# Heritage Research and Evaluation Report



# 35 Wright Street – Enfield: The Edith (Littlefield) and Harry Endean House

1921

Part of Lot 47, Concession 1, Vaughan Township

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

#### **History**

#### **Contextual History**

The Edith (Littlefield) and Harry Endean House at 35 Wright Street (also known as "Enfield") is a residential building in the historical centre of Richmond Hill village. 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. The subject property at 35 Wright Street is located within former Lot 47, Concession 1, of Vaughan Township.

#### 35 Wright Street

The subject property at 35 Wright Street originated as part Lot 47, Concession 1, in Vaughan Township. The first owner of Lot 47 was John E. Stooks, who was granted all

210 acres of Lot 47 by the Crown in 1808 and farmed the land. In 1810 the lot was sold to D'Arcy and Henry J. Boulton, who were members of one of York's elite families. The property was then acquired by David Bridgeford in 1818. Bridgeford split the property into two halves and sold the north 105 acres of the property back to Henry J. Boulton in 1820. Over the next several decades, the north half of Lot 47 was subdivided into building lots and sold for development or speculation. The present structure sits on the northeast part of Lot 47.1

In May of 1859, Matthew McNair, a local mason and builder, began acquiring property in the northeast part of Lot 47 when he bought 1 acre of land from Martha Gilmore.<sup>2</sup> Over the next few decades, McNair increased his land holdings in the northeast portion of Lot 47 and the southeast portion of Lot 48 (today located at the northwest corner of Yonge and Wright Streets) until he had acquired over 9-acres of land (Figure 1). McNair built himself a home on Yonge Street, just north of Wright Street around 1870, a building that still exists today at 10312 Yonge Street.<sup>3</sup> In 1885, McNair subdivided his roughly 9-acre property into building lots with the assistance of Provincial Land Surveyor Peter S. Gibson. This subdivision was registered as Plan 647 on March 6, 1886; Plan 647 laid out 11 building lots within McNair's property, with lots 1 to 7 fronting the west side of Yonge Street and lots 8 to 11 fronting the north side of Wright Street.<sup>4</sup> The subject property at 35 Wright Street is now located in the southwest corner of Lot 8. Plan 647 (Figure 2). In September of 1905, Matthew McNair and his wife Jane sold Lot 8 to Isaac L. Walder for \$800.5 Walder then sold the west 50 feet of the south 150 feet of Lot 8 (now known as 35 Wright Street) to Edith Littlefield in July of 1920 for \$400.6 Archival blueprints (Figure 3) and construction specifications for the house show that it was originally commissioned by Edith Littlefield at an estimated cost of \$3,500,7 likely just before her marriage to Harry Endean.

Edith Littlefield married nurseryman Harry Endean on December 9, 1920, and the couple erected their new home on Edith's property on the north side of Wright Street in 1921. By the time of the 1921 Census (which was collected in June of 1921), Harry and Edith Endean are recorded as living in a brick veneer house with six rooms on Wright Street,<sup>8</sup> a description matching the subject property. A "Social Notice" in the *Toronto Daily Star* on June 1, 1921 also states that "Mrs. Harry Endean (née Edith Littlefield) will receive for the first time since her marriage on Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup> at her new home "Enfield" Wright Street, Richmond Hill…" The name "Enfield" is a portmanteau of Harry and Edith's last names, a remarkably progressive gesture for a newly married couple in

<sup>3</sup> City of Richmond Hill Inventory of Cultural Heritage Resources, 2024.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book, York Region, Concession 1, Lot 47, Vaughan Township (Richmond Hill).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book, York Region, Concession 1, Lot 47, Vaughan Township (Richmond Hill).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book, York Region, Richmond Hill, Plan 647.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> "Construction specifications for 35 Wright Street," date unknown. City of Richmond Hill Heritage Property (D12) Files.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Census of Canada, 1921.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> "Social notices," *Toronto Daily Star.* Jun 1, 1921.

the 1920s. Their completed house can be seen in an archival fire insurance plan of Richmond Hill from 1923 (Figure 4).

At the time of the 1931 Census, Edith and Harry Endean are still recorded as residing at their home on Wright Street, this time joined by their 2-year-old son, Frank, and servant Flossie Denby. 10 However, it appears that by 1933, the Endeans had moved to Toronto, as Harry Endean, Vice-President of Endean Nurseries, is recorded as living on Lytton Boulevard in North Toronto beginning in this year. 11 Land Registry records indicate that the Endeans sold 35 Wright Street in 1941 to John and Hilary Curzon for \$3,500. 12 The Curzons then quickly resold the property to Albert W. Chisholm in 1943, and Chisholm sold to Florence G. Irwin in 1947. 13 Florence G. Irwin owned 35 Wright Street for nearly 50 years until December 1993, when the property was transferred to Susan Smit. 14

#### **Edith (Littlefield) Endean and Harry Endean**

Edith Irene Littlefield (Figure 6) was born to Frank and Mary Littlefield in Peoria, Illinois <sup>15</sup> in 1896 <sup>16</sup> and moved to Toronto with her family in 1908, <sup>17</sup> when she was 12 years old. Edith's father was an executive at the Canadian Oil Companies Ltd., <sup>18</sup> and Edith attended Havergal College before pursuing a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Toronto (University College), which she completed in 1918. <sup>19</sup> During her time at the University of Toronto, she was active in student affairs being a member of the Permanent Executive Class of University College, a member of the University College YWCA Cabinet, and a member of the Alpha Phi sorority. <sup>20</sup> After graduating, Edith bought the subject property on the north side of Wright Street in Richmond Hill in July of 1920, and soon thereafter married Harry Endean in December of the same year. Harry's family owned the Endean Nurseries in Richmond Hill. The couple built their home, "Enfield," on the subject property in 1921, where they lived with their son, Frank, until they moved to Toronto around 1933. <sup>21</sup>

After her marriage, Edith remained active in many community organizations in both Richmond Hill and Toronto. She held leadership positions with both the American Women's Club in Toronto<sup>22</sup> and the Richmond Hill Women's Institute.<sup>23</sup> She was also president of the Metropolitan Toronto YWCA, and later vice-president of the National YWCA. Edith Endean also spent her time advocating for social work and was involved

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Census of Canada, 1931.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Might's Greater Toronto City Directory: 1933. Toronto: Might Directories Ltd., 1933.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Ontario Land Registry Abstract/Parcel Register Book, York Region, Richmond Hill, Plan 647.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> "Mrs. Harry Endean was active in YWCA work local, national level," *Liberal*. Nov 30, 1967.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Canadian Census, 1911.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> "Oil executive F. Littlefield dies at home," *Toronto Telegram*. Jul 1945.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> *Torontonensis: The Year Book of the Graduates of the University of Toronto*, vol. XX. Toronto: University of Toronto Students Administrative Council, 1918. <sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Might's Greater Toronto City Directory: 1933. Toronto: Might Directories Ltd., 1933.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> "American women entertain Canadians," Toronto Daily Star. Mar 24, 1939.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> "Women's Institute elected officers," Liberal. Sep 30, 1926.

with St. Christopher's House in Toronto. In the 1950s, she also helped plan an international conference on social work held in Toronto <sup>24</sup> and served on the Richmond Hill Unit of the Canadian Cancer Society. <sup>25</sup>

Edith (Littlefield) Endean died at Toronto's St. Michael's Hospital after a lengthy illness on November 13, 1967.<sup>26</sup> She was survived by her husband, Harry, and son Frank.

Harry Edward Endean was born to Henry (Harry Sr.) and Alice Endean in North Toronto on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1891.<sup>27</sup> Beginning in the late 1800s, the Endeans owned a florist business in Toronto. While they lived and grew flowers around Eglinton in North Toronto, <sup>28</sup> their shop was located on King Street East.<sup>29</sup> Following Harry Sr.'s death in 1913, Alice Endean took over as president of the company and relocated her family business to Richmond Hill, buying a large parcel of land on the south side of Centre Street West, west of Elizabeth Street.<sup>30</sup> This large property, known as "Endean Gardens", housed the company's greenhouses and nurseries.

The Endean Nurseries were part of a large horticultural industry that developed in Richmond Hill in the first quarter of the twentieth century. The village incorporated the flower into its crest and motto in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and had proclaimed itself the Rose Capital of Canada by the late 1920s. <sup>31</sup>Greenhouse and nursery operations "made the village famous and became Richmond Hill's major employer. By 1939, the industry was producing some four million roses annually, employing upwards of one hundred workers, and pumping \$250,000 in wages into the local economy." <sup>32</sup>

The Endean Nurseries continued as a successful horticulture business through the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Figure 7). Endean Nurseries won top prizes for their exhibits at the C.N.E in 1927 and 1928,<sup>33</sup> and in 1929 the Endeans moved their nursery from Centre Street West to Elgin Mills, where they opened a new garden centre<sup>34</sup> (Figure 8). In 1954, when the TTC opened Canada's first underground subway under Yonge Street, Endean Nurseries was chosen to landscape all the TTC subway station grounds with one million small trees and shrubs.<sup>35</sup> The firm was also responsible for landscaping Highway 11 in Richmond Hill in the 1960s.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> "Mrs. Harry Endean was active in YWCA work local, national level," *Liberal*. Nov 30, 1967.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> "Local cancer society directors approve executive, committees," *Liberal*. Mar 31, 1955.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> "Mrs. Harry Endean was active in YWCA work local, national level," *Liberal*. Nov 30, 1967.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> York County Birth Records, 1891. Accessed via FamilySearch.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Might's Greater Toronto City Directory: 1910. Toronto: Might Directories Ltd., 1910.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> "Obituary," *Liberal*. May 21, 1942.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Ontario Land Registry Historical Books. York Region, Lot 47, Concession 1, Vaughan Township.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Marney Beck Robinson and Joan M. Clark. *Later Days in Richmond Hill: A History of the Community from 1930 to 1999.* Town of Richmond Hill Public Library Board, 1999: 95.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Stamp, Robert M. *Early Days in Richmond Hill: a History of the Community to 1930*. Richmond Hill, Ont: Richmond Hill Public Library Board, 1991: 261.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> "Local exhibit won first prize," *Liberal*. September 6, 1928.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> "Social and personal," *Liberal*. December 5, 1929.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Marney Beck Robinson and Joan M. Clark. *Later Days in Richmond Hill: A History of the Community from 1930 to 1999.* Town of Richmond Hill Public Library Board, 1999: 95. <sup>36</sup> Ibid: 140.

Harry Endean first began working for the family horticulture business as a clerk,<sup>37</sup> and gradually worked his way up to become vice-president of the company in the 1930s.<sup>38</sup> Apart from his leadership position at Endean Nurseries, he also contributed to Ontario's horticulture industry more broadly by serving as superintendent of the floricultural exhibits at the Royal Winter Fair for more than 10 years,<sup>39</sup> and being part of the flower show committee for Toronto's Centennial celebrations in 1934.<sup>40</sup> Harry Endean also served on the Richmond Hill Board of Education in the 1920s,<sup>41</sup> and was a member of the Richmond Hill Masonic Lodge for over 50 years.<sup>42</sup> While Harry Endean and his family left Richmond Hill for Toronto in the 1930s, they returned to the town in the early 1950s.<sup>43</sup>

Harry Endean died on February 7, 1972.44

#### **Architecture**

Dating to 1921, Enfield: the Edith Littlefield and Harry Endean House at 35 Wright Street is a representative example of craftsman residential architecture in Richmond Hill. The Craftsman style, which originated in California in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, quickly became the predominant style for smaller houses across North America from about 1905 to 1930. <sup>45</sup> Architectural features that make the subject property a representative example of Craftsman architecture include its rectangular plan and 1 ½-storey massing, the low-pitched side-gabled roof with a large, central gabled dormer, the brick and shingle cladding, exposed rafter tails, the full-width front porch supported by grouped square columns on brick pedestals, the six-over-one windows organized as singles, pairs, and triples, and the glazed doors.

The building at 35 Wright Street is a 1 ½-storey detached dwelling featuring a generally rectangular plan and low-pitched side-gabled roof with a large central gabled dormer on its front (south) slope. The subject building is constructed of orange brick veneer, with a poured concrete foundation, and wood shingle cladding at the upper storey, visible within the side gables, as well as the exterior walls of the front dormer. The front dormer is inset with two pairs of windows and features exposed rafter tails under its roof.

The building's front (south) elevation is organized into two bays. Ground floor and basement windows and doors are segmental-arched with radiating brick voussoirs and rusticated precast concrete sills, while upper-storey windows are flat-headed with wood surrounds and precast concrete sills. While all the house's windows and doors have recently been boarded up for safety reasons, photo documentation from 2021 confirms

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Might's Greater Toronto City Directory: 1910. Toronto: Might Directories Ltd., 1910.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Might's Greater Toronto City Directory. 1933. Toronto: Might Directories Ltd., 1933.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> "Million blooms showing at fair all rainbow colors except blue," *Toronto Daily Star.* Nov 25, 1947.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Middleton, Jesse Edgar. *Toronto's 100 Years*. Toronto: Corporation of the City of Toronto, 1934: 164.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> "Small attendance at nomination meeting," Liberal. Jul 22, 1926.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> 'Local nurseryman had long illness," *Liberal*. Feb 17, 1972.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Might's Greater Toronto City Directory. Toronto: Might Directories Ltd., 1951, 1952.

<sup>44 &#</sup>x27;Local nurseryman had long illness," Liberal. Feb 17, 1972.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989: 453.

that all windows contain period wood window units, most featuring a six-over-one configuration (Figure 9). Windows are largely arranged as pairs and singles, with one triple window on the house's west elevation. The front door and side (west) door also feature period wood doors with glazing.

The house's front (south) elevation features a full-width front porch, with a shed-roof that continues the slope of the main roof. There is a slight flare in the slope of the roof to accommodate the front porch. The porch is supported on brick and stone pedestals topped by grouped square wooden columns with square capitals. Above the capitals, the porch features a cornice with peaked arches, and there are exposed rafter tails under the roof.

The house also features a central brick chimney with two flues, located at the peak of the main roof, as well as a small one-storey frame addition at the rear, which dates to between 1923 and 1960.

#### Context

The Edith (Littlefield) and Harry Endean House at 35 Wright Street is located on the north side of Wright Street, west of Yonge Street. Surrounding the subject property, Wright Street is typified by large lots containing a mix of low-rise institutional and residential buildings dating from the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as a 1960s commercial plaza at the northwest corner of Yonge and Wright Streets. Many of these properties feature deep setbacks from the street, which feature lawns, greenery, and trees. Due to the prevalence of institutional and commercial uses in this block, and proximity to Yonge Street, there are also several large surface parking lots in the immediate vicinity.

# Compliance with Ontario Regulation 569/22 – 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 1921, the Edith (Littlefield) and Harry Endean House at 35 Wright Street has physical value as a representative example of Craftsman residential architecture in Richmond Hill. Architectural features that contribute to the Craftsman style include the house's rectangular plan and 1 ½-storey massing, the low-pitched side-gabled roof with a large, central-gabled dormer, the brick and shingle cladding, exposed rafter tails, the

full-width front porch supported by grouped square columns on brick pedestals, the sixover-one windows organized as singles, pairs, and triples, and the glazed doors.

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 Edith (Littlefield) and Harry Endean House at 35 Wright Street has historical value for its direct associations with Edith (Littlefield) and Harry Endean. The couple built the house in 1921, named it "Enfield" in reference to their two last names, resided there until around 1933, and owned the property until 1941. Both Edith and Harry Endean were active members of the Richmond Hill community in the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and contributed to the village's economic and social development during this time through their family business, the Endean Nurseries, along with their volunteer efforts for many different organizations and causes.

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.

The Edith (Littlefield) and Harry Endean House at 35 Wright Street has further historical value because it yields information about the Endean Nurseries business, and the successful horticultural and floral industry that developed in Richmond Hill in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Richmond Hill's flower industry helped shape the village's economy and identity in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; the village incorporated the rose into its crest and motto in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and had proclaimed itself the Rose Capital of Canada by the late 1920s.

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.

N/A

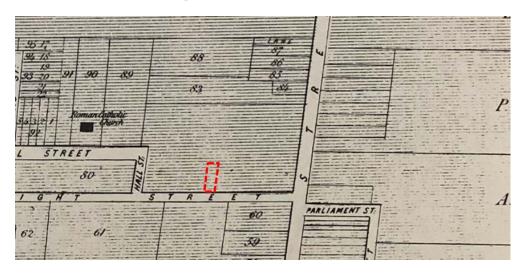
8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

N/A

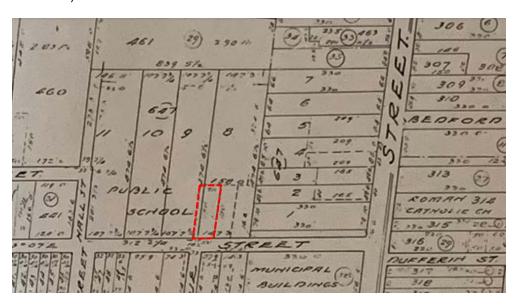
9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.

N/A

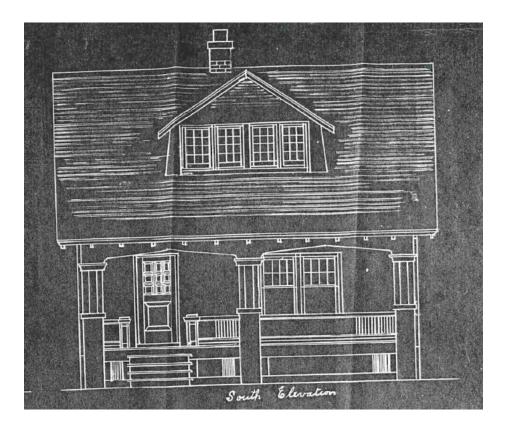
### **Maps and Photographs**



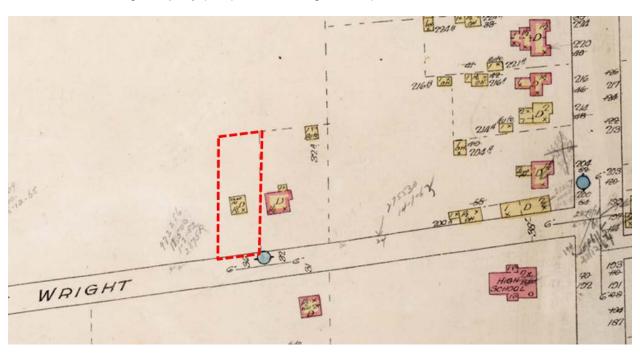
**Figure 1** Detail of the 1878 Miles & Co. Map of Richmond Hill showing the approximate location of the subject property at 35 Wright Street (in red), located within what was then an approximately 9-acre lot owned by Matthew McNair. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection).



**Figure 2** Detail of the 1938 Reuben's Map of Richmond Hill, showing the approximate location of the subject property at 35 Wright Street (in red), located in the southwest corner of Lot 8, Plan 647 (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection).



**Figure 3** Undated original elevation drawing of the subject property at 35 Wright Street. (Source: City of Richmond Hill Heritage Property (D12) Files, 35 Wright Street).



**Figure 4** Detail of the 1923 *Underwriter's Survey Bureau Limited Fire Insurance Plan of Richmond Hill*, with the approximate location of 35 Wright Street indicated (in red). (Source: University of Toronto Library)



**Figure 5** Detail of the 1960 *Underwriter's Survey Bureau Limited Insurance Plan of the Town of Richmond Hill*, with the approximate location of 35 Wright Street indicated (in red). Note that the building is now shown as brick veneer with a one-storey rear addition. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection)



**Figure 6** University of Toronto yearbook graduation photograph of Edith Littlefield, 1918. (Source: *Torontonensis*, 1918).



**Figure 7** Circa 1930s photograph of the employees of the Endean Nurseries in Richmond Hill. Harry Endean is shown third from left in the back row. (Source: Later Days in Richmond Hill)



**Figure 8** 1930s photograph of the Endean Garden Centre at Yonge and Elgin Mills (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection).



**Figure 9** 2021 photograph showing the subject property at 35 Wright Street prior to all windows and doors being boarded up for safety reasons. Note the period wood six-over-one window units and glazed front door. (Source: HUD, 2021)



**Figure 10** Current photograph of the subject property looking northeast, showing the principal (south) and west elevations. Note the house's rectangular plan and 1 ½-storey massing, the low-pitched side-gabled roof with a large, central gabled dormer, the brick and shingle cladding, exposed rafter tails, and the full-width front porch supported by grouped square columns on brick pedestals. (Source: HUD, 2024)



**Figure 11** Current photograph of the subject property looking northwest, showing the principal (south) and east elevations. Note the house's rectangular plan and 1 ½-storey massing, the low-pitched sidegabled roof with a large, central gabled dormer, the brick and shingle cladding, exposed rafter tails, and the full width front porch supported by grouped square columns on brick pedestals. (Source: HUD, 2024)



**Figure 12** Context photograph of the subject property looking northwest from the south side of Wright Street, showing the mixed character of the streetscape. (Source: HUD, 2024)

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