



LOCATION MAP – 1764 Lakeshore Road West



The main structure at 1764 Lakeshore Road West was built in 1875 as a Methodist Church called Carmen Church. It is one of a long line of Methodist meeting places in Clarkson. The first recorded meetings took place at the Bradley House and the “Red Schoolhouse,” S.S. #5, in 1826. By 1839 parishioners worshipped at the Merigold Meeting House. This was located on Daniel Merigold’s property on the east side of Clarkson Road South, across from the place where Clarkson Public School now stands. Daniel Merigold’s mother was a relative of John Wesley, founder of the Methodist church. According to Major John Barnett, Margaret, Daniel’s wife, and Reverend John Hayward “made the Merigold Branch an important member of the whole Methodist Episcopal organization.” A larger church was built across the street in 1859.

The congregation must have quickly outgrown this facility as well. Over a decade later, a new church, the subject structure, was constructed by volunteers, under the leadership of Charles Cordingley. Margaret Merigold, who was widowed at the time, donated the land. In honour of her benevolence, the congregation named the church after her close friend Bishop Albert Carman. Because it was the only church within a five-kilometre radius, it was not strictly Methodist. Other denominations, i.e., most of the village, worshipped there as well. This, in addition to its central location, made the church the heart of the community.

This focus intensified when the community hall was reconstructed to the rear of the church, though not attached, in 1924. (The community hall had been the 1859 church relocated to the east side of Clarkson Road South, just south of the subject structure. It succumbed to fire in 1920.) The community hall hosted meetings, indoor sports, concerts, plays, even Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. It also housed the library from 1925 to 1965.

To reflect the diversity of its membership, the church became Clarkson Community Church in 1918. In 1925 the name was changed to Clarkson United due to the amalgamation of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. With the postwar boom, the congregation outgrew the 1875 structure. The new house of worship opened in 1956 and is located at 1700 Mazo Crescent. St. Christopher’s Roman Catholic Church bought the subject structure but quickly outgrew it as well. Since 1964 the edifice has served commercial purposes. The 1924 community hall has since been reconfigured and attached. Presumably this can be attributed to the renovations that were complete by 1947.

Though currently serving as a toy store, the main building still holds its typical church form, with gabled front and lancet windows. The entry porch has been removed. The windows have been filled in but their Gothic outlines faintly remain. The buttresses, four on either side, the front ones being at the corners, still provide support.

1764 Lakeshore Road West, at the centre of Clarkson village, is a landmark. It is physically, functionally, visually and historically linked to its surroundings. Not only is it the physical centre

of the village, it was also the focal point of the community at large. Its modest proportions and unique, yet distinctive shape maintain what little village character that remains on Lakeshore Road West in Clarkson. The property also has direct associations with the historic churches that it served and the Merigold family, one of Clarkson's founding families. It also yields information that contributes to an understanding of Clarkson's early settlers.



Carman Church, 1923.



Historic Photo of Carman Church & Community Hall.



Detail of north façade.



View facing southeast.





View facing west



View facing east