

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE: 1299 DON MILLS ROAD  
ATTACHMENT NO. 3  
(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

George Gray House

The property at 1299 Don Mills Road was listed by the former City of North York and included in the city-wide City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) following amalgamation in 1998.

Description

Located on the east side of Don Mills Road, north of Lawrence Avenue East in Don Mills, the George Gray House is a 1½-storey house form building. Archival records indicate that the farm house was in place prior to March 1894 when it was first occupied by a member of one of the founding families of Don Mills.

Statement of Significance

The property at 1299 Don Mills Road has cultural heritage value for the design of the George Gray House as a rare surviving late 19th century farm house in its original location in Don Mills that has been identified as one of the few remaining heritage buildings from its era in North York. The George Gray House is a variation of the prototypical Ontario House mixing Gothic Revival and Italianate features, which is particularly distinguished by its low-scale L-shaped plan, the varied fenestration and the wood detailing in the gables, as well as its setting on Don Mills Road.

The associative value of the George Gray House is derived from its links to a prominent pioneering family in Don Mills. As the youngest son of William Gray, one of the original settlers of the area who was also instrumental in extending Don Mills Road through the community, George Gray was a miller at Gray's Mill until he and his elder brother inherited their father's properties. Afterward, George Gray operated a farm on the land adjoining Gray's Mill where he commissioned the historic farm house and resided with his family until 1920.

The property at 1299 Don Mills Road is also valued for its role in communicating the story of Don Mills, which began as a milling and farming community where George Gray's father, William built and operated the first grist (flour) mill on the Middle Don River. In 1920, George's farm lot and farm house were acquired by mining magnate David Dunlap and his wife, Jessie Donald Bell, who had previously transformed the neighbouring Gray's Mill property into a country estate and model dairy farm named Donald Farm. Following the Second World War, entrepreneur Edmund Plunkett (E. P.) Taylor absorbed the property at 1299 Don Mills Road as part of his planned community of Don Mills where the George Gray House stands as a reminder of the origins and evolution of the area.

Contextually, the George Gray House is historically, visually and physically linked to its surroundings on Don Mills Road where it remains the only surviving farm house in its original location on the street and a local landmark in the Don Mills community.

### Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the building known historically as the George Gray House on the property at 1299 Don Mills Road are:

- The scale, form and massing of the 1½-storey house form building with the L-shaped plan
- The placement, setback and orientation of the building with the principal elevation facing west toward Don Mills Road
- The materials, with the stone foundation, the brick cladding, and the brick and wood detailing
- The cross-gable roof with the extended eaves, the brick chimneys (which have been modified over time), and the gables (west) where the wood detailing features sunburst designs
- On the principal (west) elevation, the placement of the main entrance on the long wall near the intersection of the L-wing, the L-wing with the frontispiece, the round-arched window openings, and the window detailing that extends as string courses across the wall
- On the side elevations (north and south) of the house, the symmetrical-arched window openings with the window detailing that is extended as string courses across the walls
- The east wing, which displays red brick cladding, symmetrical-arched window openings and, on the rear (east wall), an oriel window
- The setting of the farm house with landscaped open space and trees adjoining Don Mills Road (west) and Legato Court (north)

The single-storey rear (east) additions to the George Gray House are not included as heritage attributes.