

Statement of Significance

13 Church Street South – Graham-Young House

The Graham-Young House at 13 Church Street South is recommended for designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* as a property of cultural heritage value or interest, as described in the following Statement of Significance. The subject property has been found to meet Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria 1, 4, 6 and 7.

Description of Property

The Graham-Young House at 13 Church Street South is a 2 ½-storey brick veneer building with an irregular plan and complex roof profile, located on the east side of Church Street South, south of Centre Street East. The property is located within the historic village of Richmond Hill.

Design and Physical Value

Dating to 1917, the Graham-Young House at 13 Church Street South has design and physical value as a representative example of a vernacular early-20th-century residential architectural style that incorporates elements of both Queen Anne Revival and Edwardian design. Features that express this architectural style include the building's irregular plan, complex form and roof composition, mottled rugged brick cladding, shingle-clad gables with pent eaves, the plain cornice below the roofline, flat headed windows and doors with stone sills and lintels, and the large curved wraparound verandah on the front (west) elevation, featuring tapered squared columns and a dentilated cornice.

Therefore, the subject property meets Ont. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 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.

Historical and Associative Value

The Graham-Young House at 13 Church Street South has historical value for its direct association with significant Richmond Hill developer and builder William Graham, who built the subject building in 1917, and resided there with his wife Amy Gertrude (née Phillips) and four children until his untimely death in 1924. William H. Graham started his own contracting and building company in Richmond Hill in 1910. He bought a substantial amount of vacant land on Centre Street East and Church Street South during the 1910s and 1920s, which he subdivided, developed, and then resold to accommodate the village's rapid growth resulting from the booming flower industry during this time. During his relatively short time as a land developer and builder in the boom years of Richmond Hill's flower industry of the 1910s and 1920s, he constructed many public buildings, as well as around 30 homes in the village. As a testament to the influence that Graham had on the growing village in the early 20th century, the William H. Graham Parkette now stands at 43 Church Street South. The grand scale and complex architectural style of the house reflect Graham's success as a builder at the time of its construction in 1917.

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Therefore, the subject property meets Ont. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 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 Graham-Young House has further historical value for its direct associations with significant Canadian astronomer Reynold Kenneth Young. Young was a pioneer in stellar spectroscopy who worked at each of Canada's three most important observatories for optical astronomy in the early 20th century. Young was a Professor of Astronomy at the University of Toronto under C. A. Chant and was instrumental in designing and constructing the David Dunlap Observatory's 74-inch reflecting telescope and its dome. Young also served as Director of the David Dunlap Observatory from its opening in 1935 until his retirement in 1946. Over the course of his career, Young published 23 spectroscopic-binary orbits on his own and determined the radial velocities of some 2,150 stars and the absolute magnitudes of over 1,100 stars in collaboration with others. Young married Amy Gertrude Graham (nee Phillips) in 1936, and the couple resided together at 13 Church Street South until 1964.

Therefore, the subject property meets Ont. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 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 Graham-Young House also has historical value because its early-20th-century residential architectural style reflects the work of prolific Richmond Hill builder William Graham during a period of rapid growth in the village resulting from the booming flower industry during the 1910s and 1920s. Residential buildings constructed by Graham generally reflect a vernacular combination of the Queen Anne Revival and Edwardian styles popular in the early 20th century. Graham's buildings have made an enduring impact on the built form character of Richmond Hill village, particularly on residential streets that were largely built out in the 1910s and 1920s, including Church Street South, Centre Street East, Roseview Avenue, and Arnold Crescent.

Therefore, the subject property meets Ont. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 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.

Contextual Value

The Graham-Young House at 13 Church Street South has contextual value because its scale, form, and early 20th-century architectural style are important in defining and maintaining the predominantly late-19th and early-20th-century residential character of the surrounding streetscape on Church Street South, as well as that of the surrounding residential area east of Yonge Street and north of Major Mackenzie Drive, which was largely developed in the early 20th century.

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Therefore, the subject property meets Ont. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 7: The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

The heritage attributes that contribute to the value of the property as a representative example of a vernacular early-20th-century residential architectural style that incorporates elements of both Queen Anne Revival and Edwardian design are:

- The scale, form and massing of the 2 ½-storey building with an irregular plan;
- The complex roof profile, comprised of a steep central mansard-roofed component with lower cross gables with pent eaves on the west, south and east elevations;
- The building's exterior materials, including the concrete foundation, mottled rugged-brick cladding, and shingles in the gable-ends;
- The plain cornice located below the eaves;
- The window openings on the west, south and north elevations, including:
 - Flat-headed windows with stone sills and/or lintels at basement, first floor, and second floor levels;
 - Paired flat-headed windows with wood surrounds in the west and south gable ends;
- The doors on the west elevation, including:
 - Two flat-headed doors on the west elevation at first-floor level, featuring period wood doors with glazing;
- The wraparound front verandah on the west and south elevations, including:
 - The shed-roof, which curves around the southwest corner of the building;
 - The plain frieze and dentilated cornice below the eaves;
 - The tapered squared columns on stone bases and brick pedestals.

Historical and Associative Value

The heritage attributes that contribute to the value of the property for its associations with significant Richmond Hill builder William Graham are:

- The house's scale, siting and orientation on the east side of Church Street South, south of Centre Street East; and
- The house's early-20th-century architectural style and material palette, which reflect both the work of William Graham, and his success as a builder and developer in the 1910s.

Contextual Value

The heritage attributes that contribute to the contextual value of the property for defining and maintaining the predominantly late-19th and early-20th-century residential character of the surrounding area are:

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

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