

Thomas G. Elgie House

### Description

The property at 262 Bessborough Drive is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage values, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under all three categories of design, associative and contextual values. Located southeast of Bayview Avenue and Eglinton Avenue East in Leaside, the Thomas G. Elgie House (c. 1883) is two-storey house form building. The property was included on the heritage inventory of the former Borough of East York in 1982, and listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 2006.

### Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The property at 262 Bessborough Drive contains the Thomas G. Elgie House, which is valued as a rare example of a farmhouse that is the oldest of only three residential buildings in Leaside predating its incorporation as a town in 1913. While the structure was altered through a series of additions made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the original section of the building is an important representation of the design of farmhouses from the late 1800s with the L-shaped plan, red brick walls and 19<sup>th</sup> century detailing.

The Thomas G. Elgie House is historically significant because its presence, location and orientation yield information about the formation of the community, from its agricultural origins to the early subdivision of the lands and the design of Leaside as a planned community inspired by the Garden City movement and laid out by landscape architect Frederick Todd. As the second of two farmhouses built on a York Township farm lot, the Thomas G. Elgie House was absorbed into the first subdivision of the land by its owner. In turn, with the establishment of Leaside's residential sector, the farmhouse was incorporated in a generous landscaped setting adjoining one of the picturesque curved streets that characterized the town's residential sector. Since that time, the east elevation of the Thomas G. Elgie House has functioned as the street façade that is viewed from Bessborough Drive, and the gable end where the original fenestration flanking the brick chimney beneath the gable roof is an important surviving feature.

Contextually, the value of the Thomas G. Elgie House comes from its visual and historical links to its surroundings in Leaside, where it is one of three extant residential buildings that varied from the plan for the community that was built up around these properties on previously agricultural lands. As a 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse within Leaside, the Thomas G. Elgie House has stood in place as the community grew up around it, and its atypical presence has long contributed to the distinction and beauty of the neighbourhood.

## Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 262 Bessborough Drive are:

- The building known historically as the Thomas G. Elgie House
- The original centre section of the two-storey house form building with its scale, form and massing
- The specific location, setback and orientation of the building on the west side of Bessborough Drive, north of Parkhurst, where the east side elevation of the house faces the street and is viewed across a landscaped setting from Bessborough
- The original red brick cladding and trim on the exposed elevations of the original main body of the house
- On the east façade that forms the street elevation on Bessborough Drive, the gable roof and trim, brick chimney and original fenestration
- The original window opening on the rear (west) wall containing a wood window

The north and south additions that date to the 20<sup>th</sup> century are not identified in the Reasons for Designation