

## **APPENDIX M**

### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value – Newmarket GO Station**



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## Metrolinx Interim Heritage Committee – Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

### Property Name: Newmarket GO Station, Newmarket

#### Description of property:

The Newmarket GO Station is located in the Tannery Mall at 465 Davis Drive in Newmarket, Ontario. Bounded by Davis Drive to the south, the Holland River to the east, and Barrie GO Line to the west, the triangular property is comprised of two parking lots, the mall structure, and the train platform. The mall is situated near the south end of the train platform, which runs along the west side of the property. The parking lots make up most of the property, interrupted only by a small stretch of vegetation and a stream.

The Tannery Mall is a four-storey commercial complex, composed of the renovations of former tannery buildings as well as new structures built in 1988. The original tannery structures were built by the Davis Leather Company in 1904, with an addition in 1912. The exterior presents a busy, somewhat incoherent design loosely relying on historic motifs executed primarily in veneer stone, stucco and glazing. The interior is composed of office space set about an L-shaped circulation corridor. Aside from the original brick smoke stack, no historic fabric is immediately discernable from the outside. Interior materials and forms include marble flooring and cladding, in addition to many historically derived forms with faux finishes imitating marble and stone. Some of the original tannery facades remain legible from inside the mall, and some original wood beams, joists and flooring remain exposed. The Newmarket GO Station is located in a small area off the main atrium, comprised chiefly of ticket booths and a passageway to the train platform.

It is recommended that Metrolinx proceed with identifying Newmarket GO Station as a Conditional Provincial Heritage Property.

#### Cultural Heritage Value:

The Tannery Mall is of cultural heritage value or interest for its historical, design and contextual values.

##### *Historical Values*

The Davis Leather Company was established at Newmarket, Ontario, following a catastrophic fire at the rural facilities of its predecessor, Andrew Davis & Son. After the fire, (the second in twenty years to completely destroy the tanning operation at Kinghorn, Ontario), the company set about relocating to more urban environs offering better fire protection, and greater proximity to rail lines. Town boosters in Newmarket seized the opportunity, and convinced the town to offer an attractive slate of incentives to help persuade the tanners. In 1904 three of the Davis Brothers established the Davis Leather Company in Newmarket.

The tannery was designed by Newmarket architect Oliver Edgar Tench (b.1859-d.1941), who had hitherto specialized in school design. The commission led to a string of industrial projects, one of which was the 1909 addition to the Andrew Davis & Son tannery in Kingston, which had been established by two other Davis Brothers in 1903. This addition was the first reinforced concrete tannery

in Canada. Tench then designed new facilities for the Office Specialty Company in Newmarket in 1910. In 1912 the Davis Leather Company commissioned a large addition to their facilities, effectively doubling production capacity.

The Davis Leather Company specialized in the production of fine calf leather, using chrome chemical tanning, rather than the traditional vegetable methods. The company grew to become the largest supplier of calf leather in the British Empire, exporting to almost 50 countries and employing close to 200 workers at its peak. In addition to being a major employer in Newmarket, the Davis made large contributions to the community. Their legacy is evident in such places as the Margaret Johnson Davis Wing at the former York County Hospital, the Mabel Davis Conservation Area, and Davis Drive, renamed from Huron Street in 1946.

The Davises retired in 1946, and the tannery closed in 1962. The dormant facilities were redeveloped into the Tannery Mall in 1988. It was at this time that the Newmarket GO Station moved to the site.

#### *Design Values*

The Davis Leather Company addition built in 1912 represents an early example of a reinforced concrete tannery in Canada. The first had been built three years earlier in Kingston. The four-storey building was defined a facade articulation made popular by the Chicago School: bays of wide, rectangular window openings set between very narrow concrete piers. This massing and design was an expression of its modern structural systems, which permitted a reduction in wall mass to allow for greater glazing. Despite the fact that the former Davis Leather Company buildings were heavily redeveloped in 1988, the massing and layout of the 1912 façade remain legible on the inside of the Tannery Mall.

#### *Contextual Values*

The Tannery Mall has a contextual relationship to the Barrie GO Line that runs along the west side of the property. The relationship dates back to the courting of the Davis Leather Company. Ready access to railways was an important aspect of the sales pitch to induce the tanners to set up in Newmarket. The rail siding proved advantageous to the company, as they would imported hides from four continents, and exported fine calf leather to almost 50 countries. The relationship was revived in 1988, when the Newmarket GO Station moved the Tannery Mall, giving the site an active relationship to the railway line once again.

### **Heritage Attributes:**

The key attributes essential to the cultural heritage value or interest of Newmarket GO Station are:

- Attributes related to its design values including:
  - the expression of the reinforced concrete structure, as seen in the:
    - the pattern of wide rectangular openings set between thin piers, as observed on the south side of the south corridor
    - the exposed wood beams, joists and floorboards still visible from the south corridor
- Attributes related to its historical values including:
  - the brick smoke stack
  - the continued legibility of some of the massing and fabric from the original Davis Leather Company structures

**Metrolinx Heritage Property Location:**



Figure showing the location of Newmarket GO Station, Newmarket.