



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Intention to Designate under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act – 33 Avenue Road

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Date: | January 6, 2014 |
| To: | Toronto Preservation Board Toronto and East York Community Council |
| From: | Acting Director, Urban Design, City Planning Division |
| Wards: | Toronto Centre - Rosedale – Ward 27 |
| Reference Number: | P:\2014\Cluster B\PLN\HPS\TEYCC\February 25 2014\teHPS02 |

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 33 Avenue Road under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value. Located on the north east corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue, the property contains the building historically known as York Square (1968-9). An application has been made to redevelop the property which would result in the demolition of the building complex. To refuse demolition, City Council must state its intention to designate the property at 33 Avenue Road under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 33 Avenue Road (York Square) under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance: 33 Avenue Road (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment No. 3 to the report (January 6, 2014) from the Acting Director, Urban Design, City Planning Division.
2. If there are no objections to the designation in accordance with Section 29(6) of the Ontario Heritage Act, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the bill in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

3. If there are objections in accordance with Section 29(7) of the Ontario Heritage Act, City Council direct the City Clerk to refer the designation to the Conservation Review Board.
4. If the designation is referred to the Conservation Review Board, City Council authorize the City Solicitor and appropriate staff to attend any hearing held by the Conservation Review Board in support of Council's decision on the designation of the property.

Financial Impact

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At its meeting of December 6, 2013, Toronto Preservation Board amended Item PB27.7 recommending the inclusion of the property on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties and additionally directed a report on the reasons for designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act be submitted to the Toronto and East York Community Council.

The inclusion of the site on the City's heritage inventory would enable staff to monitor any applications affecting the property and work with the property owner to enable the adaptive reuse of the building while respecting its heritage attributes and values.

COMMENTS

A location map (Attachment No. 1) and photographs (Attachment No. 2) are attached.

Staff have completed the attached Research and Evaluation Summary (Attachment No. 4) for the property at 33 Avenue Road. As a result of this assessment, staff have determined that the property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation under the Ontario Heritage Act that is also applied by the City when evaluating sites for the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties.

Situated at the northeast corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue, the property at 33 Avenue Road, York Square (1968-9) contains seven c.1900 Victorian-style houses which were rehabilitated by the innovative Toronto architectural firm of Diamond and Myers and the developer I R Wookey to create a modern commercial complex with an open square and an additional two-story building which integrated the Victorian character, retained the low-rise scale of the street and contributed to the revitalization of Yorkville. It is one of the first examples in Toronto of rehabilitating and integrating historic buildings into a new project where transformation of the original building site into a contemporary use contributed significantly to the revitalisation of a dilapidated historic neighbourhood. The project stimulated other similarly-scaled developments contributing to the transformation of the area into a vibrant cultural and commercial hub in the city.

Combining Modernist architectural elements derived from the notable architects Louis Kahn and Robert Venturi and preserving the Victorian-style features of the original turn-of-the-century houses on the site, York Square continues to be a celebrated local landmark in Yorkville as well as an important invention of a new urban prototype in Toronto. The project received an Ontario Association of Architects Award in 1970 and was recognized in both national and international publications for its innovative thinking on urban renewal and for the integration of heritage buildings into a complex that embodied the socially radical and upbeat culture of its time. It is one in a long list of Toronto projects by the architects A.J. Diamond and Barton Myers who were fore-runners in challenging the accepted practice of razing a site as a form of urban renewal and who advocated instead for the revitalization of run-down neighbourhoods through the rehabilitation of heritage and sensitive infill to maintain scale, social cohesion, local character, identity and history.

The Statement of Significance (Attachment No. 3) includes the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate and will be advertised on the City of Toronto's web site in accordance with the City of Toronto Act provisions and served on the property owners and on the Ontario Heritage Trust according to the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act.

CONTACT

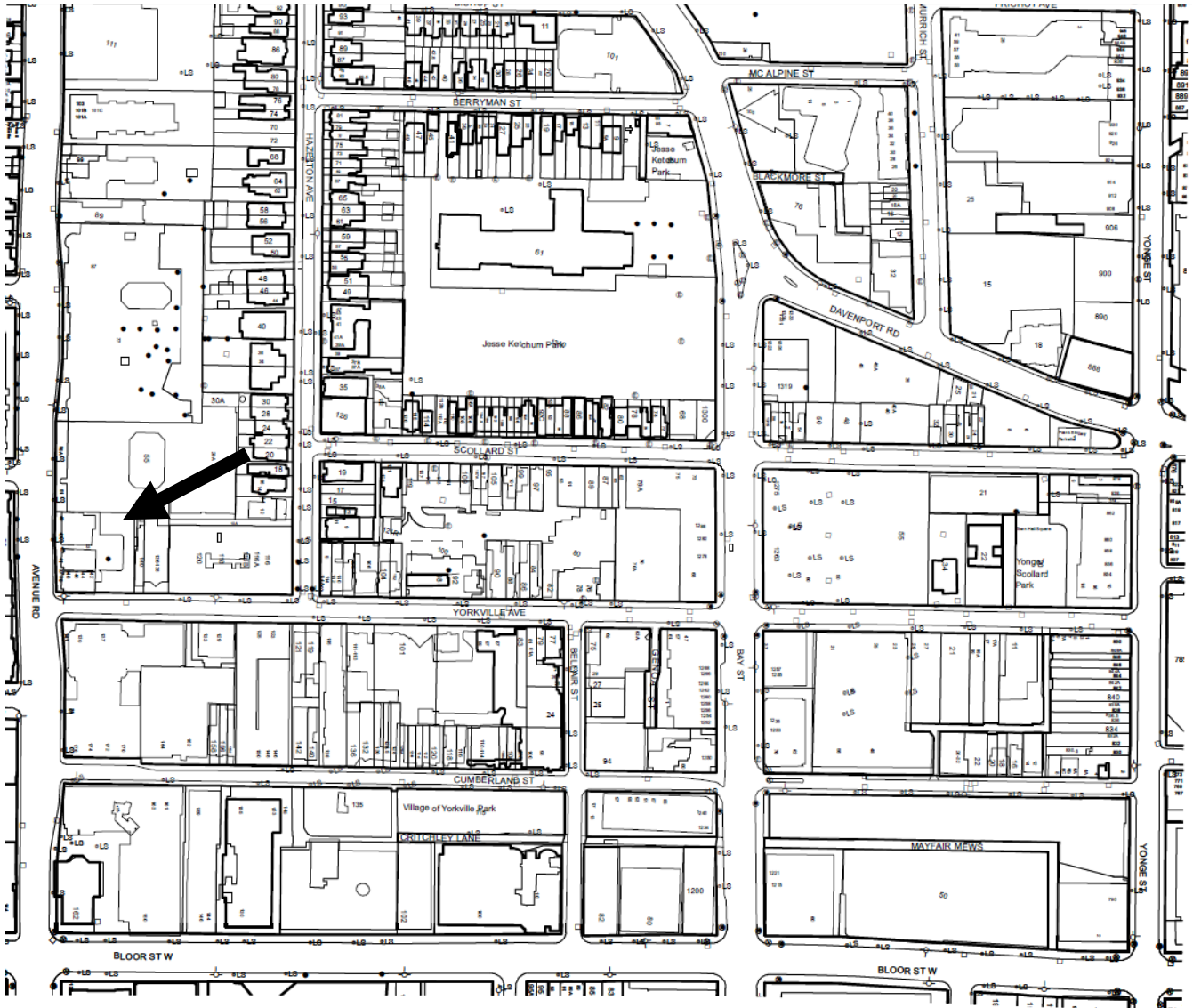
Mary L. MacDonald, Acting Manager
Heritage Preservation Services
Tel: 416-338-1079
Fax: 416-392-1973
E-mail: mmacdon7@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

James Parakh
Acting Director, Urban Design
City Planning Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No. 1 – Location Map
Attachment No. 2 – Photographs
Attachment No. 3 – Reasons for Listing (Statement of Significance)
Attachment No. 4 – Research and Evaluation Summary



This location map is for information purposes only;
the exact boundaries of the property are not shown.

The **arrow** marks the site.



Principal (west and south) façades at the corner of Avenue Road (left) and Yorkville Avenue (right) (Heritage Preservation Services, September 2013)



Contemporary photograph of York Square
(*Progressive Architecture*, September 1969, p 153)

York Square (1968-9)

Description

The property at 33 Avenue Road is worthy of designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value, and meets the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario under the three categories of design, associative and contextual values. York Square (1968-9) is located at 33 Avenue Road. Situated at the north east corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue, the site contains the building historically known as York Square (1968-9). The complex includes 7 semi-detached and row houses dating from c 1900 on Avenue Road and a new 1960s two-story infill building which extends from Yorkville Avenue into the site behind the historic houses to enclose an open air square with a tree.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

York Square (1968-9) has associative value for its significant innovative approach to urban regeneration. It is one of the first examples in Toronto of rehabilitating and integrating historic buildings into a new project which transformed the original buildings with a contemporary use and a new outdoor space which contributed significantly to the revitalisation of the historic Yorkville neighbourhood. York Square set an important precedent for heritage preservation before Ontario's heritage legislation existed, adaptive re-use, and for maintaining existing neighbourhood scale and character in opposition to the then standard practice of demolition.

The building is historically associated with the careers of the influential and nationally and internationally acclaimed architects A J Diamond (b 1932) and Barton Myers (b 1934). It is one of the earliest projects by this Toronto-based partnership of Diamond and Myers. Graduates of the University of Pennsylvania where they were students of both Louis Kahn and Robert Venturi, the South African and American architects immigrated to Toronto and set up an architectural partnership in 1968. York Square introduced principles which would underpin other projects by the firm: urban revitalization through the rehabilitation of existing buildings, appropriate infill, low-rise/high density and the creation of humanly-scaled, well-designed urban space. The work also endorsed an outspoken Modernist sensibility in form and material which combined their principles in future projects such as Eclipse Whitewear (1970), 19 Berryman Street (1970), Innis College (1975), Sherbourne Lanes (1975).

After the dissolution of the practice in 1975 Diamond and Myers have continued to practice independently. Jack Diamond has received numerous awards including being made an Officer of the Order of Canada as well as Canadian Governor General's Awards for Architecture for work done in partnership with Donald Schmitt. Barton Myers has

received Gold Medals from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the American Institute of Architects.

York Square is innovative in creating a new type and style and reinvented the quality of the site on which it is located. The building complex displays a high degree of craftsmanship in its architectural resolution and collage of forms and elements from different periods. Combining Modernist architectural elements while preserving the Victorian-style features of the original early 20th century houses on the site, York Square continues to be a celebrated local landmark in Yorkville as well as an important invention of a new urban prototype in Toronto. The project received an Ontario Association of Architects Award for its design in (1970) and was recognized in both national and international publications for its innovative thinking on urban renewal and for the integration of heritage buildings into a complex that embodied the socially radical and upbeat culture of its time.

Apart from its historical importance for its influential attitudes towards preservation and urban design, York Square maintains the associations with the 19th houses and the historic village of Yorkville. Further it is a significant connecting link to the 1960s when Yorkville was in its heyday as a cultural and commercial destination for youthful social transformation.

Contextually, York Square is a significant local landmark. Its relationship to Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue are important in maintaining the scale and character of the neighbourhood. The open square at its heart continues to provide an urban oasis with trees and planting a few steps from these busy commercial thoroughfares. The complex is a landmark of historical importance in Yorkville as through it preservation of the historic houses it became an integral part of the neighbourhood's revitalization into a cultural and commercial destination that continues to flourish today.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the property at 33 Avenue Road are:

- The scale, form and massing of the building complex
- The two to two-and-a-half-storey structure combining early 1900s and 1960s buildings with an open courtyard and access from Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue
- The materials including red brick, painted brick, shingles, wood and metal elements
- The gable roofs and dormer windows of the Victorian buildings and flat roofs of the 1960s buildings,
- On the principal (west and south) façades on Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue, the combination of the Victorian bay windows, dormer windows and circular headed windows behind a red brick screen of 1960s circular windows and rectangular windows (originally entrances)
- The open air square

- The 1968-9 red brick two story modern buildings enclosing the square
- The rear facades of the historic buildings and modern buildings facing the square
- The two entrances to the square, one from Avenue Road which passes through adjacent buildings and one from Yorkville Avenue which provides access through an enclosed lobby
- The staircases and access levels providing entrances to the properties facing the square
- The placement of the structure on the north east corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue

HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT



YORK SQUARE
33 AVENUE ROAD, TORONTO

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services
City Planning Division
City of Toronto

January 2014

1. DESCRIPTION



Above: York Square, West and South Facades at Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue (HPS, 2013)
 Cover: York Square, South Façade on Yorkville Avenue, 1969
 (*Progressive Architecture*, September 1969, p 148)

| Address and Name of Property | |
|------------------------------|---|
| ADDRESS | 33 Avenue Road ¹ |
| WARD | 27 |
| LEGAL DESCRIPTION | PL 289 PT LTS 1 & 2 |
| NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY | Yorkville |
| HISTORICAL NAME | Yorkville Square |
| CONSTRUCTION DATE | 1968-9 |
| ORIGINAL OWNER | I R Wookey, Laver Investments (1963) Ltd. |
| ORIGINAL USE | Retail |
| CURRENT USE* | Retail and Institutional |
| ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER | Diamond and Myers (architects) |
| DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION | Brick Cladding, Wood, Wood Shingles, Metal |
| ARCHITECTURAL STYLE | Victorian and Modernist |
| ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS | n/a |
| CRITERIA | Design/Physical, Associative and Contextual |
| HERITAGE STATUS | Cultural Heritage Evaluation ² |
| RECORDER | Marybeth McTeague |
| REPORT DATE | 6 January 2014 |

¹ This is the primary address for this property, as referenced on the City of Toronto's Property Data Map. Entrance addresses associated with this property include 35, 37, 41, 45, 47 and 49 Avenue Road, 142, 144, 146, and 148 Yorkville Avenue.

² A Research and Evaluation Summary (October 2013) was prepared for the property at 33 Avenue Road and attached to the staff report dated October 15, 2013 that was directed to the Toronto Preservation Board (November 5, 2013). The evaluation determined that the site merited inclusion on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The report was deferred from the Toronto and East York Community Council on November 19, 2013 and is due for consideration on January 15, 2014.

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 33 Avenue Road, and applies evaluation criteria to determine whether it merits designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in Section 4 (Summary).

i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

| Key Date | Historical Event |
|----------|---|
| 1796 | First Toll gate appears on Yonge Street at the Second Concession (Bloor Street) |
| 1800 | Lot 22 of the Park Estate Lots, first lot north of the Second Concession (Bloor Street) and the second lot west of Yonge Street is granted to the Chief Justice |
| 1830 | Sherriff William Jarvis and Joseph Bloor lay out the Village of Yorkville north of Bloor and west of Yonge |
| 1851 | Lot 22 north of Con 2 (Bloor Street) is bisected by Avenue Road. East side remains undeveloped. West side is subdivided with the current boundaries of Prince Arthur, Lowther and Elgin Avenues |
| 1852 | Petition for village status which is granted. The Village of Yorkville extends as far west as Avenue Road |
| 1878 | Cumberland Avenue and Yorkville Avenue are extended to Avenue Road and Hazelton Lane is also laid out with subdivided properties |
| 1883 | Yorkville is annexed to the City of Toronto |
| 1884 | Goad's Atlas indicates two properties facing Avenue Road (later known as 39-41 and 43-45) at the north east corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue. Each property contains a single house identified as built of wood and part of the White Estate |
| 1901 | The assessment rolls indicate that the two pairs of semi-detached houses at 39-41 and 43-45 Avenue Road were completed in this year |
| 1909 | The assessment rolls indicate that three small row houses at 47, 49 and 51 Avenue Road were completed in this year |
| 1912 | The assessment rolls indicate that a pair of semi-detached houses at 140-142 Yorkville Avenue were completed in this year |
| 1913 | Goad's Atlas shows that each of the same two properties are now occupied by a pair of large brick semi-detached houses (39-45 Avenue Rd) with three smaller row houses at 47-51 and two smaller semi-detached houses at 140-142 Yorkville Avenue in what was previously the backyard of 39-45 Avenue Road |
| 1924 | Goads Atlas indicates an additional brick building has been added between 45 and 47 Avenue Road on what was previously identified as a vacant lot |
| 1930s | Yorkville begins to acquire it Bohemian character attracting artists and musicians |
| 1960s | Yorkville's houses begin to accommodate art galleries, restaurants, antique stores and coffee houses |
| 1968-9 | 33 Avenue Road, at the northeast corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue York Square by Diamond and Myers Architects is designed and completed. It integrates the four Victorian-style semi-detached houses adding a new two story building around an open square in the rear of the property |
| 1976 | Hazelton Lanes by Webb, Zerafa, Menkes, Housden is constructed; causes the |

| | |
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| | removal of the supergraphics at York Square; ³ |
| 2002 | To the east of 33 Avenue Road Yorkville-Hazelton is designated as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act |

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The location of the property at 33 Avenue Road is shown on the property data map below (Image 1) where it anchors the northeast corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue, two blocks north of Bloor Street at the western edge of Yorkville. Avenue Road had originated by 1851 the year in which it is first recorded by J O Browne on his Plan of the Township of York bisecting Lot 22. (Image 3) This property had been granted c.1800 as one of the Park Lot Estates to the "Chief Justice" (Image 2) but no development on the property is indicated and in 1851 it was still undeveloped except that the west side of Avenue Road had been sub-divided into lots whose boundaries are now Prince Arthur, Lowther and Elgin Avenues. To the east, the village of Yorkville had been laid out in 1830 by Sherriff William Jarvis and Joseph Bloor on the west side of Yonge Street. By 1878 the York County Historical Atlas shows Cumberland and Yorkville Avenues had extended west as far as Avenue Road. (Image 4) The property at the northeast corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue (now 33 Avenue Road) had been subdivided into two long narrow lots parallel to Yorkville Avenue.

By 1884 Goad's Atlas records a wood house on each lot and these lots are two of five on the north side of Yorkville Avenue belonging to the White Estate, a distinct set of properties which are not part of the adjacent subdivisions. (Image 5) Assessment Rolls indicate that these two single houses were replaced with a pair of brick semi-detached houses on each lot with the addresses of 39-41 and 43-45 Avenue Road in 1901. By 1909, the assessment rolls indicate that to the north three row houses have replaced an earlier single dwelling at 47-51 Avenue Road. In 1912 at 140-142 Yorkville Avenue a pair of semi-detached houses have been built in what had been the back yard of 39-45 Avenue Road. The new construction is reflected in the 1913 edition of Goad's. (Image 6) By 1924 an additional building has been constructed in the vacant lot that had remained between 45 and 47 Avenue Road. (Image 7)

The village of Yorkville itself was to undergo a series of transformations. Initially development remained slow after its founding in 1830 but the provision of a tram line in 1849, followed by its achieving village status in 1852 and subsequently being annexed in 1883 to the City of Toronto provided greater services including sidewalks, paved streets and an electric street car which accelerated development. By the 1930s Yorkville began to acquire a "vaguely artistic and Bohemian reputation"⁴ and establishments such as the House of Hambourg which featured jazz played by the likes of Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis. The cultural commercial focus increased after the war in the late 1950s and 1960s with nineteenth century houses being transformed to accommodate art galleries, antique stores and restaurants. Coffee houses such as the Purple Onion, the Mynah Bird

³ Dendy and Kilborne, p 298.

⁴ Ibid.

and the Riverboat provided venues for such renowned singer-songwriters as Arlo Guthrie, Joni Mitchell, Neil Young and Gordon Lightfoot while an underground literary culture flourished with writers like Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje and Gwendolyn MacEwen. Yorkville has been called Toronto's equivalent of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury, becoming "the symbol of the sharp edge of youth culture" ... and by 1967 "Canada's hippie capital."⁵ Protests featured sit-ins to free the streets for pedestrians and informal markets proliferated along the sidewalks often run by draft dodgers selling tie-dyed fabrics and hand-tooled leather goods.

It was within this social context that York Square was designed and built in 1968-9 by the influential Toronto-based partnership of A J Diamond (b 1932) and Barton Myers (b 1934) whose work has been nationally and internationally acclaimed. Graduates of the University of Pennsylvania where they were students of both Louis Kahn and Robert Venturi, the South African and American architects immigrated to Toronto and set up an architectural partnership in 1968. York Square was one of the earliest projects of the firm which demonstrated principles of urban revitalization through the rehabilitation of existing buildings, appropriate infill, low-rise/high density and the creation of humanly-scaled, well-designed urban space while endorsing an outspoken Modernist sensibility in form and material.

These two aspects of York Square would become fundamental elements in future projects. While Diamond and Myers demonstrated their cutting edge Modernism in projects like the steel houses at 19 Berryman Street (1970) and the Wolf House (1975) they also showed a commitment to preserving and enhancing urban scale and character while revealing the potential of heritage buildings to contribute positively to an entire scheme. In subsequent Toronto projects of varied building types such as the rehabilitation of Eclipse Whitewear, 322 King Street West (1970), the insertion of Innis College, (1975) into a row of Victorian Houses, the preservation of 12 Victorian Houses on Sherbourne Street with low rise infill housing at Sherbourne Lanes (1975) this innovative and influential approach received wide acclaim and demonstrated an important alternative to bulldozing and demolition as a form of profitable, new-use and density-increasing revitalization.

After the dissolution of the practice in 1975 Diamond and Myers continued to practice independently producing work that has been consistently recognized for its high quality and influence. Jack Diamond has received numerous awards including being made an Officer of the Order of Canada as well as Canadian Governor General's Awards for Architecture for work done in partnership with Donald Schmitt. Barton Myers has received Gold Medals from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the American Institute of Architects.

⁵ Lemon., p 179.

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

York Square was completed at the height of the hippie period of Yorkville in 1968-9. (Image 8) Its innovative collage of two periods (the Victorian and Late Modernist/Pop Art) whose dramatic juxtaposition reflected the social ruptures and revolution of the time which nonetheless were resolved into a cohesive whole and a prototype for a new urbanity born through an integration of existing form, with new use wrapped in a skin that proclaimed transformation.

The project included the two pairs of Victorian semi-detached houses and three row houses that had first appeared on Goad's Atlas in 1913. By 1968 they had already been converted with new shop fronts inserted into their facades facing Avenue Road. (Image 9) Diamond and Myers' scheme preserved these four semi-detached houses and included but completely refaced the three others to the north. (Image 10) Two semi-detached houses on Yorkville were replaced by a two story building which stretched around the south, east and north perimeter of the site enclosing a large open courtyard with two trees at the heart. On one side the backs of the Victorian-style houses faced the yard and on the other the modern red brick and metal-framed glass walls looked back. (Image 11 and 12) Access to the courtyard is through an open passageway between the houses from Avenue Road as well as an additional covered route from Yorkville Avenue. The courtyard was and is still occupied by a restaurant but it also provided a location for performance by the Toronto Dance Theatre in the summer and carolers in the winter, leading to it being called in the contemporary press "Toronto's mini-centre for the performing arts"⁶

One of the most striking features of the project was the façade treatment. As was often typical in the 1960s in an attempt at rejuvenating old buildings, the original historic buildings were painted white. A ground floor redbrick skin which provided a few additional feet of storefront accommodation on Avenue Road wrapped around the entire projecting unifying old and new into a single whole. On the three northern buildings this skin extended to the second floor completely concealing the original facades. (Images 13 and 14) The brick wall had a series of distinctively 1960s punctures – giant circular openings for the windows and tall vertical slots. The brick and the large geometric openings with exposed concrete slabs may reflect the influence of their teacher Louis Kahn with whom they had studied and worked (Myers) while at the University of Pennsylvania. The plan of the project which resolves itself into a square with diagonal axial entries in the north-east and south-east corners is another element which would indicate Kahn's influence.

Added to this were the painted supergraphics by the artist Barrie Briscoe which ran along the Avenue Road façade in green and white racing stripes and then turned the corner on to Yorkville Avenue to expand as a giant graphic representing the plan of the complex in ochre with the words York Square in giant green letters on the side. (Image 15) While supergraphics were a popular form related to 1960s Pop Art they are also likely the

⁶ *Progressive Architecture*, p 150.

influence of the Pritzker Prize winning architect Robert Venturi on the work. Venturi was Kahn's teaching assistant at the University of Pennsylvania during the time Diamond and Myers studied there. Contemporary works of Venturi such as the Bosco Showroom (1976) Philadelphia or the Best Products Catalogue Showroom (1978) reduced the building to a signboard reflecting the theory of his publication *Learning from Las Vegas* (1972, revised 1977).

In the hands of Diamond and Myers at York Square the lessons of Kahn and Venturi acquired another layer which was particularly instructive for future architecture in Toronto and that was the frank inclusion of the heritage buildings with the supergraphics and the dramatic contrast of the old, historic, textured, varied and finely scaled monochromatic surfaces with the new flat giant-scaled and dramatically painted modern skin. Apart from the innovative juxtaposition of new and old what was perhaps more important was that their collision and integration created a greater whole from the sum of the disparate parts. Not only did the project maintain the much appreciated scale of Yorkville, and its 19th century residential origins, while providing new commercial and cultural uses it added an additional urban form with the courtyard which in contrast to the commercial shop fronts lining Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue provided an oasis and of contrast and respite which continued the theme of integrating heritage buildings and modern architecture for an inspired backdrop to the social and cultural events which occurred in the square.

iv. CONTEXT

It is important to see the project within the architectural development context of its time to truly appreciate the revolutionary aspect of its approach. From the 1940s most of the residential buildings in Yorkville were simply adapted for their new cultural and commercial uses. York Square provided a new model as the architects deliberately integrated new and old and celebrated the contrast between the two. It is important to remember that in 1968 there was no Ontario Heritage Act, no provision for the listing and designation of properties to encourage their preservation. There was a growing heritage movement in the province, inspired partly by architects like Eric Arthur, a professor at the University of Toronto whom Jack Diamond would have met as a teacher in the graduate program. A 1969 article in the American journal *Progressive Architecture* celebrated York Square with the title "Urban Supertoy Subdues Renewal Bulldozer"⁷ In 1970 the Ontario Association of Architects gave 6 design awards one of which went to York Square. The jury commended the project as "an outstanding example of infusing new life into an old neighbourhood."⁸ In the spring of 2013 John Bentley Mays wrote in the *Globe and Mail*, "The complex is also an expression of patient, careful urbanism that needs to be kept intact, just so young architects and the architecturally interested public can learn from its good example."⁹

⁷ *Progressive Architecture*, p 144.

⁸ *Architecture Canada*, p 535.

⁹ John Bentley Mays

3. EVALUATION CHECKLIST

EVALUATION: Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed by the Province of Ontario for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act

| Design or Physical Value | |
|--|------------|
| i. rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method | X |
| ii. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit | X |
| iii. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement | N/A |

York Square set an important precedent for heritage preservation, adaptive re-use, and for maintaining existing neighbourhood scale and character in opposition to the then standard practice of demolition.

Its design is innovative in its transformation of Victorian style houses with the Late Modernist sensibility inspired by Pop Art and the work of Louis Kahn and Robert Venturi. By integrating this collection of Victorian houses into a new commercial whole which transformed rear unused space into a courtyard which functions as an urban oasis this project displays a high degree of artistic merit.

| Historical or Associative Value | |
|--|----------|
| i. direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community | X |
| ii. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture | X |
| iii. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community | X |

York Square (1968-9) has associative value for its significant innovative approach to urban regeneration. It is one of the first examples in Toronto of rehabilitating and integrating historic buildings into a new project which transformed the original buildings with a contemporary use and a new outdoor space which contributed significantly to the revitalisation of the historic Yorkville neighbourhood. York Square set an important precedent for heritage preservation before Ontario's heritage legislation existed, adaptive re-use, and for maintaining existing neighbourhood scale and character in opposition to the then standard practice of demolition.

The building is historically associated with the careers of the influential and nationally and internationally acclaimed architects A J Diamond (b 1932) and Barton Myers (b 1934). It is one of the earliest projects by this Toronto-based partnership of Diamond and Myers. Graduates of the University of Pennsylvania where they were students of both Louis Kahn and Robert Venturi, the South African and American architects immigrated to Toronto and set up an architectural partnership in 1968. York Square introduced principles which would underpin other projects by the firm: urban revitalization through

the rehabilitation of existing buildings, appropriate infill, low-rise/high density and the creation of humanly-scaled, well-designed urban space. The work also endorsed an outspoken Modernist sensibility in form and material which combined their principles in future projects such as Eclipse Whitewear (1970), 19 Berryman Street (1970), Innis College (1975), Sherbourne Lanes (1975).

After the dissolution of the practice in 1975 Diamond and Myers have continued to practice independently. Jack Diamond has received numerous awards including being made an Officer of the Order of Canada as well as Canadian Governor General's Awards for Architecture for work done in partnership with Donald Schmitt. Barton Myers has received Gold Medals from the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and the American Institute of Architects.

| Contextual Value | |
|---|----------|
| i. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area | X |
| ii. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings | X |
| iii. landmark | X |

Contextually, York Square is a significant local landmark. Situated at the north-east corner, its relationship to Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue are important in maintaining the scale and character of the neighbourhood. The open square at its heart continues to provide an urban oasis with trees and planting a few steps from these busy commercial thoroughfares. It provides a link with the vibrant times of the 1960s which was a colourful point in the neighbourhood's social and architectural evolution as well as integrating the elements of the Victorian period. The complex is a landmark of historical importance in Yorkville as through its preservation of the historic houses it became an integral part of the neighbourhood's revitalization into a cultural and commercial destination that continues to flourish today.

4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the award-winning property at 33 Avenue Road has design, associative and contextual values as an important example of early integration of historic buildings in an adaptive re-use scheme which contributed to the revitalization of a neighbourhood designed by the influential and important Toronto-based architects Diamond and Myers.

SOURCES

Archival Sources

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Goad's Atlases, 1880-1924

Plan of the Township of York, 1851

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Whiteson, Leon. *The Liveable City: the Architecture and Neighbourhoods of Toronto*. Oakville, 1982

<http://urbantoronto.ca/forum/showthread.php/6947-Miscellany-Toronto-Photographs-Then-and-Now/page238>

(accessed 15 October 2013) photos of York Square – pre -1968

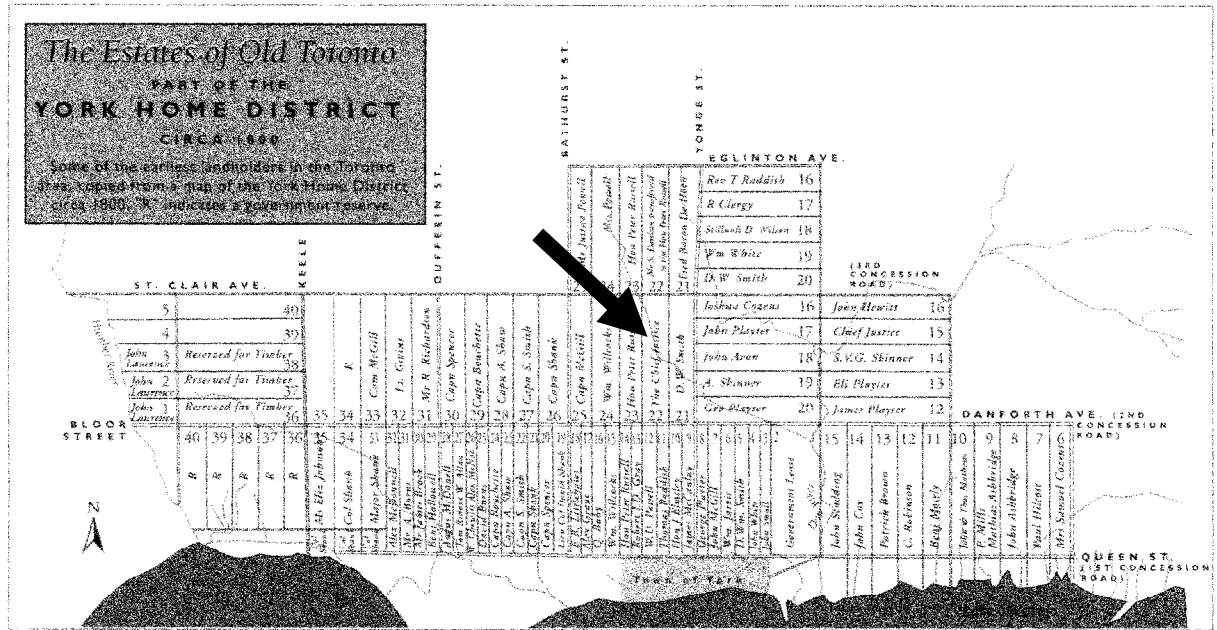
http://www.tobuilt.ca/php/tobuildings_more.php?search_fd3=3725

(accessed 15 October 2013) Lothian Mews)

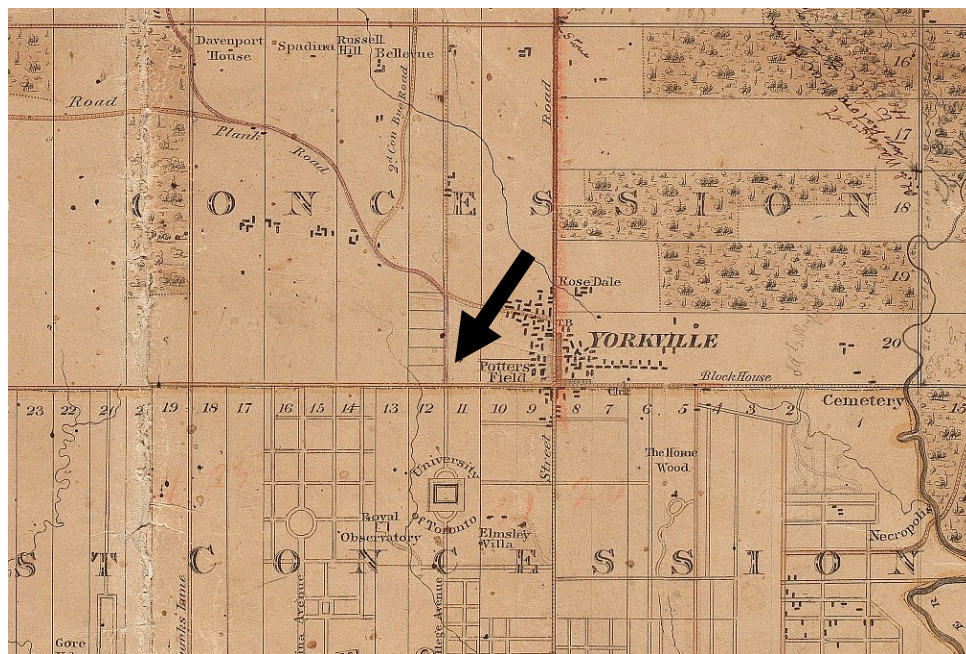
IMAGES – **arrows** mark the location of the property at 33 Avenue Road.



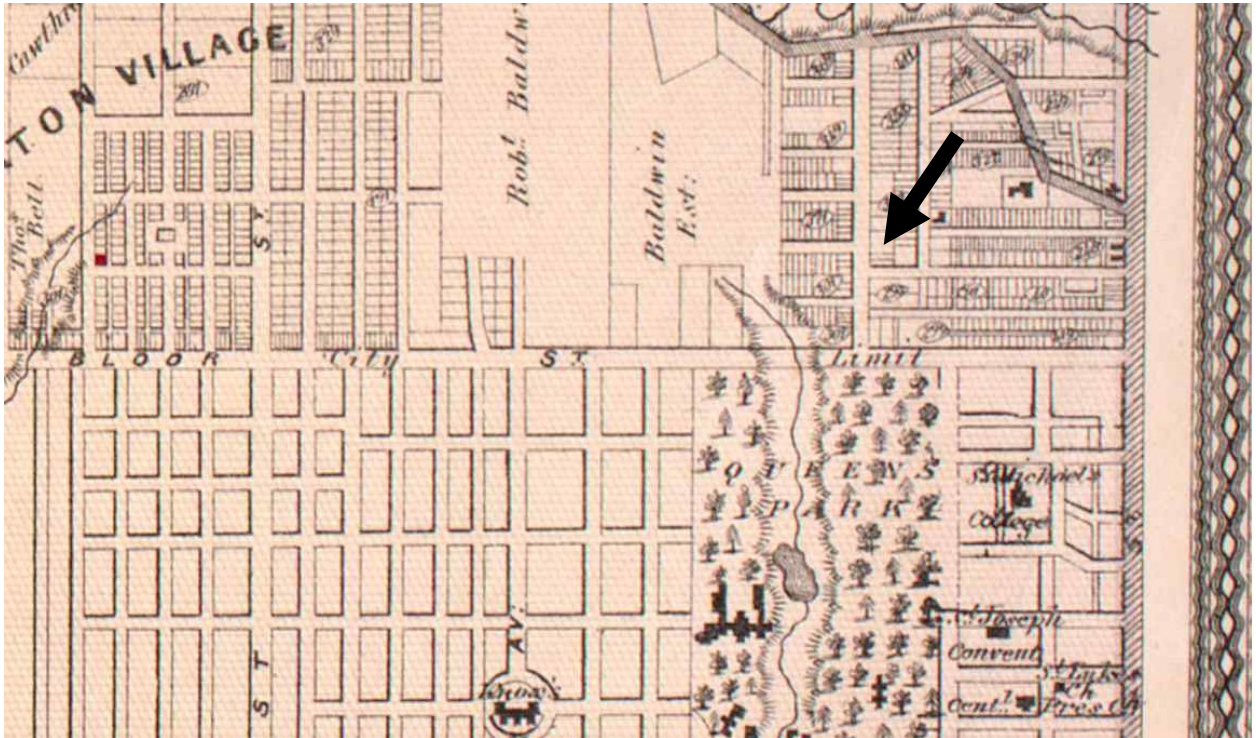
1. City of Toronto Property Data Map: showing the location of the property at 33 Avenue Road on the northeast corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue.



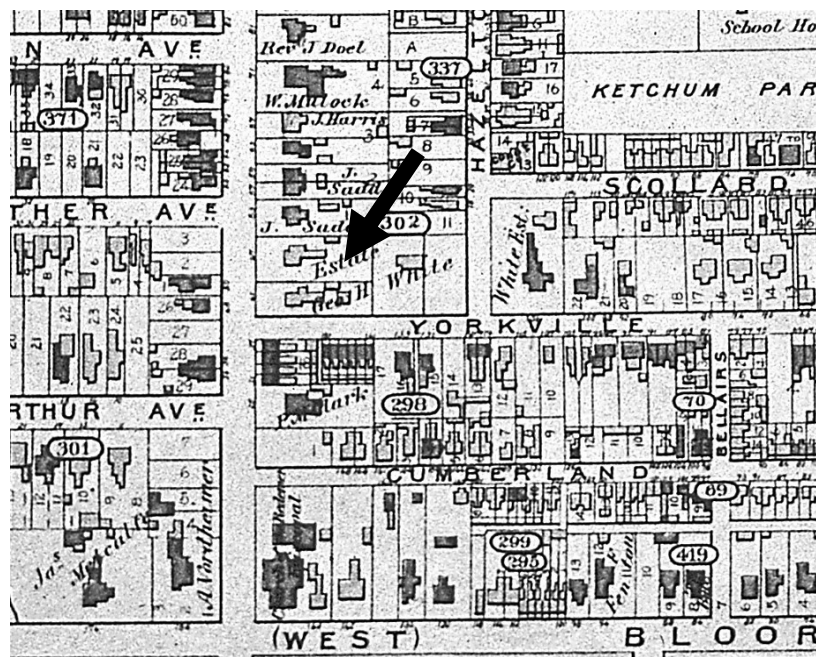
2. The Estates of Old Toronto, c 1800, map indicates the landholders in the Town of York, c 1800. Lot 22, west of Yonge and north of the Second Concession (Bloor Street) was a 200-acre parcel allocated to "the Chief Justice." (Lundell, p 10)



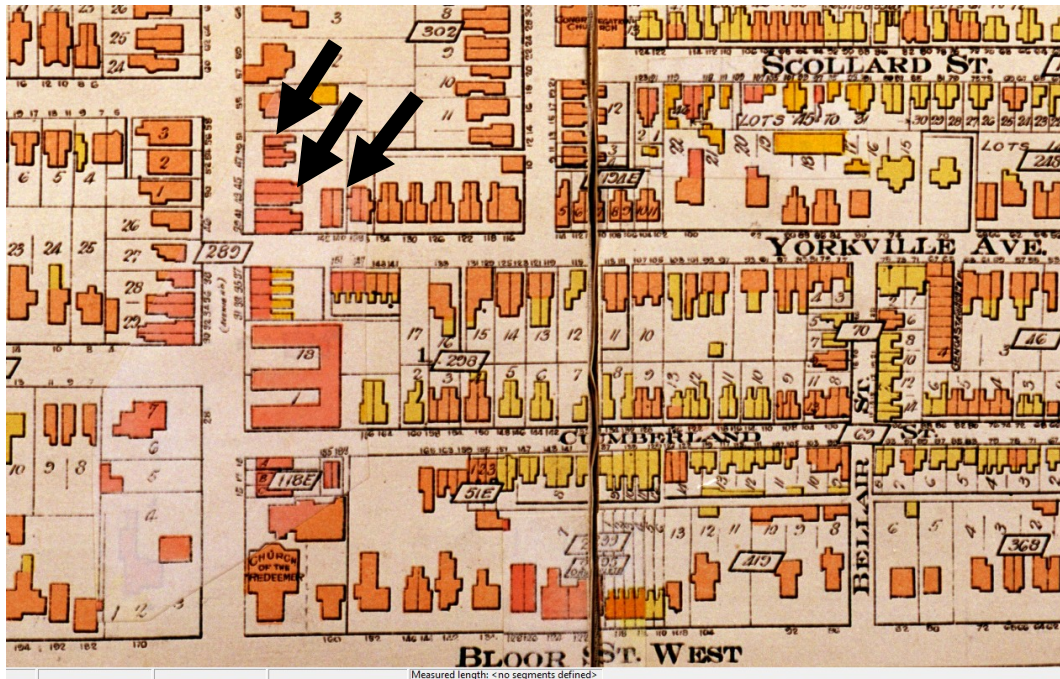
3. Plan of the Township of York, 1851: the map shows the vertical division of Lot 22 by current day Avenue Road and the development of the Town of Yorkville to the east. The line above the Potters Field marks the approximate location of Yorkville Avenue which eventually extended to Avenue Road. 33 Avenue Road is on the eastern half of Lot 22.



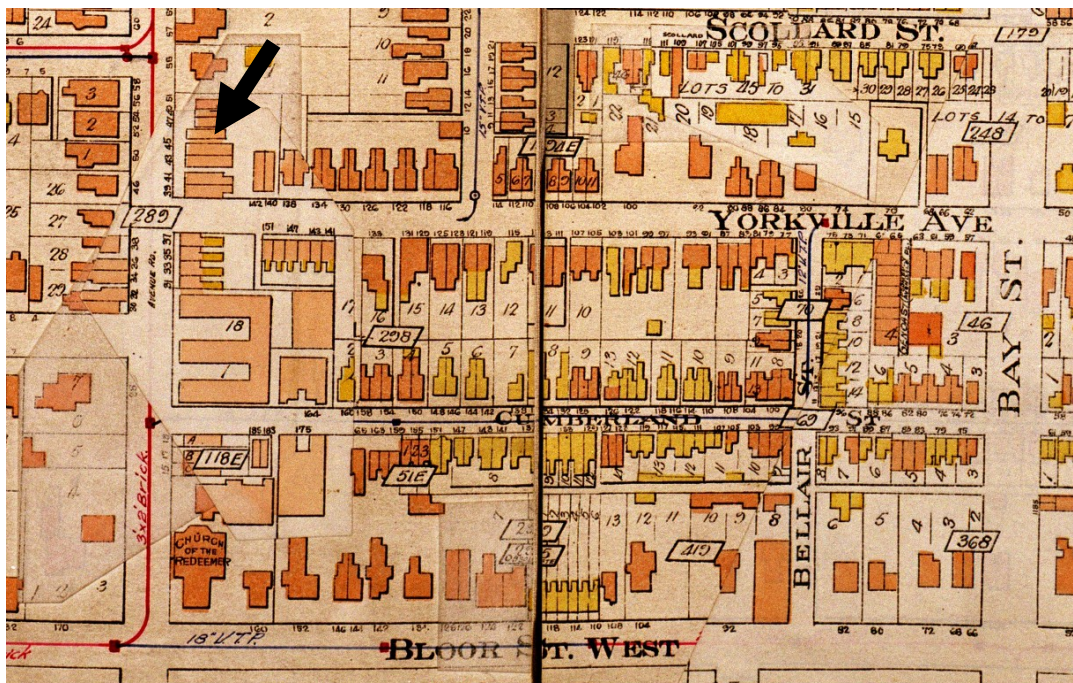
4. York County Historical Atlas (1878): showing two lots facing Avenue Road at the corner of Yorkville Avenue.



5. Goad's Atlas (1884): showing the two lots each with a single house at the north east corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue, identified as part of the White Estate.



6. Goad's Atlas (1913): Two semi-detached houses replace the single houses and new addresses are created at 39-41 and 43-45 Avenue Road. Further row houses are added at 47-51 Avenue Road and a pair of semis is inserted into the former back yard with new addresses at 140-142 Yorkville Avenue.



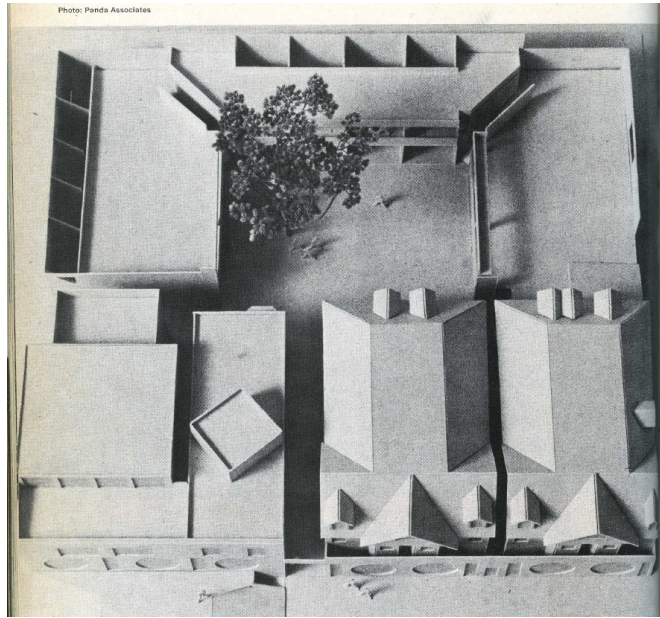
7. Goad's Atlas (1924): Showing the infill building between 45 and 47 Avenue Road.



8. Contemporary Photograph: showing the principal façades at the northeast corner of Avenue Road and Yorkville Avenue. (*Progressive Architecture*, p 153.)



9. 35 Avenue Road prior to renovation: pre-1968 photograph showing the original building and a portion of 37 Avenue Road with their later store front additions. (<http://urbantoronto.ca/forum/showthread.php/6947-Miscellany-Toronto-Photographs-Then-and-Now/page238>, accessed 15 October 2013.)



10. York Square, model: The model shows the 4 existing semi-detached houses at the bottom right corner, the 3 existing buildings which were completely re-clad with new upper floors at the bottom left and the new buildings wrapping in a u-shape at the top of the photo. (*Progressive Architecture*, p 146.)



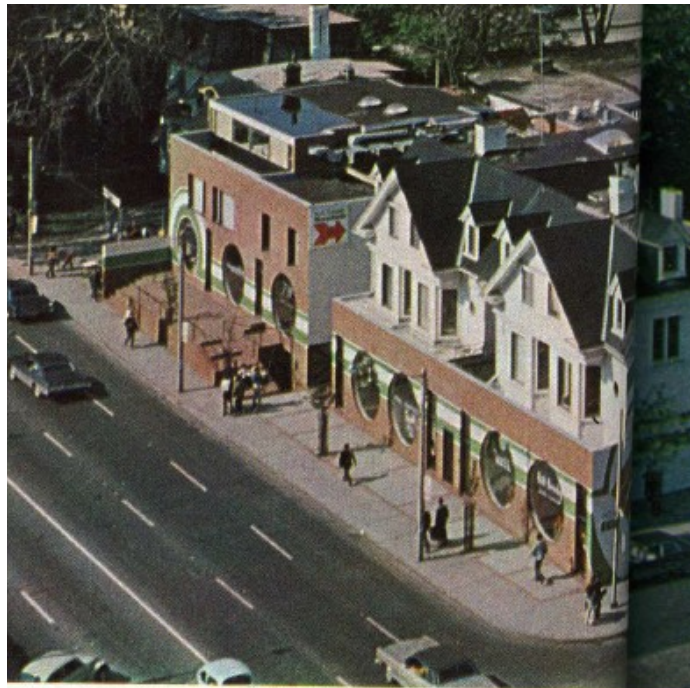
11. York Square Courtyard: showing the new building with its brick walls with circular windows and exposed concrete slabs alternating with metal framed curtain wall. (*Heritage Preservation Services*, October 2013)



12. York Square Courtyard: Original c1900 buildings are painted and integrated into the new courtyard with new staircases and planting. (*Heritage Preservation Services, October 2013*)



13. York Square, Three North Buildings on Avenue Road: the original buildings were completely refaced and a new third story added to two at the northern edge of the site. (*Heritage Preservation Services, October 2013*)



14. York Square, contemporary view of Avenue Road Facades: showing the original supergraphics, the complete re-facing of the three buildings to the north and the exposed historic facades of the four semi-detached houses to the south. (*Progressive Architecture*, p 144.)



15. Supergraphics, Barrie Briscoe artist: The painting incorporates a graphic representing the plan of the complex and the letters for York Square. (*Progressive Architecture*, p 148.)