

## Heritage Research and Evaluation Report



### **317 Mill Street – Jesse Good House**

Circa 1885

Part of Lot 48, Concession 1, Vaughan Township

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

## **History**

### **Contextual History**

The Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street is a residential building located on the west bank of the Mill Pond, which was historically located on the outskirts 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. No. 317 Mill Street is located within what was historically Lot 48, Concession 1 of Vaughan Township. As its name implies, Mill Street was named after the industrial and agricultural area that arose around the Mill Pond in the early-19<sup>th</sup> century. Over the course of its life, the subject property has been called Lot 48 Concession 1, Lot 56 on 48, and 317 Mill Street.

### Site History

The Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street stands on part of what was historically Lot 48 Concession 1 in Vaughan Township. The first owner of Lot 48 Concession 1 in Vaughan Township was Edward Stooks, who was granted 210 acres of land from the Crown in 1823. Sometime in the 1820s, the lot was acquired by John C. Stooks, who sold it to Miles Langstaff in 1830. Over the next few decades, the property was passed along between various members of the Langstaff family, who divided and sold the land into smaller lots.<sup>1</sup> While more centrally located lots in Richmond Hill developed into storefronts or residential properties during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, mills, industrial properties, and small farms were established along Mill Street and around the Mill Pond during this period.<sup>2</sup>

In 1857, John Langstaff Sr. sold the subject property, at the time totaling 5 and 15/16 acres of land on Lot 48, to James Daniels,<sup>3</sup> who ran a local match factory. The 1862 Ratcliffe Map of Richmond Hill,<sup>4</sup> local directories from 1866 and 1870, and voters' lists from 1879 and 1881<sup>5</sup> all confirm that James Daniels resided on the subject property from the late 1850s to the early 1880s.<sup>6</sup> Archival documentation also provides further information on the structures existing on Daniels' property during the 1860s. The 1862 Ratcliffe Map shows a cluster of six structures on the lot (Figure 1).<sup>7</sup> One of these structures would have been Daniels' house, a one-storey frame dwelling also described in the 1861 census.<sup>8</sup> The remaining structures were likely used as part of Daniels' match factory. According to archival documentation, Daniels ran a match factory on the property with his neighbour, John Fox, in the late 1850s and early 1860s.<sup>9</sup> In 1862, the match factory caught fire overnight, burning down three of its buildings. Archival records indicate that the factory did not reopen after the fire. However, census records show that Daniels ran a small farm on the subject property after the fire, producing crops including peas, potatoes, beets, and hay.<sup>10</sup>

In 1884, Daniels sold the property, then known as Lot 56 on 48, to Jesse and Ellen Good. The Goods had purchased the adjoining Lot 57 to the west in 1883,<sup>11</sup> creating a large property approximately ten acres in size. During the Goods' tenure on the subject

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<sup>1</sup> *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 48, Concession 1, Vaughan Township.

<sup>2</sup> Stamp, Robert M. *Early Days in Richmond Hill: A History of the Community to 1930*. Richmond Hill: Richmond Hill Public Library Board, 1991.

<sup>3</sup> *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 48, Concession 1, Vaughan Township.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> *List of Voters for the Village of Richmond Hill*, Richmond Hill: Liberal Printing and Publishing House, 1879, 1881.

<sup>6</sup> *Mitchell & Co's general directory for the city of Toronto and gazetteer of the counties of York and Peel for 1866*. Toronto: Mitchell & Co., 1866; *County of York Gazetteer and Directory: First Edition (1870-1)*. Toronto: W.H. Irwin & Co., 1870-1.

<sup>7</sup> *Census of Canada West*, 1861.

<sup>8</sup> *Census of Canada West*, 1861.

<sup>9</sup> *Census of Canada West*, 1861.

<sup>10</sup> *Census of Canada*, 1871.

<sup>11</sup> *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 48, Concession 1, Vaughan Township.

property, they farmed the land and tended to an orchard producing fruits such as apples, plums, and pears.<sup>12</sup>

Archival records also show that Jesse Good built the subject house around 1885. When the Goods purchased the property in 1884, they likely moved into James Daniels' existing frame dwelling. However, the following spring, disaster struck on the Good property when a fire originating in the house's stovepipes burned the frame house to the ground.<sup>13</sup> At the time, the subject property, located on the west end of Mill Street, was far from the fire hall, and the house could not be saved from the fire.

Sources indicate that Good rebuilt his home shortly after the disaster. Firstly, the subject property was the family's only known residence, which indicates that a quick rebuilding was necessary. According to an article from the *Liberal*, Good's property was insured, indicating that he also had the means to rebuild his structure shortly after the fire.<sup>14</sup> Finally, census records from 1891 show that the Goods lived in a brick two-storey house at the time, a description matching the subject building.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the subject house was built between the spring of 1885 and 1891, and most likely built immediately after the fire in 1885.

In 1907, Jesse Good sold the subject property to Jacob and Nancy Brillinger, who resold it to William and Martha Orrill in 1912. The Orrills sold the property to Frederick Mansbridge the following year.<sup>16</sup> Census records from 1921 confirm that Mansbridge lived in the subject house until at least 1921.<sup>17</sup>

In 1922, Mansbridge sold the property to Joseph Allan Bales.<sup>18</sup> Census records show that Bales lived on the subject property in a brick house, a description matching the subject building.<sup>19</sup> Records show that Bales was a poultry farmer and farmed the subject property throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>20</sup> Archival records show that Bales lived at 317 Mill Street until at least 1960.<sup>21</sup>

## Architecture

A site visit and visual inspection of the subject property were conducted in November 2024, which informed the subject building's architectural description and identification of heritage attributes. However, due to thick foliage currently obstructing photography of the house from the public realm, all photos included in this report are archival photographs of the subject property from the 1980s.

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<sup>12</sup> "For sale." *The Liberal*, July 9 1896.

<sup>13</sup> "Fire." *The Liberal*, April 2 1885.

<sup>14</sup> "Fire." *The Liberal*, April 2 1885.

<sup>15</sup> *Census of Canada*, 1891.

<sup>16</sup> *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 48, Concession 1, Vaughan Township.

<sup>17</sup> *Census of Canada*, 1921.

<sup>18</sup> *Ontario Land Registry Historical Books*. York Region: Lot 48, Concession 1, Vaughan Township.

<sup>19</sup> *Census of Canada*, 1931.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.; "Long-time Hill resident Allan Bales dies at 79." *The Liberal*, July 28 1976.

<sup>21</sup> MHBC. "Cultural Heritage Evaluation Report – 317 Mill Street." MHBC, September 2016.

The Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street is a representative example of the late-Victorian vernacular farmhouse architectural style and building typology. 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. In particular, this architectural style and typology feature L-shaped building footprints, cross-gable roofs, bays and gables, large verandahs and decorative features such as dichromatic brickwork.<sup>22</sup>

The Jesse Good House consists of an original structure, built circa 1885, and four additions located on the house's north, northeast, and west elevations. The original part of the building is a two-storey dichromatic brick structure featuring a medium-sloped cross-gable roof and a brick chimney (Figure 2). While the original part of the house has an L-shaped building footprint, numerous additions over the 20<sup>th</sup> century have created an irregular footprint. The house is constructed of yellow/buff brick, with decorative red brick detailing, including quoining, brick banding comprised of two courses of offset, angled bricks ("sawtooth banding"), and voussoirs (Figure 3).

The house's original L-shaped plan has seen a number of additions over time. The house's rear (north) elevation now features three additions built between the late-19<sup>th</sup> century and 1978.<sup>23</sup> These additions are illustrated in Figure 9. The original house's north elevation features a two-storey brick addition with a gable roof, which likely dates to the late-19<sup>th</sup> or early-20<sup>th</sup> century. While the roof of this addition is slightly lower than that of the original house, it features similar style and materials to the original building, including roof pitch, dichromatic brick cladding, red brick quoining and voussoirs, and window shape and proportion. This addition's north elevation features a later one-storey brick addition with a hipped roof, while its west elevation features a one-storey addition with vinyl siding and a shed roof. Both of these later additions appear to have been added in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sometime before 1988.<sup>24</sup> The original house's west elevation also features a two-storey side addition constructed between 1991 and 1992.<sup>25</sup> The west addition features a side-gable roof with a central front gable ("peak"), and is clad in a board and batten exterior (Figure 4).

The house features a one-storey rounded and enclosed verandah wrapping around its front (south) and side (east) elevations. The verandah depicted in an archival photograph (Figure 5) was enclosed sometime after 1923, with the enclosure constructed of a mix of dichromatic brick, multi-paned windows, and wood shingle cladding. The dentilated cornice and some of the doric columns of the verandah are also still visible as part of the enclosure. The enclosed verandah also features a

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<sup>22</sup> "Building Styles." Victorian. <http://www.ontarioarchitecture.com/Victorian.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> *317 Mill Street*, date unknown, City File No. D12-07341, City of Richmond Hill Heritage Property (D12) Files, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>24</sup> *317 Mill Street*, date unknown, City File No. D12-07341, City of Richmond Hill Heritage Property (D12) Files, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada.

<sup>25</sup> *317 Mill Street*, date unknown, City File No. D12-07341, City of Richmond Hill Heritage Property (D12) Files, Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada.

doorway oriented to the east, which replaced the house's original south-facing doorway (Figure 5). Based on the style of the verandah, it was likely built to replace an earlier verandah in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, although the exact date of construction is unknown.

On the front (south) and side (east) elevations, there are segmental-arched window openings with red brick voussoirs and stone sills. Window openings include two-over-two or one-over-one hung window units and operable shutters. The house also has a canted bay window located below the south gable-end. The bay is one storey tall and features a mansard roof.

To the rear of the property, there is also a circa 19<sup>th</sup>-century wooden barn.

### Context

The Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street is located on the north side of Mill Street, immediately west of the Mill Pond.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the subject property was located on the outskirts of Richmond Hill village, and was surrounded by relatively large agricultural and industrial properties powered by the Mill Pond and Upper East Don River (Figures 6-11).<sup>26</sup> The semi-rural character of the Mill Pond area well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be seen in a 1940s photograph of Mill Street (Figure 9). Since Mill Street featured expansive and sparsely developed lots until the area was subdivided and developed for denser housing beginning in the 1950s, the existing built form character of the immediate vicinity is that of a postwar residential suburb, with some remnant historical buildings dating from the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The current streetscape is defined by a consistent setback of houses with mature trees in front yards lining the street on both sides. Mill Pond Park wraps around the north and east of the subject property, contributing to the surrounding mature tree canopy. The trees, shrubbery, and picket fence on the subject property also contribute to an enclave of greenspace within the surrounding streetscape.

Despite postwar residential development to the west and south of the subject property, the Jesse Good House retains strong visual and historical links to the Mill Pond located immediately east of the house. The Mill Pond contributes to the house's picturesque landscape setting, complementing and augmenting its late-Victorian architectural expression. The house's historical wraparound verandah is also oriented east towards the pond, providing views of the water from the house (Figure 12). The Jesse Good House also has historical links to the Mill Pond as one of few remaining 19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings in the Mill Pond area, and the last remaining 19<sup>th</sup>-century house located on its banks.

Existing visual and historical links between the Jesse Good House and the Mill Pond to the east offer passers-by a glimpse into 19<sup>th</sup>-century Richmond Hill, when Mill Street

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<sup>26</sup> Stamp, Robert M. *Early Days in Richmond Hill: A History of the Community to 1930*. Richmond Hill: Richmond Hill Public Library Board, 1991.

existed on the outskirts of the village, and the Mill Pond area featured large semi-rural properties with sparse industrial and agricultural development.

### **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.**

Dating to circa 1885, the Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street has design and physical value as a representative example of the late-Victorian vernacular farmhouse architectural style and building typology. 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, but are not limited to, the house's asymmetrical L-shaped footprint, two-storey massing, cross-gabled roof, dichromatic brick cladding featuring buff brick with red brick detailing including quoining, banding, and voussoirs, canted bay window with a mansard roof on its south elevation, and wraparound verandah.

**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.**

N/A

**5. The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.**

N/A

**6. The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.**

N/A

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

N/A

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

The Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street has contextual value because it is visually and historically linked to its surroundings on the west bank of the Mill Pond. The Mill Pond located directly east of the house contributes to the house's picturesque landscape setting, complementing and augmenting its late-Victorian architectural expression. The house's historical wraparound verandah is also oriented east towards the pond, providing views of the water from the house. The Jesse Good House also has historical links to the Mill Pond as one of few remaining 19<sup>th</sup>-century buildings in the Mill Pond area, and the last remaining 19<sup>th</sup>-century house located on its banks. Existing visual and historical links between the Jesse Good House and the Mill Pond to the east offer passers-by a glimpse into 19<sup>th</sup>-century Richmond Hill, when Mill Street existed on the outskirts of the village, and the Mill Pond area featured large semi-rural properties with sparse industrial and agricultural development.

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

N/A

## Maps and Photographs



**Figure 1** 1862 Ratcliffe Map showing the approximate location of the Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street (in red). In 1862, the subject property and its surrounding land was owned by James Daniels, who ran a match factory on the lot. Note the cluster of industrial structures present on Daniels' property, as well as the sawmill located on the south side of the Mill Pond. Over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were a number of industrial properties, including mills, tanneries, and factories, scattered around the shore of the Mill Pond. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library)





**Figure 2** 1983 photograph of the Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street facing northwest, showing the approximate location of alterations on the building's verandah (indicated in red). Archival documentation shows that the wraparound verandah was enclosed sometime after 1923. (Source: LACAC 1983)



**Figure 3** 1983 detail photograph of the Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street, showing the house's south elevation. Note the dichromatic brick detailing, including the voussoirs, quoins, and brick sawtooth banding, which is present along the south and east elevations. (Source: LACAC 1983)



**Figure 4** 2023 aerial photograph of the Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street showing the approximate locations of additions to the site. Archival documentation shows that addition “A” was added in the late-19<sup>th</sup> or early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, “B” and “C” were added in the 20<sup>th</sup> century before 1988, and “D” was added in 1991-1992. (Source: York Maps)



**Figure 5** Circa 1923 photograph of the Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street looking northwest. Note the building's L-shaped footprint, cross-gabled roof, buff brick construction with red brick detailing, and canted bay window with a mansard roof. Note that the house's wraparound verandah has not yet been enclosed. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library Digital Archives)

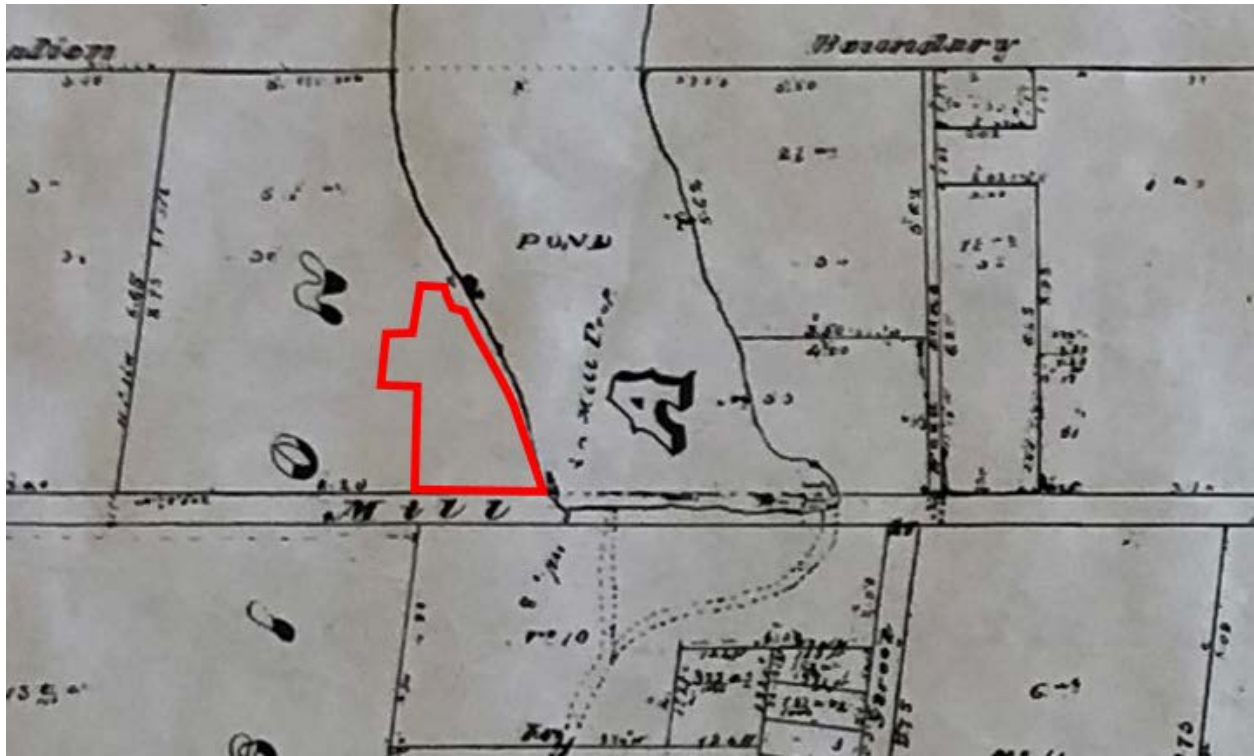




**Figure 6** 1954 aerial photograph of the subject property at 317 Mill Street (in red). Note the surrounding open fields and lack of development to the south and west of the subject property. As the subject property was located on the outskirts of Richmond Hill village, surrounding development did not occur until the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Source: York Maps)



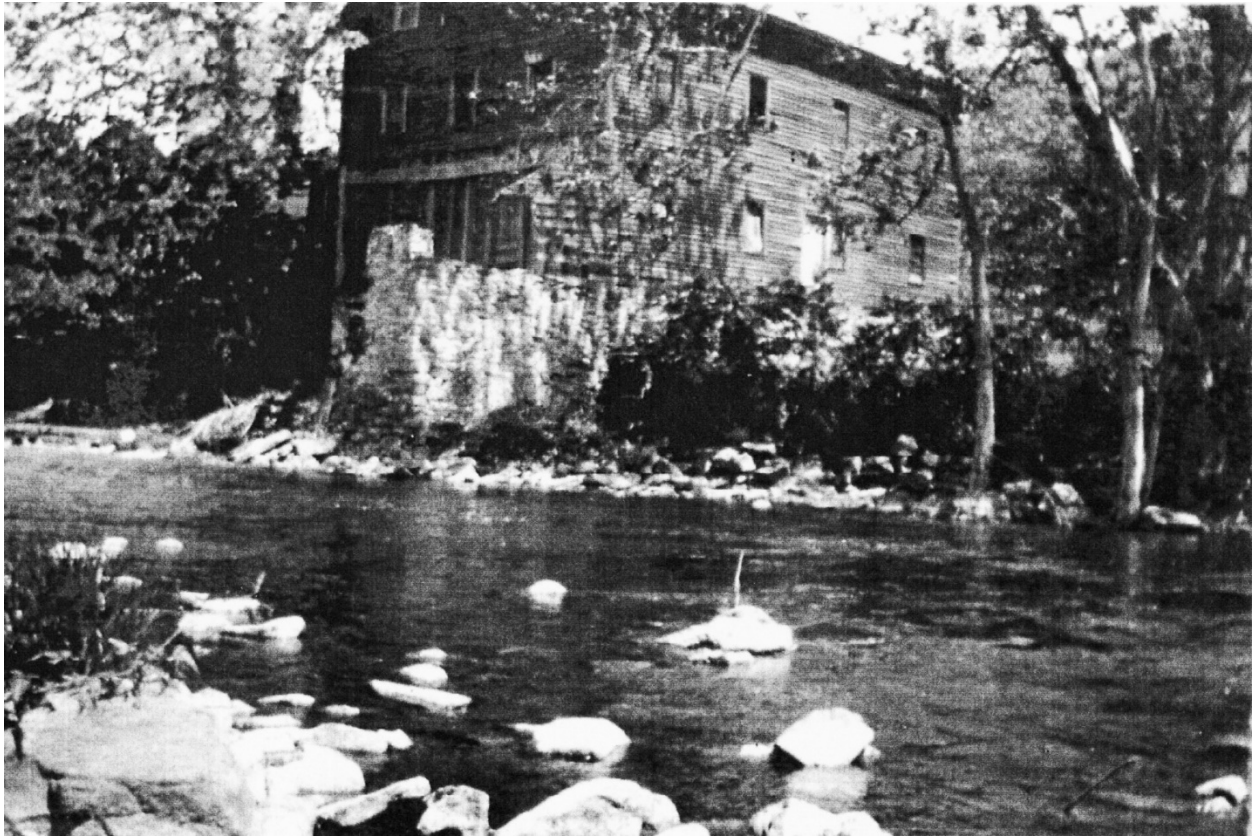
**Figure 7** 1878 Miles & Co. Map of the Village of Richmond Hill showing the approximate location of the Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street (in red). Note that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the subject property was located along the northern boundary of the village, and that it and the surrounding properties had large lot sizes with sparse development. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library)



**Figure 8** 1879 Gibson Plan showing the approximate location of the Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street (in red). Note that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the subject property was located along the northern boundary of the village. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library)



**Figure 9** Circa 1943 photograph looking west on Mill Street, east of Bridgeford Street, showing the surrounding historical context along Mill Street. Note the surrounding semi-rural context, sparse development, and heavily-treed streetscape. Note that the Jesse Good House at 317 Mill Street is located approximately two blocks west of this photograph. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library)



**Figure 10** Circa 1900s photograph of the old mill located along Mill Street. Note the mill's proximity to the nearby Mill Pond tributary, where it would stand until about 1927. The mill was one of many industrial structures located along the banks of the Mill Pond in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library)





**Figure 11** Circa 1920s photograph of a child fishing on the Mill Pond. Note that until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the Mill Pond area was very sparsely developed, and the Pond itself was used for multiple purposes, including industry and recreational fishing. (Source: Richmond Hill Public Library)



**Figure 12** 2024 map of the subject property at 317 Mill Street (in red). The subject house (indicated in blue) has retained its significant visual and historic links to the adjacent Mill Pond to the east. (Source: York Maps)

## Sources

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