

## 3.1 Prince Arthur Avenue

### 3.1.1 The Historical Development of Prince Arthur Avenue

*Prince Arthur Avenue was named for the Duke of Connaught (1850-1942) who became Governor-General of Canada 1911-1916. He first visited Canada in 1869 and this street name appeared on the registered plan in 1870.*

James Metcalfe subdivided his 3 acre Glebe lot in 1870 with Plan 301, keeping significant Bloor Street frontage for himself and offering nine lots on each side of Prince Arthur.

The seven lots between the east and west ends were laid out 53' wide, but as purchased, not one lot retained that frontage, suggesting that sales may have been rather casual. Where construction occurred after 1888 on the west end, the lots range from 21'4" to 32' and buildings are closer to the street. From midblock to the east end, houses dating from the 1870s were built on lots measuring between 42' and 125', indicating the brief prevalence of the suburban villa ideal.

As with the rest of the area, the provision of services hastened development. After sewer installation and paving in 1885, the lots were more attractive to speculators; the row of four at #25 - 31 reflects the new impetus. The houses west of the lot line of #33 were beyond the western boundary of Yorkville, and came about as the large corner lots of Bedford were slowly subdivided, mostly after 1900.

As the first residents on Prince Arthur preceded municipal services such as water or street paving, properties typically had up to five buildings on a lot, comprising two or three principal structures, one or two sheds, and a stable. Materials were generally roughcast and frame, although a few notable buildings were of brick, such as #17 of ca. 1884. Most were later bricked or clapboarded, as in the case of #21-23, which remained roughcast well after 1943.

In 1884, 11 of the 18 lots were built on, compared with 32 properties existing when the street was fully built (before the demolition of nine for the apartment building at 20 Prince Arthur). There was a considerable jump in housing starts before 1890, although the street was not fully built and extended past Bedford until 1910.

Early occupants included accountants, a barrister, a university professor, business employees, and church ministers. Reverend Septimus Jones, the rector of the Church of the Redeemer on Bloor at Avenue Road, occupied #13 and #18 (demolished) at separate times, despite having a manse behind the church.

After 1900 and the developing image of the Annex generally, the street became fashionable with Toronto Establishment socialites<sup>50</sup> and well-known architects. Investment banker Edward Aemilius Jarvis was a long-time resident of #34 (demolished).<sup>51</sup> In 1895, architect Kivas Tully lived at 61 Prince Arthur, across Bedford (demolished). Architect David Brash Dick lived at #22 (demolished) between 1890 and 1895, toward the end of his illustrious career. Later, architect Henry Sproatt settled at #8 before 1915, and his widow lived there into the 1940s after his death in 1934.<sup>52</sup>

Changes following the war were resisted by the residents. Prince Arthurians were the first in the City to petition to restrict the single-family use and character of their street, winning the by-law in 1921 that also restricted Bedford, Bernard, and Lowther streets.<sup>53</sup> That same year they tackled the Separate School Board for attempting to install St. Basil's school at 14 and 18. While classes were taught in four rooms, the case dragged on for four years. Although the Supreme Court granted the Board leave to appeal, the city's case was eventually upheld by the Privy Council in London in 1925.<sup>54</sup> In 1928, the City allowed an orthopedic hospital to be built on the street, although it was overturned at the predecessor to the OMB.<sup>55</sup>

The Women's Art Association occupied #23 before 1920, and expanded to include the Lyceum Club at #21 by 1940. The A XA Fraternity occupied #40 by 1940. Subdivision of a few houses

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<sup>50</sup> Annex area residents have been classified by, among others, C. A. Russell, *The Establishment and the Industrial Elite, 1912-1920* in Lydia Burton and David Morley, *The Annex Book* (Toronto: unpubl. MS, 1978, TPL Municipal Reference), 1.5.

<sup>51</sup> E.A. Jarvis (1860-), grandson of Samuel Peters Jarvis, was key in assembling the financial package for the development of the King Edward Hotel in Toronto. He occupied his house at 34 Prince Arthur, called Hazelburn, from around 1901 to after 1925. Cf. Austin Seton Thompson, *Jarvis Street* (Toronto: Personal Library Publishers, 1980), p. 170.

<sup>52</sup> Henry Sproatt (1866-1934), in partnership with Darling, Sproatt & Pearson, 1893-96; then Sproatt & Rolph.

<sup>53</sup> Stuart Schoenfeld, *Formation of a Neighbourhood* in Burton and Morley, *The Annex Book*, 1.4 p. 5.

<sup>54</sup> Bev Stager, *The Founding of an Association: The Early Annex Ratepayers, 1928-1940* in Burton and Morley, 2.1 pp. 2-5.

<sup>55</sup> Schoenfeld, *Formation*, p. 6.

appears in the directories by 1940, which is much later than most streets in the area, but is in accord with the tremendous pressures caused by the general shortage of accommodation.

The largest changes in scale on the street occurred with the construction of the rear addition of the Park Plaza in 1955 and the erection of the towers at 20 Prince Arthur in 1967, and the later towers at #50 and #55.

### **3.1.2 Prince Arthur Precinct Boundaries**

Prince Arthur has already been identified as an Area of Special Identity noted for its 'art galleries and restaurants, open spaces, mature trees and diversity of built form'. It forms the southern edge of the proposed District.

It was the first street in the study area to be laid out after Avenue Road and the early pattern of villa development that took place distinguishes this street from others in the study area. The dominant character attributes continue to be generous lots, setbacks and side allowances, open lawns, grassy boulevards, and the perception of a tree canopy. Combined with the 66' width of the street, this is the most spacious and open street in the proposed District.

To the east Prince Arthur is terminated by a view of the Four Seasons Hotel, and pedestrian movement from the east is limited by the heavy traffic on Avenue Road. To the west the continuation of the street is dominated by the towers at both 50 and 55 Prince Arthur. To the south the buildings back onto a municipal parking lot which is located in the interior of the block and has entrances on Prince Arthur and on Bedford.

To the north the interior of the block has been opened up by the landscaped open space for the tower at #20, and in other places, built upon by buildings extending into their rear yards. The buildings on the block of Prince Arthur between Avenue Road and Bedford are: 4, 8, 10, 14, 20, 36, 36a, 36b, 38, 40 and 9, 11, 15 (15a), 17, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 43 (34a and 15 Bedford). It is recommended that all of these properties, with the exception of the high-rise at #20, be included in the Prince Arthur precinct for the proposed District.

It is noted that 4 Prince Arthur is part of the proposed Matthews development and further discussions will be occurring between the Toronto Historical Board and the owner of the property regarding the possible retention or removal of this building.

### 3.1.3 The Buildings on Prince Arthur

#### *Overview*

Of the buildings facing onto Prince Arthur, ten are already included on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties. Twenty of the buildings were constructed prior to 1910, and during this study, twenty of the buildings were evaluated as contributing to the heritage character of the neighbourhood. With the exception of the very fine row at #25 - 31, each of the buildings are distinct from its neighbours, with eclectic stylistic differences, including the Second Empire style of #21-23, the sober Italianate of #17, and the remarkable Tudor Revival, crenellations and all, of #35. Some of the earlier buildings reflect the villa development which first occurred on the street, and others, particularly at the ends of the block, reflect the later Queen Anne variants which were to appear throughout the Annex. Each of these stylistic differences reflects different street frontages, roof-lines, setbacks, building massing and materials. Roughcast stucco, now covered by a later siding in the case of #21-23, and both the white Yorkville brick and the later red brick can be seen on the street.

The later buildings include a pre-1920s building on the south side of the street, at #33, and two small infill houses on the north side which date from the 1940s, #36a and #36b. These buildings demonstrate the gradual filling in of the larger villa lots. In their scale and materials they contribute to the residential built-form character of the street.

#### *Impact of Large Scale Development*

The impact of large scale development on the precinct is quite clear. The 1955 low rise apartment building at #14 was a typical replacement building of its time in Toronto, but it is the tower at #20 which appears as an anomaly. Because of its height, its surrounding open space, the demolition of buildings which occurred for its construction, and its aesthetic appearance, it is now recognized by the neighbourhood as a major intrusion. It was excluded from the Area of Special Identity designation and is recommended for exclusion from the proposed District. Aesthetic responses to a recent building are quite subjective and at this point we are recommending its exclusion from the proposed District because of its building typology, that of a high rise tower, rather than any aesthetic consideration. On an aesthetic level it is of greater interest than many of the high rise towers of the period. The following is a comment from Uno Prii, its architect, on his towers built within the Annex area:

"I thought I could do something different.... I felt I could treat them as big sculptures, give them an identity, a life

in itself. Everything looked the same, it all looked like filing cabinets. You lived in the 15th floor drawer or the 10th floor drawer, so my idea was to give them some character so that the guy who lived there could say 'I live in this building' and people would say 'Oh, I know that building', so that it isn't just another anonymous place".<sup>56</sup>

Other high rise buildings within the study area include 50 and 55 Prince Arthur. They also are recommended for exclusion from the proposed District because their building type does not contribute to the historic character of the area.

The north section of the Park Plaza Hotel faces onto Prince Arthur but it was not included in the City Council's definition of the study area. The Park Plaza (4 Avenue Road) is a property which is listed on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties. Its north wing, designed by the influential and locally prominent architect, Peter Dickenson while working for Page and Steele, is worthy of note, particularly for its open balconies which provide a residential scale to its facades. *It is recommended that the north wing of the Park Plaza be specifically recognized in the reasons for listing of the Park Plaza on the City of Toronto's Inventory.*

#### *Impact of Commercial Use*

This block of Prince Arthur is noted for its commercial uses, particularly its restaurants and art galleries, and this use forms part of the street's distinctive identity. Alterations required for commercial use, such as signs, patios, and modifications to entrances, have been accomplished in various ways. Some of these elements, such as the night lighting of the street trees, the outdoor sculpture in front of the Gallery Louise Smith, or the open restaurant patio on the front of the apartment building at #14, have added a unique sense of place to Prince Arthur, which is informal, lively, and arts-related.

The commercial uses have led to increased densities and this will have a significant impact on the heritage buildings. Over the street there is a great disparity between existing densities on different lots. Most of the older buildings have a existing density of less than half of the permissible density of 2.0 times coverage. A rear infill project at #35 has a density of 2.5 and a similar density (2.33 x) has been proposed for a project at #10. Only four properties have the existing permissible density, or exceed it, including the 20 Prince Arthur which has a density of 2.9 times coverage.

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<sup>56</sup> David Cluisau and Marco Polo, *Uno Prio*, Toronto Society of Architects Newsletter, Fall 1991.

The differences in existing densities on these commercial properties is a potential threat to the long term retention of the heritage buildings. Rear yard development, similar to, but not exceeding the existing density at #35 (2.5x) should be permitted when it ensures the retention of an historic building (see Official Plan 1A.42).

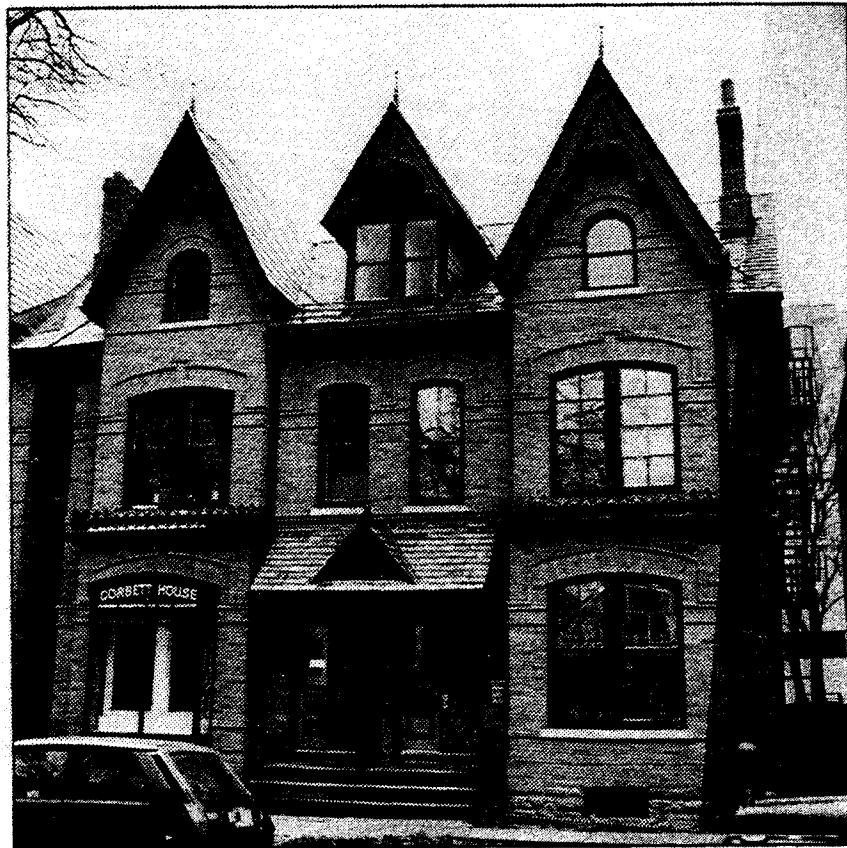
*Interpreting the Guidelines for Buildings on Prince Arthur*

The general guidelines for the District (page 8) are appropriate for Prince Arthur with the following comments:

The commercial nature of Prince Arthur can work well with the existing heritage buildings, with signage which does not detract from the building and with well maintained historic materials.

Substantial development in rearyards is evident on Prince Arthur and is indicative of present commercial uses. Rear yard additions should not over-power the existing buildings and preferably should have low visibility from the street.

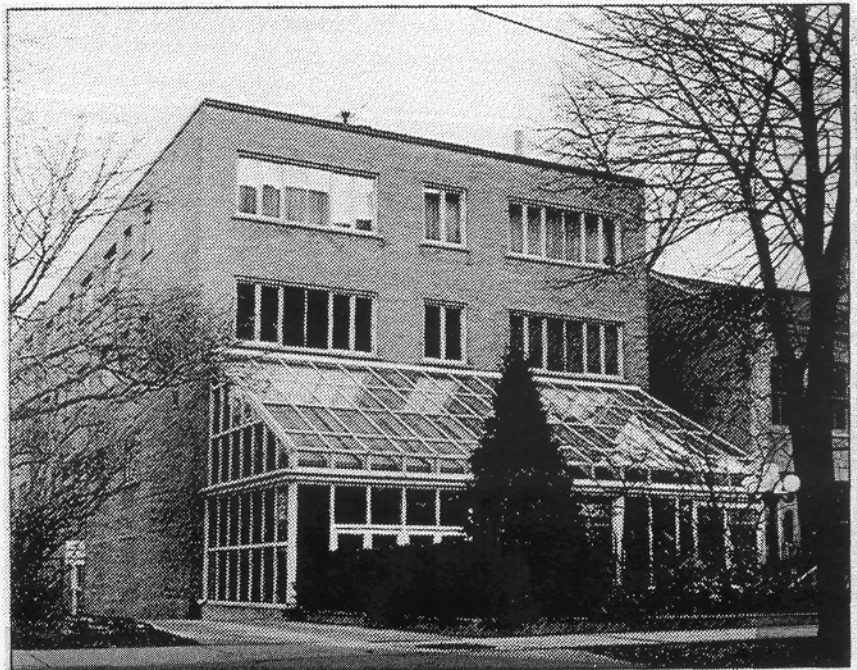
29-31 Prince Arthur  
constructed circa 1889  
first residents:  
A. B. McCallum , teacher  
at the School of Practical  
Science, U. of T., and  
Henry Gardiner, a  
bookkeeper.



The variety of buildings on Prince Arthur requires a degree of flexibility in interpretation of the guidelines. The use of a front yard patio for a restaurant at 14 Prince Arthur is unusual but works well to soften the rather plain character of the apartment building.

Owners of commercial properties on Prince Arthur may wish to coordinate aspects of their signage to emphasize the District. Other coordinated improvements to the buildings, or streetscape improvements such as replacement of concrete bollards or modification of streetlighting to match the standards for the Yorkville B.I.A. would only be considered with coordination by the property owners.

*14 Prince Arthur  
constructed 1955 as a 42  
unit apartment building;  
P. Meschino architect,  
C. Fidam and Sons  
owners.*



### 3.1.4 Streetscape Character

#### *Description*

Prince Arthur Avenue has one of the largest street allowances in the residential district, second only to Bedford Road. There is very little continuity down the length of the streetscape. The building line is fairly irregular along both sides, with a very large setback at #20. On both sides of the street, the concrete sidewalk is 4 metres from the curb and the boulevard is planted with 31 street trees. Norway Maple make up almost half of these trees, but the largest specimens are Silver Maple. The boulevard at a number of properties is covered in concrete brick. The sidewalk is very close to the buildings and in some cases is adjacent to front porches or stairs. In these cases, particularly at the west end, the front yard is paved. On other properties the setback is quite generous, and these are landscaped with foundation planting and grass lawns.

Parking is on the south side of the street only at parking meters. Parking on the boulevards appears to be a problem. The north side is lined with low triangular shaped bollards to prevent cars from parking on the boulevards. A couple of properties on the south side have timber bollards. Traffic is one way, going east. Overhead power lines and street lights are on the north side of the street. The view east down the street, particularly in winter when there are no leaves on the trees, is dominated by the tower of the Four Seasons Hotel on Avenue Road.

#### *Street Guidelines*

The general guidelines for streetscape (page 12) apply here, with the following additional comments for street tree planting:

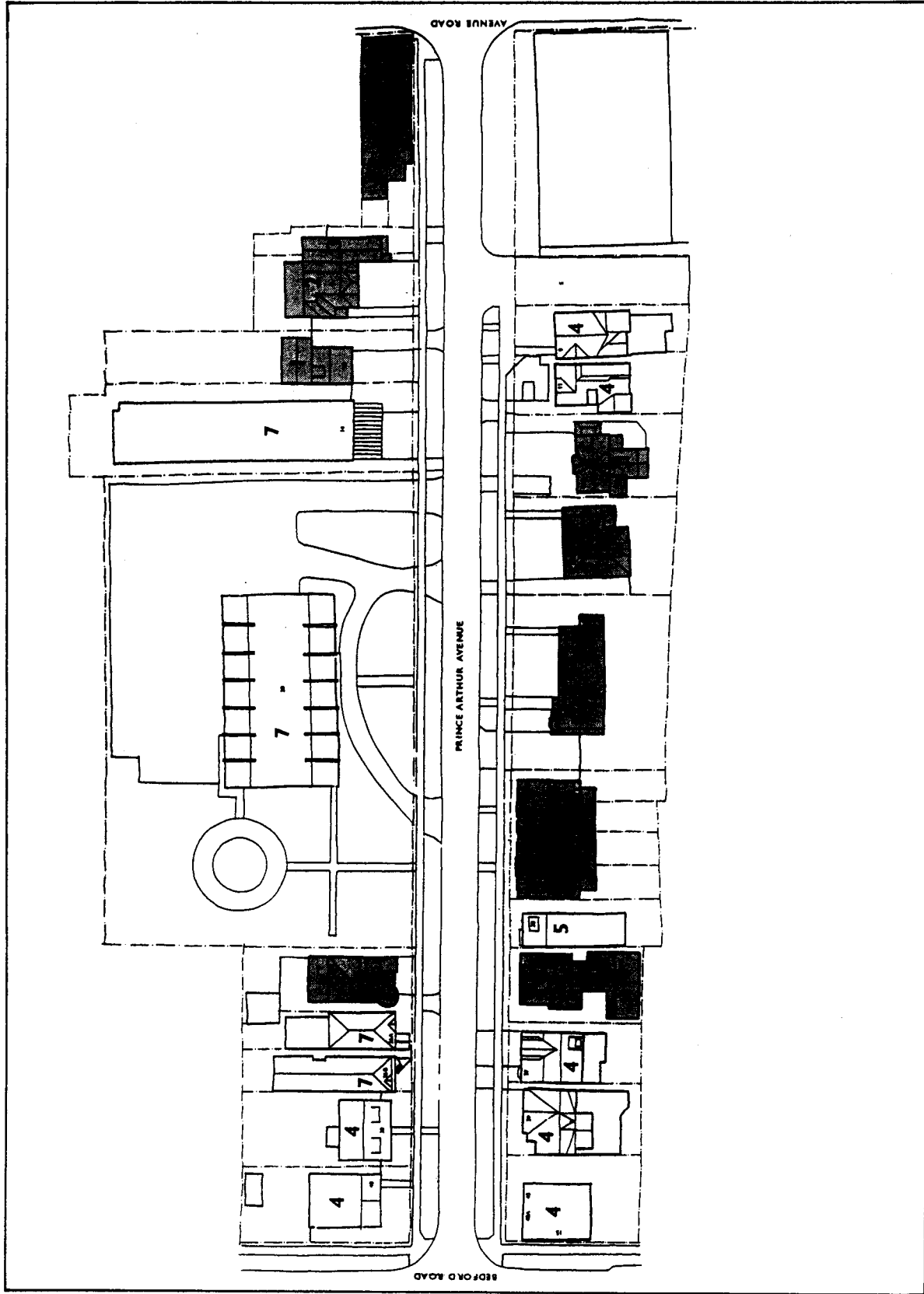
There is room to plant 18 trees on Prince Arthur Avenue in order to provide a continuous framework to the street. Since this number will represent about a third of the final total, it is recommended that a new species be introduced, that is under-represented in this district. It is recommended that Red or English Oaks be introduced. For the four trees to be planted behind the Park Plaza Hotel, it is recommended that Honeylocust be used.

The following pages illustrate the existing and proposed street tree locations, in addition to the age and heritage evaluation for buildings on Prince Arthur Avenue.

**PRINCE ARTHUR AVENUE**

**AGE OF BUILDINGS**

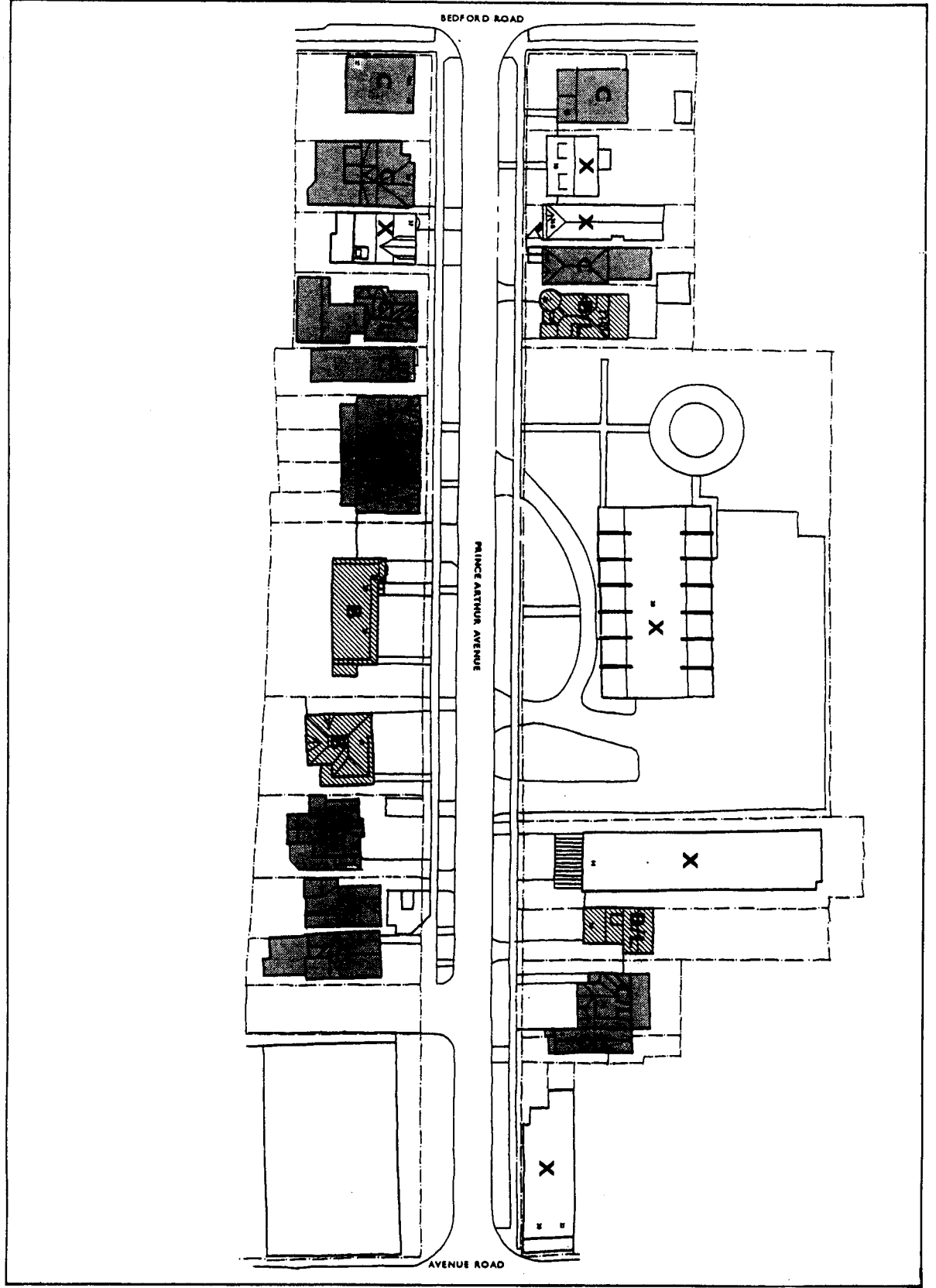
NO.	PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION
1	PRE 1883
2	1884 TO 1889
3	1890 TO 1899
4	1900 TO 1909
5	1910 TO 1919
6	1920 TO 1939
7	1940 TO 1959
8	1960 -



**PRINCE ARTHUR AVENUE**

**EVALUATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS**

KEY	DESCRIPTION
(Solid black)	PROPERTIES WHICH ARE INDIVIDUALLY OUTSTANDING AND HAVE NATIONAL OR PROVINCIAL SIGNIFICANCE
(Diagonal lines /)	PROPERTIES WHICH ARE NOTEWORTHY FOR THEIR OVERALL QUALITY AND HAVE CITY WIDE IMPORTANCE
(Stippled)	PROPERTIES WHICH RETAIN MUCH OF THEIR ORIGINAL CHARACTER AND ARE VITAL REMINDERS OF A COMMUNITY'S PAST
(X)	PROPERTIES WHICH ARE NOT IN THE ORIGINAL CHARACTER
(/L)	PROPERTIES WHICH ARE LISTED BY THE TORONTO HISTORICAL BOARD ON THE INVENTORY OF HERITAGE PROPERTIES

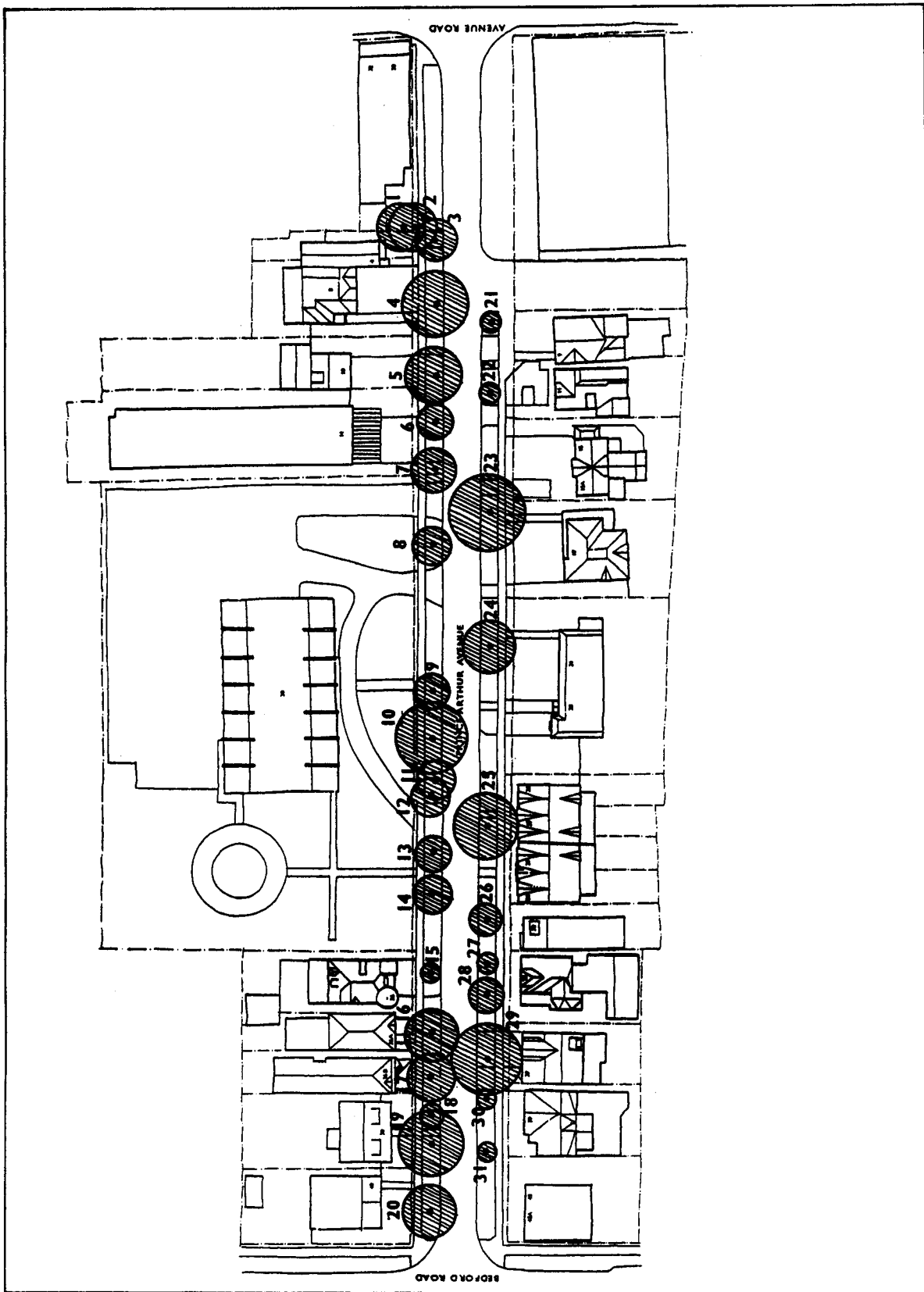


**PRINCE ARTHUR AVENUE**

**EXISTING STREET TREES**

#	TREE NAME	dbh
1	ASH	10
2	ASH	20
3	HONEYLOCUST	20
4	HORSECHESTNUT	41
5	LINDEN	30
6	LINDEN	25
7	LINDEN	20
8	NORWAY MAPLE	15
9	NORWAY MAPLE	15
10	SILVER MAPLE	61
11	NORWAY MAPLE	15
12	NORWAY MAPLE	15
13	NORWAY MAPLE	15
14	NORWAY MAPLE	20
15	NORWAY MAPLE	5
16	NORWAY MAPLE	36
17	NORWAY MAPLE	30
18	RED ASH	10
19	PLUMBERRY	46
20	NORWAY MAPLE	30
21	NORWAY MAPLE	10
22	NORWAY MAPLE	10
23	SILVER MAPLE	81
24	NORWAY MAPLE	41
25	HORSECHESTNUT	46
26	HOLYAINASH	10
27	NORWAY MAPLE	8
28	NORWAY MAPLE	15
29	SILVER MAPLE	81
30	LINDEN	10
31	LINDEN	11

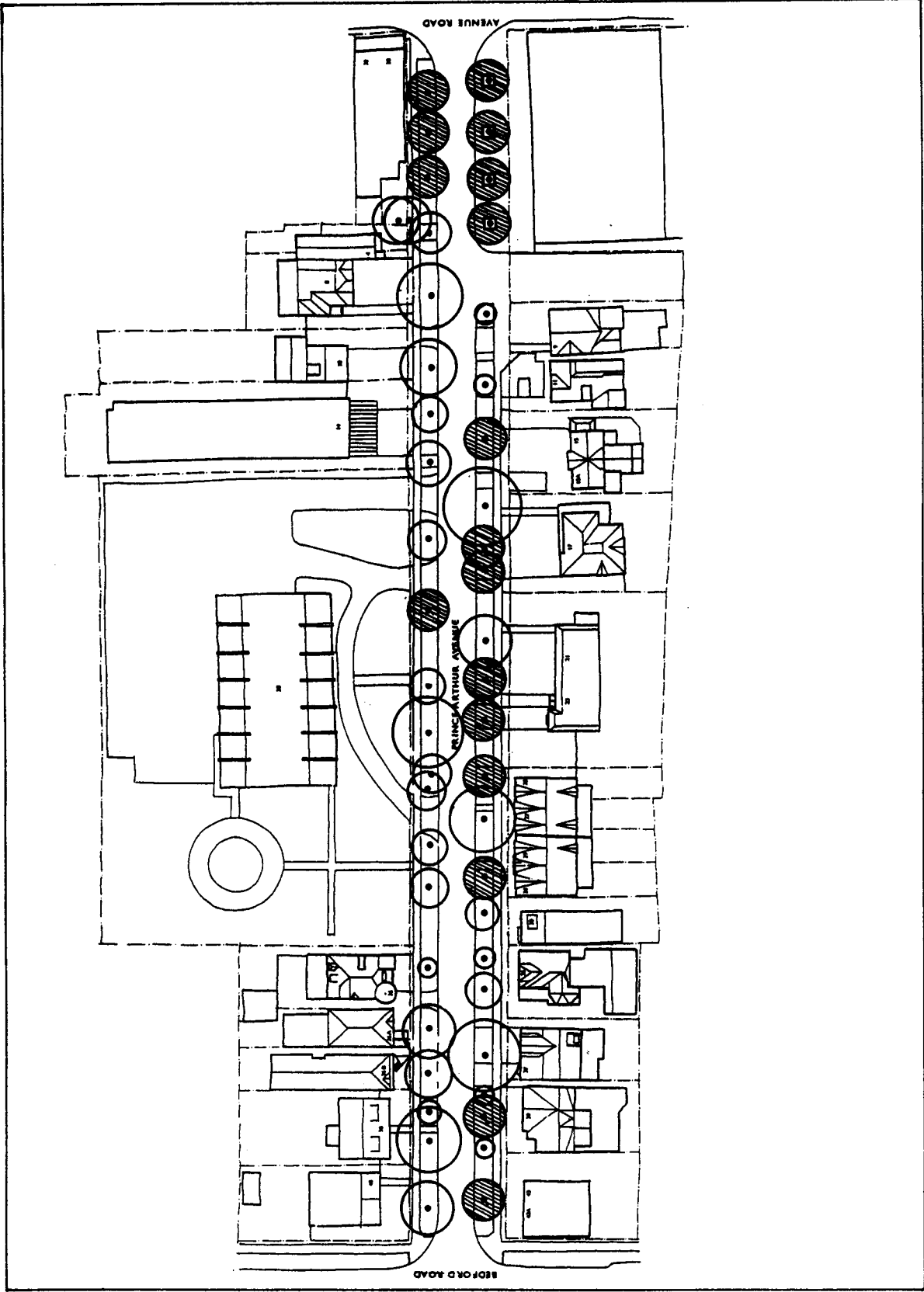
dbh refers to the diameter of the tree trunk at breast height in centimetres.



**PRINCE ARTHUR  
AVENUE**

**PROPOSED  
STREET TREES**

FOR PRINCE ARTHUR  
AVENUE, PROPOSED  
STREET TREES ARE  
RED OAK AND/OR  
ENGLISH OAK. FOR  
THE 7 TREES NEAR  
AVENUE ROAD,  
HONEYLOCUST ARE  
PROPOSED.



6 15 30M