

## **North Toronto Historical Society (NTHS)**

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May 8, 2024

Via email: [phc@toronto.ca](mailto:phc@toronto.ca)

### **Re: PH 12.6 - 26 Millwood Road - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act**

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee:

The North Toronto Historical Society strongly supports the designation of 26 Millwood Road under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act. This decision cannot be deferred because the owner has filed an application for a demolition permit.

The subject property is among the most important historic buildings in North Toronto. It meets 4 of the 9 criteria for designation including criteria in all three categories (design, historical and contextual). The house is designed in the Victorian Vernacular style and built ca. 1880-1885. The house is one of the few surviving examples of Victorian development in the Davisville neighbourhood and one of the only buildings that predates the formation of The Town of North Toronto in 1890.

The house was constructed for Joseph Stanley Davis, for whose family Davisville is named. Davis's father, John Davis, founded the Davisville community. Joseph Stanley Davis was a prominent local businessman, postmaster, a justice of the peace, a member of North Toronto Town Council and served as Mayor of North Toronto for five years. Prior to the annexation of North Toronto, Millwood Road was in fact named Joseph Street, for Joseph Stanley Davis. Davis was among the most prominent residents of North Toronto.

The building is contextually significant for its connection with the founding family of the Davisville community and is therefore directly linked to the development of the Davisville community. The building has been located on the plot of land formerly owned by Joseph Stanley Davis for 140+ years.

The North Toronto Historical Society has featured the house in its walking tours and publications for over forty years. The historical significance of 23 Millwood Road was also recognized in 1990 when a large reunion of Davis Family descendants was held to mark the 150th anniversary of the arrival of John Davis in Upper Canada. In 1981 house was identified as one of the important buildings of North Toronto to be included in a photography project conducted by the Toronto Public Library, Northern District Branch. The property was identified in the Midtown In

Focus Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment in 2017 and was nominated by the North Toronto Historical Society for inclusion in the City of Toronto's Heritage Register in December 2021. Our Society strongly supports the report on 23 Millwood Road prepared by staff of Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning which was presented to the Toronto Preservation Board at its meeting on May 7, 2024.

We entirely disagree with the arguments against designation in the letter submitted by Ms. Costello on behalf of the owner and address the arguments below:

**1. Property Condition and Vacancy:** The property condition and vacancy issue is not addressed anywhere in Ontario Regulation 9/06 (criteria for designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act) and therefore cannot be taken into consideration when determining whether the property has merit for designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. The current condition and vacancy status of the property does not negate the property's cultural heritage value.

While the property has been vacant for 8 years, it is important to note that the building's vacancy and deterioration occurred while the property was owned by Should Be Developments. While the property is not serviced, this is because Should Be Developments disconnected the servicing. The owner's treatment of the building has no bearing on the merits of designation.

**2. Original Location and Associative Value:** The argument that the building lacks associative or contextual value because it is not situated in its original location is flawed. The home has been located on the plot of land owned by Joseph Stanley Davis since construction. The building is located approximately 15 meters from its original location. The building has been at its present location for 99 years. The house was relocated within the same plot of land owned by the home's original owner, Joseph Stanley Davis. The significance of 26 Millwood Road extends beyond its physical location to its connection with the development of the community.

**3. Heritage Attributes:** The assertion that the heritage attributes are overly broad and that the building's physical characteristics are not rare or unique overlooks the significance of even common architectural features within the context of a particular time period or architectural style. The determination of heritage value also considers the building's contribution to the contextual and historical fabric of the community. The property is one of the only examples of Victorian-era development remaining in the Davisville community.

**4. Unreasonable Imposition of Obligations:** While it is acknowledged that designation under the Ontario Heritage Act may impose restrictions on alterations or demolition, these obligations are intended to preserve and protect significant heritage resources for future generations. These obligations do not diminish the property's value or the importance of safeguarding our cultural heritage.

In conclusion, while the objections raised by Should Be Developments Inc. are noted, it is important to recognize the broader public interest in preserving our cultural heritage and the significance of the property in question.

Sincerely yours,

Lynda Moon, President,  
North Toronto Historical Society  
Alex Grenzebach,  
Director NTHS

**Copies:**

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