

GORMLEY HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT STUDY: The Study

1.0 Introduction

1.1. The Heritage Conservation District Concept

The creation of Heritage Conservation Districts (HCD) is a power given to municipalities under the Ontario Heritage Act. According to Provincial guidelines, an HCD is a collection of buildings, streets and open spaces that are of special significance to the community. The individual elements of the district must combine in such a way as to present a sense of cohesiveness. This unity can be expressed by a common historical association within the district, a sense of unified or diverse but complimentary design, or the sympathetic relationship of one building to another or a group of buildings to open space. The district character should not be greatly altered by the intrusion of unsympathetic structures within the area.

A Heritage Conservation District is a tool for managing change in an area that is of special historical significance to the municipality and its residents. Policies and regulations in an HCD Plan encourage heritage conservation through controls on demolition and alteration of heritage buildings, design guidelines, incentives and public education. The HCD Plan provides criteria for regulating design for new buildings and additions to ensure that change and growth are compatible with the area's special character.

According to the Ministry of Culture, district designation "... is concerned with the protection and enhancement of groups of properties that collectively give an area special character. This character derives not only from individual properties which may be of architectural or historical interest but also from the overall historic and aesthetic values of buildings, streets and open spaces seen together. District designation under Part V of the Act provides a tool for protecting that character in the course of change and development within a municipality."

It is not the purpose of an HCD to freeze an area in time; rather the purpose is to guide change so that it contributes to, and does not detract from the district's architectural and historical character. The designation of an HCD can help foster enhanced community pride, promote property maintenance and improvements, and may be a factor contributing to increased property values resulting from such positive directions in the community.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This Study is undertaken pursuant to Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, RSO 1990, Chapter O.18. The purpose of the Study is to provide the supporting data necessary to effect the designation of a Heritage Conservation District for a portion of the Town of Richmond Hill, as called for in Sections 1.4.6.3 of the Official Plan of the Town of Richmond Hill.

The primary goal of the Gormley Heritage Conservation District Study is to provide the basis for the development of a Heritage Conservation District Plan for the community. The objectives of the Study include:

- a) to inventory and evaluate the features of the study area that contribute to its special character as a heritage area;
- b) to examine the impact of planning and other municipal and provincial regulations and policies with respect to their potential impacts on the area;
- c) to seek public input from the local residents and property owners on their vision for their community and the implementation of HCD designation and plan;
- d) to recommend to Council appropriate boundaries for the district designation.

Adoption of this Study will lead to the preparation of Heritage Conservation District Plan, in conformity with Section 41.1 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The Plan will include:

- a statement of the objectives to be achieved in designating the area as a heritage conservation district;
- a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the heritage conservation district;
- a description of the heritage attributes of the heritage conservation district and of properties in the district;
- policy statements, guidelines and procedures for achieving the stated objectives and managing change in the heritage conservation district; and
- a description of the alterations or classes of alterations that are minor in nature and that the owner of a property in the heritage conservation district may carry out or permit to be carried out on any part of the property, without obtaining a Heritage Permit.

1.3 Background of the Study

Gormley is a rural hamlet near the south east corner of Leslie Street and the Stouffville Sideroad consisting of 36 households, a church, agricultural land and a manufacturing plant producing concrete products. In November 1999, a group of local residents organized an information session on the subject of Heritage Conservation District (HCD) designation. The community's interest in heritage districts came about as a response to the increasing rate of change and development being experienced in bordering areas. Concerned that the integrity and character of Gormley might be threatened by approaching large-scale development, the residents sought to explore ways to protect the hamlet and preserve the essence of their neighbourhood.

A further community meeting, again organized by local residents, was held in April of 2001 to address questions and determine the level of interest in continuing to pursue an HCD in Gormley. Mr. Regan Hutcheson, Manager of Heritage Planning for the Town of Markham, was present to make a presentation on his municipality's considerable experience in the designation and administration of HCDs. This was followed by a questionnaire from Ward 1 Councillor Vito

Spatafora. The results of the questionnaire indicated strong community support for an HCD.

At the July 3, 2001 Committee of the Whole meeting, local resident Ms. Susan Johnson addressed the members of Council regarding the community-based initiative to proceed with an HCD in Gormley. The Committee unanimously supported a direction to staff to produce a staff report outlining the purpose, process, implications and potential costs of an HCD Study and Plan for the Gormley area. A draft report was prepared pursuant to that direction. However because Gormley was within the area affected by the Provincially-imposed development freeze on the Oak Ridges Moraine, it was necessary to put the study on hold until the implications of the anticipated legislation and regulations could be assessed by staff.

According to the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001, Gormley is a Rural Settlement as a Component of a Countryside Area. An initial review by Planning staff indicated that there does not appear to be anything in the regulations to preclude the establishment of an HCD in a Rural Settlement. In fact, the regulations of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001 Part II: Land Use Designations, Section 13 (1)(c), include the goal of “maintaining the rural character of the Rural Settlements,” a goal which is in agreement with that of an HCD designation as envisioned by the local residents.

On March 10, 2003 Committee of the Whole approved the recommendation of Staff Report SRPD.03.033 which included:

- a) that Planning and Development Staff prepare a work program for the Gormley Heritage Conservation District Study;
- b) that Town Staff, in conjunction with LACAC, be requested to recommend to Council an appropriate boundary for a Heritage Conservation District Study Area;
- c) that the Clerk be instructed to prepare a by-law stating the Town’s intent to carry out a Heritage Conservation District Study and Plan for the Hamlet of Gormley; and
- d) that a resident of Gormley be appointed to LACAC.

What are the effects of Heritage Conservation District designation?

An area that has been designated as a Heritage Conservation District is carefully chosen, studied and designated to enable it to receive special treatment. It is anticipated that an HCD will enjoy a continued vitality because of the enhancement of its historical and architectural character. The future viability of the District will be protected as the possible intrusion of incompatible uses and structures will be controlled to some degree. At the same time, an HCD should not be isolated as a museum piece, but rather it should accommodate services and functions that are important to the municipality of which it forms a part.

An HCD designation allows a municipality to use architectural and urban design controls to affect design details and materials for new buildings, additions and renovations. Designation also allows the municipality to prevent demolition of heritage buildings and to protect heritage structures from alterations that could detract from their historical and architectural significance. Designation can provide a financial benefit to property owners through access to

Federal, Provincial and Municipal heritage grant and loan programs in cases where heritage designation is a prerequisite to qualify.

In a designated HCD, all buildings are subject to the policies of the HCD Plan, whether they are historical or more recent structures. This ensures that the entire area is treated in a consistent manner and all property owners may benefit from funding programs, when available. Typically, design guidelines for non-heritage buildings are less detailed and rigorous than those for heritage buildings.

The details of an HCD Plan can be custom-fit to suit the needs and wishes of the community. For example, the Heritage Act allows a Plan to exempt certain classes of minor work from review and permits. Usually, routine maintenance and repairs, and small secondary back-yard constructions are exempted.

HCD designation does not generally regulate land use, zoning, or other matters generally dealt with under the Planning Act, but a Plan may contain guidelines concerning Site Plan approval, severances, and building scale and mass. It can also offer recommendations for changes in some other policies, so that the municipal efforts in the District are harmonized.

The Plan will contain provisions for administration of the District—review of applications, and the issuance of Heritage Permits. The system of administration is chosen by each municipality. Review may be conducted by Town staff, the Municipal Heritage Committee (Heritage Richmond Hill), or by a special committee appointed by Council. In most municipalities there is no fee for a Heritage Permit, and the forms for a permit application fit on a single page.

Council always retains the central role in maintaining the Plan. Applicants can appeal permit decisions to Council, and Council can update and revise the administration of the District by a simple resolution.

1.4 The Study Area

The hamlet of Gormley is a well-defined, self-contained area comprising Gormley Road East, Gormley Road West, Gormley Court, Station Road and Farmer Court. The C.N.R.'s Bala Subdivision Line runs through the approximate centre of the neighbourhood, dividing it into east and west halves. Council enacted the Gormley Heritage Conservation District Study Area By-law No. 59-05 in 2005 with boundaries as recommended by Planning staff and in consultation with the then LACAC.

The railway right of way and associated property is under Federal jurisdiction and cannot be regulated under Provincial legislation. For this reason, the C.N.R. lands are not formally included in the HCD Study Area By-law. However, the impact of the railway line on the community will be considered in the study itself.

It should be noted that the area enclosed by the HCD study area may not be the same as the final boundaries of the HCD designation.

1.5 Implications of Designation as a Heritage Conservation District

Planning for Change

All municipalities plan for the future, using their powers under The Planning Act. The instruments of these powers are Official Plans, Secondary Plans, Zoning By-laws, and Site-Plan approvals. Property owners who are contemplating changes in the built form of communities must seek approval under these instruments, in accordance with The Planning Act.

Heritage Conservation District Plans are also planning instruments, although they derive their authority from the Ontario Heritage Act, rather than from the Planning Act. They provide municipalities with additional, and different, tools for accommodating and shaping change.

A significant difference is that the Ontario Heritage Act addresses issues of visual appearance, which the Planning Act explicitly excludes from its concerns. The ability to preserve community character is greatly enhanced when a heritage plan is part of the municipal tool kit, along with the regulation of building size, Site Plan approval, use, and so on, under The Planning Act.

Growing Use of Heritage Districts.

Since the original passage of the Heritage Act in 1975, there has been continued growth in the number of Districts in Ontario. There has been a strong recent up-trend, particularly in smaller municipalities where modern growth threatens to overwhelm older towns and villages. Thirteen municipalities have been sufficiently satisfied with their first districts that they have created additional ones.

This graph shows the growth in the number of heritage conservation districts in Ontario since the enactment of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1975. Information from the Ontario Ministry of Culture. [image of a graph showing a steady increase in heritage conservation districts between 1975 and 2005.]

A Stable Environment

Public consultation in the development of a heritage conservation district plan allows local people to plan for the future appearance of their own neighbourhood, as changes occur over time—as they inevitably will. It's a way for neighbours to promise each other to maintain the integrity of the place that they all call home. This kind of stability preserves and enhances the desirability of the neighbourhood.

Property Values

The fear of negative impact on property values is a common source of concern about heritage designation. The theoretical argument is that designation restricts what the owner can do with a property, that it limits the number of buyers willing to accept such restrictions, and that the law of supply and demand necessarily diminishes the market price. This fear, and the theory that supports it, is not borne out by research.

The most recent study, by Robert Shipley of the University of Waterloo, investigated market trends over time, for 2,707 designated properties in 24 Ontario communities, including 5 Heritage Districts. The study found that approximately 74% of designated properties performed above or at average in price-trend compared to similar but undesignated properties in their

communities. Results for properties in the Heritage Districts studied were similar. In addition, the prices of Designated properties showed a marked resistance to general real-estate market downturns, retaining value at average or better rates in 79% of the cases, and rate-of-sale figures for Designated properties were generally higher than average, showing that Designation does not hamper sales.

Results from similar studies in the United States tend to confirm Shipley's conclusions that the impact of Heritage Designation on property values is positive rather than negative.

Financial Incentives

The Town provides financial assistance for some heritage projects, through the Richmond Hill Heritage Fund. This fund provides matching grants of up to \$2000 for projects directed toward the maintenance and enhancement of significant architectural features of designated heritage properties. Buildings in the District are designated, under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. Only one grant is permitted per project, and a property is only permitted one grant per calendar year. Typical eligible projects include conservation or reconstruction of significant exterior features such as doors, windows, verandahs, decorative trim, or original siding or roofing. Structural work required to restore structural soundness is also eligible. Upon approval by Council, the owner enters into a restoration agreement with the Town. For further information, contact the Town's Heritage Co-ordinator at (905)-747-6416.

Education

A good heritage district plan will provide information about proper techniques for maintaining heritage properties, and will point the way to other sources of such information. There are many publications that provide such guidance, and there are also excellent internet resources, provided by the Canadian and American governments. These will be listed in the body of the Plan, and they are included in the Sources in Section 10 of this Study.

Heritage Permits

Heritage Permits are the administrative instruments of a heritage conservation district.

Section 42.1 of the Ontario Heritage Act requires an owner of property in a heritage conservation district to obtain a permit from the municipality to:

"1. Alter, or permit the alteration of, any part of the property, other than the interior of any structure or building on the property.

"2. Erect, demolish or remove any building or structure on the property or permit the erection, demolition or removal of such a building or structure."

Certain classes of work may be exempted from the requirement of a permit, as seen in Section 41.1 (5) (e), below.

The Ontario Heritage Act sets standards for a heritage district plan in Section 41.1 (5):

"(5) A heritage conservation district plan shall include,

"(a) a statement of the objectives to be achieved in designating the area as a heritage

conservation district;

“(b) a statement explaining the cultural heritage value or interest of the heritage conservation district;

“(c) a description of the heritage attributes of the heritage conservation district and of properties in the district;

“(d) policy statements, guidelines and procedures for achieving the stated objectives and managing change in the heritage conservation district.

“(e) a description of the alterations or classes of alterations that are minor in nature and that the owner of property in the heritage conservation district may carry out or permit to be carried out on any part of the property, other than the interior of any building or structure on the property, without obtaining a permit under Section 42.”

To simplify the legal language, Heritage Permits are required for all exterior work except that which has been exempted in the district plan, and the objectives, policies and guidelines in the district plan establish the framework for approval of permit applications.

Demolition Control

A noteworthy change in the 2005 amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act is the new ability of municipalities to prevent the demolition of buildings in heritage conservation districts. Previously, demolitions could only be delayed for a period of 180 days. This change brings Ontario in line with most North American jurisdictions in the power to preserve heritage.

Maintenance Standards

Under Section 45.1 of The Ontario Heritage Act, a municipality that has a property standards by-law under the Building Code Act, can pass a similar by-law setting minimum standards for maintenance of heritage attributes of property in a heritage conservation district.

2.0 Historical Aspects

2.1 A Short History of Gormley

Prehistory

When the ice sheets retreated about 12,000 years ago, they left behind the soils (glacial till, sand, and gravel) that Gormley rests upon. The meltwaters found watercourses that evolved into the Holland River watershed. Small human populations began to inhabit the region: a succession of aboriginal cultures, which evolved from big game hunting, through hunting and gathering, to the slash-and-burn and trading economy of the Late Woodland culture, which had occupied eastern North America for about 600 years by the time of European contact. The trading networks were remarkably extensive, stretching from the Canadian prairies to Central America.

The principal tribal groupings around Lake Ontario were Iroquoians: the tribes to the north of

the lake constituted a group called the Huron Confederacy; those to the south were the Five Nations (later six) of the Iroquois League. Both were loosely organized groups of smaller tribes or nations, and the two groups vied for trade and territory. The trading system had established what is now called the Toronto Passage, or Carrying Place Trail. This was a 45-kilometre portage between the Humber and Holland Rivers, which linked Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay, and thence to the northwest beyond. Sometime between 1550 and 1600 these settlements, along with all of South Central Ontario were abandoned by the Hurons, who moved to the lands to the south of Georgian Bay, and Iroquois moved into some of the old Huron territory [information on Carrying Place trail from City of Vaughan, history Brief: Bulletin No 2, Archaeology].

The glacial history of Gormley is written in its geology. The yellow stripe across the image, between Lakes Ontario and Simcoe, is the Oak Ridges Moraine—debris left behind by the retreating glaciers.

European Contact: France and England

The arrival in North America of the rival European nations of France and England, shortly after 1600, changed everything for the aboriginal inhabitants. The French built a fur trade, based on control of the St. Lawrence, extending through the Great Lakes and beyond. In 1616 Étienne Brûlé became the first European to travel the Carrying Place Trail.

Trade with the newcomers introduced European goods into the tribal economies and intensified trade rivalries. Eventually, European diseases and intertribal warfare ended the old tribal dominion. By 1700, an Ojibwa tribe from the north, the Mississaugas, became the aboriginal occupiers of the old Iroquoian lands.

The European rivalry between France and England naturally spilled over into their colonial empires. The French had about 45,000 colonists, ranging over thousands of miles in pursuit of furs. The English colonists were penned in by the Appalachian Mountains, but numbered a million. The population disparity, and British naval power, proved telling. In 1760, New France was defeated on the Plains of Abraham outside the walls of the Quebec fortress. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 ceded the land to Britain, and it became the English colony of Canada [see Francis Parkman's *France and England in North America* for an extensive history of European exploration and conflict. A more recent, and much more concise, account is found in Chapter 2 of John Keegan's *Warpaths*].

There was little immediate effect of this change of ownership in the Great Lakes region. A few forts were manned, and the fur trade was revived, under English licenses. Britain's 1783 defeat in the American Revolutionary War changed the situation, leaving Canada as England's only remaining North American colony. In the war's aftermath, American colonists who retained loyalty to the Crown, desiring to remain British subjects and fearing rebel persecution, began to migrate to Canada. These were the United Empire Loyalists, and they began settling in such places as Kingston and Newark (now Niagara-on-the-Lake). Soon, unhappy with the limited rights and French-based land tenure laws under the Quebec Act, they agitated for a separate colony. As a result, Lord Dorchester divided the colony into Upper and Lower Canada in 1791, and Col. John Graves Simcoe was made Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. He set about to

build a successful English colony.

Simcoe's Plan

When France and England went to war again in 1793, Simcoe feared that the Americans would support their former French allies. With navigation between the upper and lower Great Lakes blocked by Niagara Falls, his capital in Newark and his communications to Lake Erie and Lake Huron to the west and northwest were open to attack. He took decisive action, moving his capital to York (now Toronto), and projecting two military roads from the new capital, one westward to the fort at Detroit and the other northward to Georgian Bay. Believing that the Carrying Place Trail would serve for the northern road, he set out with a small survey party on 25 September 1793 from the mouth of the Humber. He travelled by horse to the end of the Carrying Place on the West Holland River near present-day Kettleby and thence through Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching and the Severn River, to Georgian Bay. On the return trip, an Ojibway named Old Sail suggested a more eastern route, avoiding the marshes on the upper West Holland River. Simcoe found this eastern route much more favourable. Arriving back at York on 14 October, he had the Deputy Provincial Surveyor laying out his route the next day. The new military road was laid out straight from York to Holland Landing, roughly following his return march. Simcoe named the road after Sir George Yonge, Britain's Secretary of State, and an old family friend [Early Days of Richmond Hill describes Simcoe's survey trip in detail, and includes diary entries of Alexander Aitken, the Deputy Provincial Surveyor].

Soon the surveyors were laying out the familiar grid of sideroads and concessions to create the infrastructure for agricultural settlement. Drawn in the comfort of an office in the capital, these roads were lines on a map, laid out over forested wilderness without regard for topography. There are still many valley areas with "unopened road allowances" where those lines were drawn over terrain that proved impracticable for road building.

The creation of the road grid initiated the pattern of open-ended land-based development for Ontario. This contrasted with Quebec's river-based transportation network, and the effect of the difference is seen on maps to this day.

[Image showing map from F.R. Berchem, *The Yonge Street Story*, Toronto: McGraw Hill Ryerson, 1977. The caption reads, Simcoe set out on the Carrying Place trail in hopes that it would prove suitable for his military road to Georgian Bay. On his return he found a better route, and laid out Yonge Street to the east.

Settling in

Simcoe made a determined effort to encourage settlement, offering generous land grants in the new colony and going so far as to advertise in newspapers in Philadelphia. He had been impressed by the industriousness of the "Pennsylvania Dutch" when he was stationed there during the American Rebellion. He preferred working settlers, whatever their origin, to absentee landlords, however British and posh they might be—an attitude that met with official disapproval higher up the political ladder [Reaman's *A History of Vaughan Township* describes Simcoe's efforts and success in attracting Pennsylvanians of German origin, and his difficulties with his superiors].

The image of the United Empire Loyalists as conservative royalist Englishmen ignores the substantial role of the Pennsylvania Germans in settling Ontario—as was the case in the Gormley area.

[A drawing of a man, young boy, and a black dog walking down a dirt path through a forest. The caption reads, “The original farms were carved out of forest. The roads were surveyed by the government, but under the Statute of Labour, landowners were responsible for clearing and maintaining them.”]

Settlement here began with the arrival of Pennsylvania German immigrants in the first decade of the 19th century. On the south side of today’s Stouffville Road, Lot 35, Concession 3, Markham Township was patented by Jacob Miller in 1805. In 1807, the 200 acre property was purchased by John Doner, formerly of Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. Doner was an ordained Bishop in the local Brethren in Christ (Tunker) Congregation. The Brethren in Christ continue to be an active part of the Gormley community to the present day. The Doner family too have an unbroken lineage in Gormley, still owning the homestead and residing on part of the original farm. The historic Doner farmhouse at 12119 Leslie Street is listed on the Town’s *Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Importance*. The earliest portion of this much- evolved frame house may date to the first quarter of the 19th century.

On the north side of the Stouffville Road, Lot 1, Concession 3, Whitchurch Township was patented by Baron Frederick de Hoen in 1802 as part of over 3,000 acres granted in recognition of military service during the American Revolutionary War. In 1805 he sold the 200 acre property to Joseph Heise, who like John Doner came from Lebanon County, Pennsylvania. The property was purchased by Doner in 1808 and then by Samuel Baker in 1836. Baker was a member of another Pennsylvania German immigrant family that settled in southern York County in the early 19th century. The Bakers came to Upper Canada from Somerset County, Pennsylvania, in 1800. The Baker homestead in Vaughan Township is a well known historic site and the location of a long-established maple sugar bush. In Gormley, the circa 1858 home of Samuel Baker Jr. can still be seen at 32 Gormley Court, relocated there when Highway 404 was constructed through the area.

Other Pennsylvania German families that settled in the vicinity of Gormley include names such as Hoover, Steckley, Brillinger, and Sherk. These early settlers laid the foundation of a prosperous agricultural community that has continued for generations. Many decedents of the old Pennsylvania German families continue to live in the area to the present day. They can be counted among the members of the Heise Hill Brethren in Christ Church on Woodbine Avenue, south of the Stouffville Sideroad.

A portion of Gormley east of Farmer Court and on the north side of Gormley Road West was once part of the Leary property. John Leary, an Irish immigrant, farmed the north half of Lot 1, Concession 2, Whitchurch Township. He purchased the 100 acre property in 1857, and added to his property holdings with the purchase of 34 acres of Lot 1, Concession 3 from Daniel Heise in 1871. There was a house and business on this property. At about the time of his marriage to Mary Jane Dale (circa 1870), Leary built a brick house in the Classic Ontario Farmhouse style that still stands at 12370 Leslie Street. Unlike the majority of their neighbours, the Leary family

was of the Methodist faith. In 1873, a Methodist Church was built on land donated by John Leary.

Establishment of Gormley

The original hamlet of Gormley or Gormley's Corners was established at the intersection of Woodbine Avenue and the Stouffville Sideroad. The community was named for its first postmaster, James Gormley, in 1854. He was a storekeeper and auctioneer and a former school teacher. In its heyday, Gormley supported a hotel, store, blacksmith shop, weaver, boot and shoemaker and several rural industries. These included a cheese factory, sawmills, a wagon maker, a planing mill, and a grist mill. In addition to the businesses, there were a number of residences clustered within this crossroads community. Today, "Old Gormley" remains a distinct hamlet within the current municipal boundaries of the Town of Whitchurch- Stouffville.

The western portion of the Gormley community that is now part of the Town of Richmond Hill was established when the new James Bay Railway line came through the neighbourhood in 1905-1906. This part of Gormley is referred to by a number of different names: New Gormley, West Gormley, Gormley Station, or simply "Gormley." The geographical distinction between New Gormley and Old Gormley was less pronounced prior to the construction of Highway 404 and the rerouting of the Stouffville Sideroad.

Prior to "New Gormley", the intersection of Leslie Street and Stouffville Road was known as Emery's Corner. It was named after John Emery, who ran a store out of a building that once stood on the north east corner of what is now Gormley Road West and Farmer Court. A harness shop later operated at this location. The combination house and store was demolished in the 1950s.

Religion and the People of Gormley

The construction of a Methodist church on land donated by John Leary was a significant local development in 1873. Known as the Union Church, it was a board and batten building designed in a simple version of the Gothic Revival style. By the early 1880s, pastors from the Markham Missionary Church began holding regular services for the Mennonite community here. The formal start of the Gormley United Missionary Church did not occur until 1891 when six charter members, all of the Mennonite faith, formed the first small congregation. In 1931 the frame church was replaced with a larger brick structure that still stands on the same property. A. T. Gooding, who was the leader of three other churches, was the first minister at the new church, called the Mennonite Brethren in Christ. The name was later changed to the Gormley United Missionary Church, and again to simply be the "Gormley Missionary Church." The tall blue cross that acts as a signpost to the church is a prominent landmark on the south side of the Stouffville Sideroad as one approaches New Gormley from the west.

The Tunker or Dunkard Church, an anabaptist sect related to the Mennonites, also had a strong presence in the Gormley Community. Many of the earliest families to settle in the area were members. In 1877, they built a brick church at Heise Hill, on the west side of Woodbine Avenue south of the Stouffville Road. Prior to the construction of the church, services were held in the members' homes on a rotating schedule. Today this group is

called the Brethren in Christ church. Many of Gormley's pioneer families have relatives interred in the cemetery associated with the Heise Hill church.

All of this church background is significant to the history of Gormley because most of the people who lived in the community were involved in these churches, including the pastors, who were local residents.

The Coming of the Railway

The most significant influence on the history and development of Gormley was the arrival of the James Bay Railway line in 1905-1906. The James Bay Railway Company received its charter in 1895. It was the first project of railway promoters Mackenzie and Mann, who later controlled the Toronto and York Radial Railway, the successor to the Metropolitan Railway. Construction of the line, which ran from Toronto to Sudbury, took place between 1905 and 1908. It was intended to service the mining region of Northern Ontario as new silver, nickel and iron mines were being opened up in the early years of the 20th century.

Following their original survey of Gormley in the winter of 1903-1904, the company bought the right-of-way in Whitchurch from John Leary and in Markham from Daniel Doner. The tracks were finally laid through New Gormley by September of 1905. The line between Toronto and Parry Sound was officially opened on Monday, November 19, 1906. By December, the railway was in full operation. By this time the name of the company had changed to the Canadian Northern Ontario Railway, and later to the Canadian Northern Railway. In 1923, the line became part of the new Canadian National Railways system.

South of the Stouffville Sideroad, a two storey station was built in 1907, along with associated structures such as a driving shed, coal shed, stock pens, section house, and garage. Mr. W. A. Wilson was the first Station Agent. Clustered around the station ground were a number of businesses that relied on the rail service, and along with these enterprises were the homes of their owners and others who built substantial new houses in the emerging centre. The station was important to local farmers who shipped milk and other produce to the city from here.

From the arrival of the railway until the widespread use of the motor truck New Gormley was a very busy and industrious area. The early morning train to Toronto brought farmers from miles around with wagons and sleighs (depending on the season) loaded with eight gallon cans of milk to be shipped into the city. Groups of farmers would take turns loading the train according to a schedule. The optimistic mood of the community was captured in this newspaper article from The Liberal that appeared in March 21, 1907 edition:

"Gormley Gleanings. The town of "West Gormley" is making rapid strides, and it is only a question of a short time till the "old town" will become a sleepy suburb of its western rival. The Gormleyites are rejoicing in the assurances of a regular station on the C.N.O. , which is already doing a lot of business there. The company have built stock and hog yards, and carloads of cattle and hogs have been handled. Mr. Alex. Bruce of Carrick Mills, has imported a number of carloads of corn, which has been selling like hot cakes to the surrounding farmers. A temporary platform has been built for the convenience of passengers and the loading of milk, the business

in which, from present indications, will soon assume immense proportions.

“Mr. Geo. Baker, the proprietor of the North American Cement Block and Tile Co. adjoining the station grounds, has done a rushing trade in coal this winter, some going as far south as below Victoria Square. Mr. Baker kindly allows passengers the friendly shelter of his factory, pending the building of the station.

“Mr. D. Doner is going to build a large barn, the building of which is let to Smith Bros. of Edgely. Progress is in the air. “West Gormley” lies high and dry, there is abundance of ozone, and plenty of pure water. From the windows and verandahs of its homes can be seen the whole township of Markham and a little of Scarboro, not forgetting Richmond Hill.”

The Development of New Gormley

Daniel H. Doner, a farmer, was the son of Peter Doner and Elizabeth Heise. In 1906, he had one of the first new houses in the village built by David W. Heise. Today this house is 195 Gormley Road West, at Station Road. By the time New Gormley reached its peak of development, a general store, garage, planing mill, ruler factory, grain elevator and feed mill as well as a blacksmith shop, railway station and section house were all well established on the Doner homestead.

David Heise, another prominent citizen of New Gormley, was a mechanic, carpenter and preacher. In the July 5, 1906 edition of *The Liberal*, it was reported that “Mr. D. W. Heise has built himself a fine residence adjoining the railway...” This was the first of a series of new red brick residences to be built in the emerging hamlet. With his brother Jacob, D. W. Heise built a frame double house on Station Road in 1908. In 1904, he helped to form the Bethesda and Stouffville Telephone Company. Eventually, this independent company was purchased by Bell.

The Doner and Heise houses were just two of many fine, spacious residences to be constructed on either side of Gormley’s “main street” in the first quarter of the 20th century. Most of these were substantial red brick, two storey dwellings. The favoured architectural styles were the Edwardian Classical, Queen Anne Revival and American Foursquare. Ample verandahs, decorative glass, attic rooms and adjoining frame carriage houses were features of many of these houses. A number of frame houses were added as well, a few of which were older homes relocated to the hamlet and placed on new foundations. Perhaps the most innovative of the dwellings to be constructed in New Gormley was the home of George W. Baker, the cement block manufacturer. His remarkable cement block house was a veritable “sample case” of the products offered by his business.

Commerce and Industry

In 1907, George W. Baker, proprietor of the North American Cement Block and Tile Company, constructed a concrete block building to serve as his plant and office on a site adjoining the railway line. The plant manufactured a variety of plain and ornamental blocks, lintels and other building components. As mentioned earlier, Baker’s own home across the road from the plant was a display piece for his line. In addition to the home and office, other examples of his work include the neighbouring house to the west, and two houses on Major Mackenzie Drive East in Richmond Hill’s historic village core. The block was more commonly used for house and barn

foundations rather than for entire buildings.

George Baker's business enjoyed great success for several years. By 1922, a planing mill operated by the Farmer brothers was also on the site. The North American Cement Block and Tile Company was later sold to Messrs. Barr and Scholls and became the Gormley Block Company. The tradition of concrete block manufacturing in New Gormley continues to the present day with Unilock, on the original site.

A grain elevator was built in 1908 by Hiram Powers of Unionville, on the east side of the tracks opposite the train station. It was purchased by A. D. Bruce in 1909. The grain elevator was later sold to the Canada Grain Company and was operated for many years by George Leary and Joseph Cherry. The company would store grain, which it purchased from local farmers, in the tall wooden grain elevator which was not unlike those seen in the Canadian west. From there, the grain was shipped by rail to Toronto.

The grain business declined as livestock became more prevalent on local farms, and the grain was used as feed. As a result, very little was sold to Canada Grain and the grain elevator was sold and converted to a feed mill with the installation of a grain grinder. The elevator was damaged by fire when a diesel engine overheated in 1944, but was repaired and stayed in operation into the mid 1950s when it was operated by McKay Cereals.

On the west side of Station Road, a blacksmith shop was established by Eli Mantle in 1909. Mantle was formerly employed by the famous Trench Carriage Works of Richmond Hill. The building itself was probably built by the Heise brothers. In 1912, F. J. Woodward moved into the double house next door and became the next operator of the blacksmith shop at New Gormley. The shop was later operated by Samuel N. Doner, who sold to Alvin and Percy Farmer in 1922. The Farmer brothers, who also operated a planing mill, converted the blacksmith shop into a small factory producing rulers and other types of measuring sticks. In March 1925, the business had an order for 100,000 gasoline tank measuring gauges. Today, though the building is shut up and quiet, it remains an important landmark as one of the few commercial/industrial structures from New Gormley's heyday as a rural business centre.

A new general store was built by the Reverend Peter Cober near the railway station in 1912, replacing a temporary location at which he had enjoyed good business. History has not recorded its location. Perhaps it was another building that once stood on or near the same site. In addition to his mercantile business, Cober was a minister at the Gormley Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church. W. Birch and then J. T. and Mable (Snider) Johnson were successive owners of the store, which was passed on to their son Whitney and his wife, Eva (Wideman) Johnson. Eva Johnson still owns the building. In 1947, the building was damaged by a fire but was repaired and reopened until 1955, when it closed its doors after 43 years of business. The old storefront, with its gracefully arched windows, still remains and makes the building readily identifiable as a former commercial establishment.

Just prior to the First World War, an open-air skating rink was located in New Gormley, near the block plant. A frame building housing a change room and concession stand was constructed in association with the rink. For a time, the little building served a variety of community-related functions, then was eventually converted into a residence.

The rapid development of New Gormley brought about a greater demand for services by the growing population. Beginning about 1928, a travelling office of the Aurora Branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce operated out of the frame building next to the Baker office building. Banking services were available there twice a week. Dr. C. J. Henderson, a dentist based in Aurora, also used the building, visiting the community once a week. A Massey-Ferguson outlet was another of the many uses that occupied the buildings on the grounds of the North American Cement Block and Tile Company.

Changing Times

With truck transportation of goods began to overtake rail transport, there was no longer a need for New Gormley's businesses to centralize around the railway station. As a result of changing transportation patterns and other social and economic factors following World War II, the local businesses and industries faded away, with the exception of the concrete block manufacturing plant. New Gormley's passenger traffic dropped off as well, and the railway line and station that were once such a vital part of the community's growth and prosperity lost much of their significance. Although the line remained active, Canadian National closed the station and it was demolished. Today, the Section House remains, as does "Station Road," as a reminder of this important early phase of New Gormley's history. And of course the trains still rumble through the hamlet on a regular basis, and continue to be part of the distinctive character of the community.

In more recent history, the construction of Highway 404 has divided Old Gormley and New Gormley with a physical barrier, and with the creation of the Region of York in 1971, New Gormley, once split between Whitchurch and Markham Townships, became part of the expanded boundaries of the Town of Richmond Hill. Changes to the alignment of Stouffville Road took the main traffic route off of the old section running through the hamlet, leaving New Gormley as a quiet, somewhat secluded enclave.

3.0 District Criteria

3.1 A Heritage Conservation District: Why and Where

3.1.1 Official Basis

Subsection 41(1) of the Ontario Heritage Act requires that prior to designating a Heritage Conservation District by by-law, a municipality must have an Official Plan that contains provisions relating to the establishment of such districts. The Act doesn't specify the nature of those provisions, but the Ministry suggests in its Guidelines that reference to the Act and its requirements, and a statement of intent to designate one or more areas be included in the Official Plan.

The Town of Richmond Hill meets the requirements under the Act as stated above. General authority to conduct studies and create plans for Heritage Conservation Districts in the Town is established in the Official Plan sub-sections quoted below:

2.2.2.10.4: Certain areas of the Town may be designated as Heritage Conservation Study Areas

by By-law passed pursuant to the Ontario Heritage Act (R.S.O. 1980), to be studied with a view to establishing these areas as Heritage Conservation Districts. These areas will not be limited to the areas shown on Schedule 3 of this Official Plan.

2.2.2.10.5: In consultation with the Local Architectural Conservation Advisory Committee, a Heritage Conservation District Plan for the area(s) designated under Section 2.2.2.6.4 may be prepared in accordance with the guidelines for such plans established by the Ministry of Culture and Recreation. Having received the endorsement of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation for this plan, the area(s) may be designated as a Heritage Conservation District(s), pursuant to Section 41 of the Ontario Heritage Act (R.S.O. 1980).

Specific authority, concerning the Hamlet of Gormley is established in Official Plan Amendment 218:

1.4.6.3: It is the intention of Council to undertake a Heritage Conservation Study and Plan for the hamlet of Gormley in order to identify and protect the existing heritage homes and character of the hamlet.

3.2 Criteria for Establishing District Boundaries

3.2.1 Guidance from the Ministry

The Ontario Heritage Act empowers municipalities to define areas “to be examined for future designation” as Heritage Conservation Districts. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture provides guidance for Heritage Conservation Districts in Ontario’s Heritage Conservation District Guidelines. Section 3.5, Ingredients of a District, is quoted in its entirety, below:

“3.5 Ingredients of a district. The Act does not define “heritage” or “heritage conservation district as such; neither does it describe how the “examination” is to be carried out. Nevertheless, the experience gathered to date in heritage conservation district planning and designation provides a sound basis upon which to address these matters more fully. There are three prime ingredients needed for a successful district—evaluation, delineation and participation.

“EVALUATION:

“Defining heritage. In general, properties of heritage value should be able, with suitable examination, to reveal some of the broad architectural, cultural, social, political, economic or military patterns of our history, or should have some association with specific events or people that have shaped the details of that history. What each community thinks appropriate to its heritage will vary, but the key to its protection is to understand the distinction of a place or area in its large context.

“Describing area character. A heritage conservation district is an aggregate of buildings, streets and open spaces that, as a group, is a collective asset to a community in precisely the same way than an individual property is valuable to that community.

“A district may comprise a few buildings, or an entire municipality. It may have architectural, scenic, or archaeological aspects worth conserving. Above all else, a heritage conservation district has a special character or association that distinguishes it from its surroundings.

Potential districts can be found in both urban and rural environments and may comprise residential, commercial and industrial areas, established rural landscapes or entire villages or hamlets.

“Successful area examination has always included an evaluation of each property from a variety of perspectives. The following criteria suggest the basic questions that ought to be addressed.

“Historical associations. A building, structure, or property may have been associated with the life of a well known historic personage or group, or have played some role in an important historical event or episode.

“Architectural value. A building or structure may be exemplary for the study of the architecture of construction of a specific period or area, or the work of an important builder, designer, or architect.

“Vernacular design. A modest, well-crafted building or structure may be no less important to the community’s heritage than an architectural gem such as a mansion or public building.

“Integrity. A building, or structure, together with its site, should retain a large part of its integrity its relation to its earlier state(s) in the maintenance of its original or early materials and craftsmanship.

“Architectural details. Specific architectural consideration should include style, plan, and the sequence of spaces; use of materials and details, including windows, doors, signs, ornaments, and so on; colours, textures, and lighting; and the relationships of all these to neighbouring buildings.

“Landmark status or group value. Where a building or structure is an integral part of a distinctive area of a community, or is considered to be a landmark, its contribution to the neighbourhood character may be of special value.

“Open spaces. Examination of a potential district should also include public spaces such as sidewalks, roads and streets, and public parks or gardens. These features often play roles as conspicuous as those of buildings in the environment. Open spaces provide setting for buildings as well as places to view them and the landscapes in which they sit. These spaces are often features of the original plan or survey of a settled community and have intrinsic value in ordering and organizing the location of buildings and structures.

“Vacant land and contemporary structures.

“Vacant, undeveloped or underdeveloped land or contemporary buildings and structures should not be summarily dismissed from either examination or inclusion within the proposed district. Municipalities may wish to include these types of property where it is likely that incongruous development or unsympathetic construction on these sites will adversely affect the character of the proposed district. It may well be such sites that enable the distinction of the district to be enhanced, or damaged, in the future.

“DELINEATION:

“Establishing a boundary that will encompass the proposed district is a crucial task. Its principal objective is to ensure that the special character identified through study of the proposed

district will be adequately protected by the measures available to the municipality in Part V of the Act. The district boundary should be established according to the unique characteristics of the area. Examples of potentially successful districts include:

- “areas that have changed little since first developed and that contain buildings, structures and spaces with linkages and settings as originally planned still substantially intact—a group of civic and institutional buildings located around a public square, or a waterfront area with its marine related structures are good examples.
- “areas of buildings or structures of perhaps similar or perhaps different architectural style and detailing which, through the use of materials, height, scale, massing, colours, and texture, comprise cohesive harmonious streetscapes having a definite sense of place distinct from their surroundings.
- “areas of buildings and structures that have acquired a definite sense of time and place through historical associations with activities, events and individuals.

“Boundaries should be drawn to include not only the buildings or structures of interest but also the whole property on which they are located. Vacant land, infill sites, public open space and contemporary buildings may also be contained within the district where it is desirable to ensure that their future development is in keeping with the character of the area. Boundaries may follow distinctive topographical features such as rivers, roads, walls, fences, treelines and slopes. Less visible elements such as property or lot lines, land use designations in official plans or boundaries for particular uses or densities in the zoning by-law may also influence the delineation of the boundary, especially as they may effect its eventual legal description in by-law form.

“PARTICIPATION.

“The Act does not require any form of public participation other than municipal consultation with its Municipal Heritage Committee prior to enacting a by-law for a study under Section 40; the OMB may make its own requirements for notifying people as it sees fit.

“Public participation and consultation in the designation of districts is nevertheless very desirable. Public meetings during the examination process, individual notification to property owners within a study area, and notices or articles in local newspapers advertising municipal proposals are all valuable for both informing the public and enabling the public to respond to proposals for designation.

“In some cases it has become a practice during the process of district designation to eliminate possible objectors to designation by excluding their properties from the proposed district. This is not generally advisable. While it may seem expedient in the short term to take such action, the overriding objective of a district should be to protect and enhance all buildings and structures of heritage value within its boundaries. Any objectors to district designation will be able to voice their concerns and present supporting or objecting arguments at the mandatory OMB meeting.”

Note that amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act require two changes in the guidelines regarding PARTICIPATION, above:

- 1) Section 41.1(6)(b) of the Act now requires at least one public meeting be held with respect to a proposed heritage district plan (the plan, not the study).
- 2) review of District boundaries by the OMB is no longer mandatory, although any person may appeal a by-law designating a Heritage Conservation District to the OMB.

The Ontario Heritage Act also embodies The Ontario Heritage Trust (formerly the Ontario Heritage Foundation), and entrusts it with several objectives related to the conservation, protection, and preservation of the Province's heritage. Well Preserved, The Ontario Heritage Foundation's Manual of Principles and Practice for Architectural Conservation offers additional guidance, under the headings of Neighbourhood and District Character, and Heritage and Planning Policies, parts of which are quoted below:

"Much of the motivation for heritage conservation comes from a general concern that future construction will not fit as well into a neighbourhood as existing structures. The public has a growing sense that conservation is essential to neighbourhood or district planning beyond preservation of single buildings. The character of an area, with its buildings, landscapes and streets, has become of considerable value, even though no single person owns or controls this amenity— and even though its boundaries may be difficult to determine.

"A district of particular heritage importance may be a collection of pleasant residential streets with solid Victorian houses [or] a main street lined with commercial blocks of many different eras, a collection of mill and factory buildings along a waterfront, or even a rural landscape of scenic interest. Such areas are more than the sum of their parts and are demonstrably unique. They may be amenities for local people as well as attractions to visitors from near and far. They serve as a tangible focus for community pride.

"Provide for diversity as well as consistency in assessing and planning districts. Include vacant lands within district boundaries where their development offers opportunities that may either enhance or damage the character of the district, and make explicit criteria for the quality of development on such lands, especially on frontages facing heritage properties.

"Boundaries are based on a combination of factors, including physical situation, visual perceptions, patterns of historical evolution, and various definitions of property and land use regulations.

3.2.2 Additional Guidance from the Official Plan

This Study and Plan relies on The Town of Richmond Hill Official to provide its context, and it will reflect and respect policies found therein. Relevant portions are quoted above in Section 3.1.1.

3.2.3 Site-Specific Evaluation

In recognition of the above, a series of goals specific to the Gormley area in the Town of Richmond Hill has been identified as providing appropriate criteria for setting the boundaries of a Gormley Heritage Conservation District:

- 1) To establish a sense of continuity and to make the District readily identifiable, the

boundaries should encompass a contiguous area.

- 2) Principal entries into the District should have the quality of “gateways”, and principal travel routes should have a sense of enclosure on both sides of the route.
- 3) The District boundary should include areas that are significant to the neighbourhood in terms of architectural heritage, historical development, character, and quality of landscapes and vistas.
- 4) Recognizing that the District Plan will be a guide for future development, the District boundary should encompass sufficient areas to ensure that new development or redevelopment will maintain and enhance the heritage character that the District Plan seeks to preserve.
- 5) Individual properties designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act as having historical or architectural value or interest, can be included in the Heritage Conservation District. The interior remains subject to Part IV, and other aspects of the property are subject to Part V.

4.0 Examination

4.1 Topographical Setting

The northern third of the modern municipality of Richmond Hill lies on the southern slopes of the Oak Ridges Moraine, and the hamlet of Gormley is near the southern boundary of the moraine.

In the Study Area, the general southeast-trending downslope of the Moraine is evident. As a result, there are very long views toward the south.

The railway and the roads create substantial interventions in the natural topography, which have tended to intensify the sense of seclusion enjoyed by the hamlet.

4.2 Overall Character

Gormley has a strong rural character, with a large aggregate of open land. The 44 properties in the Study Area occupy over 75 acres of land. The 42 built lots—excluding the Doner farm, and the land west of Farmer Court—occupy over 46 acres. The cultural landscape is a significant aspect of the character of the hamlet.

Landscape and human intervention have conspired to give the hamlet a self-contained quality that is unique. The open and agricultural land to the south is protected from encroaching development by Oak Ridges Moraine Act. The construction of Highway 404, in a deep road cut, creates a separation to the east. Although the railway divides the community into two halves, its presence required the diversion of Stouffville Road from the centre of the hamlet, allowing it to escape the effects of road-widening that have devastated so many of Ontario’s rural settlements. To pass under the railway, Stouffville Road was also placed in a deep road cut, which removes it even further from the visual realm of the hamlet.

Within the hamlet, landscaping and streetscaping make a significant contribution to the

character of Gormley. Large trees provide elegant frames for the heritage houses, and most homeowners have put in decorative planting of deciduous and coniferous shrubbery that further enriches the landscape.

Other aspects of a traditional village have been preserved: the ditched rural road profile, without curbs and sidewalks; the variety of house styles and sizes; the similar but not identical front yard set-backs; and a proliferation of substantial outbuildings.

4.3 Heritage Resources

The Study Area is very rich in heritage resources. Of the 42 properties, 22 are listed in the Richmond Hill Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and Historical Importance.

The inventoried properties include examples of architectural styles ranging from Georgian through the early 20th century Edwardian styles. Many of these properties are worthy of designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act.

The Heritage District Study includes the Gormley Heritage Conservation District Inventory, which is published in a separate volume. It includes images and descriptions of every property in the District.

5.0 Current Development Controls

5.1 Official Plan-Oak Ridges Moraine

Parts of Gormley have specific designations in Town's Official Plan Amendment No. 218. The top map, from Schedule 12, shows the Land Use provisions. Most of the Study Area is designated as Rural Settlement, including the northern edge of the Doner Farm. The cross-hatched areas are designated as Countryside. The diagonally hatched area south of Gormley Court is designated Natural Linkage Area.

The centre map, from Schedule 13, shows the Heritage Features and Hydrologically Sensitive Areas. The stream that runs through No. 1 Gormley Court has designations of Wetlands with some Oak Ridges Moraine Woodlands along its course.

The lower map, from Schedule 15, shows Areas of High Aquifer Vulnerability. Substantial portions of the Study Area show this designation, which is indicated by a crosshatch.

This map shows an enlarged view of the Land Use provisions described in Schedule 12 of the Official Plan-Oak Ridges Moraine.

Note that the Official Plan Rural Settlement area is larger than the Zoning By-law's Hamlet area, which is shown on this map as ORMH, and on the map 3 on the next page.

Section 15. (1) of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan allows the Hamlet to be intensified or expanded by creating new lots for the following purposes only:

"3. Minor infill within Rural Settlements.

"4. Minor rounding out of Rural Settlements designated in the applicable official plan as appropriate for this type of lot creation."

The information provided above is an overview of Official Plan Amendment 218. Refer to the Official Plan Amendment documents for detailed information on its provisions. OPA 218 does not conflict with heritage preservation in Gormley.

5.2 Zoning By-Law

Zoning within and adjacent to the Study Area is governed by By-law No. 128-04, The Oak Ridges Moraine Zoning By-Law. The zones are shown on the map to the right.

The zoning is in general conformity with the Official Plan, as amended by Official Plan Amendment No. 218, which has been approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Zoning By-law No.128-04 has not yet been approved by the Minister.

The area designated “Hamlet” under the By-law is somewhat smaller than the Settlement Area shown in the Official Plan. Gormley is the only settlement designated as a Hamlet in the By-law.

Existing lots require rezoning and Site Plan approval in order to effect severances. Lots created by severance must meet the tests of the Official Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan for minor infill and minor rounding- out. The District Plan should specify those tests.

The above is an overview of By-law No.128-04. Refer to the original documents for detailed information on its provisions. By-law No.128-04 does not conflict with heritage preservation in Gormley.

5.3 Sign By-law

By-law No 258-90, as amended, regulates the erection of signs in the Town of Richmond Hill. There are no special requirements for signs in heritage areas or on heritage buildings.

For Gormley, the concern is small, since there is only one remaining business enterprise—the Unilock manufacturing facility. The Cober-Johnson Store at 217 Gormley Road West retains its storefront and porch, although it hasn’t been used as a shop since 1955.

In the event that Richmond Hill creates a Heritage Conservation District in a strongly commercial area, it would be sensible to amend the Sign By-law to create “special sign districts” for such areas. For the hamlet of Gormley, with its minimal opportunities for signage, a few guidelines in the District Plan would be a simpler regulatory device.

5.3 Tree By-law

Richmond Hill has recently adopted a tree preservation by- law, By-law No. 41-07. The large and mature trees in Gormley play a significant role in creating its heritage character, and their preservation is important. It is recommended that the District Plan includes applicable policies with regard to the protection of mature trees and that the provisions of the Tree Preservation By-law be used to preserve this important feature.

5.5 Provincial Policy Statement

In the words of its preamble, “The Provincial Policy Statement provides policy direction on

matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development.” The current Provincial Policy Statement came into effect on March 1, 2005, and applies to all applications, matters or proceedings commenced on or after that date.

Section 2.6 deals with Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, and two subsections are relevant to this Study.

Section 2.6.1 has been strengthened, and is now in the form of a mandamus: “Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.” (emphasis added, ed.)

Section 2.6.3 deals with lands adjacent:

“Development and site alteration may be permitted on adjacent lands to protected heritage property where the proposed development and site alteration has been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property will be conserved.

“Mitigative measures and/or alternative development approaches may be required in order to conserve the heritage attributes of the protected heritage property affected by the adjacent development or site alteration.”

This requires “identification, protection, use and/or management of cultural heritage resources in such a way that their heritage values, attributes and integrity are maintained.” This requirement will apply to lands adjacent to the Heritage Conservation District.

5.6 Regional Policy Effects

Plans for the widening and realignment of Leslie Street are shown on the map below. Although this is not a development control, in the sense of an Official Plan or Zoning By-Law, it is a strong factor in the future character and shape of the Gormley community. Access to the west end of the hamlet will be changed, and the direct road connection between Gormley Road West and Leslie Street will be eliminated. Gormley Road West will end at Farmer Court, and Leslie Street will be below the level of the hamlet at that point.

Section 41.1(6) of the Ontario Heritage Act requires only one public meeting to be held with respect to a Heritage Conservation District Plan, prior to its adoption. However it is good practice to have a number of consultations, so that the public can thoroughly understand the many aspects of a District, and have sufficient information to meaningfully contribute to the creation of their District.

As noted in Section 1.3, of this Study, extensive public consultation occurred prior to Council’s authorization for this Study. The first public meeting under the auspices of the Study was held on the afternoon of November 7, 2005 at the Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada.

Town Staff and the Consultants made presentations explaining the genesis of the District, the process to date, the nature of Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, and how a District and its Heritage Permit process would operate. A questionnaire was handed out to everyone present, which would be returned at a later time, if desired. The meeting was then open to the public for questions and comments.

The questionnaire and the discussion centred on three questions:

- What do you like about living in Gormley?
- What don't you like about it?
- What issues would you like a Heritage District Plan to Address?

The results of the public consultation, including some questionnaires sent in by people who were not in attendance, can be summarized as follows:

Likes: Most people used the words "neighbours" or "neighbourhood".

Quiet; Trees and gardens; Dead-end streets—good for walking; A sense of history; the variety of houses.

Dislikes: Most complaints related to traffic.

Noise from Stouffville Road—Leslie Street re-alignment will probably create even more noise; Safety—Leslie Street intersections are difficult and dangerous; Trucks from the concrete plant in a small village; Screeching of trains.

Issues to be dealt with: There was a strong desire to preserve the qualities of the village.

Keep the historical village feeling; protect it from high density development; Protect the existing homes; Have standards for upkeep of properties; Develop a way to help people who are absent or incapacitated to look after their properties; Capitalize on the stream and pond; Make the dead ends beautiful (recognizing that the Leslie re-alignment will create another dead end at the west); Keep history alive.

The November 7 public meeting ended with a walkabout through the hamlet with residents, staff, and the consultants enjoying the fine autumn mists.

A second public meeting was held on the evening of February 9, 2006, at the Oak Ridges Community Centre. The turnout was a bit less than for the first meeting. The consultants presented the results of their examination of the Study Area, which concluded that Gormley was suitable for designation as a Heritage Conservation District, and recommended that the Study Area boundary be revised somewhat.

The consultants then introduced the concept of a Heritage District Plan, and outlined the statutory requirements, and the kinds of options available to the residents so that the plan would meet the desires and requirements of the Gormley community. The consultants recommended a list of the kinds of small work that might be exempted from the Heritage Permit requirement, and the kinds of policies and guidelines that might be appropriate for the protection of the heritage character of the area.

A questionnaire was distributed that asked residents for assent on the recommended boundary, the classes of exempt work, and the areas for regulation by policies and guidelines. Additional space was provided for open ended comment, as well.

The feedback received to date has generally approved of the consultants recommendations. The recommended boundary is shown on the map on the next page.

The recommended classes of minor work exempted from the Heritage Permit requirement are:

- Ordinary repairs using ordinary materials;
- Ordinary maintenance, such as new eavestroughs, caulking, and installation of removable storm windows and doors;
- Painting; and,
- Planting.

The recommended areas for policies and guidelines to regulate activities in the district area are to:

- Prevent demolition of historic buildings;
- Limit severance of large lots;
- Control Site Plans and architectural design for new buildings;
- Control the design of additions and alterations to historic buildings so they respect the original design;
- Control the design of public works, such as the existing rural road profile, street lighting, and street furniture;
- Develop public awareness strategies; and,
- Provide information on the correct preservation and restoration of historic buildings.

7.0 District Boundary

The hamlet of Gormley is found to be worthy of designation as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. Section 8.0, below, contains the Heritage Statements that support this conclusion.

The recommended Boundary for the Gormley Heritage Conservation District is shown by the heavy line on the map below. The heavy dashed line shows the planned re-alignment of Leslie Street and other roadways.

The boundary revises the Study area boundary in four particulars:

- The District is extended to include the watercourse to the southeast of the hamlet.
- The area west of the future Leslie Street is excluded.
- Railway land is included, but not regulated, at the road crossing to create a single boundary.
- Railway land is included, but not regulated, to incorporate the Section House at 26 Gormley Station Road. If the land is sold it will fall under the ordinary regulations of the District Plan.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 Recommended Actions

8.1.1

No changes to the Official Plan or current by-laws are recommended at this time.

8.1.2

A bylaw designating a Heritage Conservation District, under Section 41 of the Ontario Heritage Act, is required by Section 41.1 to adopt a Heritage District Plan. The Plan must comply with the requirements contained in Section 41.1 (5- 10).

It is recommended that Council authorize the preparation of a Heritage Conservation District Plan for Gormley, to be in accordance with Section 41.1 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

8.1.3

It is recommended that the Gormley Plan should adopt as its overall objective for designation the preservation of the heritage character stated in Section 8, above; and that specific objectives, policies and guidelines be developed in the Plan for the policy and guideline areas identified in Section 6, above.