TORONTO

REPORT FOR ACTION

19 Don Ridge Drive - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

Date: October 28, 2026
To: Toronto Preservation Board
From: Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning
Wards: 15 - Don Valley West

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 19 Don Ridge Drive under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value according to the Statement of Significance which includes a description of heritage attributes found in Attachment 1.

The subject property at 19 Don Ridge Drive, known as St. John's York Mills Anglican Church, an active Place of Worship, is located on the west side of Yonge Street, north of York Mills Road, within the York Mills neighbourhood of North York. The property also includes several structures related to the church, including the Lodge (Napier Simpson, 1958); the Dawson Lychgate, the Kay Gate, and burial grounds. The 1844 church has been the subject of additions since construction, including the Parish Hall and Auditorium (1939, 1949), and the McCollum Wing (1968). The focus of this report is the original 1844 church structure, not any of its later additions, auxiliary structures, or the adjacent burial grounds.

A location map and current photograph of the heritage property are included in Attachment 2.

The property known as St. John’s York Mills Anglican Church is a buff brick Gothic Revival church reflective of the work of the architect John George Howard and his application of a restrained Gothic style to ecclesiastical commissions through the 1840s in Upper Canada. Built as the second iteration of St. John’s York Mills Anglican Church, the present structure comprises the original 1844 church with additions from 1939, 1949, and 1968. The primary (west) façade faces southwest towards Yonge Street, and while largely obscured by mature trees today, was at one time highly visible from the valley below. While the 1844 church has been the subject of extensive additions and alterations, the integrity of John Howard’s Gothic Revival design remains intact and visible from each elevation. The additions have been designed using complementary

materials, and have not subsumed the church in their scale, form, or massing, ensuring the legibility of the 1844 church from various perspectives and vantage points.

The congregation of St John’s York Mills Anglican Church traces its history back to the establishment of the Town of York in 1793, and the arrival of United Empire Loyalists to York soon after. Originally founded in 1816, the church and its original parishioners, many of whom are interred on the grounds, have deep roots within York Mills.

Today, though much of York Mills' rural character has been replaced by suburban development, there remain several area heritage properties that share a similar period of construction with St. John’s York Mills Anglican Church. These include the C.W. Jefferys House (1833; Part IV) at 4111 Yonge Street, the John Street Worker's Cottages (1860; Listed) at 4150 Yonge Street, St. John's Rectory (1878; Part IV) at 174 Old Yonge Street, the York Mills Baptist Church Manse (1850, Listed) at 106 York Mills Road, and the Jolly Miller Tavern (1857; Part IV) at 3885 Yonge Street. Collectively, and alongside the remaining natural features including the ridge and western branch of the Don River, these properties convey the history of colonial settlement and religious practice within York Mills through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries and are valued by the present-day community of York Mills and North York.

The subject property at 19 Don Ridge Drive was listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on September 27, 2006.

This property is one of eighteen pre-1870 listed properties citywide which have been identified as candidates for designation through the City's implementation of Bill 23 amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act and its ongoing prioritization strategy for listed properties that must be designated or removed from the Heritage Register by January 1, 2027.

Part of the strategy for the review of listed properties on the Heritage Register includes the procurement of qualified heritage consultants to research, evaluate, and prepare heritage evaluation reports for a subset of listed properties prioritized for designation. City Planning retained the services of Alex Corey Heritage Consulting ("the Consultant") to research and evaluate a citywide group of eighteen pre-1870 listed properties which includes the subject property at 19 Don Ridge Drive. The Consultant evaluated the subject property and determined that it meets the provincial criteria.

The Consultant's research on the subject property is included in Attachment 3 of this report. The research, analysis, and evaluation contained within Attachment 3 reflect the Consultant's professional expertise and opinion. Staff have independently reviewed the Consultant's research and heritage evaluation and concur with the determination that the property at 19 Don Ridge Drive has cultural heritage value and meets five of the Ontario Regulation 9/06 criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. A property may be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, if it meets two or more of the nine criteria.

In accordance with 3.1.6.50 of the Official Plan and the City's Protocol for the Identification and Review of Heritage Places of Worship, Heritage Planning staff consulted members of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto to determine if any of the

heritage attributes identified in the Statement of Significance and in a future designating by-law were liturgical elements, and therefore not subject to regulation while the property remained in use by the congregation. The Anglican Diocese of Toronto confirmed that while the structure is used for liturgical purposes none of the identified attributes were liturgical elements.

Designation enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the property and enforce heritage property standards and maintenance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 19 Don Ridge Drive under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance for 19 Don Ridge Drive (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 1, to the report, October 28, 2026, from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.

2. If there are no objections to the designation, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bill in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations included in this report in the current budget year or in future years.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council included the subject property at 19 Don Ridge Drive on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on September 27, 2006.

On October 30, 2024, the Planning and Housing Committee received for information item 2024.PH16.9 - Updates on Implementation of Bill 23 Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act regarding phase two of the City's response to Bills 23 and 200. This report outlined the citywide prioritization framework developed to prioritize subsets of listed properties located within areas where growth is anticipated for designation under the Act and described the proactive strategy under development that will be used to monitor the listed properties that are deemed removed from the Register after January 1, 2027. https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.PH16.9

POLICY AND REGULATION CONSIDERATIONS

Provincial Plans and Policies

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, and healthy and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act. https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13

Further, the policies and definitions of the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) identify the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage evaluation and heritage conservation will be implemented.
Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 (ontario.ca)

Ontario Regulation 9/06 sets out the criteria for evaluating properties to be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The criteria are based on an evaluation of design/physical value, historical and associative value and contextual value. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.
https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060009

Official Plan

The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime and provides policies to guide decision making within the City. It contains a number of policies related to properties on the City's Heritage Register and properties adjacent to them, as well as the protection of areas of archaeological potential. The Official Plan should be read as a whole to understand its comprehensive and integrative intent as a policy framework for priority setting and decision making. The Official Plan can be found here:
https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/

COMMENTS

Evaluation Analysis

The following evaluation analysis is based on the comprehensive research conducted by the Consultant on the property at 19 Don Ridge Drive (Attachment 3). The research and heritage evaluation was reviewed by staff, who concur with the Consultant's determinations of cultural heritage value that provides the rationale for the recommendations found in this report.

The property at 19 Don Ridge Drive meets the following five out of nine criteria:

- **Criterion 1:** The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.
- **Criterion 4:** The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.
- **Criterion 5:** The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
- **Criterion 6:** The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
- **Criterion 8:** The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.

For more detailed explanations of how each criterion is met, see Attachments 1-3 of this report for the Statement of Significance; Location Map and Current Photograph; and Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources pertaining to the property at 19 Don Ridge Drive, as these documents are integral to the recommendations made in this report.

CONCLUSION

Staff have independently reviewed the research and heritage evaluations prepared by the Consultant and agree with the determination that the property at 19 Don Ridge Drive has cultural heritage value and meets five of the nine criteria as outlined by Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. Therefore, the property merits designation and staff recommend that Council designate this property.

The Statement of Significance: 19 Don Ridge Drive (Reasons for Designation) included as Attachment 1 to this report comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Mary L. MacDonald, MA, CAHP
Senior Manager, Heritage Planning
Urban Design, City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation)
Attachment 2 – Location Map and Current Photograph
Attachment 3 – Research, Evaluation & Visual Resources

19 DON RIDGE DRIVE **ATTACHMENT 1**

ST. JOHN'S YORK MILLS ANGLICAN CHURCH

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)

The property at 19 Don Ridge Drive is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria for municipal designation.

Description

The subject property at 19 Don Ridge Drive is located on the west side of Yonge Street, north of York Mills Road, within the York Mills neighbourhood of North York. Constructed in 1844, the property contains St. John's York Mills Anglican Church, an active Place of Worship. The property also includes several structures related to the church, including the Lodge (Napier Simpson, 1958); the Dawson Lychgate, the Kay Gate, and burial grounds. The 1844 church has been the subject of additions since construction, including the Parish Hall and Auditorium (1939, 1949), and the McCollum Wing (1968). The focus of this report is the original 1844 church structure, not any of its later additions, auxiliary structures, or the adjacent burial grounds.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Design or Physical Value

The property at 19 Don Ridge Drive is a representative example of the Gothic Revival style of ecclesiastical architecture employed by the prominent architect John George Howard in the design and construction of several churches across Southern Ontario in the 1840s. More specifically, it is a representative example of what has been referred to as "Commissioners Gothic," in reference to an Act passed in Britain in 1818 to advance funds to the construction of Parish churches and which advocated for designs that employed a specific form of Gothic architecture based on Classical arrangements. Architecturally, this is represented in the combination of the classically inspired rectangular preaching-box layout with Gothic pointed windows and ornamentation, both seen at St. John's York Mills. The conservatively adorned interior gives way to the Gothically-inspired exterior, featuring simple buff brick buttresses, lancet and pointed arched window and door openings with Gothic tracery, drip moulds, pinnacles, and belfry. The subsequent additions (1939, 1949, and 1968) have been designed to be contextually appropriate through their materiality and details and subordinate through scale, location, form, and massing to the 1844 church, and do not detract from the integrity of Howard's design or its ability to convey the Commissioners Gothic architectural style.

Historical or Associative Value

The property at 19 Don Ridge Drive has historical value for its direct associations with the establishment of the Anglican Church within Upper Canada and the Town of York, and with the founding of St. John's York Mills parish within the community of York Mills. Following the founding of the Town of York in 1793 and the construction of Yonge Street connecting York to Holland's Landing, the settlement of York Mills grew along the

banks of the Western branch of the Don River. The growth of the community precipitated the need for a mission church to serve the growing congregation that had been meeting in residences and a schoolhouse in Hogg's Hollow. Driven by the support of local families, including the Ketchums, Van Nostrands, Marshes, and Sheppards, St. John's Chapel was completed in 1817 and was the first mission of St. James Church, in the Town of York. Consecrated in 1829 and declared a Crown Rectory in 1836, the current church was constructed in 1844 and consecrated that same year. Celebrating its bicentennial in 2016, St John's York Mills Anglican Church is recognized as the oldest parish church within the present-day City of Toronto and retains an active congregation that continues to be involved in the social, religious, and educational life of York Mills and North York.

The continued operation of the church as a Place of Worship, with its extensive on-site archives and the incorporation of physical elements relating to the former York Mills Baptist and Presbyterian Churches, as well as the first St. John's York Mills Church, has the potential to yield information on the early history of the Anglican Church within Upper Canada, and the history of the settlement of York Mills.

St. John's York Mills Anglican Church has associative value as it reflects the work of the architect John George Howard, Toronto's first professional architect in the mid-nineteenth century. John Howard was responsible for the design of numerous residential, commercial, and institutional buildings throughout Upper Canada, drawing inspiration from his upbringing and training in England prior to emigrating to Canada in 1832. Among his ecclesiastical commissions were several country churches for both the Anglican and Catholic diocese where Howard employed a form of Gothic Revival termed "Commissioners Gothic," incorporating classical forms with Gothic ornamentation in a formulaic method that could be adapted to different contexts and specific church needs. This style is well-represented at St. John's York Mills Anglican Church (1844), as well as his commissions for Christ Church Tyendinaga (1843), Christ Church Holland Landing (1843), and St. John's Anglican Church in Jordan (1841). St. John's York Mills Anglican Church is an important and significant example of John Howard's work with this style within the City of Toronto, and alongside its contemporaries illustrates Howard's approach towards ecclesiastical architecture during this period of colonization and expansion within Upper Canada.

Contextual Value

The property at 19 Don Ridge Drive has contextual value as it is historically linked to its surroundings, which include several properties that share a similar period of construction with St. John's York Mills Anglican Church and that collectively relay the history of the community. These include:

- 4111 Yonge Street, C.W. Jefferys House (1833, designated Part IV)
- 4150 Yonge Street, John Street Worker's Cottages (1860, listed)
- 174 Old Yonge Street, St John's Rectory (1878, designated Part IV)
- 106 York Mills Road, York Mills Baptist Church Manse (1850, listed)
- 3885 Yonge Street, Jolly Miller Tavern (1857, designated Part IV)

Collectively, and alongside the remaining natural features including the ridge and western branch of the Don River, these properties convey the history of colonial settlement and religious practice within York Mills through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries and are valued by the present-day community of York Mills and North York. The siting and situation of 19 Don Ridge Drive atop a rise of land overlooking the valley remains a significant feature that conveys the church's historic importance within York Mills.

Heritage Attributes

Design and Physical Value

Attributes that contribute to 19 Don Ridge Drive being a representative example of the Commissioners Gothic architectural style:

- The scale, form, and massing of the 1844 church, situated atop a ridge of land overlooking the York Mills valley and the western branch of the Don River
- The arrangement of the church featuring a central and prominent bell tower, standing proud of the main body containing the nave and apse with low-pitched sloped roofs on either side
- The central bell tower, divided into three sections comprising the primary entrance at-grade, window openings on the second section, and louvered openings for the belfry, crowned by stepped gable crenellations
- The primary use of buff brick with stone detailing including drip moulds, capstones, sills, and finials
- The Gothic pointed arch window openings on the bell tower, west, north, and south facades, containing Gothic tracery
- The buff brick buttresses on the north and south facades, set between pointed arch window openings illuminating the nave within
- The primary (west) entrance set within the bell tower and composed of wood double doors, along with the secondary entrance into the narthex on the south façade with wood double doors
- The rear (east) façade comprised of buff brick cladding punctuated by a pointed arch window opening and set below a cast stone cross finial perched at the roof peak

Historical Value

Attributes that contribute to 19 Don Ridge Drive having historic value and an association with the early history of the Anglican Church within the City of Toronto and the settlement of York Mills:

- The date stone surmounting the primary (west) entrance on the bell tower
- The wood beams inside the narthex of the church, which were originally used in the construction of York Mills Baptist Church and the first iteration of St. John’s York Mills Anglican Church
- The eastern Dawson Lychgate, providing access into the churchyard from Old Yonge Street
- The western Kay Gate, providing pedestrian access from Yonge Street up the ridge to the primary entrance of the 1844 church

Contextual Value

Attributes that contribute to 19 Don Ridge Drive having contextual value include:

- The siting and placement of the church atop a ridge overlooking the valley and York Mills
- The low-density, heavily treed landscaping of the property, reminiscent of a rural church with extensive green space creating a serene environment
- The presence of 19 Don Ridge Drive on Yonge Street, announced by the western Kay Gate at the bottom of the footpath
- The presence of 19 Don Ridge Drive on Old Yonge Street, announced by the eastern Dawson Lychgate providing access into the churchyard

LOCATION MAP AND CURRENT PHOTOGRAPH ATTACHMENT 2

19 Don Ridge Drive

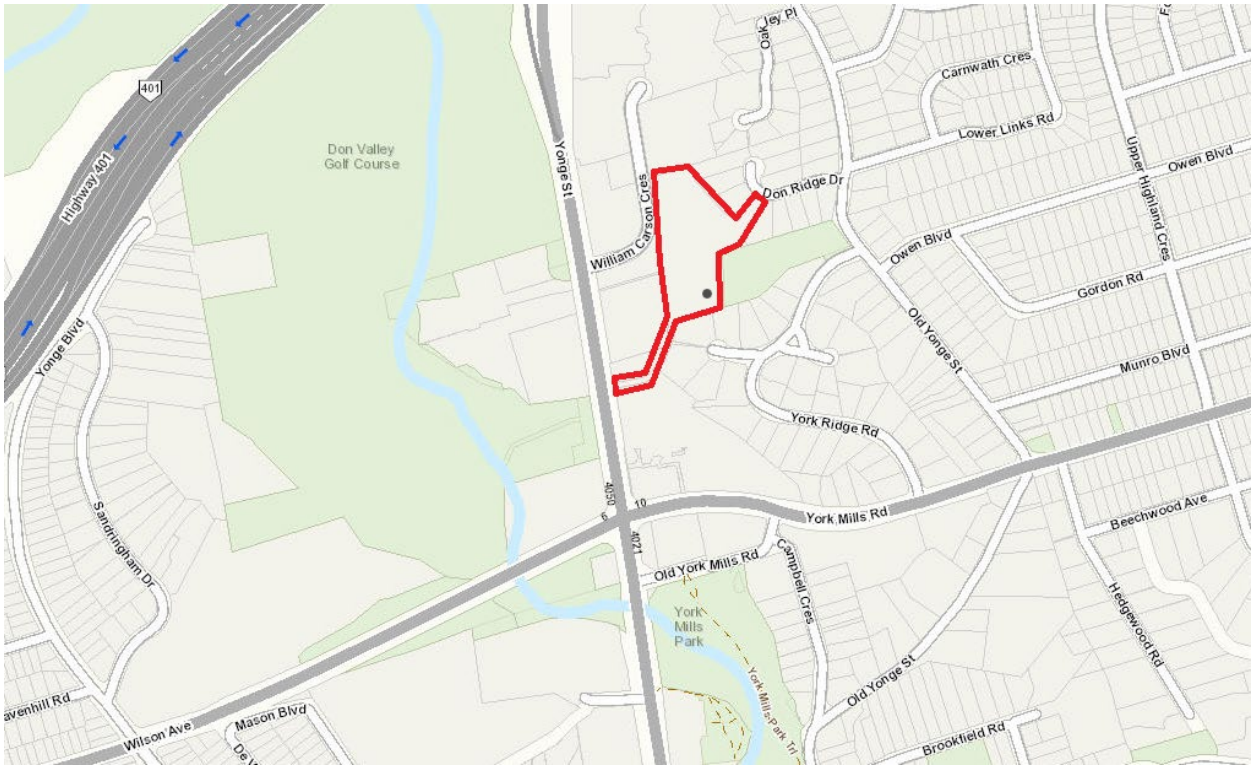


Figure 1. This location map is for information purposes only. The exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The red outline depicts the location of the subject property (City of Toronto iView Mapping, 2025).



Figure 2. St. John's York Mills Anglican Church. (Alex Corey, September 2025).

RESEARCH, EVALUATION & VISUAL RESOURCES **ATTACHMENT 3**

19 Don Ridge Drive

In undertaking this research and evaluation, we recognize that the area now known as the City of Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit (1805), and the Williams Treaties (1923) signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.



Figure 3. St. John's York Mills Anglican Church. (Alex Corey, September 2025).

1. DESCRIPTION

19 DON RIDGE DRIVE - ST. JOHN'S YORK MILLS ANGLICAN CHURCH	
ADDRESS	19 Don Ridge Drive
WARD	15 - Don Valley West
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	York Mills
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1844
ORIGINAL USE	Place of Worship
CURRENT USE* (*This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law	Place of Worship
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	John George Howard; Molesworth, Secord, and Savage; Page and Steele
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	1939; 1949; 1968
LISTING DATE	September 27, 2006

2. ONTARIO REGULATION 9/06 CHECKLIST:

CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUE OR INTEREST

The following checklist identifies the prescribed criteria met by the subject property at 19 Don Ridge Drive for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. There are a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act if the property meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

The evaluation table is marked “N/A” if the criterion is “not applicable” to the property or "✓" if it is applicable to the property.

19 Don Ridge Drive

1.	The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	✓
2.	The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.	N/A
3.	The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	N/A
4.	The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.	✓
5.	The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.	✓
6.	The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	✓
7.	The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	N/A
8.	The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	✓
9.	The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.	N/A

3. RESEARCH

This section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property. Visual resources related to the research located in Section 4. Archival and contemporary sources for the research are found in Section 5 (List of Sources).

Indigenous Communities

For time immemorial, Toronto has been home to Indigenous peoples. Ojibway oral histories speak of Ice People, who lived at a time when ice covered the land.[1] Following the retreat of glaciers approximately 13,000 years ago, small groups of Indigenous peoples moved from place to place, hunting and gathering the food they needed according to the seasons. Over millennia, they adapted to dramatically changing environmental conditions, developing and acquiring new technologies as they did so. Waterways and the lake were vital sources of fresh water and nourishment, and shorelines and nearby areas were important sites for gathering, trading, hunting, fishing, and ceremonies. Long-distance trade moved valuable resources across the land.

After maize and squash were introduced to Southern Ontario, by approximately 500 CE, horticulture began to supplement food sources. By 1300 CE, villages focused on growing food became year-round settlements surrounded by crops. These villages were home to ancestors of the Huron-Wendat Nation, who would continue to occupy increasingly larger villages in the Toronto area and beyond. These villages were connected to well-established travel routes which were part of local and long-distance trail networks, including the Carrying Place trails on the Don, Rouge and Humber rivers that connected Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay. Beads made from seashells from the eastern seaboard were found at the Alexandra site in North York, which was a community of 800-1000 people in approximately 1350.

By 1600, the Wendat had formed a confederation of individual nations, and had concentrated most of their villages away from Lake Ontario, in the Georgian Bay area. Following contact with French explorers and missionaries in Southern Ontario in the early 1600s, European diseases decimated First Nations. Competition for furs to trade with Europeans and the desire to replenish numbers through absorption of captives, among other factors,[2] contributed to the Beaver Wars, which after 1640, saw the Haudenosaunee Confederacy expand into Southern Ontario, dispersing the Wendat. Within the boundaries of today's Toronto, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy then occupied villages on the Carrying Place trails on the Humber and Rouge Rivers from approximately the 1660s to the 1680s.

In the late 1680s, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy chose to leave their village in the Toronto area and returned to their homelands in upstate New York. As evidenced by the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal, the 1701 Nanfan Treaty, and the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, the Haudenosaunee continued to have an interest in the resources of the area.

Anishinaabe people from the Lake Superior region then moved into the Toronto area. While the Wendat and Haudenosaunee people lived in year-round villages surrounded by crops, the Anishinaabe people continued to live primarily by seasonally moving across the land to hunt, fish and gather resources that were available at a specific time, including migrating birds and maple syrup. To the west of Toronto, the Anishinaabe

1 With thanks to Philip Cote for the reference to Benton-Banai, Edward, The Mishomis book: The voice of the Ojibway (Indian Country Press, 1985), p. 26.

2 https://histindigenouspeoples.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/chapter-5-colonial-wars-looking-east; Gary Warrick, "The Aboriginal Population of Ontario in Late Pre-history," in Munson and Jamieson, eds., Before Ontario: The Archaeology of a Province (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), p. 72.

people became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit. To the east, they became known as the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama and the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island.[3]

In 1787, as the British began to prepare for an influx of colonists into the area following the American Revolution, the British Crown negotiated the Toronto Purchase with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to obtain title to the land. The flawed and poorly documented agreement was invalidated, and Treaty 13 was negotiated in 1805 for lands now including much of the City of Toronto. In 1923, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed the Williams Treaties for over 20,000 km^2, including portions of eastern Toronto, with seven First Nations of the Chippewa of Lake Simcoe (Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama) and the Mississauga of the north shore of Lake Ontario (Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island).

The Mississaugas, Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, or the Wendat did not traditionally regard land as a commodity to be sold. Following the Toronto Purchase, the British government quickly set out to survey the land into lots which were either sold or granted into private ownership of settlers. In 2010, the Government of Canada settled the Toronto Purchase Claim with the Mississaugas of the Credit after agreeing that the Mississaugas were originally unfairly compensated. In 2018, the Williams Treaties First Nations settled litigation about land surrenders and harvesting rights with the Governments of Canada and Ontario.

The City of Toronto remains the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is also covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with seven Mississaugas and Chippewa First Nations.

i. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

The following section outlines the history and facts related to the property which are the basis for determining historical or associative value of Criteria 4, 5 or 6 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

York Mills

The historic village of York Mills was established on a western branch of the Don River where it was crossed by Yonge Street, an early colonial settlement route that was laid out by John Graves Simcoe following the establishment of the Town of York on the shores of Lake Ontario to the south. Yonge Street roughly followed a route that was shown to Simcoe by Indigenous peoples who had used the route as a portage trail connecting Lake Ontario with Lake Simcoe. Construction of Yonge Street began in 1794

3 Mississaugas of the Credit, "The History of Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation." n.d.

north from Eglinton to the Holland Marshes, and in 1796 extended south to Bloor Street.[4]

The first mill constructed in York Mills was built in 1804, followed by two more mills around 1817, and 1844, respectively. Various names were used to refer to the unincorporated community prior to a post office being established in 1836 and named York Mills.[5]

Early settlers in York Mills were primarily Loyalists who emigrated to Upper Canada following the American Revolutionary War, and Scottish immigrants. The local economy revolved around the three mill sites which processed local lumber and grain for market, taking advantage of the natural watercourse as well as the strategic route south to market along Yonge Street. Related businesses and institutions, including blacksmiths, coopers, a tavern, school, and churches, provided essential services to the local and surrounding community.

The largest and first church within the community was St. John's York Mills Anglican Church, the first outpost of St. James Anglican Church. The York Mills Anglican congregation began practicing in 1797 in the home of Seneca Ketchum, a Loyalist and prominent settler in York Mills whose family emigrated from New York State. St. John's York Mills first church was completed in 1817, with the present-day church building constructed in 1844. The Anglican church was later joined by the Baptist and Presbyterian churches, both with smaller congregations, and neither of which remain standing today.

The community of York Mills remained small despite its strategic location along Yonge Street and along the western branch of the Don River; in 1870 its recorded population stood only at 100, with mills remaining the primary local economic activity. The village character prevailed into the twentieth century, with gradual development occurring as the City of Toronto expanded northwards; in 1922 the Township of North York was carved out from the northern portion of York Township, comprising primarily agricultural land interspersed with small villages and settlements, including York Mills. Suburban development increased in the post-war period, spurred by government incentives for single-family housing construction, the expansion of car ownership and highways, and public transportation. The Borough of North York was established in 1967 followed by the City of North York in 1979, and in 1998 amalgamation saw the community of York Mills incorporated into the City of Toronto.

Today, the former village of York Mills is an established residential neighbourhood characterized by post-war suburban housing and commercial development along Yonge Street. While much of the historic village character has been lost, a select few properties from the nineteenth century remain, complemented by the unique and varied topography that attracted settlement and supported the community's early development and economic activity.

4 Archeoworks Inc. Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment for the Yonge Tomorrow Environmental Study Report, 10.

5 Hart, Pioneering in North York, 145.

St. John's York Mills Anglican Church

The congregation of St John's York Mills Anglican Church traces its history back to the establishment of the Town of York in 1793, and the arrival of United Empire Loyalists to York soon after. The first Anglican services within the York Mills community were hosted by Seneca Ketchum (1772 – 1850), who arrived in Upper Canada c.1792 and settled in the Town of York with his brother, Jesse Ketchum, by 1797.[6]

While Jesse Ketchum established strong roots within the Town of York, his older brother Seneca focused on the acquisition of land to the north, along Yonge Street south of York Mills within the present-day Bedford Park and Teddington Park neighbourhoods.[7] Seneca's religious fervour was evidenced in his commitment to the small community that was growing around York Mills; on Sundays Seneca would travel south to St. James Church (built 1807) in the Town of York, returning later that day to read the service at his Bedford Park home.[8] Once a month, Reverand John Strachan would travel to the community to preach or would otherwise send students to read to the congregation. As the congregation grew, services were moved to a schoolhouse in Hogg's Hollow on land owned by Thomas Mercer.[9]

By 1816, the growing congregation, buoyed by wealth being generated by the mills operating along the banks of the western branch of the Don River, agreed to finance the construction of a simple chapel, with the endorsement of Lieutenant Governor Gore and Reverand John Strachan. The land for the chapel was donated by Joseph and Catherine Sheppard on a rise of land overlooking the valley. The cornerstone of the chapel was laid on September 17, 1816, by Gore and Strachan for a simple one-room chapel of frame construction measuring 30 by 60 feet located east of the present structure. When completed in 1817, the chapel was the second Anglican Church within the Home District (comprising Northumberland, Durham, York and Simcoe Counties), and the first mission of St. James Church. The chapel was subsequently consecrated in 1829 as St. John's Church.[10]

Construction of the chapel was a community-effort; with little financial support from church or state, the Anglican community of York Mills fundraised through subscriptions, donations, labour and land.[11] Notable families within the community that played a significant role in fundraising for the new church included the Van Nostrands, Hoggs, Sheppards, Ketchums, Farrs, and Mercers, all of whom are represented within the present-day burial grounds.

The small confines of the one-room chapel, heated only through a simple stove in the centre of the hall, were apparent by the 1830s, and no longer reflected the increasingly prosperous community nor supported its size. This coincided with St. John's being declared a Crown Rectory in 1836, the allotment of half of St. James's endowment of land to St. John's, and the appointment of the church's first rector, Reverand Charles

6 Grant, "Ketchum, Seneca." Dictionary of Canadian Biography.
7 Ibid.
8 Graham, *150 Years at St. John's, York Mills*. 9.
9 Kennedy, *200 Years at St. John's York Mills*, 269.
10 Graham, 24.
11 Ibid, 28.

Matthews. In 1842 a building committee was established led by prominent members of the congregation who subsequently retained the architect John George Howard (1803 – 1890) to prepare plans for a new church.

The cornerstone for the new church was laid on May 30, 1843, with Bishop John Strachan once again in attendance, and the new church opened on June 11, 1844. The old church was sold to Edward Pearse who relocated it to Yonge and Sheppard for use as a shed. In full circle, beams from the old church were returned in 1948 and incorporated within the narthex.[12]

The second iteration of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church was built to the west of the former church, closer to the ridge overlooking the valley and offering sweeping views of Hogg's Hollow. This location also afforded St. John's a position where it could serve as a prominent and highly visible landmark for travellers along Yonge Street heading north to Holland's Landing from the City of Toronto. Access to the church was permitted via a carriageway traversing the steep incline from Yonge Street (on land donated in 1857 by William Marsh),[13] as well as from the east through the burial grounds from Old Yonge Street. The rectory for St. John's was built immediately south of the eastern entrance at the present-day address of 174 Old Yonge Street, which remained within the church's ownership until 2007 and is now a private residence.

The newly constructed church was designed by Howard in the Gothic Revival style, albeit one of the "mildest Gothic flavour"[14] that would be acceptable to Upper Canada's staunchly conservative religious and political elite. The restrained Gothic style employed at St. John's and other churches designed by Howard has been called "Commissioners Gothic," reflecting features advanced by the Church Building Commissioners in England as part of the Church Building Act of 1818 and 1824.[15] The Act advocated for parish churches to be informed by Classically-inspired rectangular preaching-box churches with Gothic windows and ornamentation, with the church commissioners perceiving the Gothic style to be the most economical means of church architecture requiring "only a belfry and lancet windows to distinguish a building as a church."[16] Howard was almost certainly aware of the Act, and as an architect with British roots would have likely sought to emulate the architecture of England rather than adopting the more purely classical ecclesiastical architecture of the United States.

The interior of St. John's York Mills was restrained in ornamentation, with a vestibule at the west (front) giving way to the central nave, and with the chancel and apse towards the east. A gallery, accessed via the vestibule, features the prized barrel organ for which the congregation fundraised and had shipped from London, England by T.C. Bates & Sons in 1847, as well as the original box pews. The newly constructed church was consecrated in 1849.[17]

12 Kennedy, 276.

13 Ibid, 176.

14 Duggan, "The Churches of John G. Howard," 18.

15 Ibid, 18.

16 Ontario Heritage Trust, "Gothic Revival – Commissioner's Gothic".

17 Graham, 120.

The enthusiasm and growth that spurred the construction of the new St. John's York Mills Anglican Church within the community quieted through the 1850s and the second half of the nineteenth century; changes in transportation saw commercial traffic along Yonge Street shift westwards to new rail lines, and the community remained well-outside the City of Toronto to see it benefit from suburban residential development until the twentieth century. In 1926, the first Parish Hall was constructed, replaced on the eve of World War II, in 1939, by the first phase of a new Parish Hall designed by the architects Molesworth, Secord, and Savage and extending from the southern façade of the main church.

Hosting over 300 families with a mere 250 seats by the 1940s, the growing congregation was in desperate need of more space within the nave, as well as additional space to host community events. The upper floors of the Parish Hall, the Auditorium and the Children's Chapel were completed in 1949 and dedicated in 1952. This expansion coincided with a period of development as York Mills experienced the suburban growth it had been anticipating since the church was completed in 1844. The 1949 addition incorporated several elements of significance to the congregation and the York Mills community: the narthex features wood beams taken from the demolished first church of St. John's, wood beams from the demolished York Mills Baptist Church (previously located at 104 York Mills Road), and stones from the demolished York Mills Presbyterian Churchyard that were incorporated into the gallery stairway.[18]

The lychgate, or roofed gate, that marks the eastern entrance to the churchyard was constructed in 1956 and dedicated to Alexander Dawson, a member of the congregation who played an instrumental role in the twentieth-century history of the church.[19] It was accompanied by a smaller pedestrian gate dedicated to William Kay at the foot of the ridge that provided pedestrian access from Yonge Street. The two gates, while varying in scale, feature stone foundations, a wood structure and tile roofs. Soon after, in 1958, the architect Napier Simpson was retained and built the verger's house, also known as The Lodge, to the northwest of the church atop the ridge.

The second half of the twentieth century saw St. John's York Mills Anglican Church firmly establish itself as a valued landmark within the community of York Mills and the City of North York. In 1968 an addition designed by Page and Steele was constructed on the north façade providing an expanded entrance to the church from the parking lot, alongside offices and multi-purpose rooms which was christened the Arthur C. McCollum Wing in memory of McCollum who served as vicar from 1926 to 1947, and Rector until his passing in 1960.[20] In 1974, the church played host to Princess Anne while she was on an informal tour, an important recognition of the church's long history dating back to its establishment as the second Anglican church in the Home District, and a marked change from the routine visit to St. James Cathedral by visiting members of the Royal family.[21]

18 Ibid, 43 and 53.

19 Ibid, 227.

20 Kennedy, 269.

21 Jones, "Loyalist Church Drew Visit from Princess," A7.

St. John’s York Mills Anglican Church has maintained a significant position within Toronto’s Anglican community through to the present-day and is recognized both for its long history dating back to the arrival of the Anglican church to the region, and its later history serving the community of York Mills. Today, St. John’s continues to serve its congregation as well as the broader community, providing religious, educational, and social services and opportunities to York Mills and the City of Toronto.

John George Howard

The Toronto-based architect John Howard was retained to prepare plans for the design and construction of St John's York Mills Anglican Church in 1842, with construction substantially completed in 1843. Howard’s ecclesiastical commissions were primarily, although not exclusively, Anglican churches outside the City of Toronto. Similar commissions to St. John’s York Mills include Christ Church Tyendinaga (1843); Christ Church Holland Landing (1843); and St. John’s Anglican Church in Jordan (1841). These churches were relatively simple in their design and construction, likely based off a formula that permitted Howard to accept many requests during his peak period of ecclesiastical commissions in the 1840s. Collectively, these "Commissioners Gothic" churches are characterized by a hall plan with gallery and altar within a rectangular body, a low-pitched roof and small chancel, lancet windows, and shallow buttresses.

Born in England in 1803 with the surname "Corby," Howard received his architectural training with the London-based architect William Ford before immigrating to Canada in 1832. With the support of Sir John Colborne, Howard accepted a position as a drawing master at Upper Canada College. Howard was appointed the first Surveyor and City Engineer for the newly incorporated City of Toronto in 1834. For the next twenty-one years, Howard laid out the municipality’s sewage system and networks of roads and sidewalks. He also supervised the surveying of building lots, the most extensive of which were plans for the expansion and development of the Toronto Harbour and Ashbridge’s Bay. While serving the corporation, Howard accepted both public and private architectural commissions, including the landmark Provincial Lunatic Asylum (later demolished) and extant projects such as St. John’s Anglican Church in York Mills, and his High Park residence named Colborne Lodge (now a city-run museum).

Howard's architectural practice carried over into landscape design as well and included the design of St. James Cemetery (1842), an early example of picturesque cemetery design. His design for the subdivision of Samuel Peter Jarvis' estate encompassing present-day Jarvis Street from Shuter Street to Bloor Street East included generous boulevards lined with trees, creating a park-like residential enclave.

ii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The following section provides an architectural description and analysis related to the property which will establish the basis for determining design or physical value of Criteria 1, 2 or 3 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

Located at the top of a ridge overlooking York Mills and the intersection of Yonge Street and York Mills Road, St. John’s York Mills Anglican Church is a buff brick Gothic Revival church reflective of the work of the architect John George Howard and his

application of a restrained Gothic style to ecclesiastical commissions through the 1840s in Upper Canada.

Built as the second iteration of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church, the present church comprises the original 1844 church with additions from 1939, 1949, and 1968. The primary (west) façade faces southwest towards Yonge Street, and while largely obscured by mature trees today, was at one time highly visible from the valley below. A rectilinear bell tower at centre stands proud of the main body of the church, with tall lancet windows on the body of the church on either side of the tower. The bell tower comprises three sections: the lower or ground level containing a pointed arch double door entry set below a drip mould and a date stone bearing "A.D. 1845"; the middle section containing diamond-patterned double-lancet leaded glass windows with sills and drip moulds; and the top section, or belfry, with pointed arch louvered openings for the bell chamber with accompanying drip moulds above. The top of the tower is embellished with a stepped gable and is Norman in design. The corners of the tower feature buttresses terminating with stone-capped pinnacles.

The north façade faces towards a greenspace and driveway and encompasses an enlarged entrance as part of the 1968 addition. Four bays of the 1844 church remain visible and contain pointed arch window openings with Gothic tracery and stained-glass windows set between buff brick buttresses. The 1968 McCollum Wing extends from the rear fifth bay and incorporates the memorial chapel. This addition was designed by architects Page & Steele in a complementary Brutalist style and was built of brick with simple brick piers between rectangular window openings on the west façade and pointed openings on the north façade. A turret-like entrance with pointed arch openings faces the parking lot and driveway and features a covered entryway ornamented with brick piers terminating in cast stone pinnacles.

The south façade has been significantly altered with the addition of the Parish Hall, Children's Chapel, and Auditorium by architects Molesworth, Secord & Savage (1939, 1949), comprising two storeys atop a raised basement built of brick. The raised basement addition protrudes from the south facade of the 1844 church below pointed arch window openings with Gothic tracery and stained-glass windows. A wide variety of window openings on the 1949 addition reflect the complex interior arrangement of the Parish Hall and Children's Chapel, as well as varying periods of construction.

The east (rear) façade of the church faces towards the burial grounds and features an asymmetrical design with the apse at centre. The rectangular apse of the church features a large, pointed arch window with gothic tracery and stained-glass panes below a drip mould; a contemporary rectangular stone finial caps the gabled roof above, with large stone buttresses on either corner of the apse. The Parish Hall addition wraps the corner with a raised single storey on the south façade.

While the 1844 church has been the subject of extensive additions and alterations, the integrity of John Howard's Gothic Revival design remains intact and visible from each elevation. The additions have been designed using complementary materials, and have not subsumed the church in their scale, form, or massing, ensuring the legibility of the 1844 church from various perspectives and vantage points.

iii. CONTEXT

The following section provides contextual information and analysis related to the property which is the basis for determining contextual value of Criteria 7, 8 or 9 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The City of Toronto Property Data Map attached (Attachment 2) shows the site of the property at 19 Don Ridge Drive.

Contextually, St. John's York Mills Anglican Church is located on the edge of a residential neighbourhood primarily comprised of mid-century, post-war, and contemporary detached residences. The property extends from Yonge Street to the west to Old Yonge Street to the east; the western boundary is largely defined by a prominent ridge that descends towards Yonge Street and the natural river valley carved by the western branch of the Don River. To the north and south are residential dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs. The church is significantly buffered on all sides by mature trees and green spaces.

The context within which St. John's York Mills Anglican Church exists today is a post-war suburban residential landscape, significantly differing in character and appearance from the historically rural context within which the church was constructed in 1844 and that defined York Mills through the early- to mid-twentieth century. Nonetheless, the church and its larger property have maintained their integrity as representative of nineteenth-century ecclesiastical architecture and landscapes, while adapting to the evolving patterns of land use within York Mills. Changes to the church property to adapt to the evolving context include the closure of the carriageway from Yonge Street; the construction of a pedestrian pathway from Yonge to the church; the construction of the parking lot on the north side of the property; and extensive landscaping situating the church and the property within a mature, treed environment which is celebrated today as an oasis and landscape of reflection.

The construction of the contemporary office park located at 4025 Yonge Street (York Mills Centre) on the northeast corner of Yonge Street and York Mills Road, in tandem with the growth of trees along the slope of the ridge behind, has largely impeded the historic view of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church from Yonge Street. The only visible indication of its presence on Yonge Street is the Kay Gate immediately to the south of the C.W. Jefferys House at 4111 Yonge Street. From Old Yonge Street, the Dawson Lychgate demarcates the entrance to the churchyard and the church beyond. The primary means of access by vehicle is a driveway located on Don Ridge Drive, a dead-end street and cul-de-sac that runs west off Old Yonge Street.

The evolved post-war suburban landscape has erased most of York Mills rural character; however, several properties that share a similar period of construction with St. John's York Mills Anglican Church remain and collectively relay the history of the community. These include:

- 4111 Yonge Street, C.W. Jefferys House (1833, designated Part IV)
- 4150 Yonge Street, John Street Worker's Cottages (1860, listed)
- 174 Old Yonge Street, St John's Rectory (1878, designated Part IV)

- 106 York Mills Road, York Mills Baptist Church Manse (1850, listed)
- 3885 Yonge Street, Jolly Miller Tavern (1857, designated Part IV)

Collectively, and alongside the remaining natural features including the ridge and western branch of the Don River, these properties convey the history of colonial settlement and religious practice within York Mills through the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries and are valued by the present-day community of York Mills and North York.

4. VISUAL RESOURCES



Figure 4: The first St. John's Church, built in 1817 as a simple wood frame structure with a stove at centre. Painted c.1904, artist unknown. Toronto Public Library.

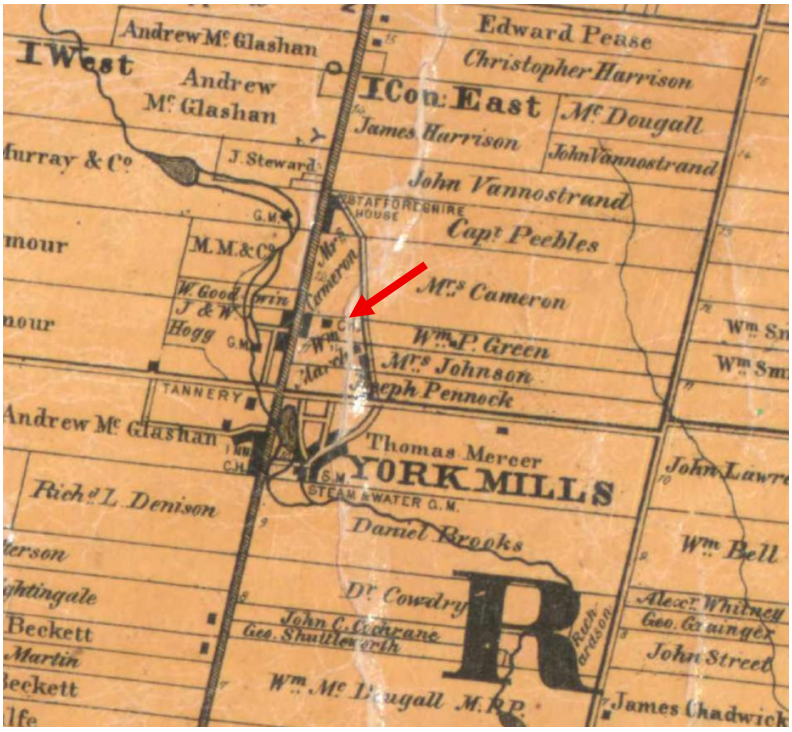


Figure 5: Tremaine's Map of the County of York Canada West, Compiled and Drawn by Geo. R. Tremaine from Actual Surveys, Toronto. Published by Geo. C. Tremaine 1860. University of Toronto Map and Data Library. The red arrow indicates the location of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church.

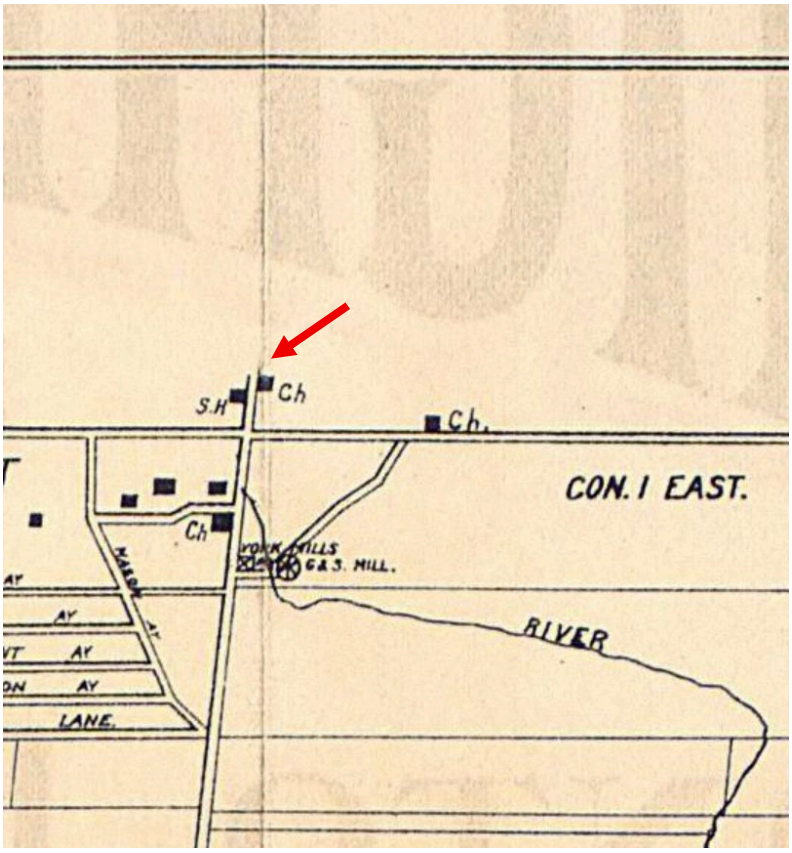


Figure 6: Map of Toronto and Suburbs Showing the Location of the Toronto Belt Line Railway. Published by Alexander and Cable, Toronto. Date unknown, potentially 1892 or 1910. The red arrow indicates the location of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church.



Figure 7: Interior of St John's York Mills Anglican Church looking east towards the apse, prior to renovations. 1912-16, photographer unknown. Toronto Public Library.

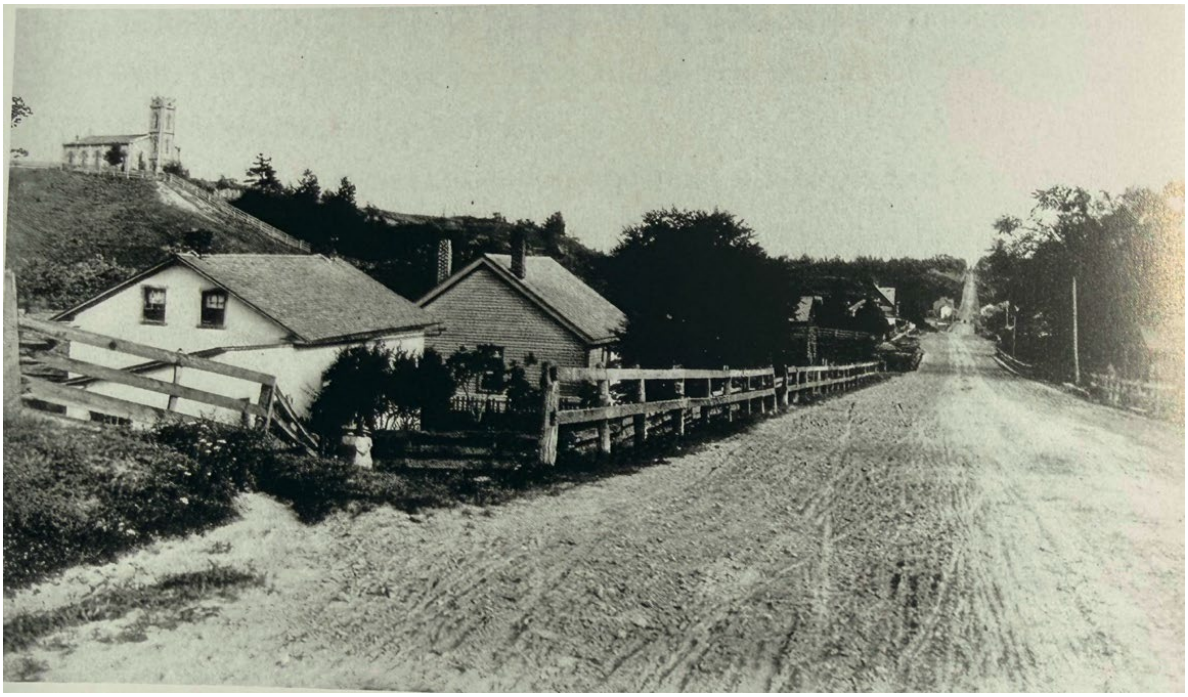


Figure 8: Yonge Street looking south from north of York Mills Road. St. John's York Mills Anglican Church is located on the ridge to the left, c.1920, 200 Years at St. John's York Mills.



Figure 9: St. John's York Mills Anglican Church, northwest (front) façade, c.1930, photographer unknown. Toronto Public Library.



Figure 10: North facade of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church, 1952, by Nicholas Hornyansky. Toronto Public Library. Note the chapel addition on the left, prior to the 1968 addition.



Figure 11: Southwest facade of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church, 1974, Erin Combs for the Toronto Star. Toronto Public Library. Note the Parish Hall addition on the right.



Figure 12: Interior of St John's York Mills Anglican Church looking from below the gallery through the apse and towards the chancel (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 13: Detail of the primary entrance to St. John's York Mills Anglican Church through the bell tower, looking through the vestibule towards the apse. Note the date stone (Alex Corey, September 2025).


Figure 14: Bell tower of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 15: Pedestrian pathway leading from St. John's York Mills Anglican Church towards the Kay Gate and Yonge Street (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 16: North (side) facade of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church, with original 1844 church on the right, the chapel addition at centre, and 1968 McCollum Wing on the left (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 17: South (side) facade of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church, with the Auditorium addition at centre and Parish Hall on the right (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 18: East (rear) facade of St. John's York Mills Anglican Church, with the chancel window and Parish Hall addition on the left (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 19: The Dawson Lychgate, looking east from the burial grounds towards Old Yonge Street (Alex Corey, September 2025).



Figure 20: The Kay Gate, at Yonge Street (Alex Corey, September 2025).

5. LIST OF SOURCES

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

- Toronto Historical Board Records.
- City of Toronto Archives Photographs.
- City of Toronto Public Library Digital Archive.
- University of Toronto Map and Data Library.

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