

Introduction

In the fall of 2017, This Land Archaeology Inc. was contracted by Fieldgate Developments Inc. to undertake an archaeological assessment of Lot 32, Concession 10 in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Regional Municipality of York, formerly Markham Township, County of York.

Our Stage 1 background research revealed that there were no known sites on Lot 32, although there were a number of sites nearby. Several factors including the presence of historic roads at both the eastern and western ends of the lot clearly indicated a high potential for the presence of archaeological sites and therefore a Stage 2 assessment of the property was required.

Our Stage 2 assessment discovered two 19th century Euro-Canadian farmstead sites—Yake (AlGt-628) and Windmill (AlGt-629). These sites were determined to have significant cultural heritage value and interest. Stage 3 test excavations were undertaken in the spring of 2017 and Stage 4 salvage excavations were completed in the summer and fall of 2017.

At this writing, the final reports on the Stage 4 investigation of the Yake site had been finalized and a preliminary excavation report was available on the Stage 4 excavation of the Windmill site. The artifact data and photographs, site photographs, and maps had been completed and were available for examination and use.

See the Appendix for the Four Stages of Archaeological Assessments as defined by the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

In 2017, working with Sheri Andrunyk and her staff at I C Publishing, the popular *Our Lands Speak* series was launched with the publication of *The Archaeology of Patterson Village: a 19th Century Company Town in the Township of Vaughan, Ontario*. As the author, I am tremendously proud of this work, with the foreword by Professor John Triggs of the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University and a history of the Patterson family by Ruth Redelmeier. Ruth's family previously owned the property on which Patterson Village was located. She spent more than 25 years researching the family, the Patterson & Bro. farm equipment manufactory, and Patterson Village, the company town located beside the manufactory.

In 2018, again working with I C Publishing, we published *The Archaeology of Five Queensville Farmsteads: a 19th Century Crossroads Community in the Township of East Gwillimbury, Ontario*. This volume contained a foreword by historian Bruce Bowden, the chapter, A Brief History of Queensville, by This Land Archaeology's Janine Stroud, and The History of Queensville, by the company's Victoria Tesan.

These two publications, and now with volume three, represent my personal efforts, outside my company, This Land Archaeology Inc., to take the results of our archaeological resource assessments to the general public by means of a high quality, full-colour publication series and to provide our clients with value added to recognize the support they provided in digging these significant heritage sites.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF TWO WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE FARMSTEADS

The outcomes so far have been very encouraging and have led to requests for public-speaking engagements to local archaeological and historical societies, libraries, and museums. The Queensville book has been seen by the local municipality as a very positive contribution by the developer, DG Group, to bring historical knowledge resulting from their archaeological excavations back to the local community.

Both the Patterson Village and Five Queensville Farmsteads books were unusual in that they dealt with very large archaeological scopes. Both were unique projects in terms of their size and duration. Most of the work we undertake involves one or two Stage 4 excavations on one lot or parts of two or more adjacent lots.

Volume three involves our assessment of a farm in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the investigation of two 19th century farmsteads, Yake and Windmill.

These sites are located on Lot 32, Concession 10. The lot is situated within the Duffin Creek drainage in close proximity to the Mantle and Draper sites, two significant Late Woodland villages which have been subject to almost total excavation. These excavations provide fascinating insights into the Indigenous occupation of this area prior to Euro-Canadian settlement. It is interesting to note that the Yake and Windmill sites would have been located within the agricultural fields of the Mantle site, and that natural regeneration of forests after the abandonment the Mantle village would have resulted in the growth of very large pine trees in the early 19th century that would have been cleared in order to farm the land. This

is a situation similar to what I recorded in the Patterson Village book, with respect to the lot that Peter Patterson purchased to construct his farm equipment manufactory and Patterson village. Patterson notes the presence of the large pine trees which were used to build the houses of Patterson Village and as lumber for the components of his farm equipment.

There are interesting similarities and differences between these two sites. The Yake site was located on a 30-acre parcel at the western end of Lot 32. This property was purchased by John Yake Sr., a prominent businessman in Stouffville; he rented the property and the house on it to a series of tenants. My interpretation is that the Yake site represents one occupied by tenants who earned their living by working the land around the leased house and who may have had employment elsewhere.

There are two parts to the Windmill site. Locus 2 represents a small house originally occupied by the Reyston family. The cellar of this house was used as a place to dispose of refuse from the occupants of the larger house existing to the northeast. The second house, in Locus 1, was a much larger house occupied at least in part by John Yake Jr. With the construction of a new brick house, still extant in 2017, the house in Locus 1 was eventually taken down and, again, the large basement was used to dispose of refuse generated by the occupants of the new brick house. Ultimately, this helped fill in the cellar to allow the previous farmstead to be recycled to active farmland.

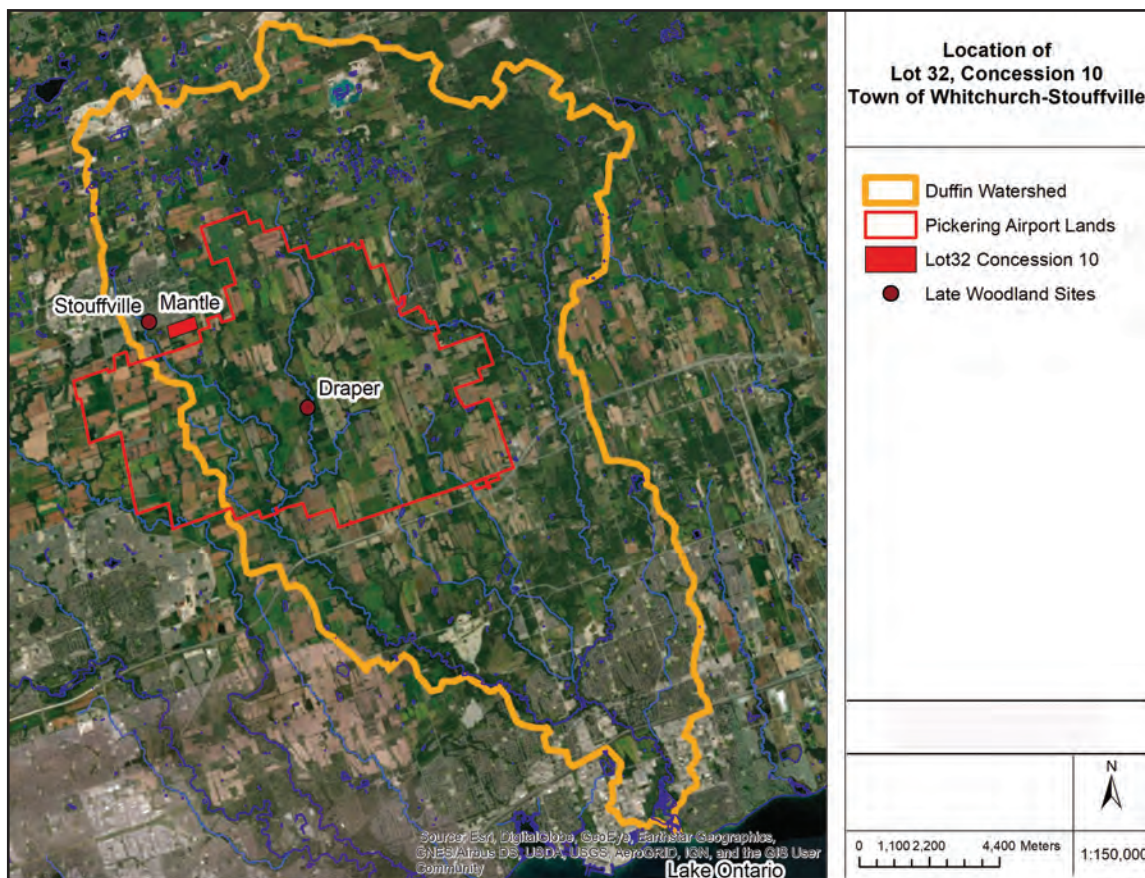


Figure 1: Location of Lot 32, Concession 10

While this book is shorter than the volumes on Patterson Village and Queensville Farmsteads, my goal is again to take the results of this project back to the general public and to provide the developer, Fieldgate Developments, with some value added for their investment in investigating the history of this property.

The outcomes of our assessments are all too often detailed in licence reports filed with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport with no further dissemination to the general public.

I hope you will agree that our efforts to investigate the Yake and Windmill sites provides new insights into the 19th century occupation of what is now the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville.