

## **Draft Statement of Significance: 275 Thames Street**

### **Description of Property**

The principal structure at 275 Thames Street is a one storey wood frame residential dwelling built c. 1848 in the vernacular style. It is located on the west side of Thames Street, Plan Nil, Part Lot 26 S/S Bathurst Street, in the City of London, County of Middlesex.

### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest.**

The cultural heritage interest of the property and building at 275 Thames Street is based on its associations with the formative history of London. More specifically, the building is associated with the early development of the black community in London, its later connections to the Underground Railway and to the emergence in London of a branch of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, later renamed the British Methodist Episcopal Church.

From the information available, the building represents the former "Fugitive Slave Chapel", probably constructed around 1848. The building and the adjacent area became a terminus of the Underground Railway with probable links to the activities of John Brown, the American anti-slavery advocate of the pre-Civil war period. There are specific references in early sources that suggest John Brown visited London on more than one occasion and it is possible the chapel was associated with these visits.

In 1869, the building at 275 Thames was sold to James Seale, a cooper. The British Methodist Episcopal Church branch relocated to its current location at 430 Grey Street. Subsequently, the building at 275 Thames Street was used for residential purposes. From 1944 to 2000 it was owned and occupied by members of the Mancari Family.

### **Description of Heritage Attributes**

Key heritage attributes that embody the heritage value of the building at 275 Thames Street include:

- its age dating to c. 1848
- its plain expression of a vernacular cottage style in a wood framed structure
- its central entrance balanced by two window openings on its front facade
- its use as a chapel as a branch of the African Methodist Episcopal Church which, in 1856, became the British Methodist Episcopal Church.
- its association with the later construction of Beth Emanuel British Methodist Church at 430 Grey Street.
- its association with the black community which took shape in the formative years of the town and city's early growth in the this area of the City adjacent to the south branch of the Thames River.