

HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT



FORSEY PAGE HOUSE
217 SHELDRAKE BOULEVARD

Prepared by:
Heritage Preservation Services
City Planning Division
City of Toronto

February 2016

1. DESCRIPTION



Above: 217 Sheldrake Boulevard, the Forsey Page House showing the east and north (principal) elevations, 1910. (*Heritage Preservation Services [HPS], 2016*)
 Cover: 217 Sheldrake Avenue, principal (north) elevation. (*HPS, 2016*)

Address and Name of Property	
ADDRESS	217 Sheldrake Boulevard
WARD	Don Valley West – Ward 25
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	PLAN 691 BLK E LOT 21
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Mount Pleasant East
HISTORICAL NAME	Forsey Page House
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1910
ORIGINAL OWNER	Forsey Page
ORIGINAL USE	Residence
CURRENT USE*	residence
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Forsey Page
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION	Brick with stucco and half-timber cladding
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Tudor Revival Bungalow
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	Modified doors and windows on the west (side) elevation
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative and Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	n/a
RECORDER	Heritage Preservation Services: Marybeth McTeague
REPORT DATE	29 February 2016

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 217 Sheldrake Boulevard, 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
1793	The town of York is established and the lands north of Lot (now Queen) Street are surveyed and allocated to the military, loyalists and other government supporters
1792-6	At the Fourth Concession (now Eglinton Avenue) the Queen's Rangers begin to clear the forest to layout Yonge Street leading to Lake Simcoe.
1803	Richard Gamble is recorded as the owner of Lot 3, (future location of 217 Sheldrake Blvd.) north of the Fourth Concession and East of Yonge Street
1814	Following the War of 1812, the rural village on Yonge Street at the Fourth concession is named Eglinton
1830	Lot 3 and Lot 4 are acquired by Jesse Ketchum
1837	At Montgomery's Tavern in Eglinton, William Lyon Mackenzie and John Rolph meet with 800 other rebels and march down Yonge Street to challenge the government.
1845	Jesse Ketchum gives Lot 4 to his daughter and her husband the Rev'd James Harris. Lot 3 is subdivided; the north portion is given to his son William who divides his portion with the road that is now Blythwood Avenue. John Boyd and William Cawthra purchase two southern portions
1860	Robert Stibbard purchases 20 acres at the south and east end of Lot 3
1882	Davisville and Eglinton are incorporated as a village
1886	Yonge Street streetcar line is completed to Glengrove Park
1887	John Sheldrake Stibbard subdivides his 40 acres (former Boyd and Cawthra properties) on the southern portion of Lot 3. He registers Plan 691 laying out Crescent Road (later Sheldrake Blvd.), Sheldrake Boulevard and Franklin Avenue (later Stibbard Avenue)
1890	Eglinton is incorporated as part of the Town of North Toronto
1909	H. D. Page is recorded as the owner of Lot 21, Section E, Plan 691 (217 Sheldrake Blvd.)
1910	Forsey Page is recorded as the owner of the property at 123 (now 217) Sheldrake Boulevard.
1912	Morton Burke is recorded as the owner of 123 Sheldrake Boulevard
1912	North Toronto is annexed to the City of Toronto

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Eglinton and North Toronto

The property at 217 Sheldrake Boulevard is located on what was originally the third 200 acre lot north of the Fourth Concession (now Eglinton Avenue) and East of Yonge Street. (Image 1) A rural village, north of the fourth concession on Yonge Street, Eglinton is named for the Scottish estate of the Earl of Eglinton in Ayrshire. The name was given as

a "tribute to the many soldiers whom Ayrshire provided in the war of 1812."¹ In the 1820s a clerical error resulted in the spelling of the town being changed to 'Eglinton,' which was not corrected until the 1880s. (Image 2)

Eglinton village would become famous as the location of Montgomery's Tavern built on the west side of Yonge Street. It was here, in 1837, that William Lyon Mackenzie and John Rolph met with 800 rebels and then marched south on Yonge to confront the members of government. They were repelled by an armed response from Sherriff William Jarvis which caused the rebels to flee. Mackenzie went into exile, two rebels were hung and the tavern was burned down. Nonetheless, the Rebellion, combined with one in Quebec, resulted in the 1841 Durham report bringing about reforms which underpin the current system of local government.

The village of Eglinton was primarily characterized by farming activity, with a strip of small lots with shops, hotels and a town hall fronting on to Yonge Street. It acquired its first school in 1842 and its first post office in 1858. In 1882 Davisville and Eglinton were incorporated into a single village, known as Eglinton. The completion of the Yonge Street car line in 1886 spurred on development and the transformation of the farmlands to suburban neighbourhoods. In 1890, Eglinton became part of North Toronto which was annexed to the City of Toronto in 1912.

Lot 3, to the east of Yonge and north of Eglinton, and the future site of 217 Sheldrake Boulevard, had been granted to Richard Gamble in 1803. Jesse Ketchum (1782-1867) purchased Lots 3 and 4 on the east side of Yonge Street in 1830.² Ketchum, American-born, moved to Canada to join his brother Seneca. He built a profitable tannery and used his wealth for philanthropic purposes primarily supporting education both in Toronto as well as in Buffalo, N. Y. He was also a member of the Reform party and in 1828 was elected to represent York. When he departed for Buffalo in 1845, Ketchum gave Lot 4 to his daughter Fidelia and her husband the Reverend James Harris. A northern portion of Lot 3 was given to his son William Ketchum who divided the lot along its length with a long road leading east from Yonge Street now known as Blythwood Avenue.

The remains of Lot 3 to the south were purchased by John Boyd,³ and William Cawthra. By 1860, Daniel Morrison and Robert Stibbard Sr. were the owners of the southern portions of Lot 3. Stibbard was recorded as one of the rebels caught after the Mackenzie rebellion. A market gardener, he married a woman from the Sheldrake family and they had two sons. Robert Jr. took over his father's farm on the elder's death and his brother John Sheldrake Stibbard (1840-1925), also a market gardener, purchased 40 acres to the east which had previously belonged to Boyd and Morrison. (Image 3)

Perhaps encouraged by the arrival of the streetcar line, in 1887, John Stibbard registered Plan 691. The new subdivision was laid out with access from Yonge Street by Crescent

¹ Brown, p 66.

² Ketchum also owned large land holdings elsewhere.

³ John Boyd was both a farmer and a teacher at the local Eglinton school. (Ritchie p 59)

Avenue (now Sheldrake Boulevard) which led to Sheldrake Boulevard and Franklin Avenue⁴ (now Stibbard Avenue). (Images 4 and 5) These two roads were subsequently bisected by Mount Pleasant Road. While some lots were purchased, no houses except his own at 394 Sheldrake Boulevard and the duplex he built on Crescent Avenue were built until 1904.⁵ Between 1904 and 1924, Goad's Atlas indicates all of the lots in the subdivision were developed with houses. (Images 6 and 7)

In 1909, H. D. Page⁶ owned Lot 21, Section E, of Plan 691. The assessment rolls indicate that the site was vacant.⁷ City Directories for the year indicate that both Hubert, who was then a student, and Forsey Page, were living at 10 Walmer Road, with their mother, Annie,⁸ and father, W. Pemberton Page. The 1909 Directory also recorded Forsey as an architect and manager of the National Construction Co.

A year later Forsey Page, was confirmed as owning and living at 123 Sheldrake Boulevard.⁹ As Page had been living at his family's home the year before, this is likely his first independent residence. As an architect and manager of a construction company, it is likely that Forsey Page designed and built the Sheldrake house for himself.¹⁰ In 1912, Page sold the house to Morton Burke and moved to 12 Weybourne Crescent.

Forsey Pemberton Bull Page (1885-1970) graduated from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Engineering in 1906 and was a licensed engineer as well as being an architect. After practising on his own, in 1911, he went into partnership with Stamford Warrington as Page & Warrington. He was in active service in World War I. In 1926, he formed a new partnership with Harland Steele as Page & Steele. Stamford Warrington was also associated with Page & Steele. Page & Steele "formed one of Canada's most successful firms in the field of domestic architecture,"¹¹ and within this category of their work was the innovative Garden Court Apartments.¹² Later, the firm would create, with the participation of the English architect, Peter Dickinson, some of the most iconic 1950s and 1960s Toronto buildings, including the Toronto Teacher's College, Regent Park South housing towers, the Benvenuto Place apartments and the O'Keefe Centre (now the Sony Centre). The firm received 24 design awards and 5 Massey Medals, the highest architectural award in Canada. Page was a Fellow of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, and of the Royal Academy of Arts, President of the Ontario Association of Architects, 1934-1935, Chancellor of the College of Fellows of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, 1952-1955, and Senator of the University of Toronto, 1950-1954.

⁴ Franklin Avenue recalls the name of John Stibbard's son Robert Franklin Stibbard, (1882-1964).

⁵ Ritchie p. 85.

⁶ Hubert Daniel Bull Page, the real estate developer noted for creating the Bridal Path and brother of Forsey Page.

⁷ Assessment Rolls, 1909 Eglinton East Ward, North Toronto.

⁸ Annie's last name before her marriage in 1880, was Bull.

⁹ The street was renumbered as of 1924 and the property has its current address of 217 Sheldrake Blvd.

¹⁰ No building permits or drawings have yet been found for the house.

¹¹ Armstrong, p. 130.

¹² Garden Court won a Massey Medal for Architecture in 1950.

iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Forsey Page house is one-and-a-half storeys, built on a square plan, with three important features: a great broad gable roof, extending over a deep verandah stretching across the front elevation, with a large gable dormer above. (Images 8 and 9) The house represents the bungalow type which was a newly fashionable house form with divergent historic roots when Forsey Page designed his first home. As Alan Gowans wrote: "The bungalow was hardly known in 1900, but by 1910 thousands of houses were being built in the generic name 'bungalow.'"¹³ The name bungalow finds its roots in the word "bangala" used to describe a house type in British Bengal which was characterized by being single storey with a broad sweeping roof which extended to include a verandah.¹⁴ 'Verandah' was derived from the Portuguese word 'varanda' used to describe the covered balconies found in the East Indies.¹⁵ The single-storey, house-form type also finds its roots on the American frontier, and one-storey and one-and-a-half storey houses with verandahs are well-known from the early 19th century onwards in Ontario. The difference here is the integration of the verandah within the roof of the house rather than as a separate entity with its own roof and structure. A bungalow is not necessarily only one storey but may also be one-and-a-half stories with the second floor concealed in a roof with dormers.

The Forsey Page house is a bungalow in the Tudor Revival style. The elements of the style are evident in the half-timbering with its decorative panels and rough cast stucco of the gable dormer and in the leaded glass windows. (Image 10) The Tudor Revival style "was a popular mode for houses across Canada in the first third of the twentieth century, and the half-timbered gable became its most recognizable feature."¹⁶

The house has a square plan with two rooms on either side of the central entrance hall and this is unusual for the bungalow type in Toronto which ordinarily, due to narrow lot frontages, would be designed with an entrance to one side of a principal room. This greater width allows for a more striking building composition with a very wide verandah contrasting with the single gable dormer in the roof.

The front (north) elevation features two, 3-light, leaded-glass casement windows flanking the entrance. (Images 11 and 12) The entrance has two fielded side panels with a central door featuring a window with decoratively etched and patterned leaded glass. Both the doors and the windows feature finely crafted flat, segmental-arched openings with brick voussoirs.

¹³ Gowans, p. 74.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 76-7.

¹⁵ Denhez, p. 42. Denhez further commented on the arrival of the bungalow in Canada: "The fact that this was a housing style designed for the sub-tropics was no deterrent: functional rationality seldom stood in the way of taste."

¹⁶ Kalman, p. 624.

The verandah features three shallow segmental arched boards framing the three openings between the four pairs of plain, square section columns. The current balustrade replaced an earlier one. (Image 13)

The rear (south) elevation features a shed dormer in the roof and various sizes of window and a basement entrance. Only the window at the south-east corner and the dormer have leaded casements on this elevation. (Images 14 and 15)

The east side elevation of the house features the projecting chimney and various casement windows with leaded glass at both the first and second floor levels, and one small, double-hung sash window. The west side elevation has been modified toward the rear, under the projecting hood roof, where kitchen windows were re-located in 2002.¹⁷ (Image 16)

Setting

The lot is long and narrow allowing for a deep lawn, setting the house well back from the street and providing a deep garden on the south side. A cement walkway is set on axis with the front door. The square plan of the house which is tight to the western boundary leaves just enough space for a driveway to a rear shed on the east. As the shed was not recorded on Goads Atlas in either 1913 or 1924, it is not attributed to Forsey Page. (Images 17 and 18)

iv. CONTEXT

The Forsey Page house forms part of the John Sheldrake Stibbard development identified as Plan 691. It includes the original access route from Yonge Street, Sheldrake Boulevard which splits at a small crescent road leading to Sheldrake Boulevard and Stibbard avenues. (Images 5, 6 and 7 as above) The houses were completed within 20 years of each other giving the neighbourhood a cohesive character, while presenting a rich variety of forms, scale, styles and materials. (Images 19-24) Some of the houses represent types that are common across the city, but still more represent a collection of unusual buildings that are less common. Some recent additions of new houses have been added to the neighbourhood, but the c1904-1924 character still remains intact. Within this diverse collection, the Page house provides a distinctive addition as the only Tudor Revival bungalow with a central hall plan.

3. EVALUATION CHECKLIST

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Ontario Heritage Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. While the criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, the City of Toronto uses it when assessing properties for inclusion on the

¹⁷ Building Permit, 02-177514.

City of Toronto Heritage Register. The evaluation table is marked “N/A” if the criterion is “not applicable” to the properties or X if it is applicable, with explanatory text below.

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

The Forsey Page house has design value as a representative example of a bungalow in the Tudor Revival style which is evident in its one-and-a-half storey form with a great broad gable roof incorporating a verandah. The dormer gable featuring decorative half-timbering and the leaded glass windows are features of the Tudor Revival. Bungalows and the Tudor Revival were popular in the first quarter of the 20th century but the combination of the two is rare within the neighbourhood.

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

The house has value for its association with the prolific and influential Toronto-based architect Forsey Page, as it was the first of several houses he would design for himself. Through his sole practise and subsequent partnerships, Page and Warrington, and Page and Steele, Forsey Page contributed some of the most outstanding architectural works which shaped the character of the City of Toronto. Page & Steel were honoured with 24 design awards and 5 Massey Medals, the highest Canadian architectural recognition. Page himself served as President of the Ontario Association of Architects, Chancellor of the College of Fellows of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and Senator of the University of Toronto.

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	N/A

The house has contextual value as it defines and maintains the character of Sheldrake Boulevard. Apart from a few earlier houses, the properties of Plan 691, on Sheldrake Boulevard and Stibbard Avenue, were developed within a twenty year period between 1904 and 1924 which provided remarkable neighbourhood cohesion. This is enriched by the great variety of building forms, scale, styles and materials which differentiate each house. As the only Tudor Revival style bungalow on the street, the Forsey Page house

maintains this architectural diversity and is visually and historically linked to its surroundings.

4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 217 Sheldrake Boulevard has design, associative and contextual values.

The Forsey Page house is a well-crafted, representative example of a bungalow in the Tudor Revival style. The property is valued for its historical association with the architect Forsey Page who designed and lived in the house. As a sole practitioner and through his partnerships, Page & Warrington and Page & Steele, as well as in his roles of President of the Ontario Architectural Association and Chancellor of the College of Fellows of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, Page made a significant contribution to the architecture of Toronto for over a half century. The house supports the historic character of this former North Toronto neighbourhood. Located on the south side of Sheldrake Boulevard, the Forsey Page house makes a distinctive contribution to the variety of house types built between 1904 and 1924, which define the character of the street and the surrounding Mount Pleasant East neighbourhood including the Blythwood Heritage Conservation District.

5. SOURCES

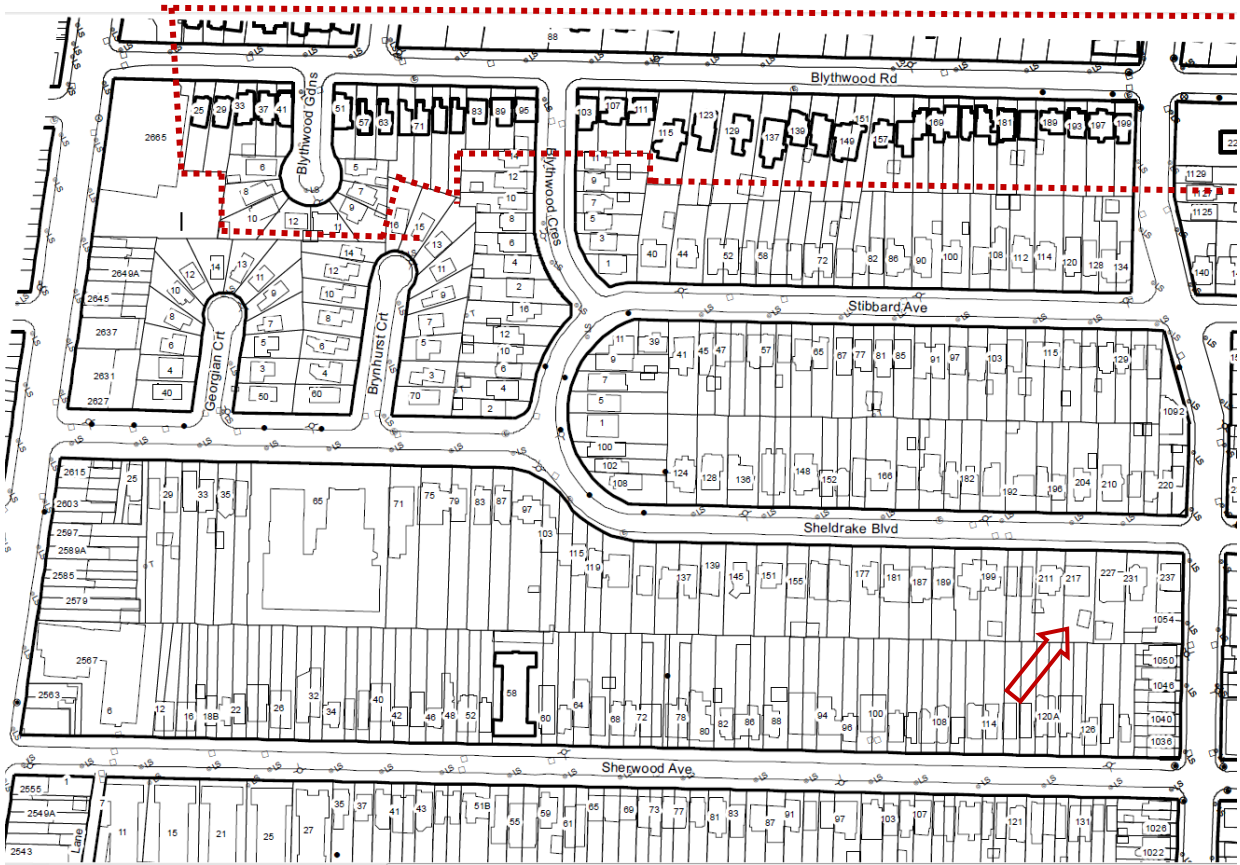
Archival Sources

- Assessment Rolls, Eglinton East Ward, North Toronto (City of Toronto Archives [CTA])
- City of Toronto Building Records
- City of Toronto Directories
- Goad, Charles E. *Atlas of the City of Toronto and Suburbs*. 1890, 1899, 1903, 1913, 1924. (CTA)
- Miles & Co. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York*. 1878. (Ng, Nathan: <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/2013/01/1878-illustrated-historical-atlas-of.html>)
- Tremaine, George R. *Tremaine's Map of the County of York Canada West*. 1860. (Ng, Nathan: <http://oldtorontomaps.blogspot.ca/2013/02/1860-tremaines-map-of-county-of-york.html>)

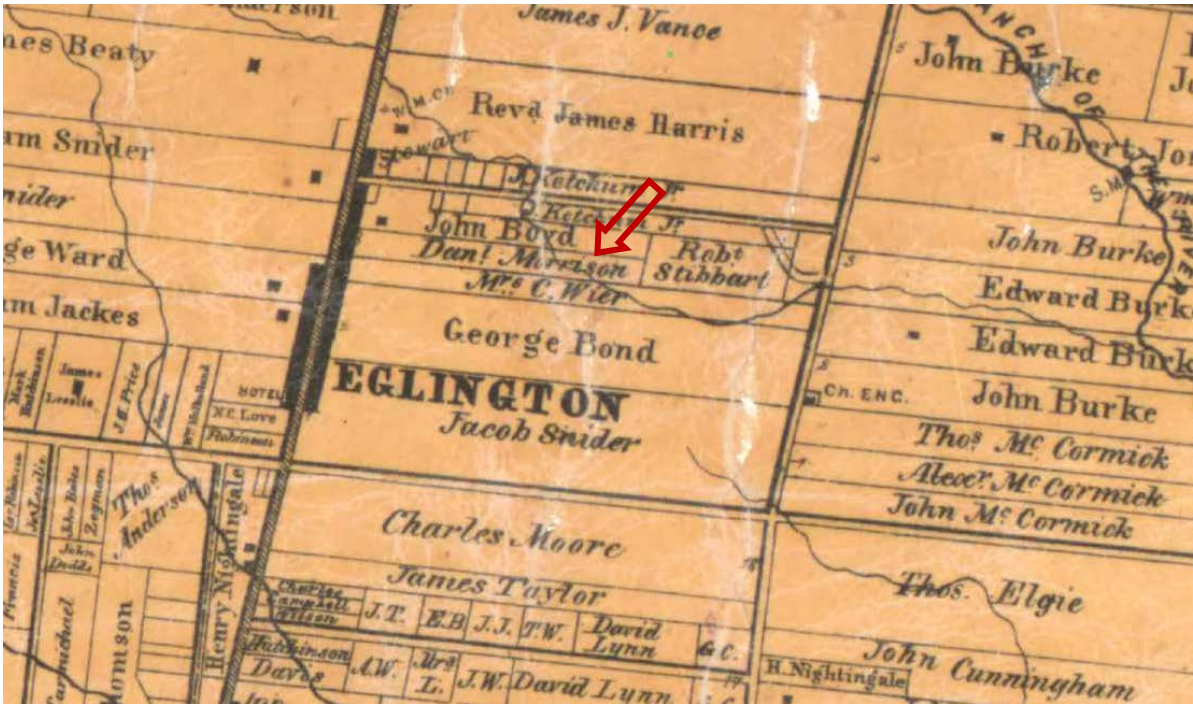
Secondary Sources

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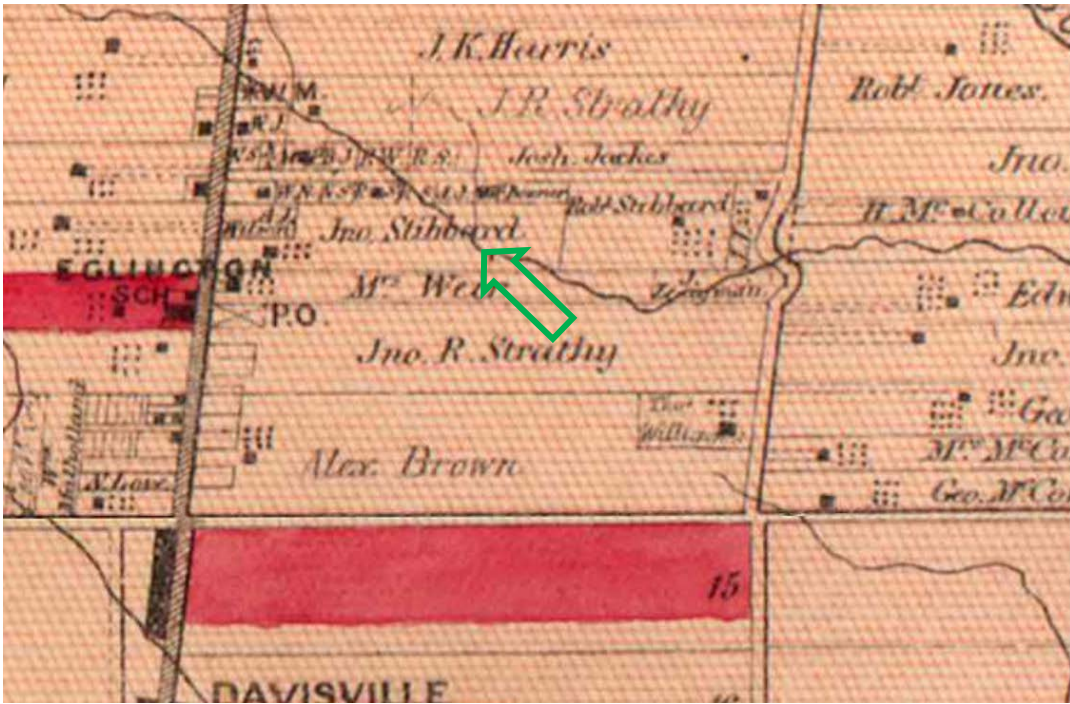
6. **IMAGES:** the **arrows** mark the location of the subject property unless otherwise indicated. *Unless otherwise indicated north is always at the top of all plans.*



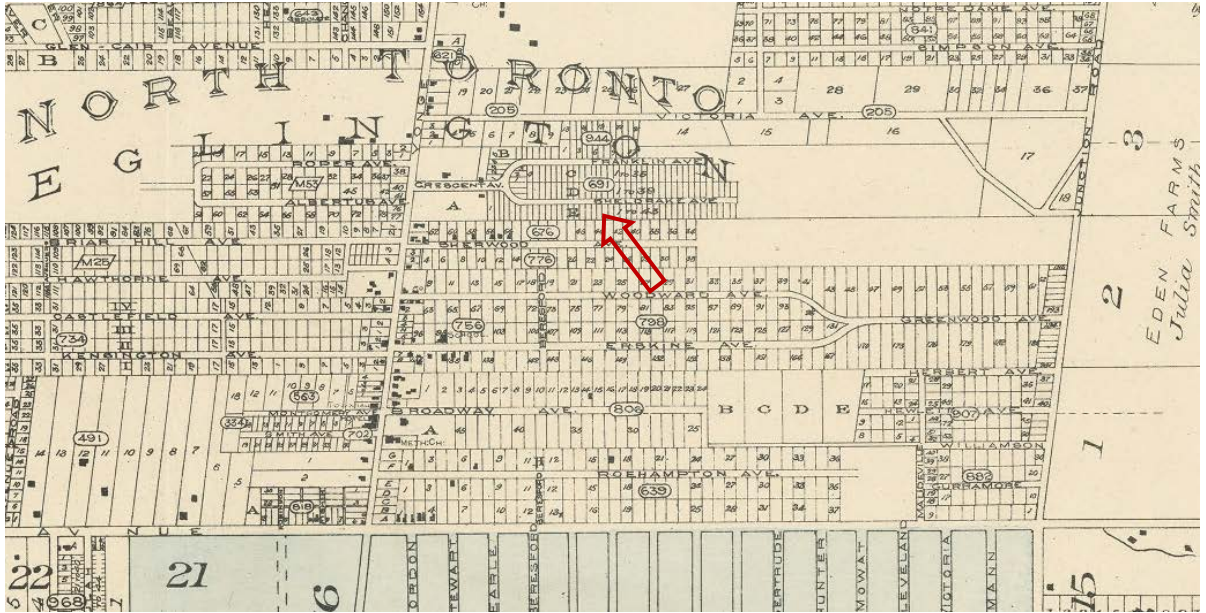
1. City of Toronto Property Data Map: showing the location of 217 Sheldrake Boulevard on the south side of Sheldrake Boulevard between Yonge Street to the west and Mount Pleasant Road to the east. The dashed lines indicate the approximate boundary of the east end of the Blythwood Road Heritage Conservation District.



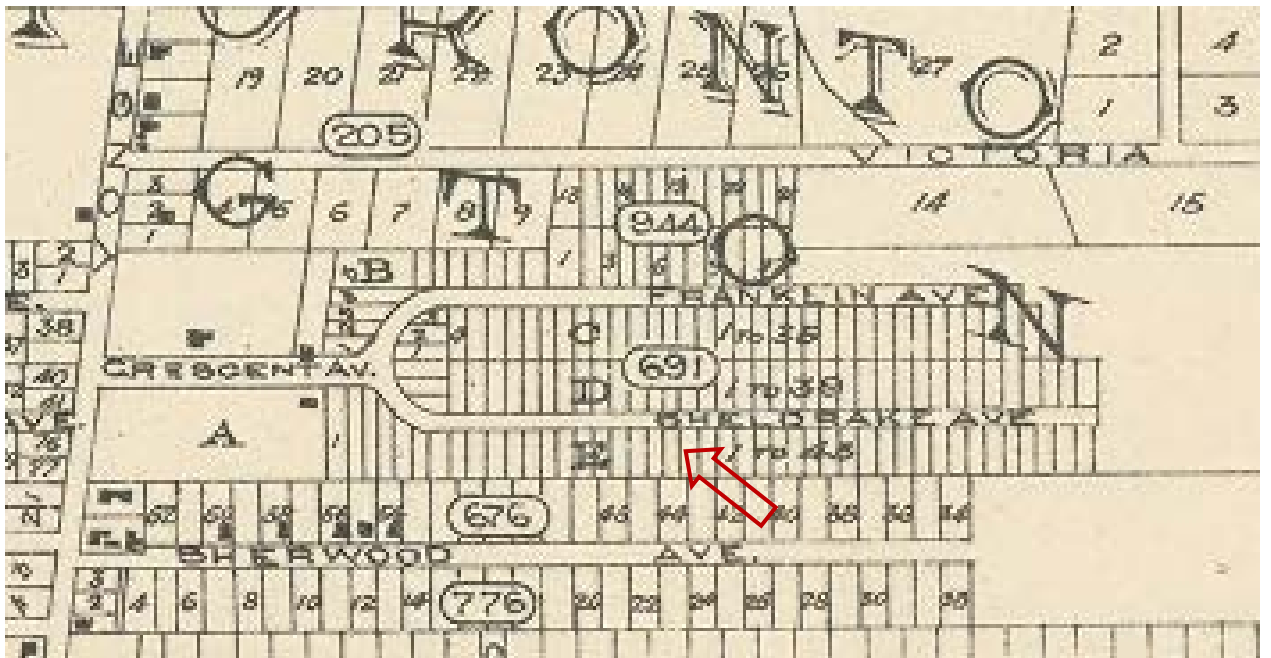
2. George R Tremain, *Tremain's Map of the County of York Canada West*, (detail) 1860: showing Lot 3 in the fourth concession (Eglinton Avenue) and the town of Eglinton. Lot 3 has been subdivided between Jesse Ketchum Jr., John Boyd, Daniel Morrison and Robert Stibbard. (Ng)



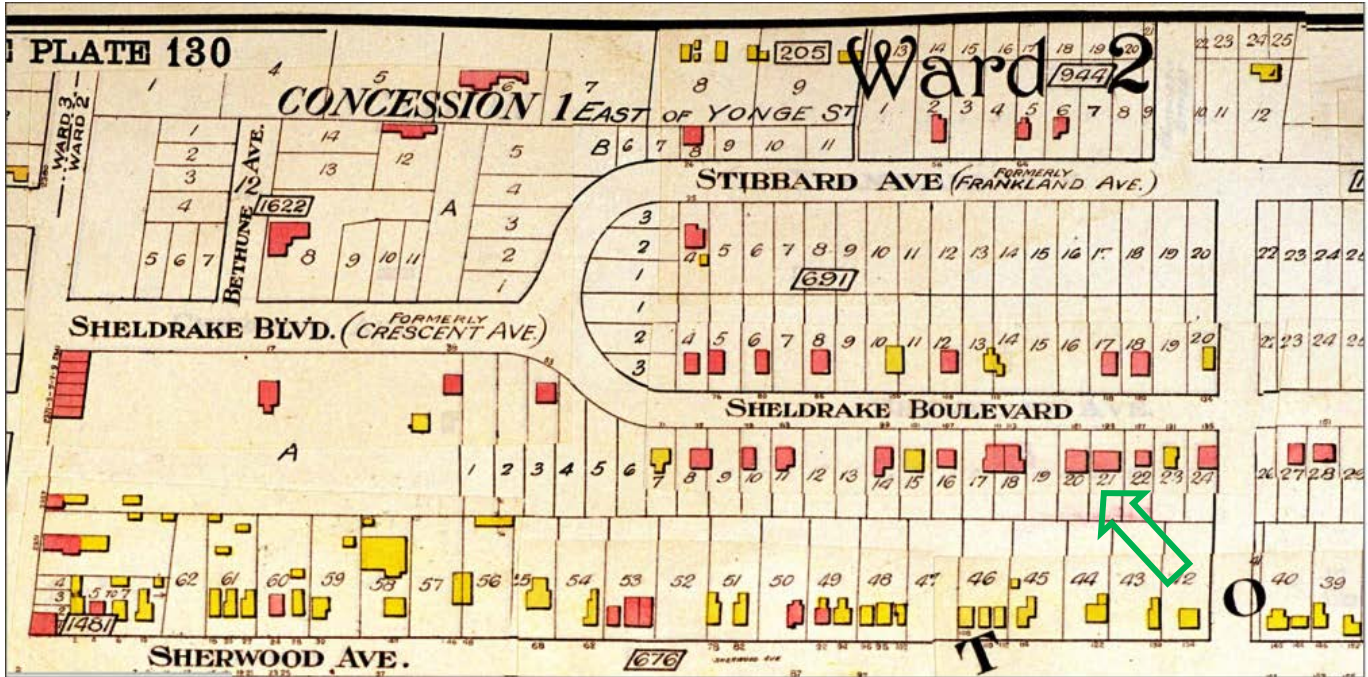
3. Miles & Co. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York* (detail) 1878: showing John Stibbard's purchase of land to the west of his brother Robert and the location of the future 217 Sheldrake Boulevard. (Ng)



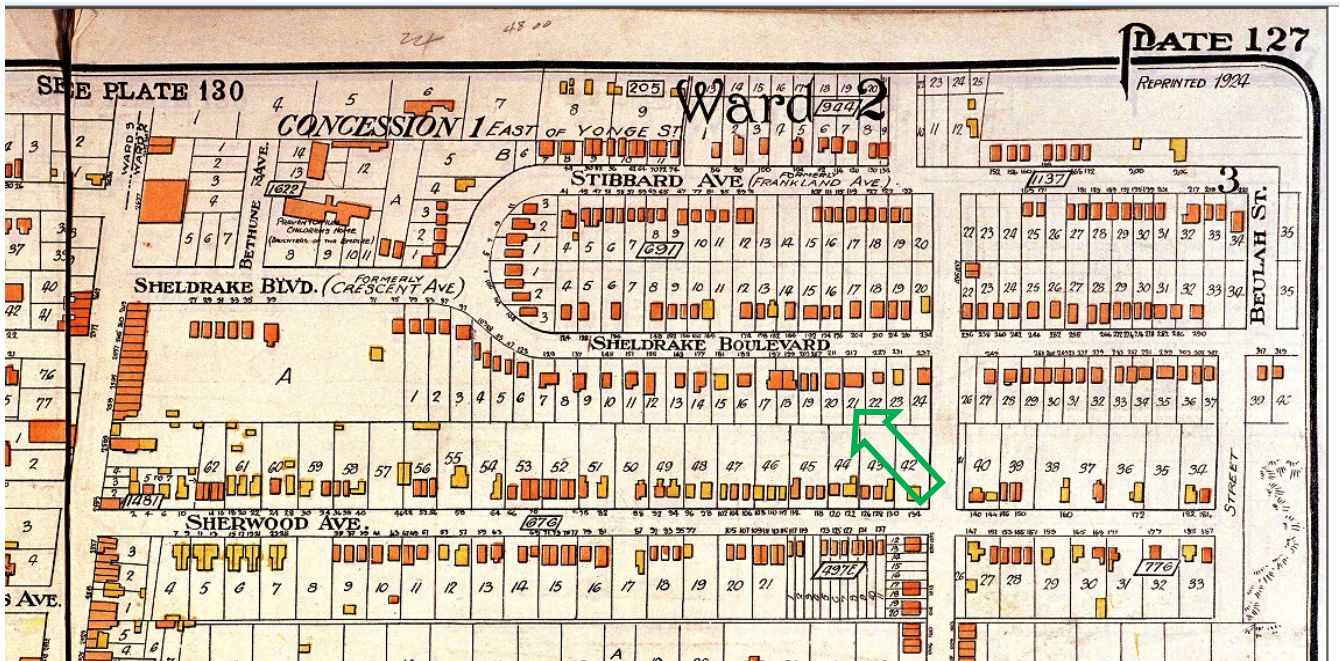
4. Goads Atlas, 1890 (detail) Showing the identification of the area as North Toronto/Eglinton, north of the fourth concession and the subdivision of the west half of the southern half of Lot 3 as Plan 691 with access from Yonge Street. (City of Toronto Archives [CTA])



5. Goads Atlas, 1890 (detail): Showing a closer view of the Plan 691, with its parts A- E. 217 Sheldrake is in part E. Sheldrake Avenue has maintained its original street name, but Crescent was later changed to Sheldrake, Franklin to Stibbard and Victoria to Blythwood (now the Blythwood HCD). (CTA)



6. Goads Atlas, 1913 (detail): Showing a closer view of the Plan 691, with the Forsey Page house occupying Lot 21 which was then known as 123 Sheldrake Boulevard. Three houses east of 123 Sheldrake, Mount Pleasant Road now crosses through Plan 691 as a new north-south route parallel to Yonge Street. (CTA)



7. Goads Atlas, 1924 (detail): Showing the full development of the plots of Plan 691 and Mount Pleasant Avenue cutting through Plan 691. (CTA)



8. Forsey Page House, 217 Sheldrake Boulevard: showing the front (north) elevation with the broad gable roof, overhanging a deep porch with a gable dormer with Tudor half timbering and stucco. (HPS, 2016)



9. Page House, east and north elevations: showing the extent of the broad gable roof, depth of the verandah and east elevation with chimney. (HPS, 2016)



10. Page House, gable dormer, north elevation: showing the half-timbering and stucco as well as the leaded glass windows all associated with the Tudor Revival style. (HPS, 2016)



11. Page House, front door: showing the typical pattern of a central door framed by sidelights. (HPS, 2016)



12. Page House, north elevation: showing a front window with its triple ligh, leaded glass and cast stone sill. (HPS, 2016)



13. Page House, north elevation: showing the verandah with previous balustrade.(HPS files, 2012)



14. Page House, rear (south) elevation. (HPS, 2016)



15. Page House, south-east corner: showing the corner windows on the south and east elevations. (HPS, 2016)



16. Page House, side (west) elevation: showing the location of the modification to the arrangement of windows in the kitchen under the hood roof. (HPS, 2016)



17. Page House, garage: showing the relationship of the garage to the house. (HPS, 2016)



18. Page House, garage: showing the garage with its windows. The street-facing side has a modern garage door. (HPS, 2016)



19. Sheldrake Boulevard, south side: showing the context of the Page house on the south side of Sheldrake Boulevard. (HPS, 2016)



20. Sheldrake Boulevard, south side: showing the houses at 199 and 197 Sheldrake with new houses beyond. (HPS, 2016)



21. 181 Sheldrake Boulevard, south side of the street. (HPS, 2016)



22. Sheldrake Boulevard, north side: showing the context with the variety of styles, materials and details, 192-204 Sheldrake. (HPS, 2016)



23. Sheldrake Boulevard, north side: showing the variety of housing, 174 and 170 Sheldrake. (HPS, 2016)



24. Sheldrake Boulevard, south side: 177 Sheldrake. (HPS, 2016)



25. Sheldrake Boulevard, north side: showing the context with the variety of styles, materials and types, 136 Sheldrake (left) (HPS, 2016)



26. Sheldrake Boulevard, north side: showing the context with the variety of styles, materials and types, 124 and 128 Sheldrake. (*HPS, 2016*)