

Authority: Midtown Community Council Report No. 7, Clause No. 7,
as adopted by City of Toronto Council on October 2, 3 and 4, 2001
Enacted by Council: October 4, 2001

CITY OF TORONTO

BY-LAW No. 781-2001

To designate the property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West (“Woodlawn”/William Hume Blake House) as being of architectural and historical value or interest.

WHEREAS authority was granted by Council to designate the property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West (“Woodlawn”/William Hume Blake House) as being of architectural and historical value or interest; and

WHEREAS the *Ontario Heritage Act* authorizes the Council of a municipality to enact by-laws to designate real property, including all the buildings and structures thereon, to be of historical or architectural value or interest; and

WHEREAS the Council of the City of Toronto has caused to be served upon the owners of the land and premises known as 35 Woodlawn Avenue West and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation, Notice of Intention to designate the property and has caused the Notice of Intention to be published in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*; and

WHEREAS the reasons for designation are set out in Schedule “A” to this by-law; and

WHEREAS no notice of objection to the proposed designation was served upon the Clerk of the municipality.

The Council of the City of Toronto HEREBY ENACTS as follows:

1. The property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West, more particularly described in Schedule “B” and shown on Schedule “C” attached to this by-law, is designated as being of architectural and historical value or interest.
2. The City Solicitor is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be registered against the property described in Schedule “B” to this by-law in the proper Land Registry Office.

3. The City Clerk is authorized to cause a copy of this by-law to be served upon the owners of the property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West and upon the Ontario Heritage Foundation and to cause notice of this by-law to be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the City of Toronto as required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

ENACTED AND PASSED this 4th day of October, A.D. 2001.

CASE OOTES,
Deputy Mayor

ULLI WATKISS
City Clerk

(Corporate Seal)

SCHEDULE “A”**HERITAGE PROPERTY REPORT**

“WOODLAWN”/WILLIAM HUME BLAKE HOUSE
35 WOODLAWN AVENUE WEST, TORONTO, WARD 22

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services – Culture Division
Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Department

April 2001

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is the “Long Statement of Reasons for Designation” for the designation of the property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West (“Woodlawn”/William Hume Blake House) under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*. It contains the Heritage Property Profile, as well as sections on the Historical Occupancy, Architectural Description and Significance of the property. Sources, a Location Map and Photographs are included. The introduction, below, forms the “Short Statement of Reasons for Designation”, intended for publication.

The property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West (“Woodlawn”/William Hume Blake House) is recommended for designation for architectural and historical reasons. The house was built in 1840-1841 for William Hume Blake, a prominent Toronto politician and judge who served as the Chancellor of Upper Canada from 1849 to 1862. From 1844 to 1885, James Curran Morrison, a noted jurist and a Chancellor of the University of Toronto, occupied the residence. The important Toronto architect, John G. Howard, prepared the plans. In the late 19th century, the west two-thirds of the house was demolished. Architects Gregg and Gregg designed the two-storey southeast wing in 1895. The Saunders family has owned the property since 1920.

The east third of the original house survives. Rising two stories under a flat roof with two brick chimneys, the house is constructed with brick that is stuccoed on three sides to resemble stone. Important surviving features of the original Regency villa are found on the principal (east) façade. A pair of French doors survives in the first floor beneath three flat-headed window openings with the original frames and sash in the second storey. The first floor is protected by a shed-roof verandah, supported on posts, with an enclosure for the front entrance. The two-storey brick-clad wing has an entrance on the north wall and flat-headed window openings with brick voussoirs, stone sills and wood shutters.

Important interior elements are found in the original part of the house. In the first-floor hall, living room and dining room, the original pine and walnut woodwork and interior shutters, two fireplaces, and pine plank floors are significant features.

The property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West is located on the south side of the street, west of Yonge Street. With the subdivision of the original estate, “Woodlawn” is set back from the street on a large landscaped lot. “Woodlawn” is historically significant for its associations with two early Toronto politicians, and as one of the oldest continuously occupied residences in the city. Architecturally, the surviving portion of the house is an important example of Regency design with intact interior elements by a noted Toronto architect. “Woodlawn” is contextually important as a local neighbourhood feature.

Cover photograph: ““Woodlawn”” as reproduced in The Estates of Old Toronto, page 72

1.1 HERITAGE PROPERTY PROFILE

**“WOODLAWN”/WILLIAM HUME BLAKE HOUSE**

ADDRESS:	35 Woodlawn Avenue West (south side of street, west of Yonge Street)
WARD:	22 (St. Paul's)
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY:	Deer Park
HISTORICAL NAME:	“Woodlawn”/William Hume Blake House
CONSTRUCTION DATE:	1840 (completed)
ORIGINAL OWNER:	William Hume Blake
ORIGINAL USE:	Residential (single family house)
CURRENT USE: *	Residential (single family house); (* <i>this does not refer to permitted use(s) defined by the Zoning By-law</i>)
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/CRAFTSMAN:	John G. Howard, architect; William Kerr, contractor
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE:	Regency
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION:	Brick construction with brick, stone and wood detailing
ALTERATIONS:	Post-1886, west 2/3 of house demolished; 1895, 2-storey southeast wing added, Gregg and Gregg, architects; 1962, window openings in west wall altered, Armstrong and Molesworth, architects
HERITAGE CATEGORY:	Category B (Notable Heritage Property)
RECORDER:	Kathryn Anderson, Heritage Preservation Services:

“WOODLAWN”/WILLIAM HUME BLAKE HOUSE

REPORT DATE: April 2001

2.0 HISTORICAL OCCUPANCY AND SIGNIFICANCE:**2.1 DEER PARK**

Following the establishment of the Town of York in 1793, Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe authorized the surveying of Yonge Street as a military road north of the community. During the survey in 1796, a series of 200-acre farm lots was laid out north of present-day Bloor Street. The latter properties were granted to military and political associates of the provincial government. Other development was slow until 1839 when Yonge Street was macadamized for 12 miles from the city limits.

In 1847, Agnes Heath acquired land near the intersection of Yonge Street and present-day St. Clair Avenue. Heath Farm and the surrounding area were named “Deer Park” for the presence of deer. While hotels and stores congregated around Yonge and St. Clair, other land was acquired for cemeteries. St. Michael’s Roman Catholic Cemetery opened southwest of Yonge and St. Clair in 1855 and, in 1873, the non-sectarian Mount Pleasant Cemetery opened to the north. In 1891, the arrival of the Belt Line Railway encouraged the development of residential suburbs north of the city limits. Deer Park remained an unincorporated area between the Towns of Yorkville and North Toronto until the City of Toronto annexed it in 1908.

2.2 “WOODLAWN”/WILLIAM HUME BLAKE HOUSE

The government granted farm lot 21, in the second concession and flanking the west side of Yonge Street, to David Smith, the Surveyor General. Smith sold the lot and adjacent property to John Elmsley, Chief Justice of Upper Canada. Elmsley’s son inherited the tract and, in 1835, conveyed 12 acres of Lot 21 to John Doel. Doel was a brewery owner whose premises were used to plot the Rebellion of Upper Canada in 1837. The following year, Doel sold his acreage in lot 21 to William Hume Blake.

William Hume Blake (1809-1870) was an Irish aristocrat who studied law at Trinity College, Dublin, before immigrating to York in 1832. Establishing a law practice in 1838, Blake later formed a partnership with Joseph Curran Morrison. A judge on the Appeal Court, Blake was the first professor of law at King’s College in the 1840s and, during the next decade, served as the Chancellor of the University of Toronto. Blake was active in Reform politics, representing York East in the Legislative Assembly from 1848 to 1851. After serving as the province’s solicitor general in 1848, Blake was appointed to a commission to reorganize the province’s judicial system. This led to his appointment as “Chancellor of Upper Canada”, heading the Court of Chancery from 1849 to 1862. His son, Edward Blake (1833-1912) was a prominent federal politician who became the second Premier of the Province of Ontario from 1871 to 1872.

“Woodlawn”, Blake’s country house, was completed in 1840 (another “Woodlawn” was built in 1857 by a member of the Jarvis family on the site of today’s Jarvis Collegiate). The property was

accessed via a laneway running west from Yonge Street. Blake occupied the residence with his family until 1844 when he sold the site to his law partner, Joseph Morrison (1816-1885). Morrison was an important politician and jurist who combined his interest in Reform politics with the development of railways. Morrison was elected to the Legislative Assembly in 1848 and served as solicitor general in two governments. He became the Chancellor of the University of Toronto in 1863. Morrison resigned as the president of the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railway, the province's first railway, in 1862 when he was appointed to the Court of Common Appeals. After his promotion to the Queen's Bench in 1863, Morrison oversaw the trials of the Fenian raiders after their unsuccessful invasion of Canada in 1866. Morrison was elevated to the Ontario Court of Appeal in 1877, serving until his retirement in 1885.

James Morrison died in 1885. The next year, his executors registered a plan of subdivision that divided the estate into 92 lots. While James Morrison's youngest son, Angus, inherited the portion of the property including the house, he lost the site to foreclosure in 1894. The two-storey kitchen and bedroom wing was commissioned in 1895. During this period, the west two-thirds of the house and the west wing were removed, along with several outbuildings. The latter included a greenhouse completed in the mid-1850s according to the designs of the notable landscape architect, William Mundie.

The property changed ownership several times until 1920 when Bernard R. Saunders, a descendant of the Willcocks family, acquired the property. He began a restoration program that has been continued by his son, Guy Saunders, to the present day. As well as preserving the surviving elements of the original building, the family added landscaping and, where the original foundations of the house were laid, a sunken garden. In 1951, Guy Saunders acquired the property at 33 Woodlawn Avenue, using the rear portion of that lot to extend the garden area at the east end of "Woodlawn".

The property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West was listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties in 1979.

2.3 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

"Woodlawn" is historically important for its association with William Hume Blake and James Curran Morrison, leading political figures in the province. The building is acknowledged as Toronto's second oldest house (after Drumsnab, 1830, in Rosedale) that has been continuously occupied as a private residence.

3.0 ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND SIGNIFICANCE:

3.1 ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

"Woodlawn" was designed as a Regency Villa. The Regency style was introduced in England during the period from 1811 to 1820 when the future King George IV reigned as the Prince Regent. In 1815, he engaged English architect John Nash to design the Royal Pavilion at Brighton, with exterior and interior detailing recalling British Colonial dwellings in India and China. The Regency Villa is characterized by a shallow-pitched hipped roof with tall chimneys, oversized French-style windows and a verandah, all designed to extend the building physically and visually into the

surrounding landscape. The style usually retained the Georgian organization of a symmetrical façade with paired window openings flanking the entrance to a centre-hall interior plan. The exterior door and window trim and the interior mouldings reflected early 19th century Classical styling, particularly Greek Revival motifs.

Historical photographs of “Woodlawn”, including the one on the cover of this report, show the house prior to its alterations. The trademarks of the Regency style, particularly the square plan with a hip roof and large chimneys, the symmetrical façade with a central entrance, the verandah extending across the façade and side walls, and the French doors, are present.

3.2 ARCHITECT/BUILDER/CRAFTSMAN

The notable early Toronto architect, John George Howard (1803-1890) designed “Woodlawn”. Howard received training as a land surveyor and engineer before entering the office of William Ford, a London architect and his brother-in-law, in 1824. Howard immigrated to York in 1832 where he was appointed the drawing master at Upper Canada College. He acquired the position of City Surveyor in 1834. As City Engineer from 1843 to 1855, Howard directed the installation of the first sidewalks and sewers in Toronto, and supervised surveys of the waterfront. In establishing an architectural practice, Howard began with residential designs before concentrating on public and commercial buildings. In 1833, he designed “The Cottage” at Front and York Streets for Thomas Mercer Jones, the son-in-law of Bishop John Strachan. Working in the Regency style for another decade, Howard completed “Summerhill” for Charles Thompson in 1842. His most important commission was the Provincial Lunatic Asylum (1846) on Queen Street West. The latter properties have been demolished. His extant works include St. John’s Anglican Church (1843) at York Mills and his country residence, Colborne Lodge (1837) in High Park. In 1873, Howard donated 120 acres in High Park to the City of Toronto and bequeathed the remainder of the estate, with the house, to the municipality upon his death.

The firm of Gregg and Gregg designed the 1895 addition to “Woodlawn”. Brothers William Rufus Gregg (1851-1930) and Alfred Holden Gregg (1868-1945) formed a partnership in 1894 that lasted a decade. W. R. Gregg trained with Smith and Gemmell in the 1870s before embarking on a solo practice. In contrast, A. H. Gregg gained experience in the United States and, after Gregg and Gregg dissolved, worked with Frank Wickson. Gregg and Gregg’s best known commission is the Eclipse Whitewear Building (1903) at 322 King Street West which is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

3.3 ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER: DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

3.3.1 EXTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

“Woodlawn” now consists of the east end of the original house, including the principal (east) façade, and the wing, added to the south end of the east wall in 1895.

The main body of the house rises two stories under a flat roof with extended eaves. Chimneys are placed at the north end and off-centre. The brick walls on the north, east and south are stuccoed to imitate roughcast stone. The principal (east) façade retains the entrance and two French doors in the

first floor. A shed-roof verandah supported on posts protects the lower storey. It is enclosed at the south end where the original entrance is found. In the second storey, three of the five flat-headed window openings remain and contain the original wood frames and multi-pane windows. The band course beneath the second-floor windows extends across the north wall, which is devoid of openings. On the south wall, an original window opening survives. When the building was truncated, a new rear (west) wall was added, consisting of a plain brick façade with a series of window openings. The first-floor window openings are copied from the original window on the south wall.

The 1½-storey east wing is attached to the south end of the east wall of the main house and conceals two of the original bays. Under a gable roof, the wing is clad with buff brick. The north wall, facing Woodlawn Avenue, has a central entrance in the first floor where a panelled wood door is set in a wood doorcase with an entablature. It is flanked by flat-headed window openings that contain multi-pane sliding sash windows. A single flat-headed window opening with brick voussoirs, stone sill, and louvered wood shutters is centered in the second storey.

Despite the changes to the original structure, “there is considerable potential for alterations and additions to be made to restore accurately the missing hipped roof and other elements while retaining the east addition as part of the layers of history on the site. It would be possible to complete the back of the house in an appropriate relationship to the landscaped garden area and the open space that originally surrounded the house much as it stood at the end of the occupancy of the Blake and Morrison families” (Greer, 7).

3.3.2 INTERIOR ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

On the interior, “Woodlawn” is only one room deep, with a living room (north) and dining room (south) flanking the central entrance hall. The three rooms have pine plank flooring. The hall has pine woodwork and contains a fireplace, relocated from the demolished portions of the building. The other rooms display walnut doors, baseboards, door and window trim, and interior shutters. A second salvaged fireplace is found in the living room.

An examination of the interior concludes that “the interior details of the original house were typical of John Howard’s work. This character has been preserved in the extant window casing details. The wood trim mouldings, the folding interior shutters in the deep reveals of the window openings and the panelling below the upper window stools are significant features of “Woodlawn”. The thin muntins in the window sash and in the French doors, executed in an unequal spacing pattern typical of mid-19th century detailing, are elegant elements preserved from the original house” (Greer, 7).

3.4 ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West is architecturally important as a surviving early 19th century Regency Villa with intact interior features. “Woodlawn” is a significant extant example of the work of the early Toronto architect, John Howard.

4.0 CONTEXT

4.1 CONTEXT AND SETTING

The property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West is set back from the south side of the street in the first block west of Yonge Street. Access to the site is via a laneway between the properties at 33 and 37 Woodlawn Avenue.

The Henry Gordon House (1890) at 105 Woodlawn Avenue West is listed on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. In the area southwest of Yonge Street and St. Clair Avenue West, Farnham Lodge (Edward Hooper House, 1844) at 50 Farnham Avenue, Firehall #24 (1911) at 20 Balmoral Avenue, and St. Michael's Cemetery Vault (1856) at 1414 Yonge Street are recognized on the Inventory of Heritage Properties.

4.2 CONTEXTUAL SIGNIFICANCE

The property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West is contextually important as the surviving component of the "Woodlawn" estate. "This combination of house and garden is a significant historic landmark in the middle of a contemporary residential neighbourhood" (Greer, 8).

5.0 SUMMARY

The property at 35 Woodlawn Avenue West is historically significant as the second oldest continuously occupied residence in Toronto. Built for William Hume Blake, an important political figure in Upper Canada, the property was occupied for nearly half a century by the noted politician and jurist, James Curran Morrison. The Saunders family, owners of the property since 1920, have been instrumental in restoring the significant surviving features of the house. Architecturally, "Woodlawn" is important as one of the oldest remaining Regency Villas in the city, although in altered form, and as an extant example of the work of the notable early Toronto architect, John Howard. The preserved portions of the house, set in landscaped open space, are contextually significant in the Deer Park neighbourhood.

6.0 SOURCES

Arthur, Eric. Toronto. No Mean City. 3rd ed. Revised and edited by Stephen A. Otto. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1986.

Bezedits, Stephen. Eminent Toronto Architects of the Past. Toronto: B and L Information Services, 1983.

Blumenson, John. Ontario Architecture. Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1990.

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Greer, William N. "Heritage Property Report – "Woodlawn", 35 Woodlawn Avenue West, Toronto". April 2001.

"James Curran Morrison". Entry in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Vol. XI. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1982.

“John George Howard, 1803-1890. A Tribute.” Toronto: The Market Gallery of the City of Toronto Archives, 1979.

Kinsella, Joan C. Historical Walking Tour of Deer Park. Toronto: Toronto Public Library Board, 1996.

Lundell, Liz. The Estates of Old Toronto. Erin, Ont.: Boston Mills Press, 1997.

Saunders, Guy. ““Woodlawn””. The York Pioneer (1972) 42-47.

Scadding, Henry. Toronto of Old (1873). Reprint. Edited by F. H. Armstrong. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1966.

Swainson, Donald. “William Hume Blake”. Entry in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Vol. IX. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1976.



Interior: showing window surrounds and walnut woodwork

Subject: By-law: Designation of premises 35 Woodlawn Avenue West
(Woodlawn/William Hume Blake House) under Part IV of the
Ontario Heritage Act (St. Paul's-Ward 22)
File: W17-H3

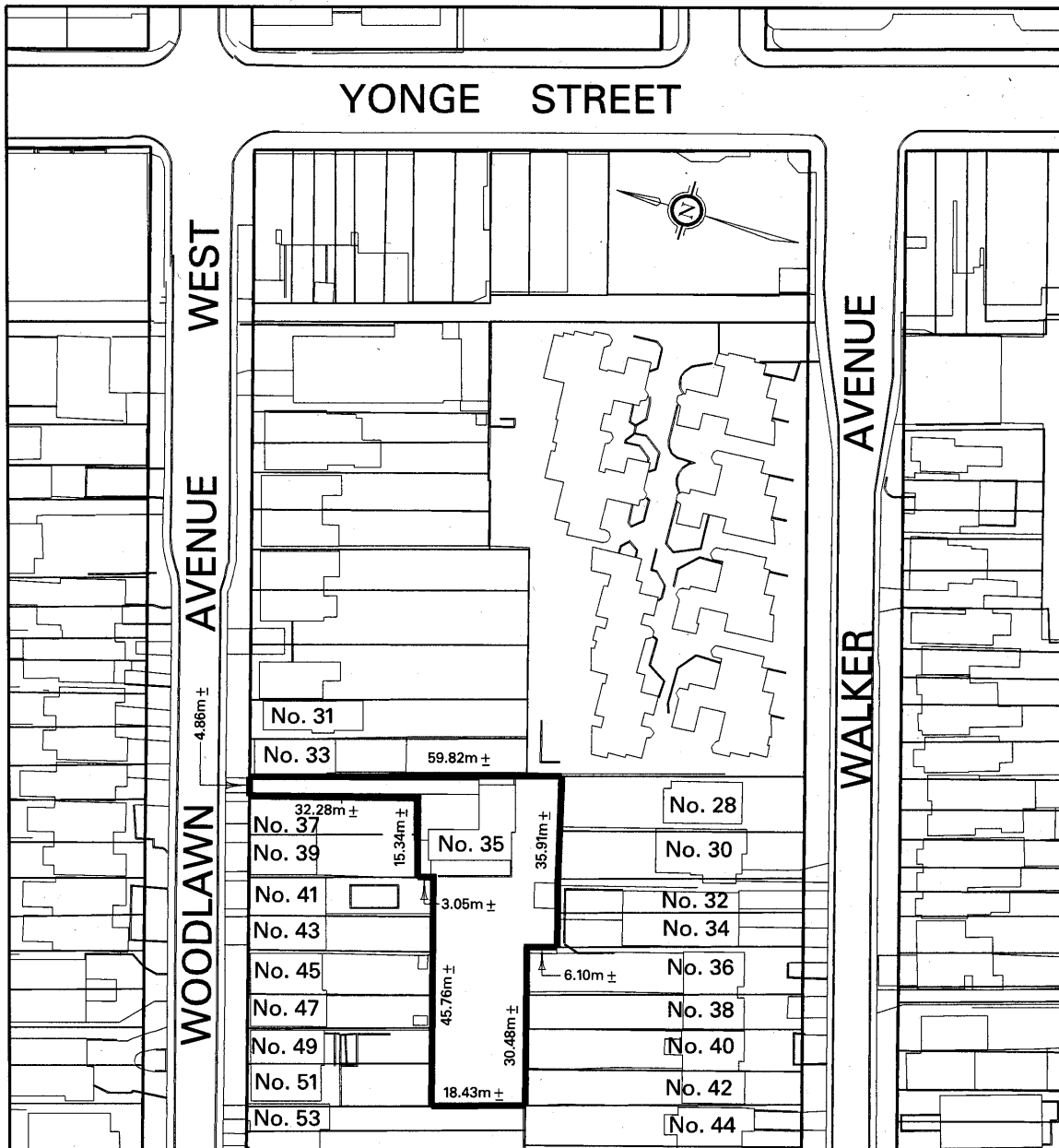
SCHEDULE "B"

In the City of Toronto and Province of Ontario, being composed of Lots 3, 4 and 5 on Plan 304-E registered in the Land Registry Office for the Metropolitan Toronto Registry Division (No. 64).

The said land being most recently described in Instrument CA467466.

The hereinbefore described land being delineated by heavy outline on Sketch No. PS-2001-063 dated August 28, 2001, as set out in Schedule "C".

SCHEDULE "C"



Toronto

WORKS & EMERGENCY SERVICES
TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION
SURVEY & MAPPING

NOTE:
THIS SKETCH IS NOT
A PLAN OF SURVEY
AND HAS BEEN COMPILED
FROM SURVEY NOTES AND
OFFICE RECORDS, IT SHALL
NOT BE USED EXCEPT FOR
THE PURPOSE INDICATED
IN THE TITLE BLOCK

PROPERTY INFORMATION SHEET
No. 35 WOODLAWN AVENUE WEST
(WOODLAWN/WILLIAM HUME BLAKE HOUSE),
LAND DESIGNATED AS BEING OF
ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL
VALUE AND INTEREST
(NOT TO SCALE)

WARD 22 ST. PAULS
DATE: AUG. 28, 2001

SKETCH No. PS-2001-063