

Statement of Significance

297 Richmond Street – William Innes House

The William Innes House at 297 Richmond Street 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 8.

Description of Property

The William Innes House at 297 Richmond Street is a two-storey wood dwelling located on the north side of Richmond Street, west of Trench Street, and within the historical boundaries of Richmond Hill village.

Design and Physical Value

Dating to circa 1893, the William Innes House at 297 Richmond Street has physical value as a representative example of the late-Victorian vernacular residential architectural style and building typology in Richmond Hill. The late-Victorian vernacular style, which was popularly applied to residential buildings in Southern Ontario from roughly 1875 to 1900, is characterized by an eclectic mixture of Gothic Revival and Picturesque elements. Features representative of this style and typology include the house's asymmetrical plan and cross-gabled roof with south, east, north, and west gable ends inset with paneled bargeboard trim, the flat-headed and round-arched window openings with wood surrounds and lugsills, the flat headed doors with paneled and glazed wooden door units, the projecting bay on the west elevation featuring a large first-storey window with leaded glass transom, and the hip-roofed entry vestibule in the ell of the front (south) elevation.

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 William Innes House at 297 Richmond Street has historical value for its direct associations with significant business owner and community member William Innes, as well as his family business the *L. Innes & Sons* firm. The subject property was once located on the same property as the *L. Innes & Sons* mill and factory complex which operated on a large industrial site at the western terminus of Richmond Street from around 1886 to 1927, manufacturing wood products and finishes used in countless building projects in York County and neighbouring Toronto. *L. Innes & Sons* were also prolific builders in Richmond Hill and York County from the 1880s to 1910s.

William Innes moved into an earlier dwelling on the subject property with his family around 1887, and then significantly renovated and expanded the house into its current form around 1893 using a variety of wooden products and finishes from the *L. Innes & Sons* mill. William and his family lived in the subject property for four decades until

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William's death in 1927. Apart from being a significant business owner and employer in Richmond Hill from the 1880s to the 1920s, William Innes was also an active member of the local community. He served as a member of Village Council from 1897 to 1905, was a charter member of the Sons of Scotland in Richmond Hill, and was a respected leader in the local Presbyterian Church, where he was elected an elder in 1895 and acted as superintendent of the Sabbath school for many years. William is one of a select few Richmond Hill residents to be featured in the *Commemorative Biographical Record of the County of York, Ontario*, published in 1907.

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 William Innes House at 297 Richmond Street also has historical value because it demonstrates the work of local builders and mill owners *L. Innes & Sons*. The Innes family owned and operated a mill and factory on Richmond Street producing a variety of wood products and finishes from the 1880s to the 1920s and were also prolific builders in Richmond Hill from the 1880s to the 1910s. The William Innes House, which was constructed circa 1880 and modified circa 1893, reflects not only the work of *L. Innes & Sons* as builders, but also displays the types of wood finishes produced by the Innes mill before the original mill was destroyed by fire in 1894.

While wooden products from the Innes mill can be seen in countless buildings throughout York County, some notable buildings constructed by the firm in Richmond Hill include the Leslie Innes House at 124 Richmond Street (1888); the William Proctor Double House at 37 and 39 Centre Street West (1891); the Charles Mason Double House at 12 and 14 Church Street South (1891); the Richmond Hill High School at 10268 Yonge Street (1897); the Temperanceville United Church at 734 King Road (1897), the John L. Innes House at 131 Richmond Street (1903); and the M. L. McConaghy Public School at 10100 Yonge Street (1914).

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 William Innes House at 297 Richmond Street has contextual value for being functionally and historically linked to its surroundings as part of the former *L. Innes & Sons* mill property on the north side of Richmond Street, west of Trench Street. The Innes mill and factory site, which was in operation until around 1927, was once the nucleus of an industrial area that grew around the Mill Pond in the 19th century and was one of the last mills operating on the west branch of the Don River.

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Therefore, the subject property meets Ont. Reg. 9/06 Criterion 8: The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

Heritage attributes contributing to the value of the property as a representative example of a late-Victorian vernacular residential architectural style and building typology in Richmond Hill are:

- The scale, form and massing of the 2-storey building with an asymmetrical plan;
- The medium-pitched cross-gable roof with south, east, west, and north gable ends;
- The paneled wood bargeboard trim with bullseye blocks and dentils in the south, east, and west gable ends;
- The wooden clapboard cladding and corner boards;
- The windows with wood surrounds and wood lugsills, including:
 - Flat-headed window openings on the south, east and west elevations;
 - The full-height projecting bay window on the west elevation with a first-storey picture window with leaded glass transom and dentilated wood trim, paired second storey windows, and a half-round attic window (currently boarded up);
 - Two round-arched second-storey windows on the east elevation;
 - Historical wood 1-over-1 sash window units;
- The flat-headed principal doorway on the south elevation, with historical paneled and glazed wood door unit; and
- The one-storey entrance vestibule with a hipped roof located within the ell of the house's front (south) elevation, featuring a historical paneled and glazed wood door unit, and four-paned wood picture windows.

Historical and Associative Value

Heritage attributes that contribute to the value of the property for its associations with significant Richmond Hill community member and builder William Innes are:

- The house's late-Victorian vernacular architecture and material palette, which reflect the work of L. Innes & Sons, builders; and
- The house's period wood finishes, produced in the L. Innes & Sons mill and factory on Richmond Street, including:
 - The historical wood window units on the south, east and west elevations, where extant;
 - The two historical paneled and glazed wood door units on the south elevation;

- The wood bargeboard cladding and corner boards; and
- The paneled wood bargeboard trim with bullseye blocks and dentils in the south, east, and west gable ends.

Contextual Value

Heritage attributes contributing to the contextual value of the property for functional and historical links to its surroundings as part of the former L. Innes & Sons mill and factory complex are:

- The property's scale, siting and orientation on the north side of Richmond Street, west of Trench Street and south of the Mill Pond; and
- The building's late-Victorian vernacular residential architectural style and typology.

Note: the non-original one-storey rear (north) addition is not considered to possess heritage attributes.