

THE EAST ANNEX HERITAGE CONSERVATION DISTRICT STUDY

Toronto Historical Board
Final Report
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92 BEDFORD ROAD

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Table of Contents

0. Summary of the Study	1	3. The Analysis of the Roads and Avenues	81
0.1 Summary of the Study.....	3	3.1 Prince Arthur Avenue.....	83
0.2 Municipal Policy.....	6	3.1.1 The Historical Development of Prince Arthur Avenue.....	83
0.3 General Guidelines for the District.....	8	3.1.2 Prince Arthur Precinct Boundaries.....	85
A. Guidelines for New Buildings.....	9	3.1.3 The Buildings on Prince Arthur.....	86
B. Guidelines for Additions and Alterations.....	10	Overview.....	86
C. Guidelines for Streetscapes.....	12	Impact of Large Scale Development.....	86
D. Guidelines for Commercial Signage.....	14	Impact of Commercial Uses.....	87
0.4 Plans of the Study Area, Study Precincts and the Proposed Heritage District Boundary.....	17	Interpreting the Guidelines for Buildings on Prince Arthur.....	88
Study Precincts.....	18	3.1.4 Streetscape Character.....	90
Heritage District Boundary.....	19	Description.....	90
		Street Guidelines.....	90
1. Introduction	21	3.2 Lowther Avenue.....	95
1.1 Outline of the Report.....	23	3.2.1 The Historical Development of Lowther Avenue.....	95
1.2 Background to the Study.....	24	3.2.2 Lowther Precinct Boundaries.....	96
1.3 The Boundaries of the Study Area.....	25	3.2.3 The Buildings on Lowther.....	96
1.4 Achieving a Heritage Conservation District.....	26	Overview.....	96
1.4.1 The Ontario Heritage Act.....	26	Issue of Density.....	97
1.4.2 The Planning Act.....	27	Interpreting the Guidelines for Buildings on Lowther.....	98
1.4.3 Other Municipal Mechanisms.....	28	3.2.4 Streetscape Character.....	100
		Description.....	100
		Street Guidelines.....	100
2. The District Analysis	31	3.3 Elgin Avenue.....	107
2.1 Historical Development of the East Annex.....	33	3.3.1 The Historical Development of Elgin Avenue.....	107
Introduction.....	33	3.3.2 Elgin Precinct Boundaries.....	107
The Initial Surveys of York.....	33	3.3.3 The Buildings on Elgin.....	108
The Village of Yorkville.....	35	Overview.....	108
Subdivision of West Yorkville.....	35	Issue of Density.....	108
Subdivision of Bedford and the Annex.....	38	Interpreting the Guidelines for Buildings on Elgin.....	109
Early Residents.....	40	3.3.4 Streetscape Character.....	111
Historical Development Issues.....	41	Description.....	111
Historical Planning Issues.....	43	Street Guidelines.....	111
2.2 Defining the East Annex Conservation District.....	49	3.4 Boswell Avenue.....	117
2.2.1 The Pattern of Blocks and Streets of the Study Area.....	49	3.4.1 The Historical Development of the Boswell Avenue.....	117
2.2.2 The Architectural Character of the Study Area.....	54	3.4.2 Boswell Precinct Boundaries.....	118
Building Typology.....	54	3.4.3 The Buildings on Boswell.....	118
Pre-Annexation Structure.....	55	Overview.....	118
Annexation Structure.....	56	Issue of Density.....	119
Post-Annexation Structure.....	57	Interpreting the Guidelines for Buildings on Boswell.....	120
Building Heritage Evaluation.....	58	3.4.4 Streetscape Character.....	122
2.2.3 Streetscape Character.....	61	Description.....	122
General Street Character.....	61	Street Guidelines.....	122
Street Trees.....	62	3.5 Tranby Avenue.....	128
Front Yard Gardens.....	65	3.5.1 The Historical Development of Tranby Avenue.....	128
Parking.....	66	3.5.2 Tranby Precinct Boundaries.....	129
Public Works Projects in the East Annex.....	68	3.5.3 The Buildings on Tranby.....	129
2.2.4 Current Planning Controls and Incentives.....	72	Overview.....	129
General Policy Statements and Areas of Special Identity.....	72	Issue of Density.....	130
Current Zoning in the Study Area.....	74	Interpreting the Guidelines for Buildings on Tranby.....	131
Exemptions of Density (1A.42) and City Plan ('91).....	77	3.5.4 Streetscape Character.....	133
Other Cityplan '91 Initiatives.....	78	Description.....	133
2.2.5 Current Local Planning Concerns.....	79	Street Guidelines.....	134

3.6	Bernard Avenue.....	139
3.6.1	The Historical Development of Bernard Avenue.....	139
3.6.2	Bernard Precinct Boundaries.....	139
3.6.3	The Buildings on Bernard Overview.....	140
	Issue of Density.....	141
	Interpreting the Guidelines for Buildings on Bernard.....	142
3.6.4	Streetscape Character.....	144
	Description.....	144
	Street Guidelines.....	144
3.7	Bedford Road.....	149
3.7.1	The Historical Development of Bedford Road.....	149
3.7.2	Bedford Precinct Boundaries.....	150
3.7.3	The Buildings on Bedford.....	151
	Overview.....	151
	Issue of Density.....	151
	Interpreting the Guidelines for Buildings on Bedford.....	152
3.7.4	Streetscape Character.....	154
	Description.....	154
	Street Guidelines.....	154
3.8	Avenue Road.....	162
3.8.1	The Historical Development of Avenue Road.....	162
3.8.2	Avenue Precinct Boundaries.....	163
3.8.3	The Buildings on Avenue.....	164
	Overview.....	164
	Issue of Density.....	165
	Interpreting the Guidelines for Buildings on Avenue Road.....	166
3.8.4	Streetscape Character.....	168
	Description.....	168
	Street Guidelines.....	168
3.9	Davenport Road.....	174
4.	The District Plan - Implementation	177
5.	Appendix	185

Historical Maps of District

- 1851, Township of York - Map
- 1851, Part of York - Map
- undated Plan of Glebe, Lot No. 22 - Map
- 1874, Subdivision Plan, West Side of Avenue Road, Yorkville
- 1874, Subdivision Plan for Davenport Road and Bernard Avenue - Map
- Ca 1876, Plan for the City of Toronto Shewing the General System of Waterworks - Map
- 1878, Yorkville and Vicinity - Map
- 1878, Subdivision of Bernard Avenue - Map
- 1884, Goads Atlas, City of Toronto, Plate 31 - Map
- 1886, Toronto Annexed, Plan of Subdivision - Map
- undated Subdivision Plan Between Lowther and Bloor, Huron and Bedford - Map
- 1886, Subdivision Plan, Corner of Bernard Avenue and Avenue Road
- 1887, Subdivision Plan, Tranby Avenue
- 1894, Building lots on Boswell
- 1899, Goads Atlas, City of Toronto, Plate 33 - Map
- 1905, Subdivision Plan, 9 - 19 Bernard Avenue - Map
- 1910, Goads Atlas, City of Toronto, Plate 33 - Map

Acknowledgements

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Consultant Team

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Toronto Historical Board direction was given by Marisa Williams, Preservation Officer, Heritage Preservation Division.

Reference Group

The study team was assisted by the East Annex Study Reference Group which was convened by the Toronto Historical Board to ensure community liaison and input. The Reference Group included the following members:

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City of Toronto
Jean Paton, Community History Project.
Marisa Williams, Toronto Historical Board

Public Consultation

During the study a full public consultation process was conducted. This process included the Reference Group consultation, three public meetings, and individual interviews. The public meetings were held within the area, were widely advertised, and were held at key times during the study.

Residents of the area were encouraged to contact the Toronto Historical Board during the course of the study and letters of support for heritage preservation in the East Annex were received both by the Board and by the local Councillor.

In addition to the public meetings a number of people were contacted and/or interviewed individually during the preparation of this study. This group includes the following: Councillor John Adams; Bill Angus, resident; Angie Antoniou, Department of Public Works and the Environment; George Baird, resident; Marc Baraness, Department of Planning and Development; Jane Beecroft, Community History Project; John Bossons, resident; Tony Cassidy, resident; David Clusiau, Toronto Society of Architects; Paul Dilse, Metropolitan Toronto Planning Department; Patricia Fleming, resident and THB member; Mark Fram, heritage consultant; Jeffrey Freeman, resident; Rob Gerrard, THB staff; Judith Grant, Brampton Heritage; Bill Greer, THB staff; Regan Hutcheson, Markham Heritage; Dr. Mima Kapches, ROM; Alec Keefer, Toronto Region Architectural Conservancy; Paul King, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation; Warren Kuan, Department of Parks and Recreation; Gary LeBlanc, Department of Parks and Recreation; James D. Lethbridge, Matthews Group; Councillor Howard Levine, City of Toronto; Gregg Lintern, Department of Planning and Development; Gary Morassutti, The Morassutti Group; John Niedra, Department of Public Works and the Environment; Jean Paton, Community History Project; Harold Perry, Mandrake Management Consultants; Angelo Rao, Department of Public Works and the Environment; Dan Schneider, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation; Peter Stokes, consulting restoration architect; Mark Warrick, City of Mississauga; Richard Ubbens, Co-ordinator of Urban Forestry Renewal, Department of Parks and Recreation, John Wells, Bryce Valley Holdings Limited; and Marisa Williams, THB staff.

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0. Summary of the Study

0.1 Summary of the Study

When one contrasts the older residential districts in Canadian cities with ours, one feels instinctively that the architects and builders of the past in Toronto have produced something that, in many ways, might be called indigenous. Scores of our old streets, whole neighbourhoods indeed could exist nowhere but in Toronto.

Eric Arthur, 1974¹

Toronto's older neighbourhoods are a valuable municipal asset. Within these neighbourhoods a sense of place, belonging, and identity has been nurtured for generations of residents. In many ways, these neighbourhoods establish a special identity for the City of Toronto.

The East Annex area is the first large scale residential neighbourhood to be studied in Toronto as a potential heritage conservation district and as such the results of the study are of value for many of the other older neighbourhoods in the City.

The East Annex demonstrates the gradual growth of Toronto and its overall character is cohesive and distinctive from the neighbouring Yorkville to the east or the Annex to the west. Originally a part of the Village of Yorkville, development of the area began with the subdivision of Prince Arthur in 1870 and the gradual subdivision and filling-in of the other east-west avenues: Bernard, Boswell, Elgin, and Lowther. Bedford Road, which completes the east-west avenues, was just west of the village boundary and was not laid out until the annexation to Toronto in 1887. This speculative development of the Annex led to changes within this western section of Yorkville, including the subdivision of the last undeveloped land, which created Tranby Avenue. The character of the area is one of incremental change where the major periods of development, most importantly from the 1870s to the first decade of the twentieth century, are amply represented by individual buildings.

¹ Eric Arthur, Toronto: No Mean City (Toronto U of T Press, 1974)

In evaluating the area the study team realized that the character of the East Annex, like the character of most of Toronto's older neighbourhoods, varies on a street-by-street basis. The avenues consist of well maintained, late-nineteenth-century or early twentieth-century buildings, but each of the avenues varies to reflect its unique development and building history. The evaluation of the neighbourhood conducted during this study recognized these differences and identified the individual streets as precincts or sub-areas. Establishment of the boundary for the proposed heritage conservation district was determined by assessing, at this street-by-street level, which of these sub-areas were of significant heritage value.

The Ontario Heritage Act

The study recommends that the unique character of the East Annex could be best recognized and protected by the establishment of an East Annex Heritage Conservation District. The district designation would occur under the authority of Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The Act has a number of limitations which have been previously outlined by the Toronto Historical Board, but it is however the best mechanism currently available for the protection of the heritage character of neighbourhoods. The Act is under review at this time and it is possible that many of the Board's concerns regarding limitations of the Act will be addressed in the revised legislation.

Role of the Toronto Historical Board

The Toronto Historical Board is the City of Toronto's advisory body on heritage matters and currently advises City Council on all properties designated either under Part IV or Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. The administrative procedures recommended for this proposed District are based on existing procedures developed by the Board and are outlined in Section 4 of this report.

*The Planning Act:
Official Plan and Zoning By-laws*

It is important that the Official Plan policies and related Zoning By-laws of the City of Toronto support the objectives of the proposed District. This can be ensured, in part, by the following:

- amending the Plan to indicate that the East Annex is a Heritage Conservation District, and possibly amending the existing Areas of Special Identity (the Village of Yorkville and the Prince Arthur Areas of Special Identity) to more adequately reflect the identified heritage character of these areas;
- revising Section 1A.42 of the Plan regarding exemptions of density for heritage buildings within the Central Area to exclude residential properties. (It would not be beneficial to this District if increases in density were permitted within the residential areas; the exemption of density would still be considered for the commercial properties).

- requesting the Commissioner of Planning and Development to report on changes to the zoning by-law which would bring the permitted height and density into closer conformity with existing developed heights and densities within the District, on a street by street basis, as discussed in the body of this study, and as previously requested by the Annex Residents' Association (September 15, 1991).

Implementation

In undertaking the study a key objective was the creation of a District which could be implemented efficiently, and as simply as possible. It is the intent of this study, particularly as a potential model for other areas, that the full implementation of the District not be contingent on an expensive outlay of services. Therefore street improvements within the District, other than a tree planting program, are seen as optional. A full listing of the recommendations for municipal action are listed under Municipal Policy in this report.

The study has not identified a major revision of parking patterns or street traffic as an essential part of the establishment of the District. It is understood that these issues are of concern to the community. The study has addressed the concerns over front yard parking, recommending stronger control over this form of parking because of its effect on the streetscapes of the neighbourhood.

The study has identified the strong importance of the trees in the East Annex which assist in establishing the area's character, and the study has provided a tree inventory for each of the streets. These trees are primarily City-owned, and in the study we provide a landscape plan for maintaining a healthy grouping of these trees, modified to reflect the different conditions found on each of the streets. Part of this tree planting can be undertaken by the City, with additional optional planting by property owners.

Heritage Conservation District Guidelines

In cooperation with the East Annex Reference Group, guidelines were developed for the construction of new buildings, for additions and alterations to existing buildings, for landscaping, for commercial signage, and for demolition control. The intent of these guidelines, which are modeled on sections of the previously adopted Wychwood Park Heritage Conservation District guidelines, are to encourage compatible and sensitive change which respects the identified character of the area. It is recognized that this character consists of considerable variety in built form, setback, and even materials. A full listing of the proposed guidelines are listed under General Guidelines in this report.

0.2 Municipal Policy

*General Recommendations
from the Study for the
implementation of the District*

For the implementation of this proposed East Annex Heritage Conservation District the Toronto Historical Board is required to forward a number of recommendations to City Council. These recommendations include:

- 1) the East Annex Heritage Conservation District with boundaries as illustrated in this report, be designated as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act;
- 2) all individual properties within the District be added to the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties as properties designated under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act; and that the evaluations of the individual buildings included in this report using the Toronto Historical Board's Criteria for Heritage Properties, be adopted;
- 3) the City of Toronto's Official Plan be amended to indicate that the East Annex is a Heritage Conservation District, and that the District plan and boundaries be included with Official Plan;
- 4) Section 1A.42 of the City of Toronto's Official Plan be amended as recommended in the Cityplan '91 Official Plan Policy recommendation #148, excluding residence areas from a heritage density exemption; (See Section on - "Exemptions of Density (1A.42) and Cityplan '91" in this study for discussion of this recommendation);
- 5) the Commissioner of Planning and Development be requested to report on changes to the zoning by-law which would bring the permitted height and density into closer conformity with existing developed heights and densities within the District, on a street by street basis, as discussed in this study;
- 6) the General Guidelines for the East Annex Heritage Conservation District and the process for receipt of a Heritage Permit Application be approved; (see following sections of this study for the Guidelines and the permit approval process);
- 7) the final study document be made available to all property owners within the District upon request;

- 8) in general, that Public Works projects and the work of other municipal departments in the District be reviewed by the Toronto Historical Board as work proposed in a Heritage Conservation District;
- 9) that the District be polled by the Department of the Public Works and the Environment to see if the residents are willing to have the secondary Hydro lines placed underground when the primary lines are placed underground over the next few years;
- 10) a street tree planting program, including the sodding or landscaping of boulevard areas, be undertaken by the City to plant the indicated species in the recommended locations in the study area with the consent of the affected homeowners, and that this tree planting program be undertaken as a co-operative effort between the Toronto Historical Board, the homeowners, the area residents' associations and the Urban Forestry Section;
- 11) the City of Toronto's previous comments on required revisions to the Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act, the section on heritage districts, be again sent to the Ontario Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Recreation for their action;
- 12) Even though they are recommended for exclusion from the proposed District, a number of properties in the study area be considered by the Toronto Historical Board for inclusion on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties because of their individual heritage interest. They are:
 - 243 Davenport Road: Weir Cripp and Associates, architects, 1956
 - 295 Davenport Road: Creeds Storage Vaults, 1939
 - 4 Avenue Road: Park Plaza Hotel, both the original and the northern addition (at present only the original section is listed).