

### **3.3 Elgin Avenue**

#### **3.3.1 The Historical Development of Elgin Avenue**

*Elgin: Elgin was named for the Earl of Elgin, Governor-General of Canada, 1847-1854.*

Elgin Avenue shares in its historical development many similarities with Lowther. Both streets were laid out as part of a subdivision by registered plan 371 in 1874, as part of the Worthington estate, owned by James Metcalfe. Eighteen lots on both the north and south sides of the street were planned, and a remarkable number of these original lot frontages remain unaltered by later subdivision. The buildings at 14, 16, 20, 21, 25 and 47 all illustrate the original lot dimensions which averaged 47'7" by 138'.

Many of the early residents represented the same economic strata as their neighbours on Lowther. By 1884 they were mostly white-collar workers, an insurance clerk, a teacher, and a barrister.

The longest term residents were the Stollery family who occupied #16 from 1875 until the 1940s. William Stollery was listed consistently as a builder, and his family also built and lived in the adjoining residence at #20.

One prominent later resident of Elgin was Humphrey Carver, a city planner who lived at #44 during the 1940s.

#### **3.3.2 Elgin Precinct Boundaries**

Like Lowther, Elgin is represented by a wide range of residential building styles. Unlike Lowther however, Elgin extends for only one block and retains a fairly strong sense of closure, of defined space. The buildings at #2 Elgin, and at #63-65 Elgin and #91 Bedford strongly define the ends of the street. These corner buildings are pivotal and contribute to both Elgin and the adjoining streets, Avenue Road to the east and Bedford Road to the west. The buildings on the west side of Bedford Road create a vista at the head of the street which again reinforce this sense of closure.

The buildings which face onto Elgin, including #91 Bedford, are - 2, 14, 16, 20, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, and 52 on the north side, with 91 Bedford, and on the south side, 9, 15, 17, 19, 21, 25, 27a, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, and 65. There are two interior block properties, 51 and R32 which appear as lots for accessory buildings, similar to the prominent garage building at 2 Elgin. It is recommended that all of these properties be included in the Elgin precinct for the proposed District.

### 3.3.3 The Buildings on Elgin

#### *Overview*

Of the buildings in the Elgin precinct fifteen are already included on the City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties. Twenty-six of the buildings pre-date 1900. A large row of semidetached houses (#36 - 38, 40 - 42, 44 - 46, 48 - 50) built by architects Chadwick and Beckett in 1902 increases the number of early buildings on the street substantially, but most of the buildings in the Chadwick and Beckett row have been altered from their historic appearance. They do however contribute to the unique character of Elgin in their setback from the street and in their uniform building line.

Elgin also contains a number of buildings of significant architectural quality. The front verandah at #2 Elgin was added by architect Frank Darling, and #52 Elgin is a very finely detailed building by F. H. Herbert, built in 1898. The quality of the local builders can be seen in the semidetached houses at #45 - 47, built and occupied by builder Thomas Snarr in 1875.

Newer buildings on Elgin have attempted to fit in as closely as possible, including the building at 27a Elgin, which was constructed in the side yard of #27 in 1985. It required the moving of #27. Other recent buildings include the grouping of townhouses at #55 to #61. These townhouses introduce prominent parking garages at grade, which is not characteristic of the street nor of the area as a whole.

#### *Issue of Density*

Like Lowther, Elgin has fairly large lots with some smaller buildings. The permissible density is 1x coverage and the majority of the buildings are below 0.8x coverage. Eight of the buildings which are of heritage importance have a coverage of 0.6x or lower. The recent buildings, such as #27a or the townhouses at 55 to 61 Elgin all have densities of approximately 1.4x coverage. Of particular concern is 2 Elgin which faces onto Avenue Road, and has a permissible commercial density higher than the residential densities permitted on the rest of Elgin. This property has been the subject of a recent development application.

It is recommended that the Department of Planning and Development report on changes to the zoning by-law which would bring the permitted density into closer conformity with existing developed densities on Elgin.

*Interpreting the Guidelines for Buildings on Elgin*

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

The property at 108 Avenue Road is of special significance because of its prominent location at the corner of Elgin and Avenue Road and because of the quality of its design. The property should be considered as a landmark for the East Annex.

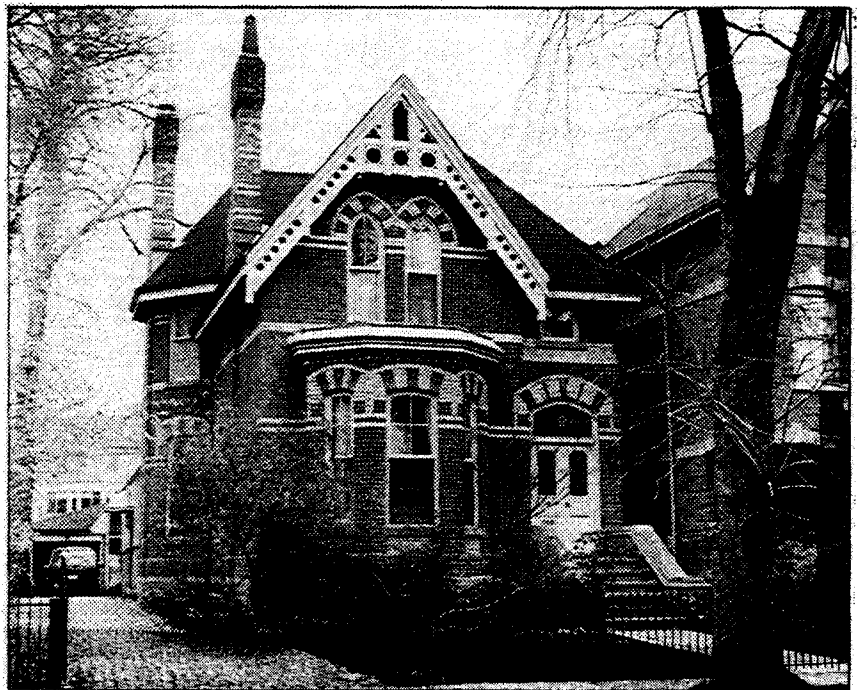
The heritage character of the buildings can be maintained by regular maintenance and by not removing original or early exterior wood trim or detailing. Note a well tended but unusual front garden at 34 Elgin adding to the vitality of the street.

*32-34 Elgin  
constructed in 1894  
first residents:  
Richard Gould, asst. insp.  
Bank of Toronto, and  
Thomas Macintosh.*



Building setbacks which allow for front gardens are an important element on Elgin. Many of these gardens are contained by simple fences which helps to reinforce the sense of an elegant, treed avenue. The setbacks vary and provide some irregularity and interest on the street.

*25 Elgin  
constructed in 1878  
first resident:  
Thomas P. Laine,  
insurance clerk.*



### 3.3.4 Streetscape Character

*Description*

The streetscape character of Elgin Avenue is typical of the boulevard streets within the district. The concrete sidewalk, on both sides of the street, is separated from the road by a 4 metre wide, tree-lined boulevard. This separation from the street makes a very special pedestrian environment, situated midway between the road thoroughfare and the private front yards. What distinguishes Elgin's boulevard streetscape from the other's is the quality and character of its trees on both the private side and public side of the sidewalk. While there are only about 38 street trees, more than half of these are very large specimens with crown spreads in the 18 meter range. Norway Maple and Horsechestnut make up the majority of street trees. In addition, there are several large trees on private property that significantly add to the street character. Grass covers the majority of the boulevard strips but a significant amount has been paved over by adjacent residents. The sidewalk pedestrian environment is further demarcated by metal fences and hedges along the frontage of many homes. Views down the length of the street are framed by the trees and limited by the foliage and branching.

The building to building line is much wider than on the non-boulevard streets, falling within a much broader range of 24 to 34 metres. While the building line is quite irregular, the consistent line of trees provides much continuity along the streetscape. Although the street allowance is only 18 metres, the front yards are quite generous compared to Tranby, Bernard and Boswell Avenues. The landscaping of the front yards consists of grass and foundation planting with some hedges along the property lines. A few of the front yards have paving as the dominant landscape material.

There is on-street permit parking on the north side of Elgin Avenue with parking meters lining the curb. Traffic moves in both directions. Of the fifty-six residences on the street, only twelve do not have parking on their lot and have to park on the street. Rear garages are more common on this street, however parking is about equally split among front yard parking, basement garage, side yard parking, etc.

The general guidelines for streetscape (page 12) are appropriate for Elgin with the following comments relating to trees:

Elgin Avenue requires only about 10 trees in order to complete the street. Eight of these are to be planted on the south side. It is recommended that Sugar Maple and Red Maple be introduced to this street to complement the existing Silver and Norway Maple.

As a secondary pattern of trees along this street, it is suggested that individual homeowners plant an additional tree on the private side of the sidewalk, offset from the City tree. A smaller, flowering tree is suggested such as the Bradford Pear, Shubert Choke Cherry, Crabapple, Tree Lilac. This way the sidewalk as well as the street is framed by trees as illustrated in the typical cross-section.

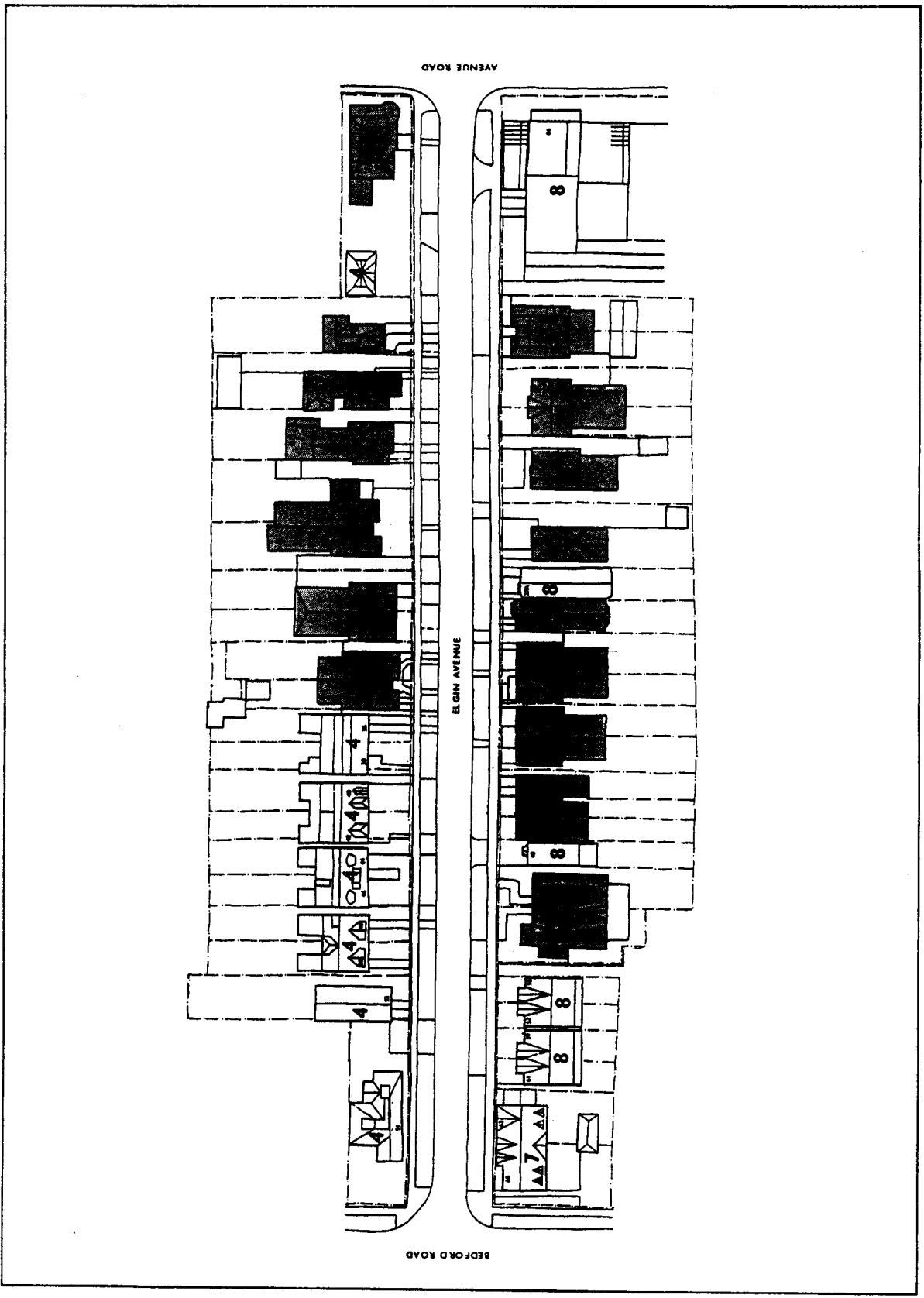
The hedges and/or fencing should be encouraged as a pattern along the sidewalk.

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

**ELGIN 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 -

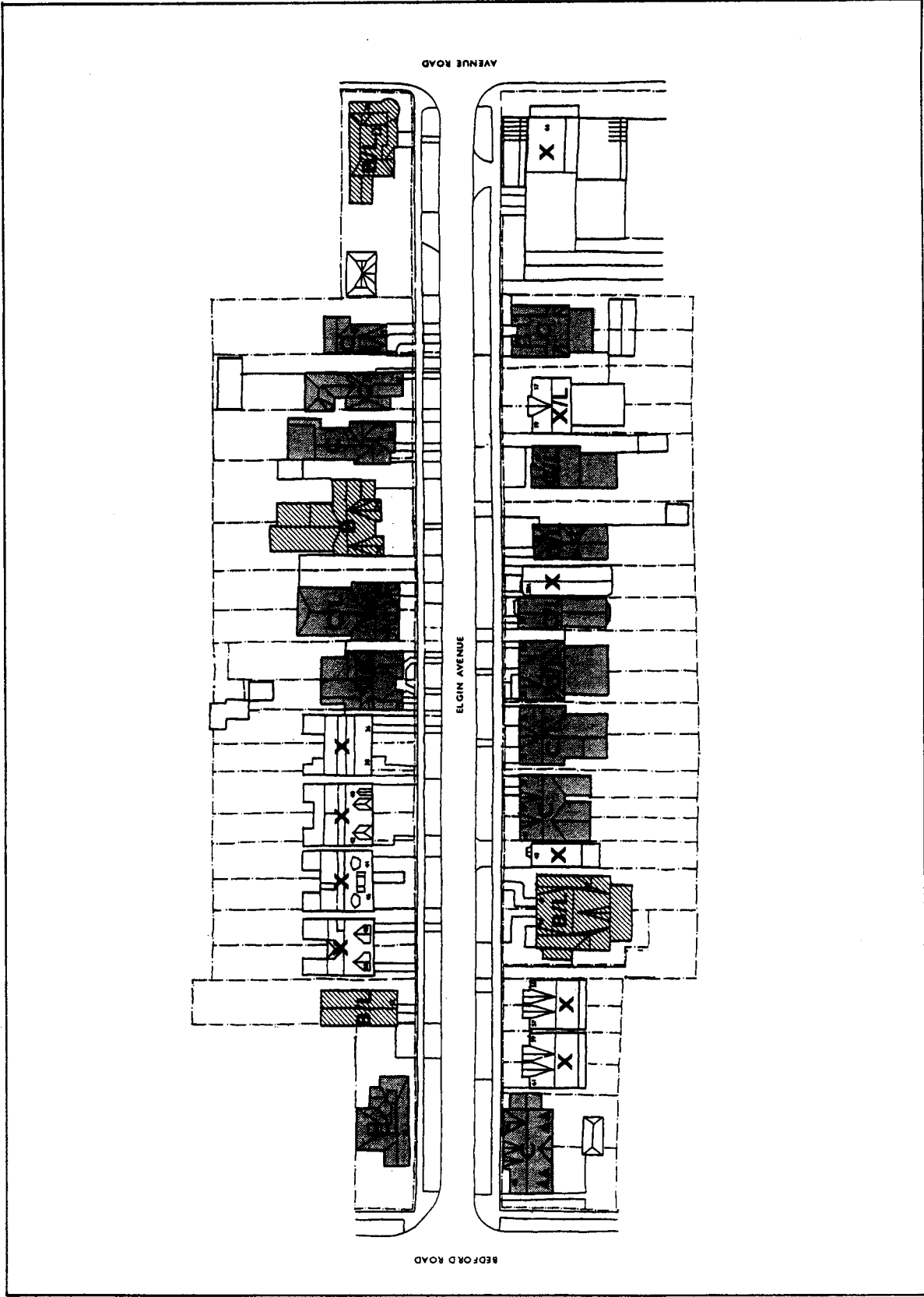


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**ELGIN AVENUE**

**EVALUATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS**

KEY	DESCRIPTION
(Solid black)	PROPERTIES WHICH ARE INDIVIDUALLY OUTSTANDING AND HAVE NATIONAL OR PROVINCIAL SIGNIFICANCE
(Diagonal hatching)	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



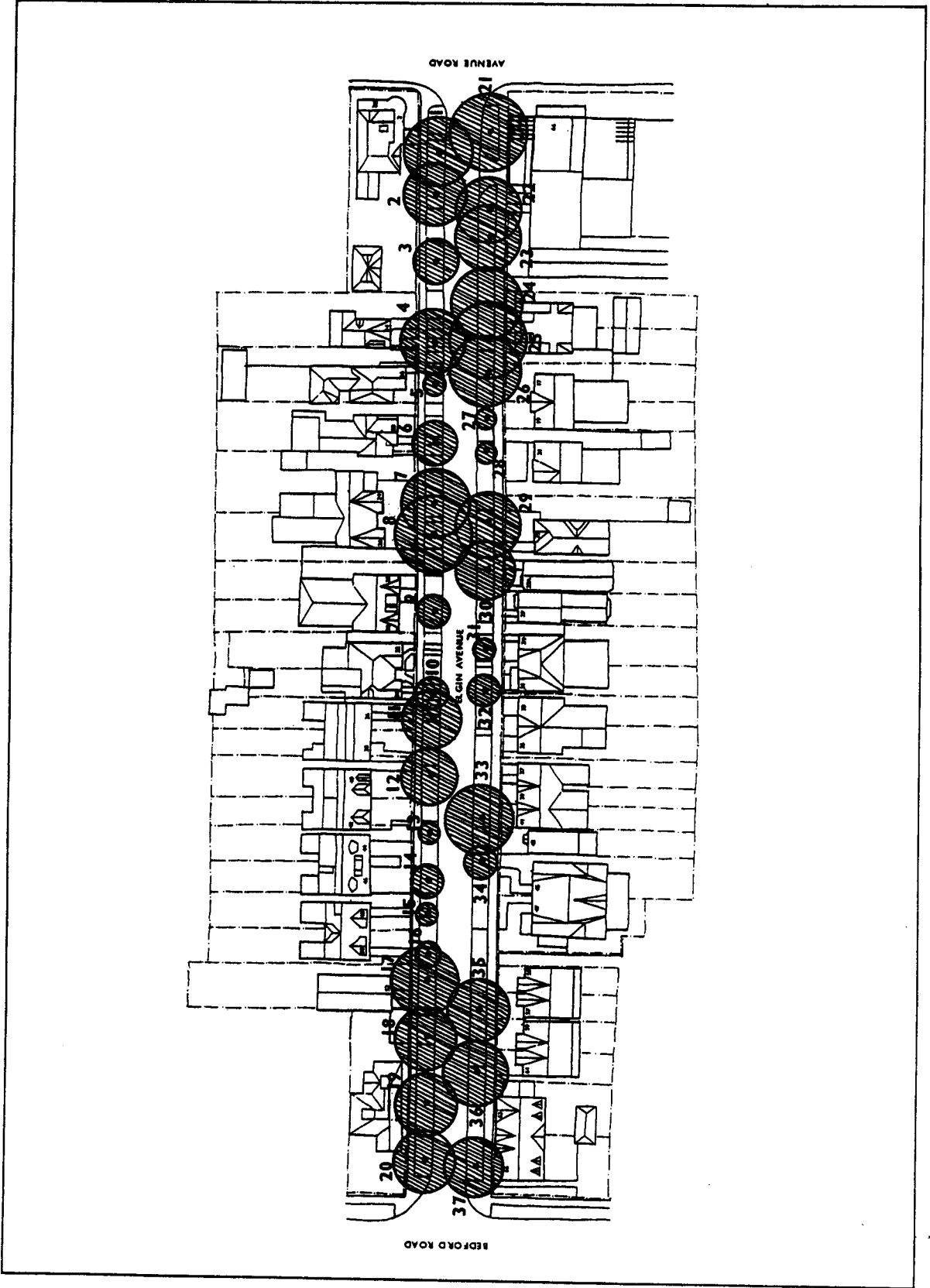
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**ELGIN AVENUE**

**EXISTING  
STREET TREES**

#	TREE NAME	dbh
1	HORSECHESNUT	51
2	HORSECHESNUT	61
3	NORWAY MAPLE	20
4	HORSECHESNUT	46
5	RED ASH	5
6	LINDEN	35
7	HORSECHESNUT	51
8	HORSECHESNUT	85
9	NORWAY MAPLE	15
10	CRABAPPLE	15
11	CHERRY	30
12	LINDEN	15
13	NORWAY MAPLE	5
14	NORWAY MAPLE	18
15	NORWAY MAPLE	5
16	HULLBERRY	15
17	SILVER MAPLE	75
18	NORWAY MAPLE	51
19	ELM	61
20	NORWAY MAPLE	30
21	HORSECHESNUT	43
22	HORSECHESNUT	58
23	RED ASH	5
24	WHITE ELM	69
25	WHITE ELM	79
26	HORSECHESNUT	64
27	HONEYLOCUST	5
28	HONEYLOCUST	5
29	SILVER MAPLE	55
30	HORSECHESNUT	48
31	HONEYLOCUST	5
32	NORWAY MAPLE	8
33	HORSECHESNUT	46
34		
35	NORWAY MAPLE	56
36	ELM	61
37	SILVER MAPLE	46

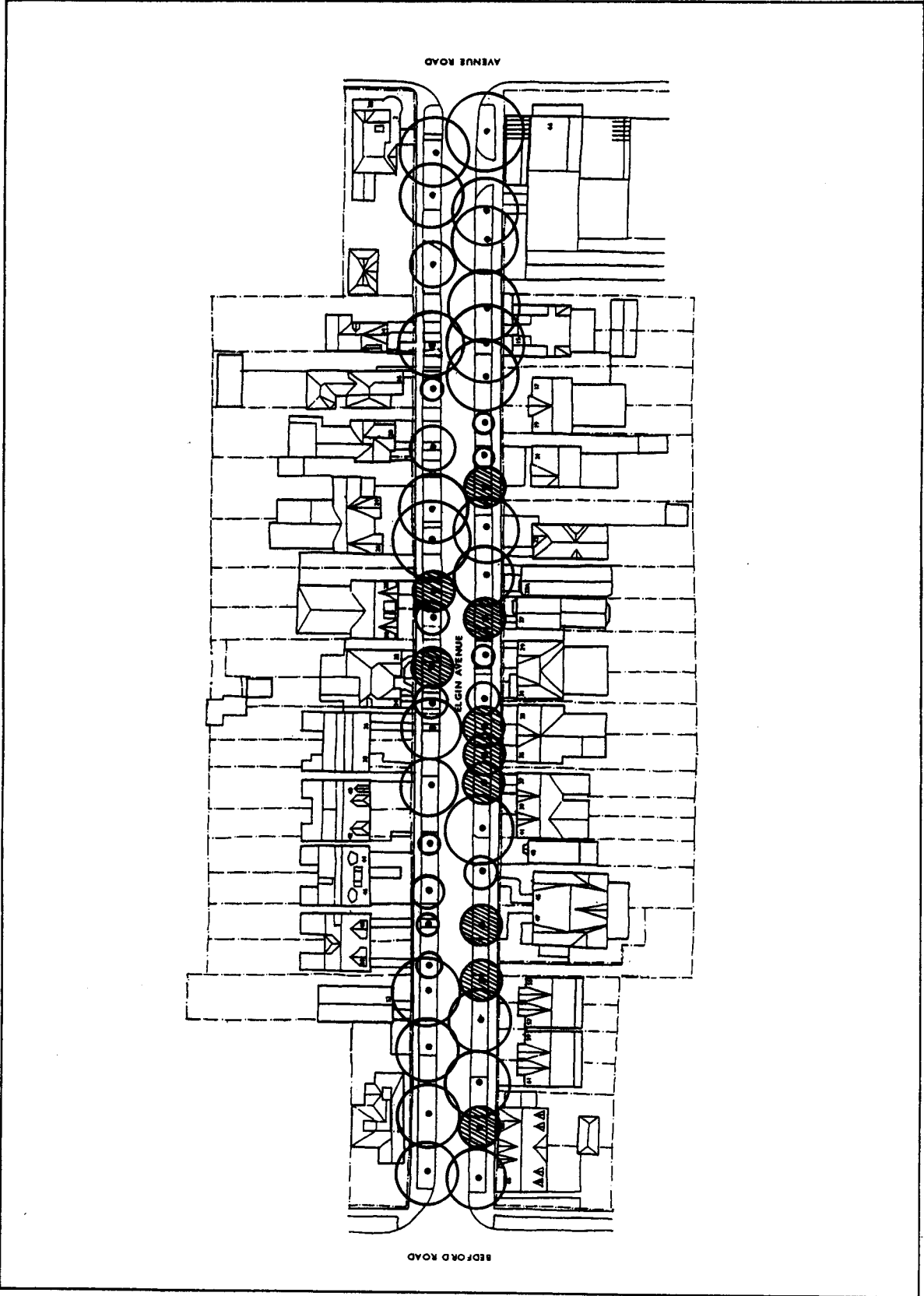
dbh refers to the diameter of the tree trunk at breast height in centimetres.



**ELGIN AVENUE**

**PROPOSED  
STREET TREES**

FOR ELGIN AVENUE,  
PROPOSED STREET TREES  
ARE SUGAR MAPLE  
AND/OR RED MAPLE.



10 15 30M