

Heritage Research and Evaluation Report



10201 Yonge Street – Richmond Hill Methodist Church

1880

Part Lot 47 Concession 1, Markham Township

Prepared by: Heritage & Urban Design, Planning & Building Services, 2025

History

Contextual History

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street is a church located in the historic village centre of Richmond Hill. Prior to colonization and settlement, the land was most recently 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. 10201 Yonge Street is located within former Lot 47, Concession 1 of Markham Township, which is associated with a period of intense

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early development within the village along Yonge, Centre, Church, and Dunlop Streets from 1810 to 1850. Over the course of its life, the subject property has been called Lot 47 Concession 1, Village Lots 46, 45 and 42 on 47 (Gibson Plan), Lot 334, 333 and 332 (Reuben Plan), and Lot 1 Judge's Plan 10030.

10201 Yonge Street

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street stands on part of Lot 47, Concession 1 in former Markham Township. The first owner of Lot 47 was Andrew Davidson, who was patented 190 acres of land from the Crown in 1802. The lot was sold to John H. Hudson in 1804 and was later acquired by Robert Franklin sometime before 1808. In 1808, the 190-acre lot was sold to Samuel S. Wilmott before being resold to Jabez Lynde in 1817. In 1832, Lynde sold the lot to Amos Wright, who subdivided the land along Yonge Street into half-acre village lots.¹

Between 1845 and 1869, Abraham and Elizabeth Law purchased over 50 acres of land on the west part of Lot 47, including the subject property.² Archival mapping shows that during this time, the Laws did not build a structure on the subject property (Figure 1).³

Following a massive fire that burned down Richmond Hill's first Methodist Church (located further south on Yonge Street) in December 1879, the Methodist congregation rallied to rebuild quickly.⁴ As the congregation wanted to replace their original modest frame church with a grander structure and required a larger lot, the subject property was chosen as the site of the new Methodist Church.⁵ In February 1880, the Laws sold part of Village Lot 46 on 47 (now comprising part of the subject property) to the Methodist Church Trustees to build a new church (Figure 2). Shortly after, the Trustees erected a large Gothic Revival church on the subject property.

Local newspapers chronicled the church's design and construction, which began in early 1880. By February of 1880, the subject property had been purchased and church members had procured building materials, including stones and sand.⁶ Unlike the previous Methodist Church, an architect, Charles A. Walton, was hired to design the subject building. Mr. Burns of Markdale was the contractor,⁷ T.T. Whalen and Garvin built the foundation, Charles Chamberlin completed the masonry and plaster work,⁸ and John Harris built the spire.⁹

The *York Herald* first described the church's design in February 1880. The church was built at the northeast corner of Yonge and Centre Streets, with its main entrance facing Yonge Street. The church was large, with 40-foot tall ceilings and two spires, the taller

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

² *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 47, Concession 1, Markham Township.

³ Radcliffe, John. "Map of Richmond Hill including the first concessions of the Townships of Markham and Vaughan in the County of York, Canada West." Thornhill, 1862.

⁴ "The New C M Church." *York Herald*, January 15 1880.

⁵ "The New C M Church." *York Herald*, January 15 1880.

⁶ "Local items." *York Herald*, February 5 1880.

⁷ "Local items." *York Herald*, April 15 1880.

⁸ "Local items." *York Herald*, April 29 1880; "Contract." *York Herald*, November 25 1880.

⁹ "R.H. United Church." *The Liberal*, May 12 1955.

of which was to house a bell. On the inside, the church was to have “amphitheater-style” seating with a capacity for 654, and a vestry that could seat 300. In the vestry, the congregation planned to put a schoolroom.¹⁰ Historic photographs further show the church’s 1880 design, which features asymmetrical massing, a cruciform plan, spires, and Gothic features including lancet-arched windows with foliated tracery, buttresses, and hood moulds (Figures 3-4). The interior of the building featured a lancet-arched niche behind the pulpit with decorative plasterwork outlining the arch (Figure 5).

In June 1880, while the church was mid-construction, the Trustees acquired an additional 500-square-foot triangular sliver of land on Village Lot 45 from Henry Sanderson.¹¹ This property fronted Yonge Street, and was located directly north of the existing church property on Village Lot 46.

The church opened in March 1881 after over a year of planning and construction.¹² Archival documentation shows that a series of alterations were conducted to the structure in the following decades. In August 1881, the church’s bell was installed in the belfry.¹³ In 1889, the church completed additional interior work, including repainting and wood re-varnishing.¹⁴ In 1923, the church once again underwent interior renovations, with the installation of a new pipe organ necessitating that the choir pulpit be relocated.¹⁵

In 1925, the Methodist Church of Canada joined the Presbyterian, Congregational, and General Council of Local Union Churches to form the United Church of Canada. In 1925, the subject church was briefly renamed St. John’s United Church, before its name was changed to the Richmond Hill United Church in 1926. In 1931, the church built an addition on its northern elevation, which housed its washrooms, kitchen, and Sunday school.¹⁶

Land registry records show that the United Church Trustees acquired additional land to the north of the church in 1956. In May 1956, the Trustees purchased the western part of Village Lot 45 from Albert and Dorothea Hill. Later that month, they purchased a small triangular sliver of land north of Village Lot 45 on Village Lot 42 fronting Yonge Street from the Town of Richmond Hill.¹⁷ The acquisition of multiple additional lots gave the subject property its present-day L-shape, with the amalgamated parcel referred to as Lot 1 Judge’s Plan 10030 (Figure 6). In 1957, the United Church constructed a new addition (the “North Wing”) to replace the older 1930s addition on the church’s north elevation. The North Wing was built in the Gothic Revival style¹⁸ to house the church’s

¹⁰ “Richmond Hill Progressing.” *York Herald*, February 12 1880.

¹¹ *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 47, Concession 1, Markham Township.

¹² “Church opening.” *York Herald*, March 17 1881.

¹³ “Peach and Bell Social.” *York Herald*, August 11 1881.

¹⁴ “Church re-opening.” *York Herald*, January 9 1890.

¹⁵ Richmond Hill United Church. *Our Heritage on the Hill: Richmond Hill United Church 1880-1980*. Richmond Hill, date unknown.

¹⁶ Richmond Hill United Church. *Our Heritage on the Hill: Richmond Hill United Church 1880-1980*. Richmond Hill, date unknown.

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

¹⁸ “Turn Sod New Sunday School Building.” *The Liberal*, October 31 1957.

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Sunday School and was designed by architecture firm Bruce Brown & Brisley.¹⁹ The addition cost over \$253,000 to build and was dedicated in September 1958.²⁰

In 1988 and 1989, the subject building underwent extensive interior and exterior renovations, including accessibility retrofits and masonry and plasterwork.²¹

The subject property has been used as a church since opening as the Richmond Hill Methodist Church in 1881.

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street was initially built for the village's large Methodist community, which was established in the village in the early-19th century. From the time of its establishment until the church's merger with the United Church in 1925, the Methodist community played a vital role in Richmond Hill's religious and social life.

Methodism in Richmond Hill began in the early days of its settlement. As early as 1803, Methodist circuit riders travelled up and down Yonge Street, stopping at settlements to deliver services and hold meetings. In the 1820s, Methodists in the budding village of Richmond Hill began sharing a meeting space with the Presbyterian Church.²²

In 1846, the Richmond Hill Methodist community built its first church on the east side of Yonge Street, just south of Centre Street. This early church was a modest one-storey frame structure (Figure 7). According to the *York Herald*, the old Methodist Church was designed by a Mr. Harris and was built using the "bee" system, a historic system common in early settler Ontario wherein a structure, like a barn or a church, was built collectively by a community.²³ While the first church building was constructed in 1846, it wasn't officially dedicated until 1860.²⁴ A Methodist manse, now located at 33 Centre Street East, was also built in 1864 to house the village's Methodist ministers. The house was used as a manse for the church until 1950, when a new manse was built at 21 Centre Street East.²⁵

On December 21, 1879, the Methodist Church suffered a calamity when a fire broke out in the building's vestry. The fire started in a stovepipe while Sunday services were being delivered. Unfortunately, the fire wasn't discovered immediately and it spread through the building, lighting the roof and burning the building down. While the church wasn't saved, the community managed to save part of the Sabbath School Library's book

¹⁹ "United Church Plans \$193,000 Extension." *The Liberal*, October 18 1956.

²⁰ "Special services for opening Christian Education Building." *The Liberal*, September 25 1958.

²¹ "Historic church to be restored." *The Liberal*, February 20 1988.

²² Stamp, Robert M. *Early Days in Richmond Hill: A History of the Community to 1930*. Richmond Hill: Richmond Hill Public Library Board, 1991.

²³ "Another big blaze." *York Herald*, December 25 1879.

²⁴ Richmond Hill United Church. *Our Heritage on the Hill: Richmond Hill United Church 1880-1980*. Richmond Hill, date unknown.

²⁵ "Designation By-Law - Methodist Manse - 33 Centre Street East." Ontario Heritage Trust. Accessed November 8, 2024. <https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/oha/details/file?id=9043>.

collection.²⁶ The Methodist congregation was eager to rebuild after the fire, and efforts began as early as January 1880.²⁷ The new church was designed by architect Charles A. Walton and was dedicated in March 1881.²⁸

The Methodist Church played a strong role in Richmond Hill village life in the 19th and early-20th centuries. The Methodist Church was the most populous congregation in 19th-century Richmond Hill, with the Presbyterian Church coming second.²⁹ According to the 1891 Census of Canada, 425 out of 743 Richmond Hill residents belonged to the Methodist Church, making up over half of the village's population.³⁰ Methodist membership historically included some of the village's most prominent members and families, including William Trench of Trench Carriage Works, the Crosby family, longtime village clerk A.J. Hume, and reeve William Harrison.³¹

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church strongly contributed to the village's social life. Four major tenets of the Methodist Church included music, weekly educational classes, camp meetings, and charity work, all of which formed the basis of the congregation's social activities.³² The Methodist choirs were a major part of the church and its performances were heavily publicized in local newspapers.³³ To promote religious education, the church hosted regular classes for members of all ages, including a weekly Sunday school and religious lectures for adults.³⁴ The church also organized camp meetings at popular Methodist campgrounds, such as the Grimsby Beach Chautauqua³⁵ in 1895 (Figure 8). Furthermore, the Methodist Church congregation was heavily involved in charity and missionary work. For example, in 1880, the church formed a Ladies' Aid Society to provide local social programs.³⁶ The church also fundraised for organizations such as the local Red Cross during the First World War.³⁷

One of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church's largest initiatives within the village was its involvement in the Temperance Movement. Temperance groups, such as the

²⁶ "Another big blaze." *York Herald*, December 25 1879.

²⁷ "The New C M Church." *York Herald*, January 15 1880.

²⁸ "Church opening." *York Herald*, March 17 1881.

²⁹ Stamp, Robert M. *Early Days in Richmond Hill: A History of the Community to 1930*. Richmond Hill: Richmond Hill Public Library Board, 1991.

³⁰ Department of Agriculture, Census Branch, *Census of Canada 1890-1, 1893-1897*, Volume 1, publications.gc.ca/pub?id=9.828079&sl=0.

³¹ Stamp, Robert M. *Early Days in Richmond Hill: A History of the Community to 1930*. Richmond Hill: Richmond Hill Public Library Board, 1991.

³² "Methodism." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, January 18, 2010.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/methodism#:~:text=in%20this%20life.->

,The%20movement%20was%20first%20represented%20in%20what%20is%20now%20Canada,of%20Methodists%20in%20the%20Maritimes.

³³ "York Choral Society." *The Liberal*, January 27 1916; "Surprise and Presentation." *The Liberal*, March 31 1882; "A congregational meeting." *The Liberal*, October 25 1917.

³⁴ "The third lecture." *York Herald*, December 29 1865.

³⁵ In this context, a Chautauqua refers to a Methodist educational summer camp. These camps had their origins at Chautauqua Lake, New York in the mid- to late-19th century, and spread in popularity across North America in the late-19th century. In Canada, Grimsby Beach was a popular example of a Chautauqua camp.

³⁶ "The Methodist Church Boom." *York Herald*, February 19 1880.

³⁷ "York Choral Society." *The Liberal*, January 27 1916.

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Independent Order of Good Templars (IOGT) and the Methodist Temperance Association, were active in the village throughout the 19th century and promoted abstinence from alcohol consumption. The Temperance Movement was largely led by Protestant groups and, in Richmond Hill, was strongly supported by the Methodist Church.

Newspaper sources show that the Methodist Church was a major proponent of the Temperance Movement throughout the 19th century. The church hosted lectures on temperance beginning in the 1850s, drawing supporters to the cause and teaching residents about abstinence from alcohol.³⁸ Although temperance societies were established in Richmond Hill as early as 1831, a separate Methodist Temperance Society was formed in 1859. At its first meeting, the society gathered 69 signatures pledging to abstain from alcohol³⁹ and would continue to provide pledge cards to its congregation every Sunday, showing the popularity and demand for a temperance society in the village.⁴⁰

In Richmond Hill, the success of the Temperance Movement championed by the Methodist community resulted in increasing regulation in alcohol sales. Beginning in the early 1870s alcohol sales were limited to hotels in the village, before being completely banned by a local option by-law in 1906. Temperance was strong in Richmond Hill and the local option by-law was in force until 1962. The movement's popularity also resulted in the establishment of a local temperance hall at 11 Centre Street West in 1876, which provided space for social gatherings and for temperance meetings.⁴¹

The subject building housed the Richmond Hill Methodist congregation until 1925, when the Methodist Church of Canada joined other Protestant denominations to form the nascent United Church of Canada.

The United Church

The subject building at 10201 Yonge Street has housed a United Church congregation since 1925.

In 1925, following the formation of the United Church of Canada, the subject building changed from a Methodist to a United Church. The United Church was formed through the union of various Protestant denominations, including Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and General Council of Local Union Churches. The push to unite the denominations emerged from a need to bring together the ministry and mission work being done both in the Canadian northwest and abroad.⁴² As a result, the United

³⁸ "Temperance Lecture." *York Ridings' Gazette*, February 19 1858; "Untitled." *York Ridings' Gazette*, July 16 1858.

³⁹ "The Wesleyan Methodist Temperance Society." *York Herald*, April 15 1859.

⁴⁰ "Village Directory." *York Herald*, July 7 1876.

⁴¹ "The Temperance Hall," *York Herald*. November 24, 1876.

⁴² "United Church of Canada." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, February 2, 2010. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/united-church-of-canada>.

Church's doctrines evolved to incorporate that of the different churches. The union was historic, and the United Church became the largest Protestant Church in Canada.⁴³

In Richmond Hill, two churches converted to the United Church in 1925 – the Methodist Church housed in the subject building became St. John's United Church, while the Richmond Hill Presbyterian Church at 10066 Yonge Street became St. Paul's United Church. In 1926, St. Paul's United Church reverted back to a Presbyterian Church, while the subject building remained a part of the United Church. As such, the two United congregations joined together in November 1926 and have been housed in the subject building ever since.⁴⁴

By 1931, Richmond Hill's population had grown to 1296,⁴⁵ a significant increase from 1880 when the church was initially constructed. The village's significant population growth coupled with the creation of the United Church meant that the church's congregation also grew. In order to accommodate this growing membership, the subject building underwent two additions in the 20th century to make more room. In 1932, an addition was added to the north side of the building, which housed a kitchen, washrooms, and a Sunday school.⁴⁶ In 1957, a second, larger addition (the "North Wing") was built on the church's north side, replacing the previous addition. This new wing was larger and featured a 350-person recreation hall, a 70-seat chapel, classrooms, and a kitchen.⁴⁷ Another improvement to the church in the 20th century was the construction of a new parsonage. The old parsonage at the northeast corner of Church and Centre Streets was sold,⁴⁸ and replaced by a new building located directly east of the church parking lot around 1950.⁴⁹

Since its establishment in 1925, the United Church has continued to play a significant role within religious and community life in Richmond Hill.

Charles A. Walton

Charles A. Walton, a Toronto-based architect practicing in the late-19th century, designed the Richmond Hill Methodist Church in 1880.⁵⁰

Walton was born in England in 1845 before immigrating to Canada as a young boy in 1856. In Toronto, he began to train as an architect, apprenticing under William Kauffman. Walton briefly worked in Detroit, Michigan, where he began his own firm with Julius A. Knapp in 1875 called Knapp & Walton. The partnership was dissolved after a

⁴³ "United Church of Canada." The Canadian Encyclopedia, February 2, 2010.

<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/united-church-of-canada>.

⁴⁴ *11901 Yonge Street Street*, date unknown, City File No. D12-07464, City of Richmond Hill Heritage Property (D12) Files, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada.

⁴⁵ *Census of Canada*, 1931.

⁴⁶ *11901 Yonge Street Street*, date unknown, City File No. D12-07464, City of Richmond Hill Heritage Property (D12) Files, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada.

⁴⁷ "Special services for opening Christian Education Building." *The Liberal*, September 25 1958.

⁴⁸ *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 47, Concession 1, Markham Township.

⁴⁹ "Many inspect parsonage of United Church." *Publication unknown*, 1950. Via Richmond Hill Public Library.

⁵⁰ "Local items." *York Herald*, March 18 1880.

year, however, and Walton returned to Canada in 1877. He spent his first year back in Toronto practicing with William Storm before working under his own name. Walton would work under his own firm for the next 30 years.⁵¹

Throughout the course of his career, Walton designed structures throughout Ontario, primarily within Toronto. He is best remembered for designing the Toronto Arcade on Yonge Street (1883-1884), which was Toronto's first indoor shopping mall.⁵² In addition to the Arcade, Walton also designed shops, residences, a biscuit factory, a school, and an opera house. Walton was a versatile architect, and his designs featured various architectural styles, often including Gothic Revival, Romanesque, and Classical elements.

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church is one of four known Walton-designed churches, three of which were Methodist churches. In 1879, Walton received a contract to design the Spadina Avenue Methodist Church. A year later, he designed the subject building, as well as the St. George's Anglican Church in Goderich, Ontario alongside architect David Roberts. In 1887, Walton also designed the New Richmond Methodist Church in Toronto.⁵³ The Richmond Hill Methodist Church and St. George's Anglican Church are especially notable because, in addition to both being built in the same year and in the Gothic Revival style, they also share an almost-identical church steeple design (Figure 9).

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church is Walton's only known building in Richmond Hill.⁵⁴

Architecture

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street is a church complex comprised of an 1880 church, a 1957 side wing ("North Wing"), and pre-1970 rear addition (Figure 10).

The 1880 church is a representative example of the Gothic Revival style applied to an ecclesiastical building typology. Typologies are used to classify buildings based on their form, function, or construction methods. In North America and Europe, Christian ecclesiastical buildings share many typical features that reveal their unique symbolic and liturgical requirements. For example, churches often have an elongated cross-shaped ("cruciform") footprint to represent the sign of the cross, which houses seating for the congregation. At the end of the church aisle, there is usually an apse, a semi-

⁵¹ "Walton, Charles Albert." Walton, Charles Albert | Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada. Accessed November 12, 2024. <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/303>.

⁵² "Chas. A. Walton Dead." *The Toronto Daily Star*, September 24 1908.

⁵³ "Walton, Charles Albert." Walton, Charles Albert | Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada. Accessed November 12, 2024. <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/303>.

⁵⁴ "Walton, Charles Albert." Walton, Charles Albert | Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada. Accessed November 12, 2024. <http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/303>.

circular or polygonal recess that often houses the sanctuary or choir. Towers are also common to the church typology, oftentimes holding the church bells.⁵⁵

The Gothic Revival style is strongly associated with the ecclesiastical typology. With its roots in Medieval Europe, the Gothic Revival style regained popularity in the 19th century as a reaction to the previous, more restrained Classical Revival and Georgian styles. While classically-derived architecture tends to be simpler, the Gothic Revival style is heavier and more ornamental.⁵⁶ While strongly associated with ecclesiastical structures, the Gothic Revival style had a major impact on both religious and domestic architecture, and was wildly popular in Ontario from the 1840s into the 20th century. In terms of church construction, it was one of the most popular church styles from the mid- to late-19th century, and the style even endured into the mid-20th century.⁵⁷

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church is an example of the Gothic Revival style applied to the ecclesiastical typology because of elements including, but not limited to, its cruciform footprint, polygonal apse, square towers with octagonal spires and belfry, lancet-arched window and door openings, stained glass windows with foliated tracery, hood moulds, and iron cresting.

1880 Church Exterior

The 1880 church has a cruciform plan with two square towers on its front (west) elevation, and terminating in a polygonal apse on its rear (east) side. The church is built of yellow brick laid in a common bond and has a stone foundation. The building's masonry has a number of decorative features, including brick scalloping, brick and stone string courses, carved stone label stops, and brick buttresses with stone copings. Historic photographs also show that the church's gables formerly featured carved stone finials, but they were removed sometime after 1910 (Figure 4). The structure's door and window openings are lancet-arched, with windows typically containing leaded stained glass units. The structure is topped by a complex and steeply-pitched roof profile. While the roofing material on the bulk of the building has been changed from its original slate⁵⁸ to asphalt, the church's two towers retain their copper roofing.

The church's front (west) façade is asymmetrical and includes a central section with three projecting masses: two brick towers and a brick porch (Figure 11). The central section is symmetrical and stands at two storeys tall with a front-gable roof. In the center, there is a main entrance with a lancet-arched paneled double door with a transom sheltered by a brick porch with a corbel-stepped gable (Figure 12). The porch features a lancet-arched entry and is supported by buttresses on either side. There are two lancet-arched stained glass windows flanking the front porch, with an additional

⁵⁵ MacRae, Marion and Anthony Adamson. *Hallowed Walls: Church architecture of Upper Canada*. Toronto, Ont: Clarke, Irwin & Company Limited. 1975.

⁵⁶ Architectural styles. Accessed November 18, 2024.

<https://www.markham.ca/wps/portal/home/about/markham-heritage/architectural-styles/>.

⁵⁷ "Architectural Style." Ontario Heritage Trust. Accessed June 12, 2024.

<https://www.heritagetrust.on.ca/places-of-worship/places-of-worship-database/architecture/architectural-style>.

⁵⁸ "Richmond Hill Progressing." *York Herald*, February 12 1880.

larger lancet-arched stained glass window with foliated tracery sitting above the porch. Within the gable peak of the west elevation, there is also a pair of small lancet-arched louvered window openings. The two towers on the west elevation flank the central section of the façade and mark the northwest and southwest corners of the church. The towers have square bases and are topped with octagonal spires with iron cresting. In addition, the taller tower on the southwest corner also contains a belfry, where the church bell has historically been located, as well as a date stone reading “A.D. 1880” (Figure 13). The fenestration on the towers is numerous and features lancet-arched window openings with either stained glass, clear glass, or louvered units. As the church’s primary elevation, the front façade also features elaborate ornamentation, including brick scalloping and carved stone label stops.

The church’s south (side) elevation is asymmetrical and features two projecting masses: a projecting bay and a square tower (Figure 11). In the center of the south elevation, there is a projecting bay with a corbel-stepped gable supported by brick buttresses. The projecting bay features three levels of window openings: a trio of lancet-arched windows at the bottom; a lancet-arched window with foliated tracery in the middle; and a louvered lancet-arched opening at the top, located within the gable. The church’s large south tower, which marks the church’s southwest corner, features a lancet-arched paneled wooden door with a transom at grade. On the upper storeys, the tower also features a series of lancet-arched windows with either louvers or leaded glass windows units with foliated tracery. Set back from these projecting masses is the main body of the church, which can be seen on either side of the projecting bay. There are pairs of lancet-arched window openings on either side of the projecting bay, as well as a lancet-arched doorway with a paneled wooden double door with transom directly to the east. Within the southern slope of the roof, there are gable-roofed dormers with louvers. Additionally, part of the church’s polygonal apse is also located on the church’s south elevation, and features a hipped roof, brick buttresses, and lancet-arched windows with brick hood moulds.

The church’s north (side) elevation is similar to the south elevation. The north elevation is asymmetrical and features a projecting bay and a projecting square tower. In the center of the north elevation, there is a projecting bay with a corbel-stepped gable supported by brick buttresses. Within the projecting bay, there is a trio of lancet-arched windows at the first storey, with a larger lancet-arched window with foliated tracery above it. Within the gable, there is another louvered lancet-arched opening. The church’s smaller north tower, which marks the church’s northwest corner, features a series of lancet-arched windows with either louvered units or leaded glass windows units with foliated tracery. Set back from the two projecting masses is the main body of the church, which features additional lancet-arched windows, as well as gable-roofed dormers with louvered units within the roof. In addition, the church’s North Wing projects from the north elevation of the main church building.

The church’s rear (east) elevation features a one-storey polygonal apse with a hipped roof (Figure 14). The apse is supported by brick buttresses and is ornamented with brick scalloping. On each of the polygon’s sides, there is a lancet-arched window with a stone sill and brick hood moulds. Within the hipped roof, there is also a gable-roofed dormer

with a louvered window opening. Projecting from the apse, there is a small, one-storey rear addition (built before 1970)⁵⁹ with a hipped roof (Figure 18).

1880 Church Interior

The interior of the church features a nave that has retained a number of its 19th-century features. The nave has a vaulted ceiling decorated with plasterwork, including ribs, cornices, and foliated bosses. On its east wall behind the pulpit, there is a lancet-arched niche outlined with plaster cornices and decorative colonettes. On the west wall, the church also features a horseshoe-shaped balcony with patterned metal balustrades supported by Corinthian columns (Figures 15-17).

1957 North Wing Exterior

The North Wing is a three-storey structure with an irregular footprint and flat roof that is connected to the 1880 Church on its north elevation. Similar to the 1880 Church, the North Wing is constructed of yellow brick laid in common bond, and includes masonry features such as buttresses with stone copings and stone sills and voussoirs, as well as stone quoining along the window and door openings. The window and door openings are a mixture of lancet-arched and flat-arched (Figure 18).

Craftsmanship and Artistic Merit

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church building also has a rich collection of stained glass windows that shows the high level of craftsmanship and artistic merit of the structure. The church's stained glass windows were installed gradually over the years, and many windows were made to commemorate significant Methodist and United Church members. As such, stained glass windows were designed and crafted by different artists. The windows show different biblical scenes. Examples of stained glass windows at the Richmond Hill Methodist Church include "I come to do thy will o'God" to commemorate Warren Sennell Ramer, "For they know his voice" to commemorate Margaret Elsie Lamb, "St. Mark" to commemorate J. Allan and Margaret Jessie Bales, and an untitled window to commemorate Laura Marguerite Spanner, Mabel Martha Walker, and the Law and Grant families. (Figures 19-20).⁶⁰

Context

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street is located at the northeast corner of Yonge and Centre Streets. The structure retains its original location and orientation on Yonge Street.

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church is important in defining and maintaining the character of Yonge Street within Richmond Hill's historic village core, which developed starting in the early-19th century. Surrounding the subject property, Yonge Street features a predominantly fine-grained late-19th and early-20th-century commercial main

⁵⁹ "York Maps Historical Imagery - 1970." *York Region*, 2024.

⁶⁰ Richmond Hill United Church. *Our Heritage on the Hill: Richmond Hill United Church 1880-1980*. Richmond Hill, date unknown.

street character, which is typified by low-rise commercial and mixed-use buildings with storefronts at-grade, typically built flush with the Yonge Street lot line. These commercial and mixed-use buildings are also interspersed with landmark historical public/institutional 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 predominant character remains that of a historic village main street (Figure 21).

Nearby buildings that contribute to the historic village character of the Yonge Street streetscape include the Hewison-Skeele House & Shop at 10155 Yonge Street (circa 1849), the Old Post Office at 10184 Yonge Street (1936), the Dominion Telegraph Building at 10185 Yonge Street (1877), the John Coulter Tailor Shop at 10217 Yonge Street (1866), the Wellman Block at 10220 Yonge Street (circa 1920), the Fireproof Store at 10225 Yonge Street (1866), the Hume House at 10231 Yonge Street (circa 1846), the Hart House at 10239 Yonge Street (circa 1852), the Frances M. Brown House at 10243 Yonge Street (circa 1915), and the Richmond Hill High School/Old Town Hall at 10268 Yonge Street (1897).

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church also has historic and functional links to nearby structures within the village core. The Methodist Church Manse (1864), which was built to house Methodist ministers, is located one block east at 33 Church Street East. As well, the Temperance Hall (1876), which had historic ties to the Methodist Church, stands one block west at 11 Centre Street West. Located near the intersection of Yonge and Centre streets, these three buildings formed an important nucleus for Richmond Hill's Methodist community in the late-19th century, and continue to contribute to an understanding of how the Methodist church and community would have functioned during this time.

Additionally, the Richmond Hill Methodist Church is a landmark within Richmond Hill's village core due to its visual prominence and longstanding role as a community gathering place.

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.

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street has design and physical value as a representative example of the Gothic Revival architectural style applied to an ecclesiastical building typology. Architectural features that contribute to the church's Gothic Revival style applied to an ecclesiastical typology include, but are not limited to, its cruciform footprint, polygonal apse, square towers with octagonal spires and belfry, lancet-arched window and door openings, stained glass windows with foliated tracery, hood moulds, and iron cresting.

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

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street also has design and physical value for the high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit displayed in its stained glass windows. The church's stained glass windows were installed gradually over the years, were made by different artists, and many windows were made to commemorate significant Methodist and United Church members. Windows include "I come to do thy will o'God", "For they know his voice," and "St. Mark".

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 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street has historical and associative value because of its association with the Methodist Church. The church was constructed in 1880 to house Richmond Hill's Methodist congregation, who remained in the subject building until the Methodists became the United Church of Canada in 1925. As a long-standing congregation and the most populous church in Richmond Hill in the 19th century, the Methodist Church touched many parts of 19th and early-20th century village life. In addition to providing religious service, the church organized musical groups and performances, hosted classes and lectures for children and adults, organized religious camp meetings, and performed charitable and missionary work. The Methodist Church was also notably involved in the village's popular and successful Temperance Movement, recruiting supporters, hosting lectures, and establishing a Methodist Temperance Society in 1859.

The Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street also has historical and associative value because of its association with the United Church of Canada. Like other United Churches across the country, Richmond Hill's United Church was formed because of a historic union between Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and

General Council of Local Union Churches in 1925 to bring together the churches' ministry and missionary work in Canada and abroad. As a result of the union, church congregations combined and grew, and the church's doctrines evolved. The subject building has housed the United Church congregation since 1925, first called the St. John's United Church before being renamed to the Richmond Hill United Church in 1926. The church has housed the United Church congregation since 1925, and continues to serve as a religious and community gathering space to this day.

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.

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street also has historical and associative value because it demonstrates the work of Toronto-based architect Charles A. Walton. While Walton is best remembered for designing the Yonge Street Arcade in Toronto (1883-1884), Walton's work was versatile and diverse, spanning different typologies including shops, residences, schools, and factories. The Richmond Hill United Church is one of four known Walton-designed churches, three of which were Methodist churches. The subject building also bears a strong resemblance to another of Walton's works, the St. George's Anglican Church, which was built in the same year. The Richmond Hill Methodist Church is Walton's only known building in Richmond Hill.

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

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street has contextual value because it is important in defining and maintaining the predominantly fine-grained late-19th and early-20th-century main street character of Yonge Street in Richmond Hill's village core. Surrounding the subject property, Yonge Street is typified by low-rise commercial and mixed-use buildings with storefronts at-grade, interspersed with landmark historical public/institutional buildings including churches, schools, and a post office. The subject property also contributes to the historic character of Richmond Hill's village core more broadly, which includes commercial and institutional built form along Yonge Street and residential buildings 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 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street also has contextual value because it has historical links to nearby structures within the village core. The subject property is historically and functionally linked to the Methodist Church Manse

(1864), located one block east at 33 Centre Street East, because it historically housed the church's ministers. The subject property is also historically and functionally linked to the Temperance Hall (1876), located one block west at 11 Centre Street West. The Temperance Hall was built to support the Temperance Movement, which historically had close ties to the Methodist Church community. Located near the intersection of Yonge and Centre streets, these three buildings formed an important nucleus for Richmond Hill's Methodist community in the late-19th century, and continue to contribute to an understanding of how the Methodist church and community would have functioned during this time.

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

The 1880 Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street has contextual value as a local landmark within Richmond Hill's historical village core. The church is sited in a prominent and highly visible location at the northeast corner of Yonge and Centre streets, where it has served as a nucleus and marker for the local community since its construction in 1880. The church is regarded as a local landmark due to its prominent scale and highly visible spires, distinct historical character and high level of design, and longstanding role as a religious and community gathering place.

Maps and Photographs



Figure 1 Detail of the 1862 Ratcliffe map showing the approximate location of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street (in red). Note that in 1862, the Methodist Church congregation was located south of the present church (indicated in blue), and did not move north until 1880. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection)

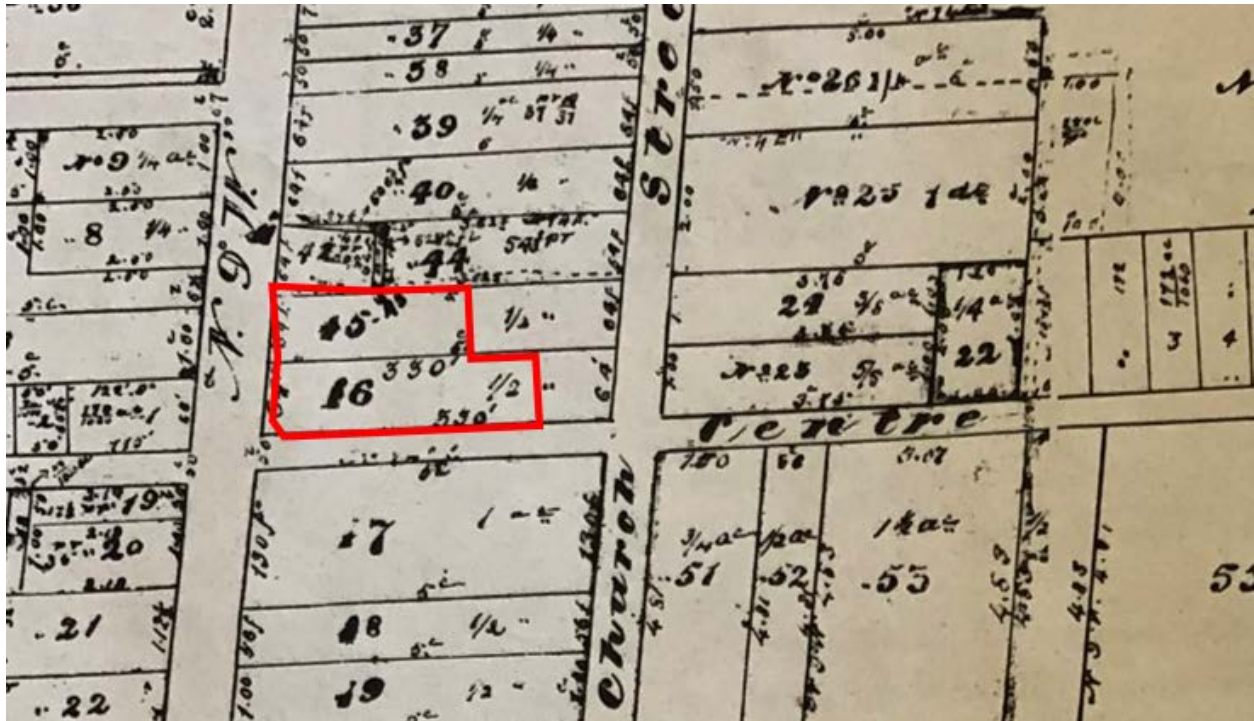


Figure 2 Detail of the 1879 Gibson Plan showing the approximate location of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street (in red). (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection)

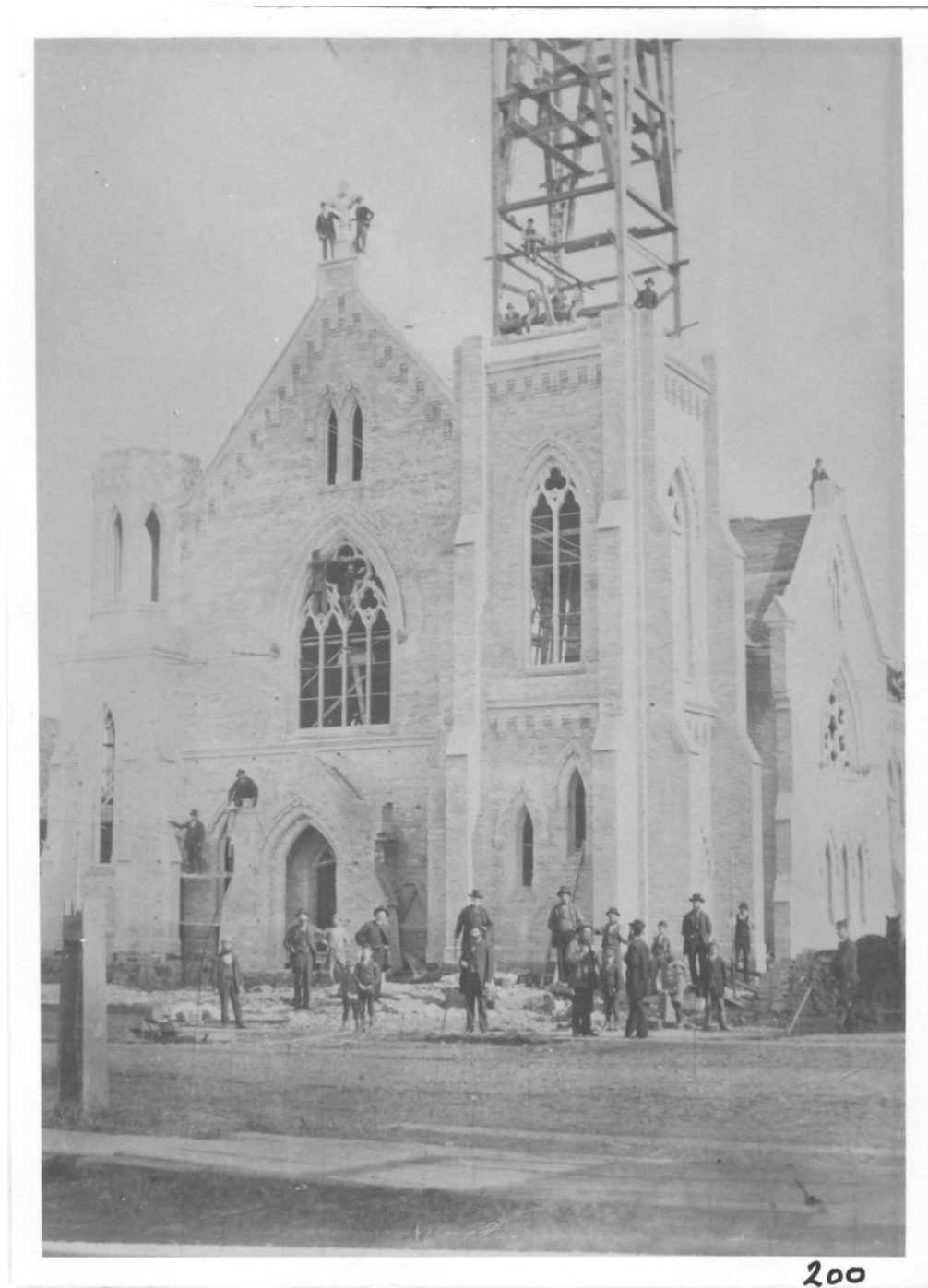


Figure 3 1880-1881 photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street looking east, showing the building's front elevation under construction. Note the building's brick construction with intricate brick scalloping, lancet-arched window and door openings, and hood moulds. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Digital Archive)



Figure 4 Circa 1910s photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street looking northeast, showing the building's front (west) and south elevations. Note the building's square brick towers with octagonal spires, windows with foliated tracery, and prominent location fronting Yonge Street. Also note that the carved stone finial located atop the church gables on the front and side elevations, which have since been removed. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Digital Archive)

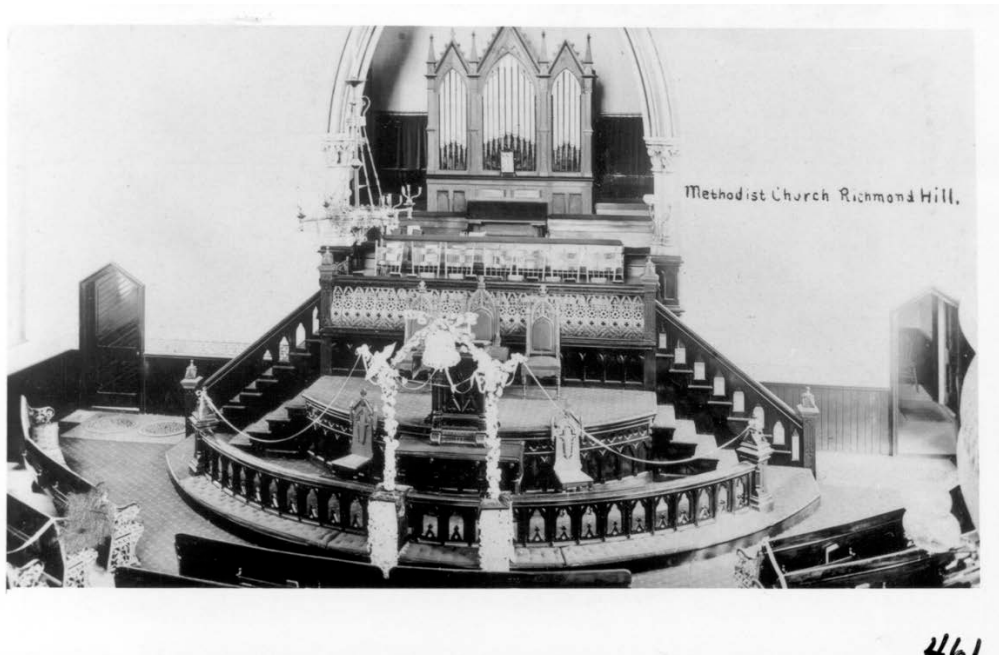


Figure 5 Circa 1880s photograph of the interior of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street, facing the pulpit. Note the lancet-arched niche behind the pulpit outlined with decorative plasterwork. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Digital Archive)

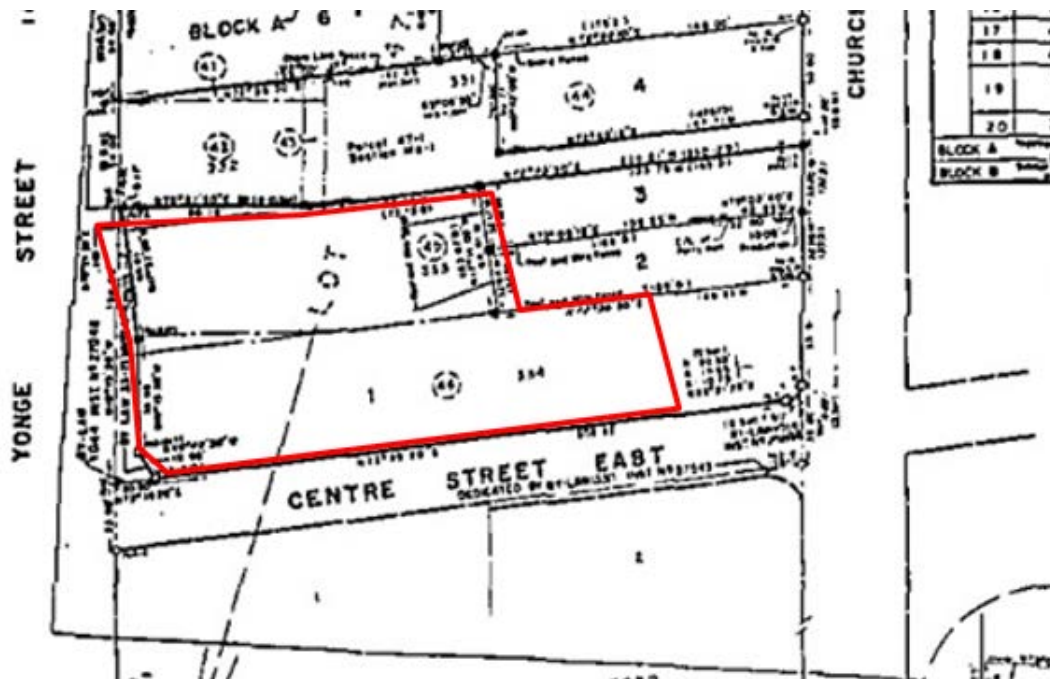
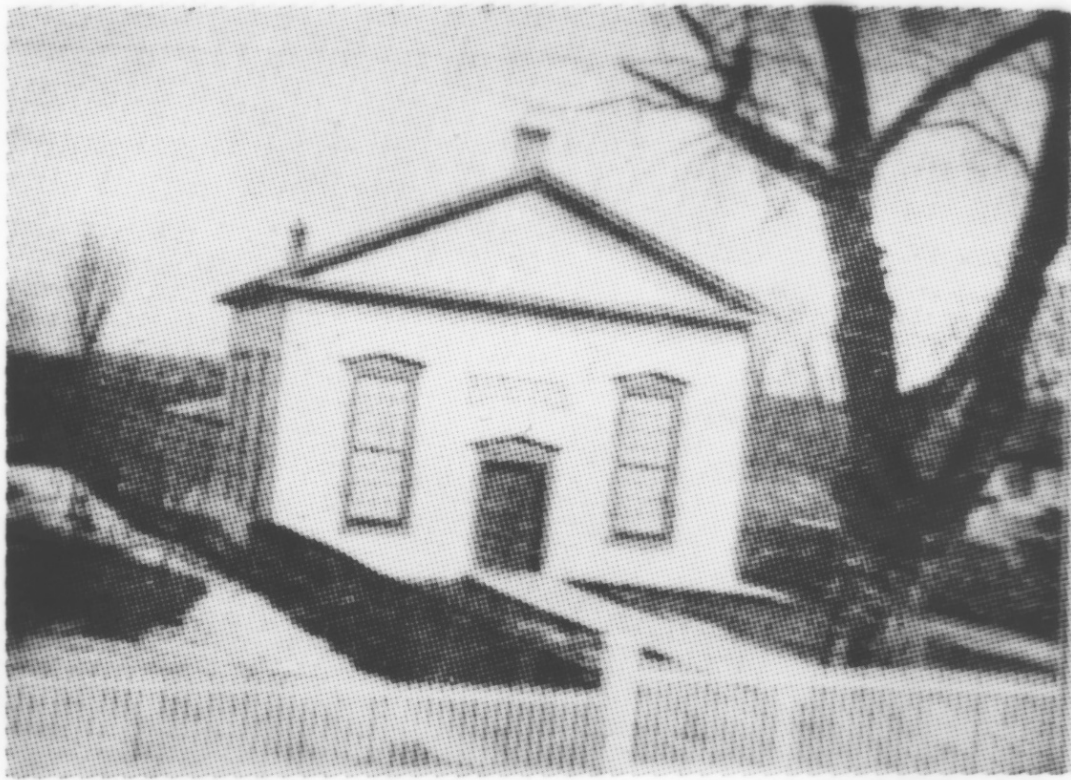


Figure 6 Detail of the 1970s Judge's Plan 10030, showing the approximate location of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street (in red). (Source: Ontario Land Registry Historic Books)



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Figure 7 Circa 1870s photograph of the old Richmond Hill Methodist Church looking east, showing the building's front elevation. The old Methodist Church was located on Yonge Street, south of Centre Street. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Digital Archive)



Figure 8 1895 photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church choir at the Grimsby Beach Chautauqua in Grimsby Beach, Ontario. Note that Methodist Church camps became very popular in the late-19th and early-20th centuries, drawing many congregations to campgrounds every summer. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Digital Archive)



Figure 9 2024 photograph of the St. George United Church in Goderich, Ontario (left) and the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street (right). Note the similarities between the two church towers, including their tall square massing, buttresses, lancet-arched windows, and steeples with dormer windows. Both churches were designed by architect Charles Walton, who used similar designs for each building. (Source: Google Street View 2024, HUD 2025)

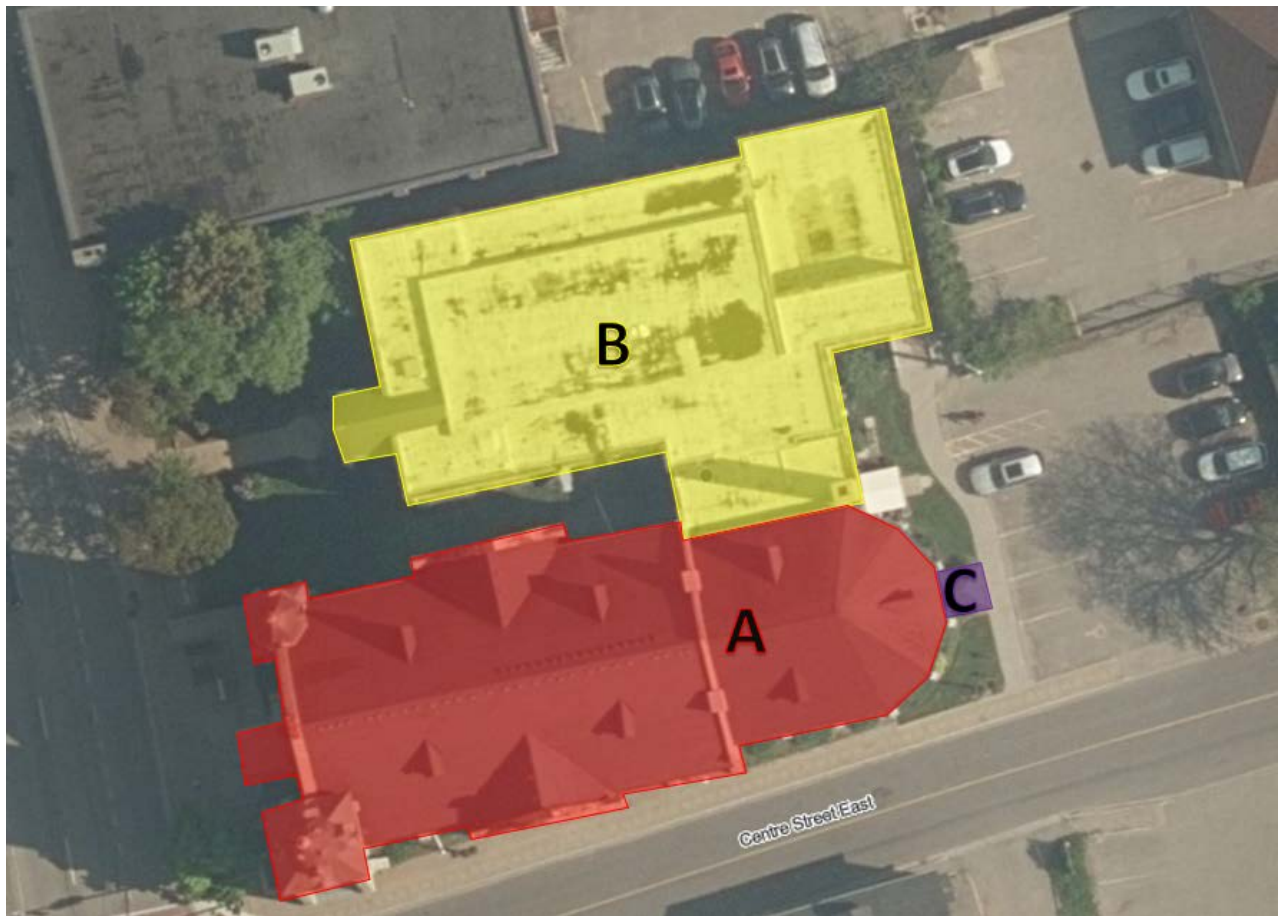


Figure 10 2024 aerial image of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street showing the approximate locations of additions to the building. Archival documentation shows that the church (building “A”) was built in 1880, the North Wing (building “B”) was built in 1957-58, and addition “C” was added before 1970. (Source: York Maps)



Figure 11 2025 photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street looking northwest, showing the church's front (west) and side (south) elevations. Note the church's variety of windows, including lancet-arched stained glass windows with foliated tracery and louvered window units. (Source: HUD 2025)

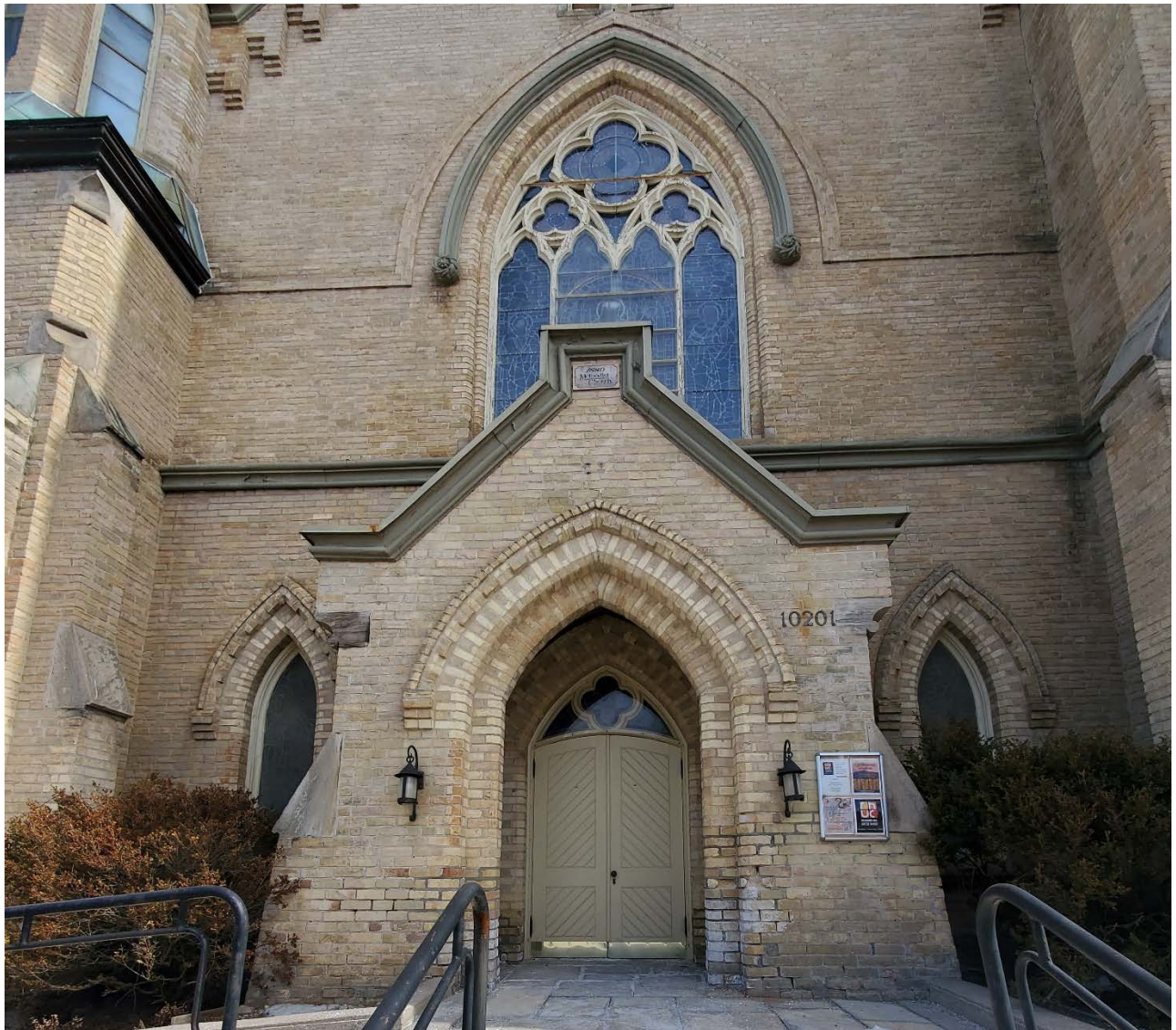


Figure 12 2025 photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street looking east at the building's front (west) elevation. Note the church's lancet-arched main doorway with a stained glass transom, sheltered by a brick porch with corbel-stepped gables. (Source: HUD 2025)



Figure 13 2025 photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street looking east at the building's front (west) elevation. Note the date stone inscribed with "A.D. 1880" located on the southwest corner of the building. (Source: HUD 2025)



Figure 14 2025 photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street looking west at the building's rear (east) elevation. Note the church's polygonal apse, brick buttresses with stone copings, and lancet-arched windows. (Source: HUD 2025)



Figure 15 2025 interior photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street facing east. Note the nave's vaulted ceiling with decorative plasterwork, including ribs, foliated bosses, and cornices. Also note the nave's balcony, which features an intricate metal balustrade. (Source: HUD 2025)



Figure 16 2025 interior photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street facing east. Note the Corinthian columns supporting the nave's balcony. (Source: HUD 2025)



Figure 17 2025 interior photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street facing east. Note the recessed lancet-arched niche located behind the church pulpit, outlined with decorative plasterwork and colonettes. (Source: HUD 2025)



Figure 18 2025 photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street looking east, showing the North Wing's front (west) façade. (Source: HUD 2025)

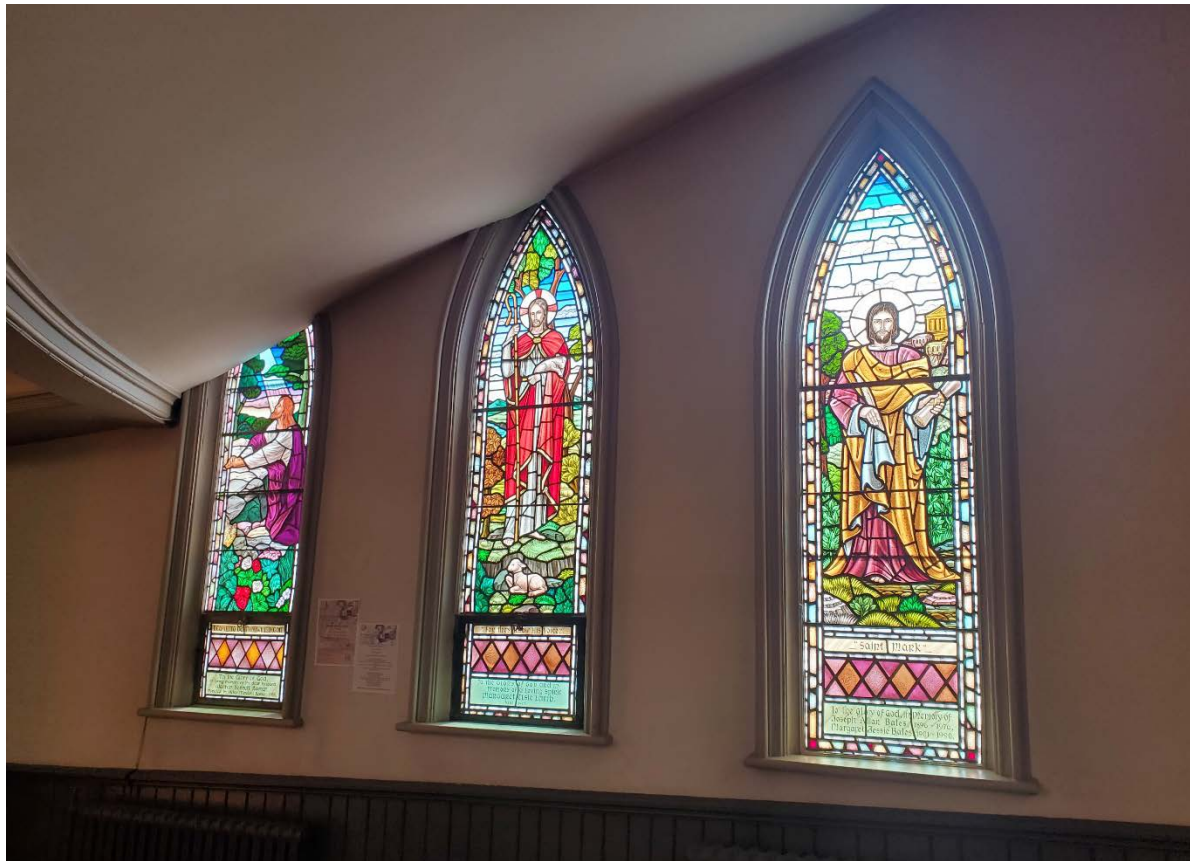


Figure 19 2025 interior photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street looking south. Note the lancet-arched window openings with leaded stained glass units. Left to right, the stained glass windows shown are entitled “I come to do thy will o’God”, “For they know his voice,” and “Saint Mark.” (Source: HUD 2025)

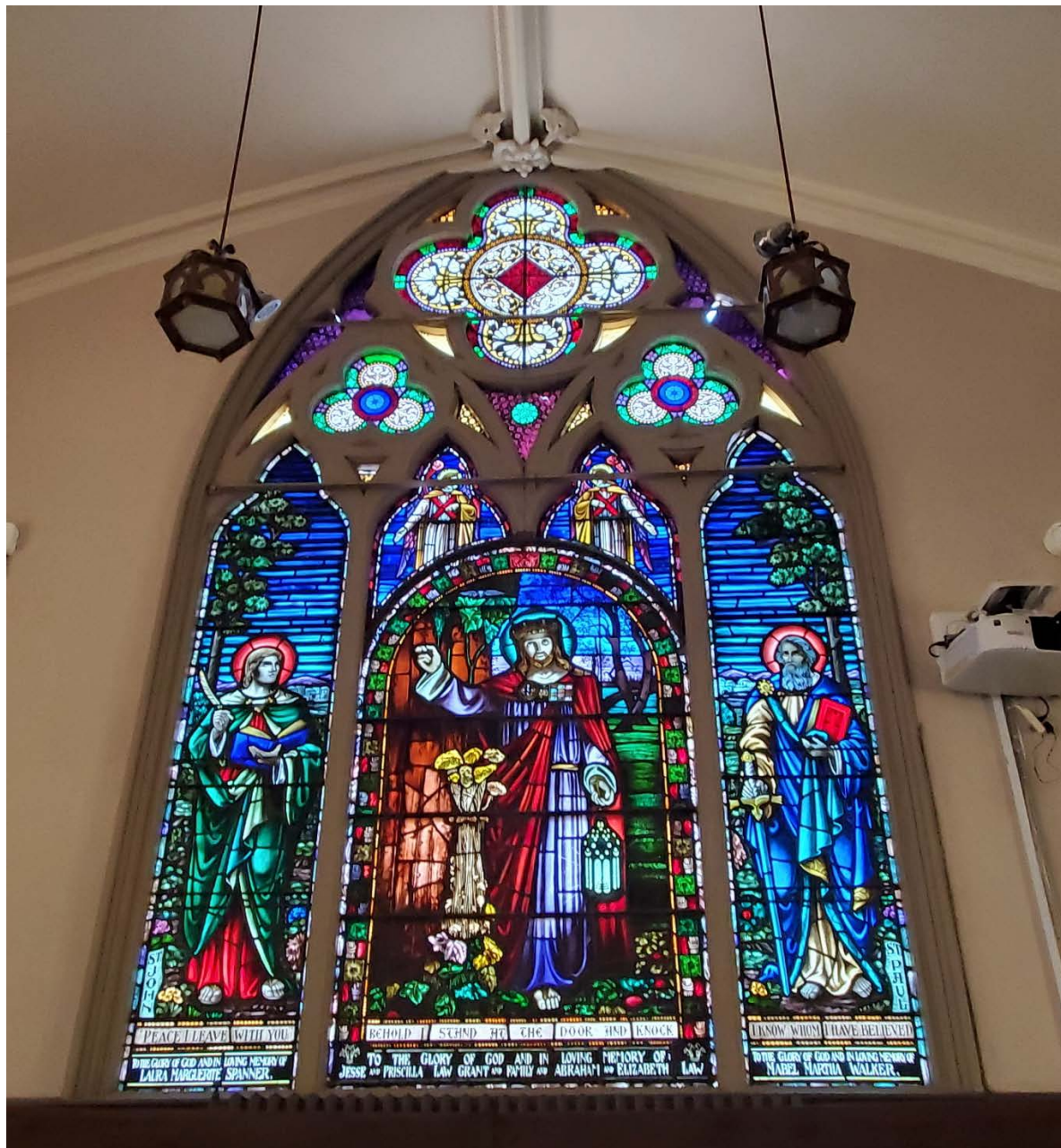


Figure 20 2025 interior photograph of the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street looking west. Note the lancet-arched window opening with foliated tracery and leaded stained glass window units. The stained glass window shown is untitled. (Source: HUD 2025)



Figure 21 2025 photograph looking southeast towards the Richmond Hill Methodist Church at 10201 Yonge Street, showing its immediate context along Yonge Street. Note the surrounding streetscape, which features commercial structures built flush with the sidewalk. Note the Methodist Church's visual prominence over its surroundings due to its scale and distinctive ecclesiastical form. (Source: HUD 2025)

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