before 1899⁴² to at least 1907.⁴³ Mary was also a member of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union,⁴⁴ and was the longtime secretary-treasurer of the Richmond Hill Horticultural Society, resigning from her position after 19 years in 1941.⁴⁵ Like Alexander and Electa, Mary was an accomplished and active musician. According to *The Liberal*, Mary was a singer who often performed in Richmond Hill and beyond.⁴⁶ In 1894, she was commended for her performance of a difficult piece at the Conservatory of Music in Toronto.⁴⁷

Architecture

The Hume House, built circa the 1840s, is a rare and early surviving example of a timber frame vernacular structure on Yonge Street in the village of Richmond Hill.

The Hume House consists of an original building, built c1840s, and a later rear addition, whose date of construction remains unknown. The structure fronts Yonge Street and is flush with the sidewalk. The original part of the building is a 1 ½ storey, 2-bay timber-frame structure with a medium-pitch front-gable roof and return eaves. The building has a rectangular footprint and is currently clad in aluminum siding.

On the front (west) façade facing Yonge Street, there is a storefront and three doorways at grade. As the front façade at grade has been altered at least twice in its history,⁴⁸ and since this structure was originally a residence, this layout is not original. At the second storey, there are two flat rectangular windows. While second-storey window openings

³⁴ “Re-union.” *The Liberal*, November 17 1887.

³⁵ “A successful entertainment.” *York Herald*, March 29 1883.

³⁶ “Choral concert.” *The Liberal*, March 20 1884.

³⁷ “Headford.” *The Liberal*, February 1 1894.

³⁸ “A congregational meeting.” *The Liberal*, October 25 1917.

³⁹ “1853 Hill band.” *The Liberal*, May 4 1977.

⁴⁰ “Surprise and Presentation.” *The Liberal*, March 31 1882.

⁴¹ “A congregational meeting.” *The Liberal*, October 25 1917.

⁴² “Locals.” *The Liberal*, December 7 1899.

⁴³ “Do you remember.” *The Liberal*, August 9 1928.

⁴⁴ “W.C.T.U.” *The Liberal*, January 30 1941.

⁴⁵ “Allan Bales is elected president of horticulturalists.” *The Liberal*, January 18 1940.

⁴⁶ “Garden party.” *The Liberal*, July 7 1910.

⁴⁷ “Favorable mention.” *The Liberal*, February 15 1894.

⁴⁸ In 1879, tenant William Claffey had a verandah attached to his house. The verandah has since been removed, and the structure repurposed for storefronts at grade.

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are likely original, the vinyl windows, window surrounds, and shutters are not original to the structure.

On the side (south) elevation, there are two flat-headed, irregularly placed, rectangular vinyl windows at the second storey.

On the rear (east) elevation, there is a one-storey addition with a side-gable roof. Like the original part of the structure, it is overclad by aluminum siding.

The Hume House is an example of vernacular architecture, meaning that while the building does not conform to any particular architectural style, its form and materials are governed by its surrounding environment. The Hume House was built using a timber frame during Richmond Hill's early days when mass-produced construction materials were scarce and wood was an abundant building material. The Hume House's timber frame construction and humble, small-scale massing and scale are indicative of vernacular architecture in mid-19th century Ontario.

Context

The Hume House at 10231 Yonge Street is located on the east side of Yonge Street, south of Richmond Street. Surrounding the subject property, Yonge Street features a predominantly fine-grained 19th and early-20th century commercial main street character, which is typified by low-rise residential and commercial buildings with storefronts at-grade, typically built flush with the Yonge Street lot line. These residential and commercial buildings are also interspersed with landmark heritage institutional/public buildings, including churches, schools, and a post office. While the surrounding streetscape along Yonge Street does feature some later development typologies, including surface parking lots and commercial plazas, the predominate character remains that of a historic commercial main street.

Nearby buildings that contribute to the historic main street character of the streetscape include the Hewison-Skeele House & Shop at 10155-10157 Yonge Street (c. 1859, designated) the Robinson Block at 10176-10178 Yonge Street (c. 1915, listed), the Old Post Office at 10184 Yonge Street (1936, designated), the Dominion Telegraph Building at 10185 Yonge Street (1877, designated), the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street (1880, listed), the Fireproof Store at 10225 Yonge Street (1866, listed), the John Coulter Tailor Shop at 10217 Yonge Street (1866, listed), the Hart house at 10239 Yonge (c. 1852, listed).

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.

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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.

The Hume House at 10231 Yonge Street, built c. 1840s, has design and physical value because it is an early and rare example of vernacular architecture in Richmond Hill, and because it is a very early remaining example of development along Yonge Street. The Hume House consists of a 1 ½-storey timber-frame structure with a rear addition. Original architectural features that contribute to the building's early and rare vernacular style include its timber-frame construction, the medium-sloped front-gable roof with eave return, the two-bay composition of the main (west) façade, the flat-headed second storey windows on the main (west) façade, and the irregularly-placed flat-headed windows on the south façade. Original architectural features that contribute to the early representation of development along Yonge Street include its orientation and placement flush with Yonge Street.

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 Hume House has historical and associative value for its direct associations with the Hume family. The Hume family, including Alexander Hume, his first wife Electa, and his second wife Mary, lived in the subject property for over fifty years from the 1890s to 1945. The Hume family was remarkably involved in the village and made many contributions to early Richmond Hill life. Alexander Hume was Richmond Hill's second clerk from 1905 to 1945, ran a tailoring business for over thirty years, and held posts as librarian, notary public, and village auditor. Electa Hume was the longtime secretary of the Richmond Hill Horticultural society until 1941. As well, Alexander, Mary, and Electa heavily contributed to Richmond Hill's cultural and musical circles – Alexander was a vocalist, choir leader, and bandmaster for decades, Electa was the Methodist church organist for almost forty years, and Mary was an accomplished vocalist.

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 Hume House has contextual value because its scale, form, and vernacular architectural style are important in defining and maintaining the predominantly 19th and early 20th century main street character along Yonge Street. 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 Hume House has contextual value because it is visually and historically linked to its surroundings on the east side of Yonge Street in Richmond Hill's historic village core. The structure is visually linked to its surroundings because it has a similar scale, massing, material, and character to other 19th century structures still standing on Yonge Street. As one of the earliest structures remaining on Yonge Street in the village core, it is historically linked to the early wave of development that arose to accommodate the village's growing population in the early- to mid-19th century.

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

N/A

Maps and Photographs

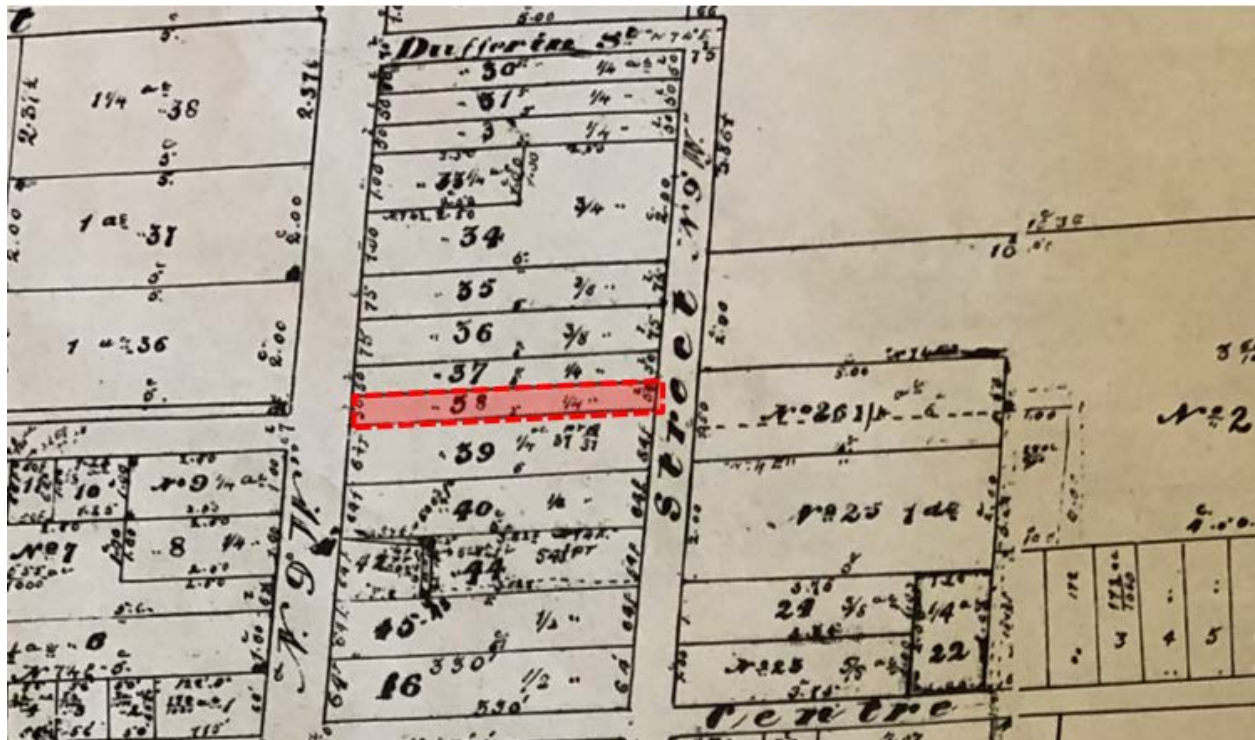


Figure 1 Detail of the 1879 Gibson Plan showing the approximate location of the Hume House at 10231 Yonge Street (in red). Lot 38 was rented by the Hume family in 1891 and purchased by them in 1902. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection)



Figure 2 Detail of the 1910 Goad's Fire Insurance Plan of Richmond Hill, showing the approximate location of the Hume House at 10231 Yonge Street (in red). (Source: University of Toronto Map and Data Library)



Figure 3 C. 1927 photograph of the Hume House (indicated by the arrow), taken from Yonge Street looking southeast. Note the placement of the window openings on the second storey, which remain unaltered. Photograph also features an enclosed front porch at grade, which has since been removed. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Photographs Collection)

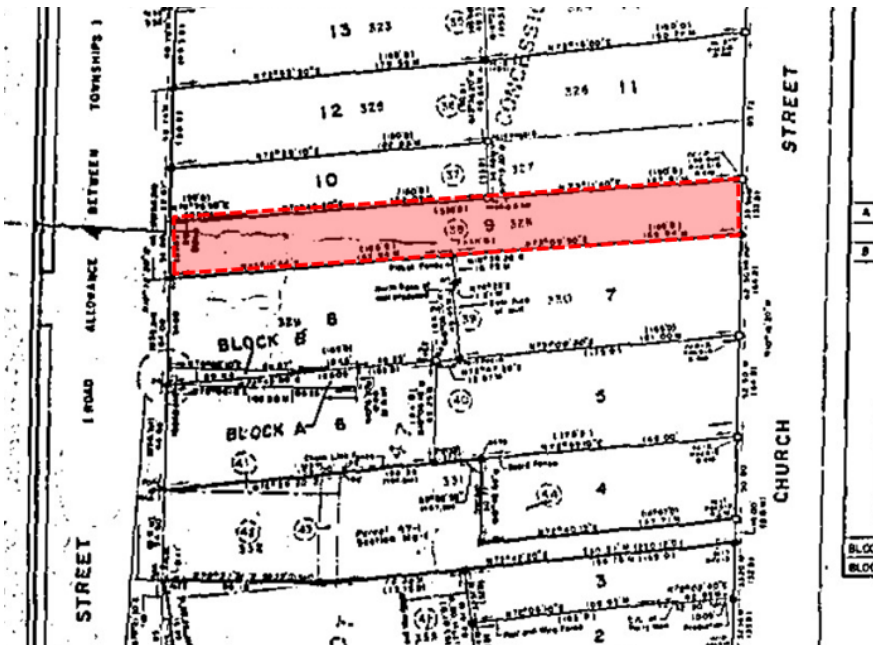


Figure 4 Detail of the 1970s Judge's Plan 10030 showing the approximate location of 10231 Yonge Street (in red). Plan indicates that the former lot 38 has been renamed to lot 9. (Source: Ontario Land Registry Historical Books)



Figure 5 Current photograph looking east, showing the principal (west) elevation of 10231 Yonge Street. Note the building's 1 ½ storey massing, front-gable roof with return eaves, and frame construction. (Source: HUD, 2024)



Figure 6 Current photograph looking northeast, showing the south elevation of 10231 Yonge Street. (Source: HUD, 2024)



Figure 7 Current photograph of 10231 Yonge Street, showing the subject property's context on Yonge Street in Richmond Hill's historic village core. Note the surrounding small-scale commercial structures. (Source: HUD, 2024)

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Paving machine on Yonge Street. Photograph. Richmond Hill Public Library Photographs Collection. c1927.

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