

HERITAGE PROPERTY RESEARCH AND EVALUATION REPORT



**GARDEN COURT APARTMENTS
1477 BAYVIEW AVENUE, TORONTO**

Prepared by:

Heritage Preservation Services
City Planning Division
City of Toronto

August 2016

1. DESCRIPTION



Above: the entrance to the Garden Court Apartments on Bayview Avenue;
cover: the Bayview Avenue frontage, showing Building A (left) and Building K (right)
(Heritage Preservation Services, 2016)

1477 Bayview Avenue: Garden Court Apartments	
ADDRESS	1477 Bayview Avenue (east side, between St. Cuthberts Road and Millwood Road)
WARD	26 (Don Valley West)
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	Plan 2920, Part Blocks A & B
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Leaside
HISTORICAL NAME	Garden Court Apartments
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1939-1946
ORIGINAL OWNER	Berney Realty Corporation Limited
ORIGINAL USE	Residential (apartment complex)
CURRENT USE*	Residential (apartment complex) * This does not refer to permitted use(s) as defined by the Zoning By-law
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Forsey Page and Steele, architects; Dunnington-Grubb and Stensson, landscape architects; Jackson-Lewis Company, contractors
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	Brick cladding with brick, stone, metal and wood trim
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	Art Moderne
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	See section 2.iii
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative and Contextual Values
HERITAGE STATUS	Designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act
RECORDER	Heritage Preservation Services: Kathryn Anderson
REPORT DATE	August 2016

2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 1477 Bayview Avenue, which was designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1989 by former Borough of East York By-law No. 87-64. The report includes an evaluation of the property according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria for municipal designation prescribed by the Province of Ontario following the 2005 amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in Section 4 (Summary).

i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Key Date	Historical Event
1913	The Town of Leaside is incorporated
1939 Jan	Architects Forsey Page and Steele prepare the plans for the Garden Court Apartments, identifying 10 apartment blocks by the letters A to K (excluding the letter I)
1939 Mar 7	C. Blake Jackson and his son, Robert B. Jackson, register Plan 2920 on the east side of Bayview Avenue, south of Millwood Road in Leaside
1939 Mar 9	Block A under Plan 2920 is transferred to Jackson's Berney Realty Corporation for \$40,000
1939 June	The property owners mortgage the tract for \$43,000, and receive funding authorized by the National Housing Act (enacted the previous year)
1939 June 23	The "Garden Court" is advertised in the <u>Toronto Daily Star</u> for occupancy in the fall of 1939
1939 Nov	The Garden Court Apartments are profiled in the <u>Journal</u> of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada
1940	Buildings A, B, C, D and E of the Garden Court Apartments are in place along the north side of the complex according to the city directory of 1941 (with information dating to the previous year)
1941	The next year, Buildings H, J and K in the southwest corner of the site are occupied, and former Toronto mayor Sam McBride is a tenant in Building C
1944 Oct	In a letter to the municipality, the owners outline the construction and delays due to World War II
1944	Toronto architect John B. Parkin begins his long-term tenancy in Building C according to the City Directory for 1945 (with information dating to the previous year)
1945	Building G is completed at the southeast corner of the central courtyard, with Toronto architect Gordon Adamson among the first tenants
1946	Located in the southeast corner of the site on Berney Crescent, Building F is the final building completed (when the tax assessment notice is compiled in April 1946, only two units are occupied)
1947 Sept	The Prudential Insurance Company of America acquires the property
1950	The Garden Court Apartments receive an inaugural Massey Medal for Architecture in the apartments category
1958	The property is illustrated on an update to the Underwriter's Survey Bureau's atlas and the subject of an editorial in <u>The Canadian Architect</u>
1965	Reuben R. Dennis and William H. Shortill are the new owners of the site
1982	The property is listed in the Inventory of Historic Buildings in East York

1989	Council of the Borough of East York designates the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act by By-law No. 87-64
2006	The inclusion of the property at 1477 Bayview Avenue on the City-wide Inventory of Heritage Properties (now known as the Heritage Register) is confirmed ¹

ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Leaside

The property at 1477 Bayview Avenue is located in the Toronto neighbourhood of Leaside, which was developed on farmland originally surveyed in York Township and acquired by members of the Lea family in the 19th century (Image 3). When the Ontario and Quebec Railway (later a subsidiary of Canadian Pacific Railway) extended its tracks through the district, it named the junction "Leaside." After 1900, the competing Canadian Northern Railway assembled over 1000 acres of land in Leaside in transactions described as "the biggest real estate operation ever carried out in Toronto or neighbourhood" (Image 4).² The railway and its real estate agency, the York Land Company engaged the famed landscape designer Frederick Todd to design a model town with curved residential streets adjoining park land and a separate sector for industry (Image 5).³ Leaside was incorporated as a town in 1913, but its development was delayed by the community's distance from Toronto, the impact of World War I, and the bankruptcy of the Canadian Northern Railway.⁴ Only 68 dwellings were recorded within the town's limits in the 1920s.⁵ However, after the Leaside Viaduct opened across the Don River in 1927 and despite the Great Depression of the 1930s, Leaside experienced a residential building boom between 1929 and 1939 when its population grew from about 600 to 5000. Leaside remained an independent municipality until 1967 when it amalgamated with the Township of East York as the Borough of East York.⁶

1477 Bayview Avenue

The development of Leaside and the subject property at 1477 Bayview Avenue can be traced on historical maps and atlases, including those attached in Section 6 of this report. The 1924 update to Goad's Atlas illustrates the large undeveloped tract on the east side of the street, south of Millwood Road in the residential sector of the community (Image 6).

¹ <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2006/agendas/council/cc060925/plt6rpt/cl003.pdf>

² Toronto World, March 22, 1912, 1

³ Leaside was the third model community (after Mount Royal, Quebec and Port Mann, British Columbia), planned by Todd and inspired by the Garden City Movement. In Leaside, the plan was not executed exactly as Todd envisioned

⁴ Leaside was an important training centre for the Royal Flying Corps during World War I, and its initial development was spurred by industries such as the Canada Wire and Cable Company, which built housing for its workers

⁵ Otto, 156

⁶ Before amalgamating with the Township of East York (created 1923), in 1954 Leaside annexed the former Thorncliffe Race Track lands south of the townsite. East York remained the only "Borough" in Canada prior to its amalgamation in 1998 as part of the current City of Toronto

In 1939, this property was subdivided under Plan 2920 by C. (Charles) Blake Jackson (1884-1979) and his son, Robert Berney Jackson, who transferred the land to their real estate firm, the Berney Realty Corporation (Image 7). Assisted by financing from the National Housing Act, the Garden Court Apartments were built by the Jackson-Lewis Company, the construction firm co-founded in 1913 by the elder Jackson, who was afterward “identified in a large way with the construction world in Ontario, with interests centering in Toronto.”⁷

The construction of the Garden Court Apartments coincided with World War II (Images 8-11). After completing the first five buildings (and the adjoining garages) on the north end of the site by the fall of 1939, three additional buildings and the garages were in place near the south boundary in 1941 (Images 12 and 13). As explained by the owners in correspondence with the municipality, the construction process was halted in 1944, with the delay blamed on the “Federal controls” on building materials during the war (Image 14).⁸ Ironically, C. Blake Jackson served as Controller of Construction for the Department of Munitions and Supply during the conflict, overseeing the very policies restricting building activity and access to resources that delayed the completion of the remaining two apartments at Garden Court until the end of the war (Image 15). During this era, occupants of note included former two-time Toronto mayor, Sam McBride and architect John B. Parkin in Building C, and architect Gordon Adamson, who was one of the first occupants in Building G.

A profile of the Garden Court Apartments in the November 1939 issue of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada’s Journal noted that “the layout of the site and buildings embodies a departure from conventional apartment house design” and that “less than 23% of the available property is utilized by buildings” (Image 12). The Garden Court Apartments were awarded an inaugural Massey Medal for Architecture in 1950. Eight years later, and more than 20 years after their completion, the Garden Court Apartments were the subject of an editorial in The Canadian Architect, which noted the property’s “exceptionally high standard of landscaping” and described it as “unique in its day and it stands up exceptionally well today” (Image 16).⁹ The former Borough of East York designated the property at 1477 Bayview Avenue under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1989.

Forsey Page and Steele, Architects

The Garden Court Apartments were designed by the Toronto architectural partnership of Forsey Page and Steele (afterward Page and Steele). The firm was co-founded by Forsey Pemberton Page (1885-1970) who, following his graduation as an architect and engineer from the University of Toronto, received additional training with S. H. Townsend before

⁷ Middleton, 121. Jackson purchased the remainder of the company from his business partner, Frank Lewis in 1917 and retained ownership of the business until his death in 1979. A brief history of Jackson-Lewis is provided by the City of Toronto Archives, with photographs and other archival records of the firm’s extensive projects recorded under Fonds 1185

⁸ Letter, City of Toronto Building Records, 1944

⁹ The Canadian Architect, July 1958

opening a solo firm in 1911. After his service in World War I, Page established a partnership with Stamford Warrington and accepted residential commissions in Toronto's upscale neighbourhoods. In 1927, Page formed a new practice with W. Harland Steele (1900-1996) following the latter's studies in Europe. Over the subsequent decades, Page and Steele evolved from a firm specializing in traditional residential designs to one of the leading practitioners of Modern architecture in Toronto. This transformation was aided after 1950 by the addition of British architect, Peter Dickinson (1925-1961) who "transformed the firm into one of the most successful architectural offices in the postwar era in Canada."¹⁰ In addition to the Garden Court Apartments, other landmark buildings in Toronto designed by Page and Steele include the O'Keefe Centre (1960, and now known as the Sony Centre), and Commerce Court (1972, in association with American architect I. M. Pei).¹¹

As a solo practitioner during the "apartment boom" era in early-20th century Toronto, Forsey Page designed the Bradgate Arms (1909) on Avenue Road near St. Clair Avenue West. During his subsequent partnerships with Warrington and Steele, Page evidently received few commissions for apartment buildings until the 1930s when Forsey Page and Steele "began to introduce a more progressive and modern aesthetic to their residential and commercial work, best seen in their Toronto projects such as the Park Lane Apartments (1937) [and] the Garden Court Apartments (1939)...." (Image 17).¹² The former project is considered the earliest example of the Art Moderne style applied to a city apartment in Toronto, while the latter is regarded as the first of its type in Canada with its integration of built form and landscaping.

Dunington-Grubb and Stensson, Landscape Architects

The landscape design that is an integral part of the Garden Courts Apartments complex was executed by the notable practice of Dunington-Grubb and Stensson. The firm originated in England when landscape architects Howard B. Grubb (1881-1965) and Lorrie A. Dunington (1877-1945) married and combined their surnames. The couple relocated to Canada in 1911 where they founded Sheridan Nurseries to provide products for both the public and private commissions they secured, mainly in Toronto and Southern Ontario. The firm was renamed Dunington-Grubb and Stensson when Jesse Vilhelm Stensson (son of the manager of Sheridan Nurseries and a graduate of the School of Design at Harvard University) joined the practice.¹³ While the partnership's extensive portfolio included the well-known Oakes Theatre Gardens in Niagara Falls, as well as the civic improvement for the design of the median on University Avenue in Toronto, "approximately two-thirds of the work was private residential gardens for wealthy clients." The latter included the Garden Court Apartments in Leaside.

¹⁰ "W. Harland Steele," entry in Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950, unpagged

¹¹ The O'Keefe Centre was a joint commission with architect Earle C. Morgan

¹² "W. Harland Steele," entry in Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950, unpagged

¹³ Stensson was afterward succeeded in the practice by his wife, the notable landscape architect Janina Korkuc

ii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Current photographs of the property at 1477 Bayview Avenue are found on the cover and in Sections 2 and 6 of this report. The Garden Court Apartments are an important early example in Toronto of the Art Moderne style, which was introduced to Europe and North America in the early 1930s. “Rather than being based on the revival of previous architectural styles, this style was a response to a new era” and “founded on smooth, clean and simple lines” with a lack of decorative embellishment.¹⁴ The Garden Court Apartments exhibit the style with the flat roofs, horizontal emphasis, curved elements (canopies and balconies), a variety of fenestration that included vertical stairhall windows and wraparound corner windows, and “modern” materials such as Monel metal and glass block.

The Garden Court Apartments were built when “the late 1920s and the 1930s were the heyday of apartment construction in Toronto.”¹⁵ While apartment buildings were introduced to the city at the turn of the 20th century, the type was first met with resistance on “moral, sanitary and economic grounds” because of their association with tenements and their challenge to the desirability of home ownership.¹⁶ Despite this scepticism and the by-laws enacted by the municipality in 1912 to restrict their construction, the completion of 250 new apartment buildings was reported in the decade between 1905 and 1915.¹⁷ The latter included a variation of the type known as “garden court” apartments for the placement of multiple low-rise housing units in an open landscaped setting.

The Development of “Garden Court” Apartments in Toronto

The origins of the garden court apartment as a type is linked to the Garden City movement in late 19th-century England, which was founded by Sir Ebenezer Howard and espoused in his book, “Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform” (1898). Howard’s description of a planned community mixing the best features of town and country living was recognized in the creation of Letchworth (1902) as the first “garden city” in England.¹⁸ A decade later, Letchworth’s utopian vision and stylistic features inspired, in part, the first “garden court” apartment complexes in Toronto. With funding provided following the passage of the Ontario Housing Act (1913), the Toronto Housing Company (the municipally-sponsored entity that was the forerunner to today’s Toronto Community Housing Corporation) built Spruce Court and Riverdale Court in response to the demand for low-income family housing in healthy settings (Image 18).¹⁹ Located in the

¹⁴ https://www.nationaltrustcanada.ca/sites/www.heritagecanada.org/files/VHF_YourHouse_Style6.pdf.
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¹⁵ Dendy and Kilbourn, 238

¹⁶ Dennis, 19

¹⁷ Dennis, 18

¹⁸ http://www.leitchworthgc.com/sites/default/files/walking_guide_2014.pdf

¹⁹ The origins, goals and outcome of the Toronto Housing Company is discussed by Sean Purdy’s article, published in the March 1993 issue of Urban History Review

Cabbagetown and Riverdale neighbourhoods that bookended the Don River, Toronto architect Eden Smith designed the facilities with low-rise “cottage flats” with Period Revival styling evoking British architecture.²⁰ The latter buildings, which were constructed around open courtyards that provided shared outdoor space, in turn, influenced high-end apartment complexes in the 1920s, including Ancroft Place (1920) in Rosedale and Governor’s Manor (1928) in East York. Whether for public or private housing, the garden court complexes offered “a good compromise between relatively inexpensive apartment living and the privacy of a detached house.”²¹

In Leaside, particularly, where significant tracks of land remained available by the interwar era, more substantial examples of the garden court type of apartments were unveiled. In 1939, local developer (and recently-elected mayor) Howard Talbot introduced a trio of adjacent apartment complexes on Bayview Avenue that complemented Leaside’s residential sector with their Georgian Revival (also known as Modern Georgian) styling and featured a variety of courtyard layouts (Image 19). Further south and adjoining Leacrest Crescent, the Crestview Apartments (1950 and 1951) comprised a series of 22 individual apartment blocks with styling similar to the Talbot Apartments that were placed in an extended green space, but without defined “courtyard” boundaries (Image 20).²² While all the variations of garden court apartments in Leaside have unique qualities, the subject properties at 1477 Bayview Avenue are set apart by the expansive amount of open green space in relation to the built forms.

Forsey Page and Steele’s plans for the Garden Court Apartments were inspired by a number of precedents, including Spruce Court and Riverdale Court, as well as the studies the firm undertook of other garden court complexes in Europe and North America.²³ The Garden Court Apartments were purportedly influenced as well by a proposal that the Toronto Chapter of the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) presented to the Bruce Commission on Housing Conditions in Toronto in 1934 in anticipation of the future renewal of the Regent Park neighbourhood.²⁴ In their plans, Forsey Page and Steele retained the OAA’s layout with low-rise buildings surrounding a large courtyard, but introduced Art Moderne styling in the yellow brickwork, the contrasting vertical versus horizontal elements, and the counterpoint of rounded and straight-line balconies. The brick colour and many of the same decorative elements were also present in Forsey Page and Steele’s contemporaneous design for the Park Lane Apartments in Forest Hill, which was a traditional downtown apartment complex apart from (in 1938) its attention-drawing Art Moderne appearance.²⁵ While strikingly Modern, the Garden Court Apartments also paid homage to Forsey Page and Steele’s long-standing familiarity with traditional

²⁰ Now co-operative housing complexes, the properties at 330 Spruce Street and 100 Bain Avenue are listed on the City of Toronto’s Heritage Register

²¹ Kalman, 775, describing the Garden Court Apartments

²² Built by the Lawrence Construction Company, the extent of the complex is shown on Image 2

²³ The Canadian Architect, July 1958

²⁴ Dendy and Kilbourn, 247

²⁵ Listed on the City of Toronto’s Heritage Register, the Park Lane Apartments at 110 St. Clair Avenue West are also noted for their historical association with the celebrated Canadian pianist, Glenn Gould, who resided in the building for over 20 years

Georgian Revival designs, as shown in the hipped roofs applied to the three-storey buildings, as well as the classical elements that include quoins and string courses.²⁶

The innovations at the Garden Court Apartments continued on the interior, which featured four-to-six units grouped together to share a common entrance and stairwell, thereby eliminating the long interior corridors associated with standard apartment building designs. The accommodation ranged from two-storey units to bachelor suites, and many apartments had both a front and back entrance recalling house form buildings. All of the apartment blocks had access to shared open space in either the central courtyard or one of the secondary courts in the outer corners of the site.

As described in the 1939 building specifications, “the Garden Court is in a class by itself in the entire Toronto District...because it has a combination of a superb location, a beautiful garden plan and building layout, more efficient floor plan and is more modern.”

Heritage Attributes

As shown on the key map (Image 21) and the plans and photographs on the cover and in Sections 2 and 6 of this report, the Garden Court Apartments are comprised of ten stand-alone buildings that are identified by the letters A to K (excluding I). At the west end of the complex, Building A (north) and Building K (south) face Bayview Avenue, with each consisting of a rectangular-shaped three-storey structure flanked by a single two-storey wing. Similar buildings, identified as Building E (north) and Building F (south), are placed at the east end of the complex facing Berney Crescent, with Building F extended in length.²⁷ Near the north and south ends of the property, Building C (north) and Building H (south) have three-storey centre blocks flanked by two-storey wings, with the principal elevations facing inward toward the central courtyard. Two-storey ell-shaped buildings anchor each corner of the central courtyard and are identified as Buildings B (northwest), D (northeast), G (southeast) and J (southwest).

The ten buildings share buff brick cladding, with brick, stone, wood, metal and glass applied for the detailing, including the brick quoins and multiple string courses. The three-storey buildings are covered by hipped roofs, while flat roofs protect the two-storey buildings and wings. Coping (which has been replaced) marks all of the rooflines, which display brick chimneys, with extended chimneys on the rear elevations of Building C (north) and Building H (south).

The apartment complex is entered from the west on Bayview Avenue through a brick portico supported on stout piers with brick detailing and, on the west face, metal letters reading “Garden Court” above the street number. On Buildings A, C, E, F, H and K, the three-storey buildings and their two-storey wings are symmetrically organized with the

²⁶ Some of Forsey Page and Steele’s high-end residential commissions in Toronto neighbourhoods including Forest Hill and Rosedale are documented in <http://www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/1376>

²⁷ The original plans (including those appended as Image 11) indicate that Building K was designed to extend further south on Bayview Avenue

main elevation of each building divided into three parts where a central frontispiece contains an entrance. Most of the entrances have surrounds with stylized classical detailing and panelled doors with glass inserts in geometrical patterns beneath either open porches or cantilevered canopies. Exceptions are found on the extended south wing of Building F on Berney Crescent and Buildings B, D, G, and J at the corners of the central courtyard where recessed entrances serving multiple units are placed in brick surrounds. On all ten buildings, the entrances on the principal elevations are surmounted by vertical strip windows designed to light the interior stairwells. The main entrances on most of the buildings are flanked by covered balconies (in all or some of the stories) that vary from rounded to square in profile and feature either brick or metal cladding. All of the buildings display flat-headed openings, including basement windows, with the window openings ranging from diminutive punched windows (Building F), to corner windows (Buildings B, D, G and J and the south wing of Building F). The vintage multi-paned steel-sash windows have been replaced in a style evoking the originals, while other openings (particularly the stairhall windows) contain glass blocks. The rear elevations of the ten buildings are viewed from either the interior pathways transecting the complex or, on Buildings C and H, the roadways accessing the garages at the north and south ends of the property, respectively. These secondary elevations display symmetrically-placed flat-headed door and window openings. Some of the side walls contain window openings.

The landscaping of the Garden Court Apartments is organized with a large central courtyard and smaller yet spacious courtyards in the four corners of the property. The property contains mature trees, low hedges and other plantings. At the centre of the complex, the large rectangular-shaped courtyard is laid out on a north-south axis. It features a grid-like pattern outlined by stone retaining walls with steps and, in the centre, a circular motif. Pathways cross the central courtyard on an east-west axis to connect the pedestrian entrances on Bayview Avenue and Berney Crescent. Other pathways link the buildings and provide secondary access routes to the adjoining streets and laneways. Some of the pathways and steps retain flagstone paving, including the terrace at the Bayview Avenue entrance. The site slopes from the west to the east, with steps leading down to the courtyard from Bayview Avenue and up to the axial pathways from the east entrance on Berney Crescent.

Light standards mark the main east/west pathways, including those placed on brick piers at the east pedestrian entrance and the south vehicular entrance on Berney Crescent (the original cone-shaped lamp heads have been removed). The series of garages along the north and south edges of the site are not identified as heritage attributes.

iii. CONTEXT

The location of the property at 1477 Bayview Avenue is shown on the maps attached as Image 1. The Garden Court Apartments are situated on the east side of Bayview Avenue in the block between Millwood Road (north) and St. Cuthberts Road (south), opposite Davisville Avenue. The large complex extends one block east to Berney Crescent.

The Garden Court Apartments are found toward the south end of Leaside’s main commercial thoroughfare on Bayview Avenue where they are adjoined by other apartment complexes, as well as house form and commercial buildings. Further south at 1325, 1351 and 1365 Bayview Avenue (flanking Airdrie Road and south of Sutherland Drive), the complex of garden court apartments known collectively as the Talbot Apartments (1939-1940), is designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. Within Leaside’s residential neighbourhood, the Agnes MacPhail House at 720 Millwood Road is another example of Art Moderne styling that is also designated as an individual property under the Ontario Heritage Act.²⁸

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 City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. The evaluation table is marked “N/A” if the criterion is “not applicable” to the property 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 property at 1477 Bayview Avenue has cultural heritage value for its design as a rare and exemplary apartment complex with highly crafted Art Moderne styling that is arranged around a central interior courtyard with retaining walls, pathways, mature trees, plantings and lamp standards that provides significant views into and across the generous site. The ten apartment blocks, which are identified by the letters A to K (excluding the letter I), are placed around the perimeter of the large courtyard, apart from those that face onto and connect the complex to the neighbouring streets (Bayview Avenue and Berney Crescent). While inspired by earlier garden court apartments in Europe and North America, the Garden Court Apartments in Leaside are purportedly the first of their type in Canada to incorporate the stream-lined Art Moderne detailing and materials that were new in this era. The high-end design featured private entrances (eliminating interior corridors), with many front-to-back units that included the open spaces and front and rear yards usually reserved for single family residences.

²⁸ Occupying a corner property that is also addressed as 2 Donegal Road, the site contains a two-storey duplex

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

The value of the Garden Court Apartments is also linked to the notable architects, landscape architects and contractors who designed and built the apartment complex. Forsey Page and Steele (afterward Page and Steele) were among the most significant architectural partnerships in Toronto in the 20th century, with their longevity linked to the firm’s ability to adapt to architectural innovations with changing styles, which included the Art Moderne. Forsey Page and Steele's design for the Garden Court Apartments was awarded an inaugural Massey Medal for Architecture in 1950, and the project remains one of the firm’s best-known commissions. The memorable landscape design was produced by the famed practice of landscape architects, Dunington-Grubb and Stensson. Headed by the husband-and-wife team of Howard Dunington and Lorrie Grubb and working with master gardener Jesse Vilhelm Stensson, the firm was among the first recognized professional landscape architectural partnerships in Canada. Among its most important private commissions, the Garden Court Apartments are particularly noteworthy for demonstrating Dunington-Grubb and Stensson’s expertise in creating intimate spaces within their landscape design on a larger public scale. The complex was built by the Jackson-Lewis Company, which was one of the best-known and most prolific construction management and general contracting firms in Toronto in the 20th century. C. Blake Jackson, a co-founder of the company, also co-owned the Berney Realty Corporation, which commissioned the Garden Court Apartments and retained the property until 1947.

The Garden Court Apartments are also valued for their contribution to the historical development of Leaside as it evolved from its agricultural origins to a planned community inspired by the Garden City movement and the designs of landscape architect Frederick Todd. The initially slow growth of Leaside as the result of war, economic depression and geographical isolation left large parcels of land intact that were developed in the mid-20th century for “garden court” apartments, including the property at 1477 Bayview Avenue. At the Garden Court Apartments, early occupants of note were the two-time Toronto mayor, Sam McBride (Building C) and architects John B. Parkin (Building C) and Gordon Adamson (Building G).

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

Contextually, the property at 1477 Bayview Avenue with the Garden Court Apartments is historically, visually, functionally and physically linked to its expansive setting in Leaside where it is situated in the residential sector, east of Bayview Avenue. While the scale of the buildings complements the adjoining neighbourhood, the size of the property (encompassing over 5 acres or 2.023 hectares) with its privately-owned open space contributes to its value as a local landmark.

4. SUMMARY

Following research and evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, it has been determined that the property at 1477 Bayview Avenue meets the criteria for municipal designation for its design, associative and contextual values. The Garden Court Apartments (1939-46) are valued as an exemplary example of a style and type of apartment complex, which was designed by the notable Toronto architectural firm of Forsey Page and Steele in a landscaped setting by the famous Canadian landscape architects, Dunington-Grubb and Stensson. Linked historically to the development of Leaside as a planned community with desirable residential buildings, the Garden Court Apartments were commissioned and constructed by C. Blake Jackson and his son, Robert, who were important contractors associated with innumerable buildings of note in Toronto and beyond. The property at 1477 Bayview Avenue stands as a local landmark in Leaside and Toronto.

5. SOURCES

Archival Sources

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- Local History Files, Leaside Branch, Toronto Public Library:

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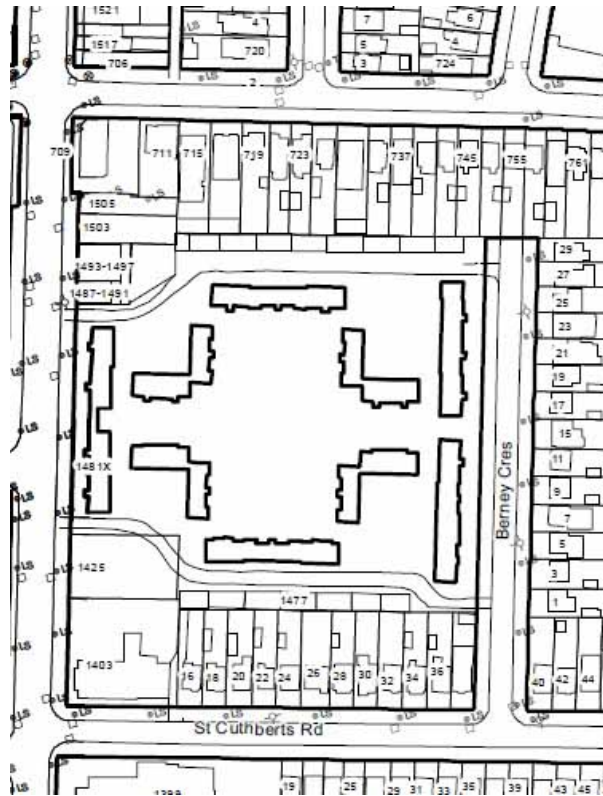
"W. Harland Steele," entry in Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Canada, 1800-1950,

<http://dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/architects/view/2052>

"The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects," correspondence, 1984

<http://www.csla-aapc.ca/sites/csla-aapc.ca/files/Congress/1984%20Congress%20Program.PDF>

6. IMAGES – maps and atlases are followed by other archival images, with contemporary photographs of the site at the end. **Arrows** mark the location of the property at 1477 Bayview Avenue.



1. Location Maps: showing the property at 1477 Bayview Avenue, which extends eastward to Berney Crescent between St. Cuthberts Road (south) and Millwood Road (north) (City of Toronto Property Data Map and www.bing.com/maps).



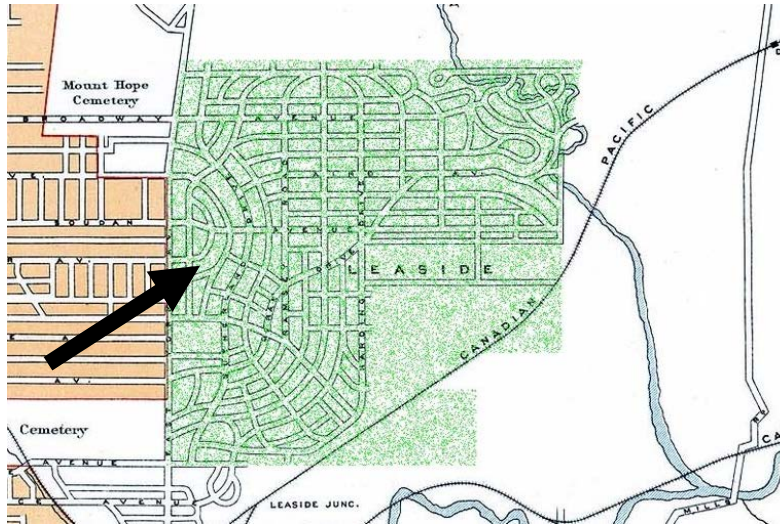
2. Location Map, Leaside: showing the three “garden court” apartment complexes in Leaside with the Garden Court Apartments at 1477 Bayview Avenue (top), the three apartment complexes collectively known as the Talbot Apartments at 1325, 1351 and 1365 Bayview Avenue (centre), and the Crestview Apartments along Leacrest Road and Mallory Crescent (bottom) (the exact boundaries of the properties are not shown) (www.bing.com/maps).



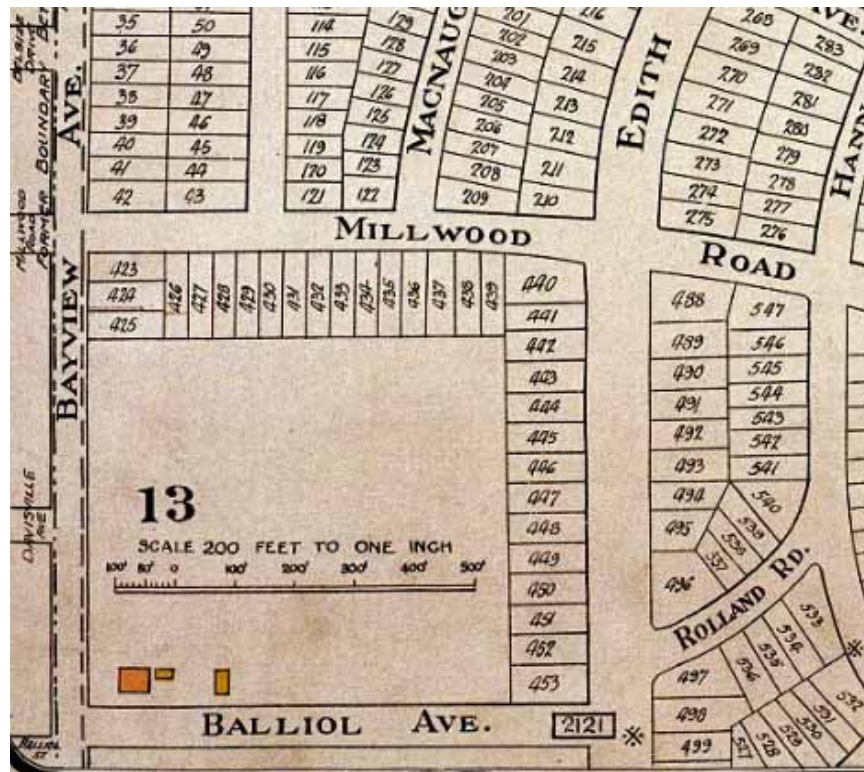
3. Tremaine's Map, 1860: members of the Lea family occupied the farm lots east of present-day Bayview Avenue where the community of Leaside was developed afterward.



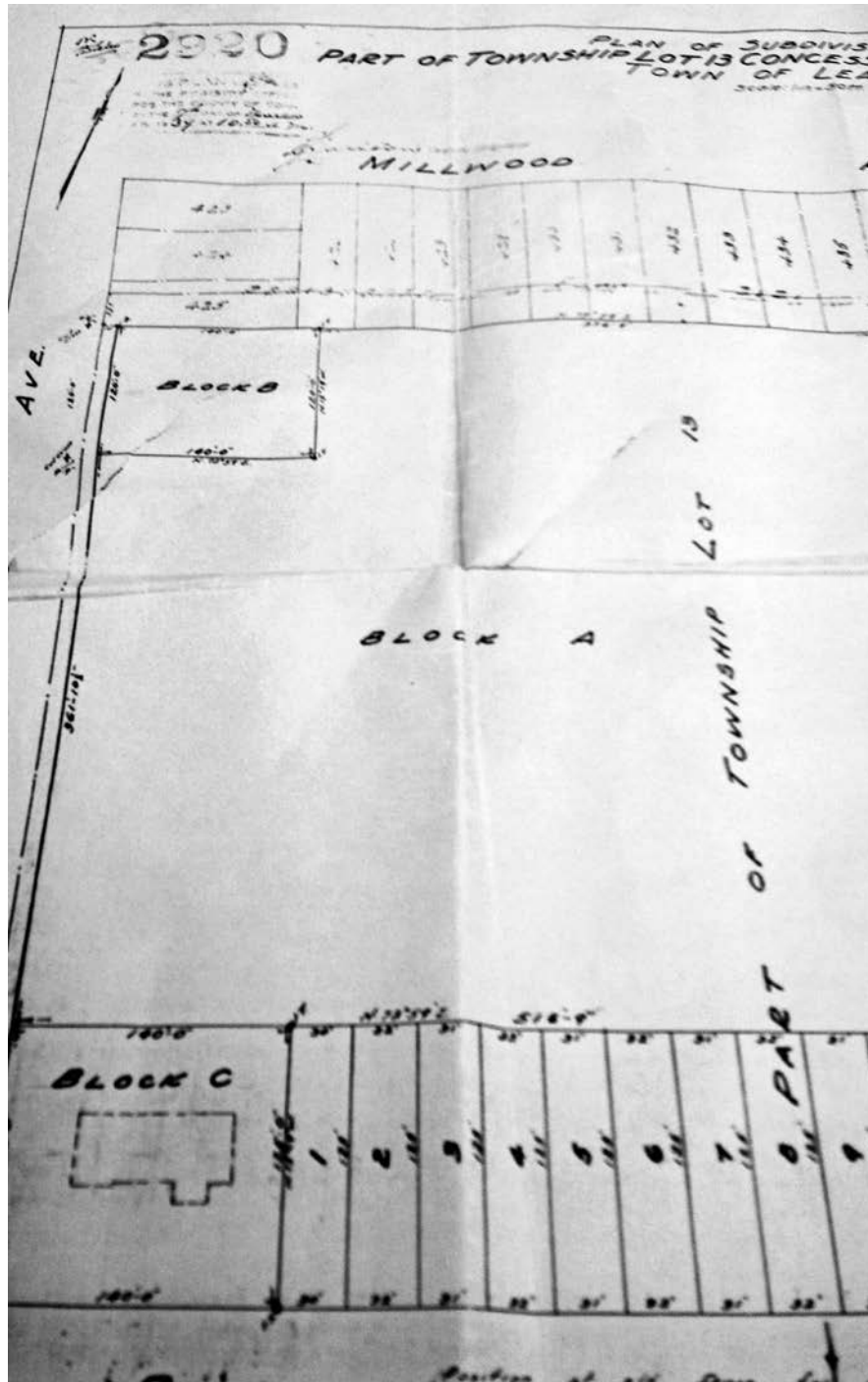
4. Illustration, "The Toronto World," June 24, 1912: showing the location of the Canadian Northern Railway's lands on the east side of Bayview Avenue in Leaside.



5. National Atlas of Canada, 1915: the layout of Leaside is shown, with the curved streets in the residential sector (the subdivision was not developed exactly as shown, and the Thorncliffe Park lands to the south were annexed later).



6. Goad's Atlas, 1910 revised to 1924: showing the subject property on the east side of Bayview Avenue on the as yet undivided portion of Township Lot 13.



7. Plan 2920, 1939: showing Block A where the Garden Court Apartments were built (Toronto Land Registry Office).

TOWN OF LEASIDE, ONTARIO

Duplicate Plans, Specifications, Survey and Block Plan must be submitted with this application.

SURVEY _____ Plan No. _____
Lot No. _____

APPLICATION FOR PERMIT TO

The Jackson Real Estate Company Ltd
80 King Street, Toronto

To the Inspector of Buildings, Town of Leaside.

The undersigned hereby applies for a permit to build according to the plans, specifications and block plan herewith submitted, and agrees to comply with all By-Laws and Town regulations. It being expressly understood that the issuing of a permit does not relieve the applicant from complying with all said By-Laws and Town regulations, though not called for in the specifications or shown on plans submitted, the applicant further agrees that if a permit is revoked for any cause or irregularity or non-compliance of the said By-Laws, or regulations, that in consideration of the issuing of the permit all claims are waived arising therefrom against the Corporation of the Town of Leaside.

1. Owner of Proposed Building *Berney Realty Corp. Ltd* Address *80 King Street*
 2. Architect's name *Tommy Page & Co. Ltd* Address *70 St. Clair Ave. W.*
 3. Applicant's name *C. Balak, owner* Address *80 King Street*
 4. Location *Berney Crescent*
 5. Nearest Cross Street *St. Catherine*
 6. Number of Storeys *part 3 stories part 2 stories (4 stories 7 ft)*
 7. Height of Building *34' and 14'*
 8. Enclosing Walls (Materials) *Brick*
 9. Probable Cost, Exclusive of Land *65,000*
 I, *C. Balak*, of *Toronto* in the County of York, do solemnly declare:

- THAT I am the authorized agent of the owner named in the application for a permit hereto attached.
- THAT the various answers made to the questions enumerated in the said application are true and made with a full knowledge of the circumstances connected with the same.
- THAT the Plans and Specifications submitted are prepared for the construction or alteration of the building or buildings described.
- THAT the Block Plan submitted correctly sets out the dimensions and area of the lands described in the said application, and the relation of the location of the proposed building to the street line and party lines.

SIGNED *C. Balak*
Per. *The Jackson Real Estate Co. Ltd*

Trustee of C. Balak H-168497

8. Building Permit, Garden Court Apartments, undated (but filed with 1939 records): showing the application for the "part 3 stories, part 2 stories" buildings (City of Toronto Building Records, Toronto and East York).

22 Apts. to Let—Unfurn'd

477 BAYVIEW AVENUE
FIVE blocks south of Eglinton avenue.

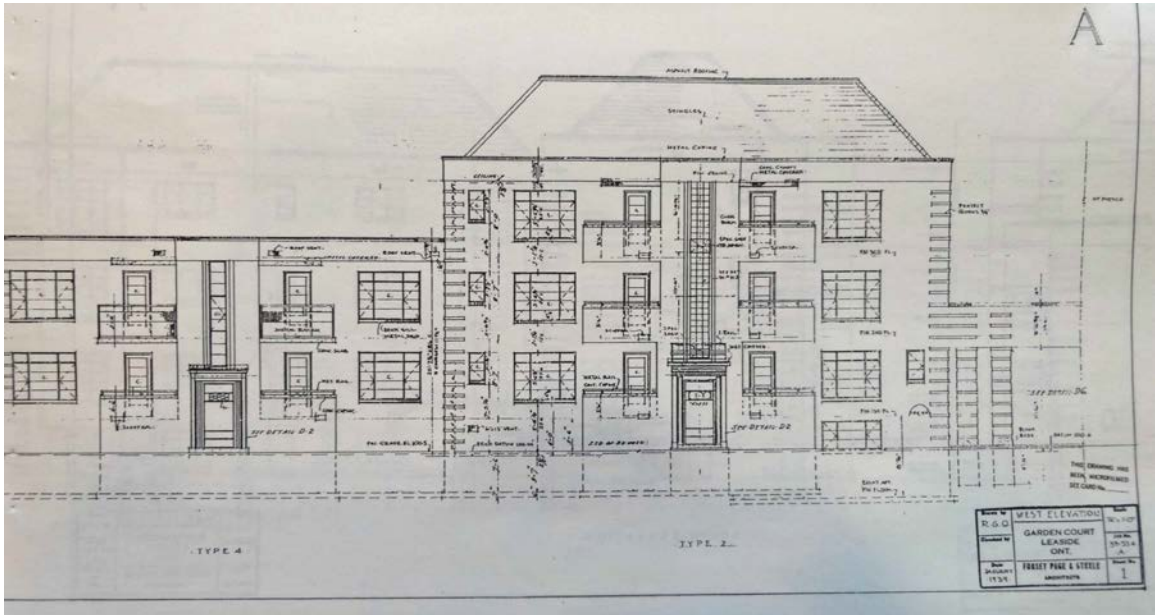
GARDEN COURT
(RESTRICTED)

DISTINGUISHED apartments, years ahead of past design, delightfully planned, cross-ventilated roomy suites, consisting of three to five rooms and some two-storey apartments; individual balconies overlooking inviting private lawns, gardens and tennis court.

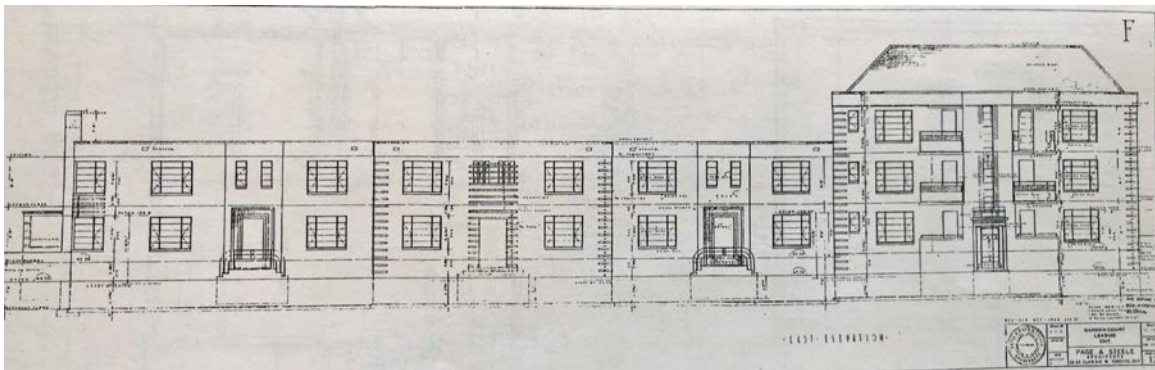
ARRANGEMENTS now being made for fall occupancy. Rentals as low as \$48.50. Visit the premises. Write or phone for attractive illustrated booklet.

THE BERNEY REALTY CORP. LTD.
CANADA PERMANENT BLDG., AD. 3768

9. Advertisement, Toronto Daily Star, June 23, 1939: advertising rental units at the Garden Court Apartments available for occupancy in the fall of 1939.

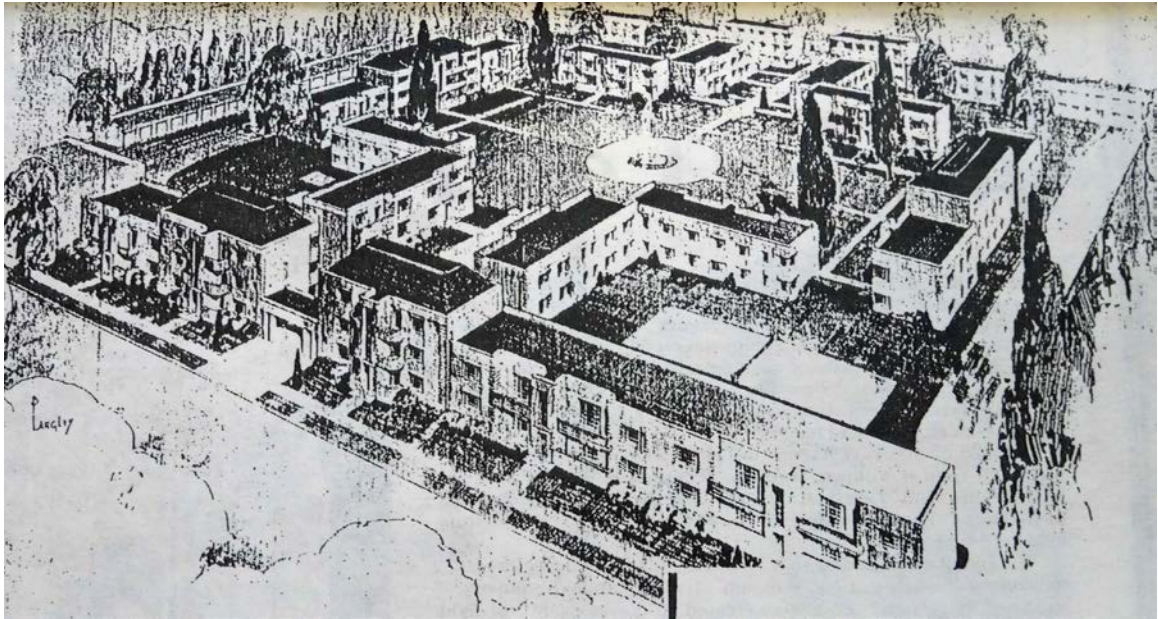


Building A, west elevation



Building F, east elevation

10. Permit Drawings, 1477 Bayview Avenue, 1939: showing the west elevation of Building A on Bayview Avenue (above) and the extended east elevation of Building F on Berney Crescent (below) (City of Toronto Building Records).



Plot Layout- The layout, of the site and buildings embodies a revolutionary departure from conventional apartment house design. Less than 23% of the available property is utilized by buildings. Thus, by the proper grouping of buildings there are large court areas which insure plenty of light and air for every apartment. The large centre court (over an acre and a half) is a more formal lawn and garden, while adjacent courts are play areas having tennis courts, etc. Even buildings which have street frontage are set well back from the street and have the benefit of a large court area. The court areas are of such an extent there are no "near facing" windows, thus providing a maximum amount of privacy for each apartment.

11. Construction Sketch and Specifications, 1939: while the sketch and description show the proposed appearance of the complex, it was not built entirely as shown after Building K in the southwest corner (below right) was shortened in length ("Garden Court Apartments, 477 Bayview Avenue, Toronto (Leaside), Canada," unpagged, above, and Specifications, City of Toronto Building Records, below).

Garden Court

GARDEN COURT is dedicated to the ideal of better living. It recognizes that the large group of citizens who, for one reason or another, do not wish to own homes of their own should not have to put up with inferior accommodation on that account.

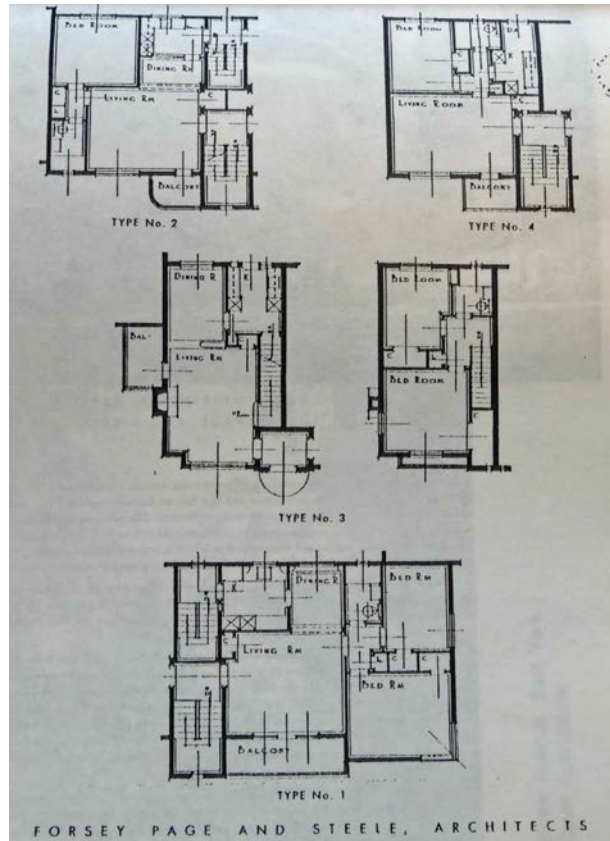
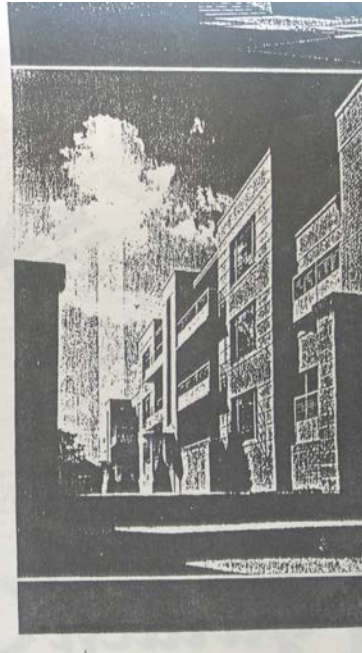
Dwellings, in the form of semi-detached residences as well as apartments, have been designed to satisfy the needs of a wide range of family types. Recreational facilities and green open spaces are provided for enjoyment of tenants.

Located on Bayview Avenue in Leaside, Garden Court is about 3½ miles from downtown Toronto. The property is level, about 5½ acres in extent. Less than one quarter of the total area is occupied by buildings. The surroundings are of residential character, free from industrial encroachments.

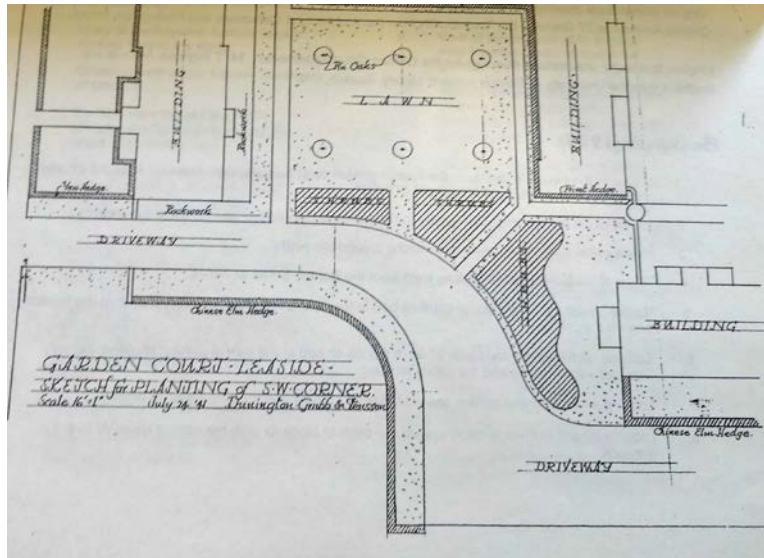
The layout developed by the architects embodies a departure from conventional apartment house design. By well-studied grouping of buildings, large court areas were created to ensure plenty of light and air for every dwelling. The large central court was treated in a formal, park-like manner, while tennis courts and play-yards are incorporated in adjacent courts of secondary importance. Garage accommodation is provided on north and south boundaries of the property.

Durable materials - concrete, masonry, steel sash, streamline piping and fittings - have been used throughout. The automatic oil heating system is by Trane. All bathrooms are finished in vitrolite and hardwood flooring is of the block type. In the basement complete laundry and drying-room facilities are installed. The erection of Garden Court was financed under the National Housing Act.

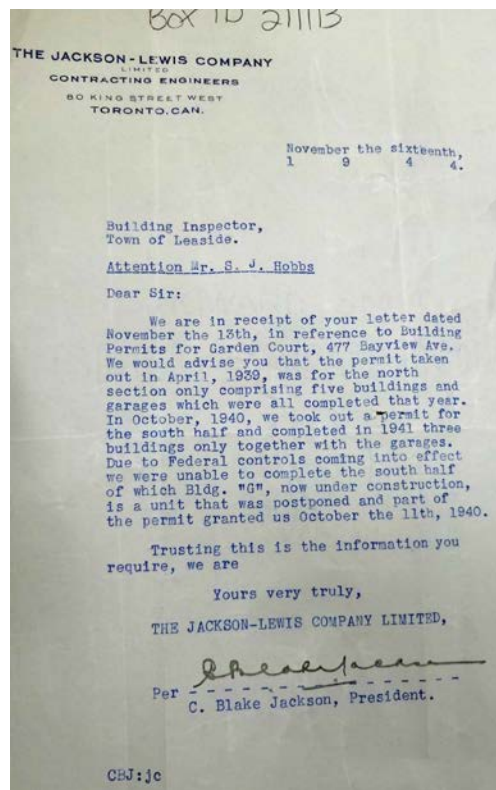
Forsy Page & Steele, Architects



12. Journal, Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, November 1939: extracts from the periodical describe the Garden Court Apartment complex (above) and show the variety of interior plans (below).



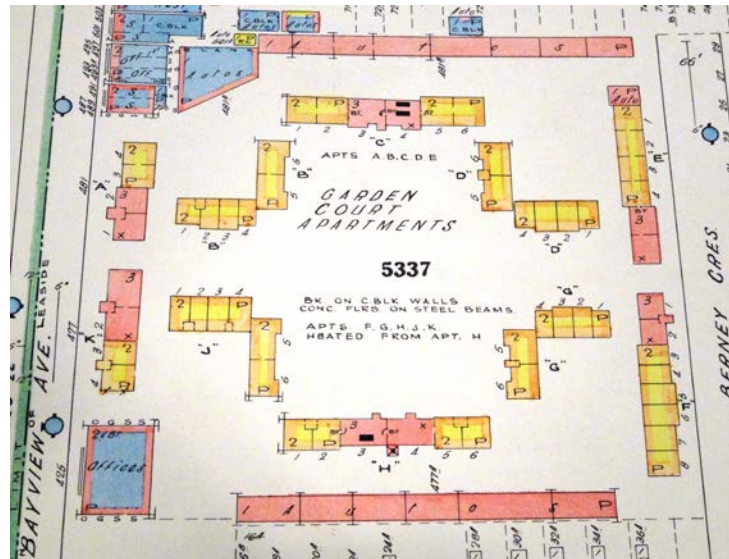
13. Landscape Plan, Garden Court Apartments, Dunnington-Grubb and Stensson, July 1941: showing the planting plan for the "southwest corner" of the property (Local History Collection, Leaside Public Library).



14. Letter, November 16, 1944: correspondence from the owners explaining the sequence of the construction to date (City of Toronto Building Records).



15. Aerial Photograph, Garden Court Apartments, 1947: the complex is shown following the completion in 1946 of all of the apartment blocks, with the dominance of its scale and footprint in Leaside (City of Toronto Archives).



16. Underwriters' Survey Bureau Atlas, December 1958: the details of the Garden Court Apartments complex are illustrated, including the letters of the alphabet assigned to each of the 10 buildings, with the garages on the north and south ends of the property.



17. Photograph, 110 St. Clair Avenue West, 2000: designed at the same time as the subject buildings, the Park Lane Apartments (1938) were another important example of Art Moderne styling by architects Forsey Page and Steele that was applied to an apartment building in an urban setting, but without the prominent courtyard associated with the “garden court” apartment typology (Toronto Historical Board).

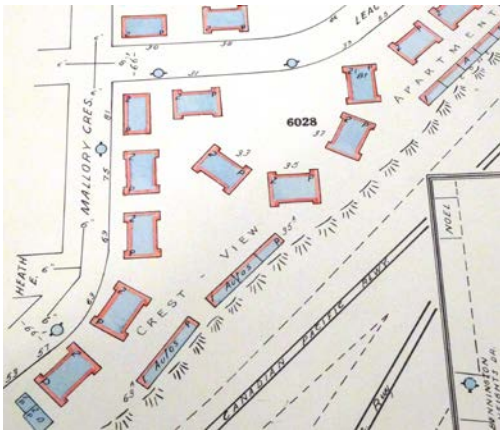


18. Archival Photograph, Spruce Court Apartments, c. 1920: showing one of the two apartment complexes commissioned by the Toronto Housing Company in 1912 and featuring the typology of the “garden court” with low-rise multi-unit buildings adjoining open courtyards that provided communal space (City of Toronto Archives, Series 838, Item 285).

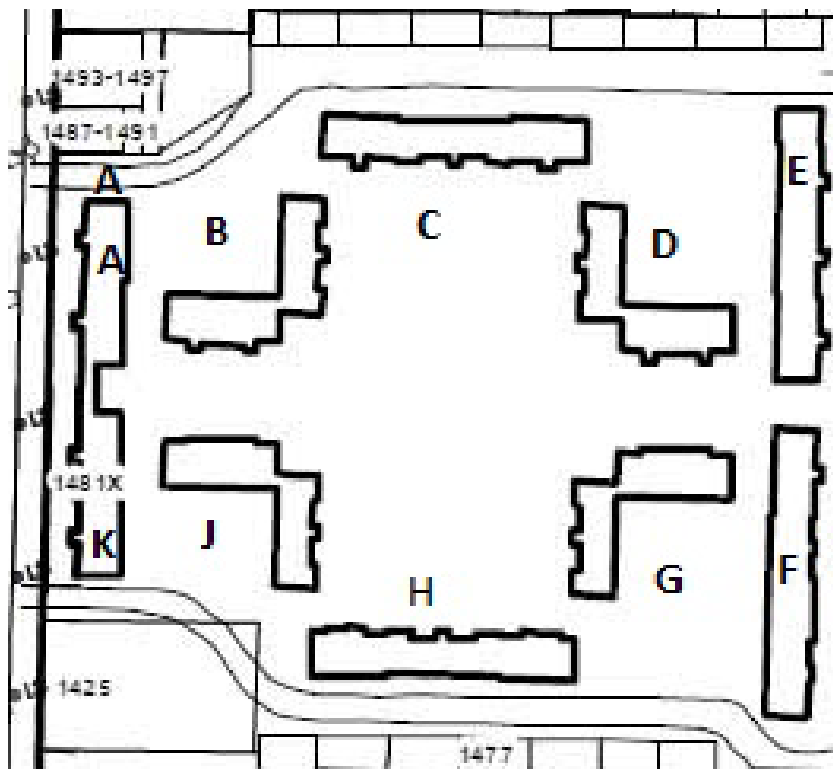


The photographs on the right show, from top to bottom, the Kelvingrove Apartments, the Strathavon Apartments, and the Glen Leven Apartments

19. Map and Photographs, 1325-1365 Bayview Avenue, Leaside: extract from Underwriters' Survey Bureau Atlas, December 1958 (left) and photographs (right) showing the grouping of the apartment complexes known collectively in Leaside as the "Talbot Apartments" that are situated south of the Garden Court Apartments and apply the garden court typology using a different architectural style and varying the layouts.



20. Map and Photographs, Crestview Apartments, Leaside: showing part of the collection of 20 apartment blocks on Leacrest Road and the adjoining streets that are set in landscaped open space, but without defined courtyards (Underwriters' Survey Bureau Atlas, 1958, left, and current photograph, Heritage Preservation Services, right).



21. Key Map, Garden Court Apartments, Leaside: with Bayview Avenue on the left, the key map shows the setback, placement and orientation around the central courtyard of the 10 apartment buildings, which are identified by their initials and illustrated in Images 22-25 below (City of Toronto Property Data Map).



The west elevation of Building A on Bayview Avenue, showing the three-storey centre section (right) flanked by the two-storey north wing (left). Similar features are found on Building K on Bayview, Buildings E and F on Berney Crescent, and Buildings C and H facing the interior courtyard.



East (rear) elevation of Building A (left), and part of the west elevation of Building K on Bayview Avenue (right).



Showing Buildings B (left) and J (right), which anchor the northwest and southwest corners of the central courtyard, respectively (similar two-storey Buildings D and G anchor the other corners).

22. Current Photographs, 1477 Bayview Avenue, 2016: showing the details of the west part of the complex and the central courtyard (Heritage Preservation Services).



Buildings C (left) and H (right) face the central courtyard from the north and south, respectively.



Looking east from the central courtyard and showing Buildings D (left) and G (right), which anchor the northeast and southeast corners, respectively.



The west elevations of Buildings F (left) and E (right) on Berney Crescent, which forms the east boundary of the site.

23. Current Photographs, 1477 Bayview Avenue, 2016: showing the details of the central and east parts of the complex and the central courtyard (Heritage Preservation Services).



Views east from Bayview Avenue between Buildings A and K with the lamp standards (left), and east into the central courtyard with the steps, retaining walls, pathways, and mature landscaping (right).



Views west from Berney Crescent between Buildings F and E with the lamp standards (left), and past Buildings G and D (right) to the central courtyard.



Views across the central courtyard, looking northeast toward Building C (left) and south toward Building H (right).

24. Current Photographs, 1477 Bayview Avenue, 2016: showing the east end of the complex and the central courtyard (Heritage Preservation Services).



Looking west from the central courtyard to Bayview Avenue and showing the steps, retaining walls, pathways, lamp standards, and mature landscaping including hedges.



Showing the pathways and retaining walls between the buildings, in this case Buildings D and E.



At the north end of the property, the garages are shown on the left, as well as the rear (north) wall of Building C with the three-part building and the large chimney.

25. Current Photographs, 1477 Bayview Avenue, 2016: showing details of the complex (Heritage Preservation Services).