

23 Jason Road: Elm Bank (pre-1820)Description

The property at 23 Jason Road is worthy of designation under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* for its cultural heritage value or interest, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the categories of design, historical and contextual value. Located on the south side of Jason Road in the area southeast of Islington Avenue and Albion Road in Etobicoke, the two-storey house form building was constructed prior to 1820 according to historical records and a physical analysis of the structure. The house at 23 Jason Road and the adjoining Regency Cottage (circa 1834) at 19 Jason Road are together known as “Elm Bank.” The property at 23 Jason Road is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**Design or Physical Value:**

Elm Bank (pre-1820) is an early house form building distinguished by its stone construction. While the small window openings in the upper floor and the returned eaves with brackets are reminiscent of Greek Revival styling, with the irregular placement of most of the openings the structure is a unique example of vernacular architecture.

Historical or Associative Value:

John Grubb, who acquired this stone house after his arrival in Canada from Scotland in 1831, is historically significant for his contributions to the development of Etobicoke. Grubb acquired property along the West Branch of the Humber River where he established two farms named “Brae Burn” and “Elm Bank.” While residing in the stone house at 23 Jason Road, he commissioned the neighbouring Regency Cottage (circa 1834) now identified as 19 Jason Road. Once joined together, the two buildings are both named Elm Bank. Grubb was involved in the subdivision of his lands for the creation of a village around the intersection of present-day Islington Avenue and Albion Road, which was known as St. Andrew before being renamed Thistle town. Serving as an area magistrate on the Home District Council, Grubb directed several companies that constructed plank roads in the district, including sections of present-day Weston Road and Albion Road. His descendants retain Elm Bank to present day.

Contextual Value:

The properties at 19 and 23 Jason Road contain two adjoining stone houses, together known as Elm Bank, which are landmarks in the community for their physical appearance and positions on a rise of land above the West Branch of the Humber River. On the opposite (north) side of Jason Road, the house form building at #32 is purported

to rest on the foundations of the barn associated with Elm Bank, while its neighbour at #34 is a former outbuilding, converted to a residence. The latter properties are listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties and form a residential enclave in the Thistletown neighbourhood.

North of the Elm Bank properties, Thistletown contains the Franklin Carmichael Art Centre at 34 Riverdale Drive, which is another Etobicoke landmark recognized on the City's heritage inventory. The unusual log-clad house form building was constructed in 1934 as the residence of Dr. Agnes Ann Curtin, one of the first female medical doctors who graduated from the University of Toronto and an accomplished artist associated with the Group of Seven. Like Elm Bank, the property at 34 Riverdale Drive views the West Branch of the Humber River from its setting at the east end of a city park.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of Elm Bank (pre-1820) at 23 Jason Road related to its cultural heritage value as a unique example of vernacular architecture distinguished by its stone construction are found on the exterior walls and roof, consisting of:

- The narrow 1½-storey rectangular plan with the long north wall facing Jason Road
- The materials, consisting of ledgestone construction (from the Humber River valley) and trim
- The low-pitched gable roof with returned eaves and brackets (not original, the brick chimney on the south side is not identified as a heritage attribute)
- The principal (north) façade, which is asymmetrically organized in three wide bays, with the main entrance located in the right (west) bay in a flat-headed surround with a flat arch
- The fenestration on all elevations, consisting of flat-headed window openings with flat arches that contain multi-paned sash windows