

## Community Services and Facilities

The Long Branch Neighbourhood contains a variety of community facilities, which contribute to the character of the neighbourhood while servicing local residents and area visitors with a variety of academic, social, cultural and recreational amenities.

### James S. Bell Junior Middle School:

The James S. Bell Junior Middle School is located along Thirty First Street at Ash Crescent. The School incorporates a baseball diamond, multi-use field, open lawn and playground.

### Long Branch Arena:

The Long Branch Arena is located at Arcadian Circle, south of Birchlea Avenue. The Arena includes an indoor dry pad and lounge space, and offers a variety of registered and drop-in skating programs.

### Long Branch Library:

The Long Branch Library is located at the intersection of Lake Shore Boulevard and Thirty Second Street. The Library includes the Long Branch Historical Society Local History Collection, large print collections, audio books, an art exhibit space, a book discussion group space, and a lecture style meeting room.

### Vincent Massey Child Care Centre:

The Vincent Massey Child Care Centre is located at the intersection of Daisey Avenue and Twenty Ninth Street. The Child Care Centre incorporates a soccer field, multi-use field, open lawn, and playground.

St. Josaphat Catholic School is located along Forty First Street south of Lake Shore Boulevard.

### Places of Worship;

The Long Branch neighbourhood incorporates several places to worship, including the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of St. Demetrius, Christ the King Church, and the James St. Gospel Tabernacle.

### Humber College:

Humber College is located at the intersection of Lake Shore Boulevard and Twenty Second Street, just to the east of the Long Branch Neighbourhood. The Lake Shore Campus includes approximately 10,600 full-time students, and is organized around a series of historic buildings, known as cottages. Each cottage is dedicated to an academic stream. The Lake Shore Campus offers programs in liberal arts and sciences, media studies and information technology, business, creative and performing arts, and social and community services.



**Figure 31** View of Parkview School, photographed from top of Aquaview Condominiums, November 2012. Photo credit: Jaan Pill



**Figure 32** Long Branch Library (first opened in 1955)

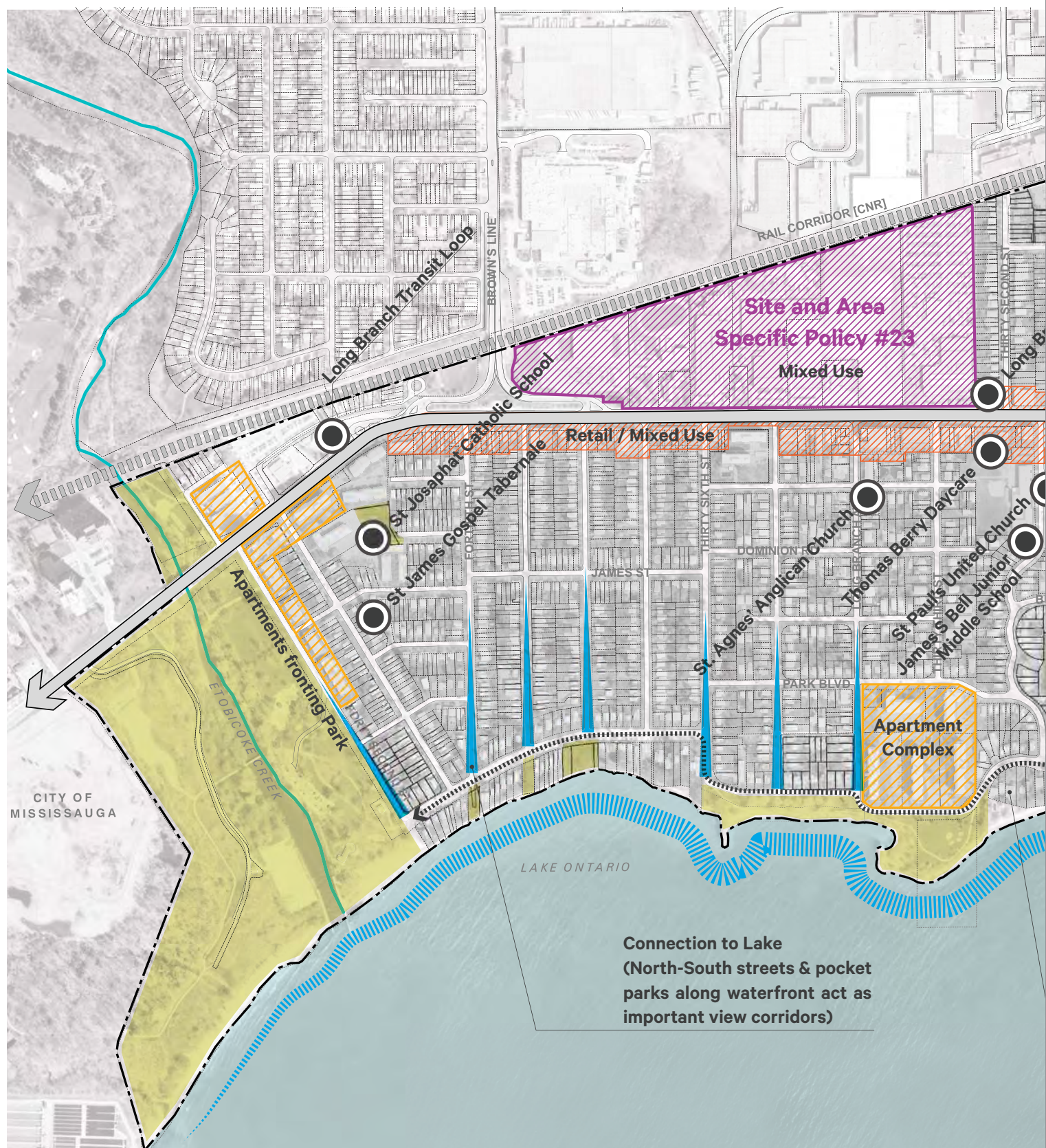


**Figure 33** Long Branch Map of Community Facilities

**City of Toronto Interactive Map:** the City offers an interactive map that shows comprehensive information, including administrative boundaries, sites of interest, transportation, along with education and public safety facilities.



## 2.2 Character Summary





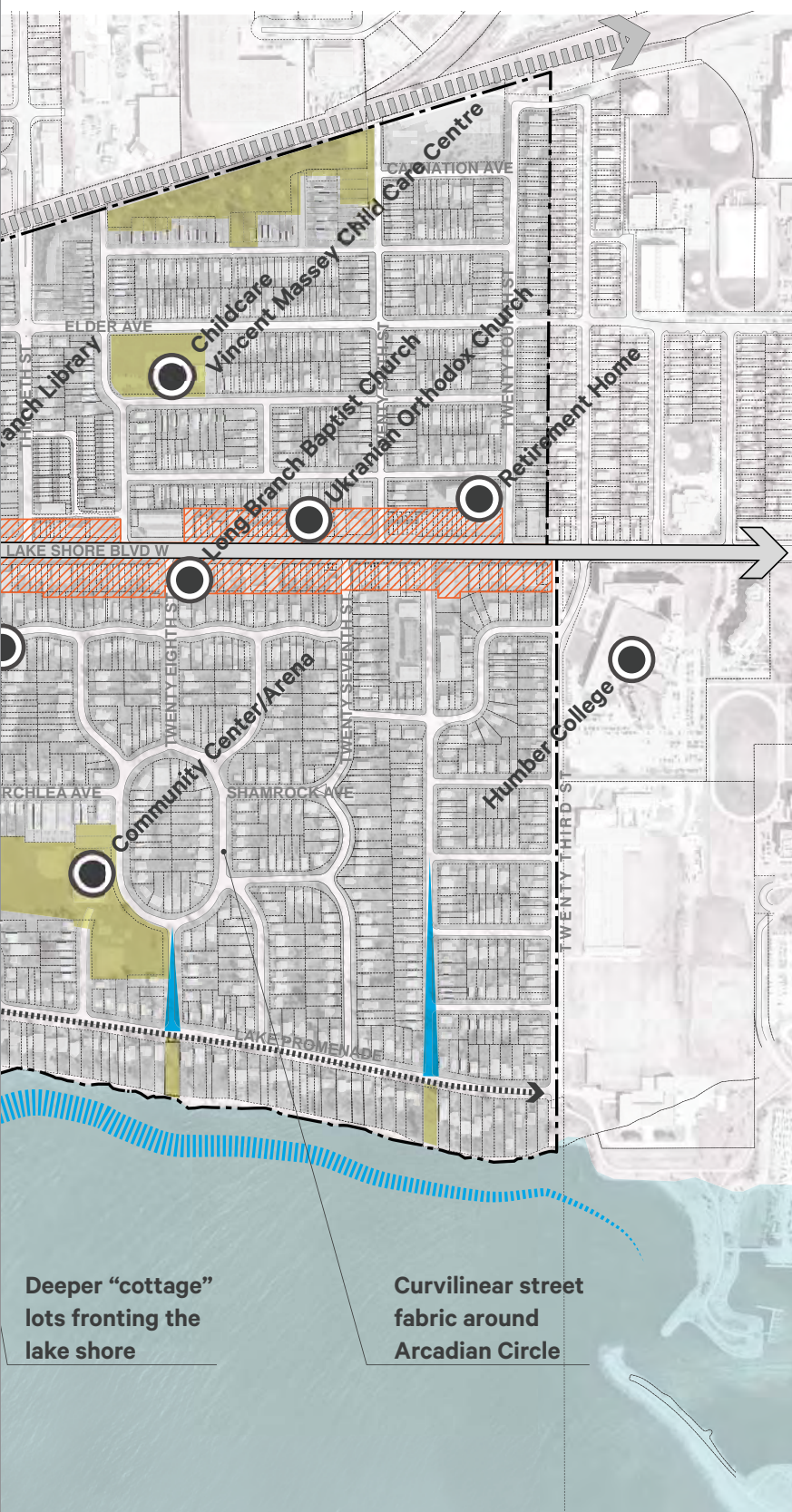


Figure 34 Long Branch Character Framework Map

### Long Branch Character Defining Conditions

- Historic Long Branch houses dating back to original "villa" lots and corner lots of distinctive character.
- Hipped or gabled roofs, front porches, ground-related first floor, prominent and grade-related entrance and window placement, and recessed or rear garages, to establish a strong street interface.
- Consistent and generous front yard setbacks with exceptions where dictated through variations in the street and block network (i.e. Arcadian Circle), maintaining landscaping, mature trees, and accent planting while allowing for projections and recesses to articulate the primary facade, and minimizing the width of curb cuts in order to maintain the continuity of the pedestrian realm.
- Consistent and generous side yard setbacks and rhythm of dwelling units, maintaining perosity between buildings, rear yard access for pedestrians and vehicles, and landscaping between buildings and adjacent open spaces.
- Consistent and moderate rear yard setbacks and building depths, maintaining appropriate height transitions, privacy, sky view access, private amenity space, landscaping and mature trees.
- 9.0m to 15.24m lot frontage and 35.0m to 45.0m lot depths, with exceptions where dictated through variations in the street and block network.
- 1 to 2 storey building heights with massing, articulation and fenestration strategies which are complementary to the existing context.
- Prominent and unobstructed views and access to the Lake Ontario shoreline, Long Branch Park, Marie Curtis Park, and other open spaces.
- Distinct elements including estate residential dwellings along Lake Promenade, isolated apartment blocks, employment areas north of Lake Shore Boulevard, and commercial developments along Lake Shore Boulevard.
- High quality materials, including brick or wood siding.



## 2.2.1 Character of the Neighbourhood Today

### Overview

A neighbourhood's character is composed of a series of individual elements that together contribute to the creation of a distinct 'sense of place'. While the neighbourhood of Long Branch has long been surrounded by development, the natural boundary of Lake Ontario to the south and Etobicoke Creek to the west as well as the man-made boundary of the rail tracks to the north have both helped to shape and preserve its distinct sense of place.

### Patterns of Development in Long Branch

Long Branch is a diverse neighbourhood that has evolved incrementally through the many phases of its history and will continue to do so. In this sense, the character of the neighbourhood today is best understood as the composite of these phases of development, each contributing to a mix of sizes and styles of houses.

Concentrated along Lake Promenade and the area surrounding Long Branch Park, where the Long Branch Park Hotel once stood, several of the original villa-style cottages remain from the late 1800's and early 1900's when the area was a gated resort accessed by steamboat from Toronto. These ornamented buildings, many located on corner lots, have a distinct architectural style that often features an articulated roof form and generous porches fronting the street. Between 1910 and 1920, seven additional subdivisions were opened, generally taking on the cottage-like feel of Long Branch Park. In the context of new development, these heritage properties should be acknowledged and respected as valuable to the character of Long Branch.

With changing patterns of settlement in the mid-20th century and the demolition of some 160 homes on the Etobicoke Creek flood plain in the wake of Hurricane Hazel (the area now Marie Curtis Park), many of the original cottages were replaced or infilled with postwar brick bungalows and other modest 1 to 2 storey hipped or gable roofed houses often on large lots in the range of 50 by 150 feet. Around the same period, with the aim of promoting growth and affordability, certain areas of the Long Branch bylaws were changed to allow multi-family dwellings which further replaced original homes with 2 and 3 storey duplexes and triplexes.

The lots south of Lake Promenade along the Lake Ontario shoreline remain distinct from the broader neighbourhood of Long Branch. Characteristically larger homes with an eclectic range of styles, these lots are generally deeper than 200 feet with consistent rear yard setbacks that respect view



**Figure 35** Aerial view looking east along Lake Shore Blvd West from near Long Branch Loop 1940s (Ontario Archives Acc 16215, ES1-814, Northway Gestalt Collection)

> see character defining condition **a.**



**Figure 36** Original cottage property on Lake Promenade dating back to the 1890s

> see character defining conditions

**b.** **f.** **g.**

> see character defining condition **i.**



corridors of neighbouring properties and have generous front yard setbacks with a mature tree canopy that both visually buffer the houses and frame the street.

### Historic Subdivisions & Today's By-laws

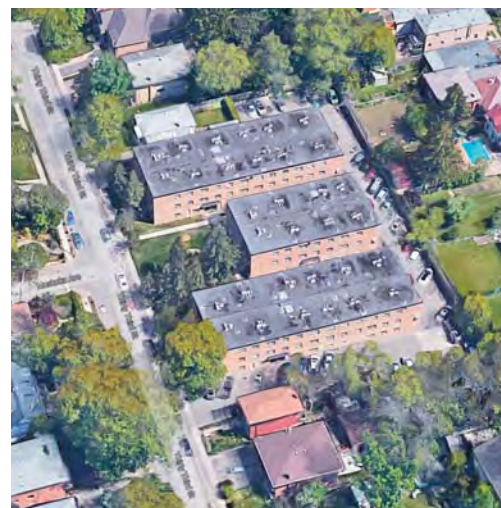
As a result of the subdivision of Long Branch all occurring within a decade span in the early 1900's, the historic lot fabric is characteristically consistent, described by 9.0m to 15.24m lot frontages and 35.0m to 45.0m lot depths. Larger lot sizes have resulted in a general condition described by generous side yard setbacks which provide driveway access to a side-entry garage or detached garage at the rear as well as establish a street rhythm through the regular spacing of houses. Where historically narrow lots exist, the original building fabric has maintained generous side yard setbacks.

Overlaying the map of the historic subdivisions of Long Branch with the current City-wide By-law reveals that the original boundaries between subdivisions roughly correspond with boundaries between areas zoned Residential Detached (RD) and Residential Multiple (RM).

The areas within the initial subdivision of Long Branch Park (1884) and the Eastwood Park Annex (1920), now designated RM zones, permit a variety of residential building types and densities per lot from detached dwellings to 3 and 3.5 storey apartments. Within these areas there are duplexes and

> see *character defining conditions*

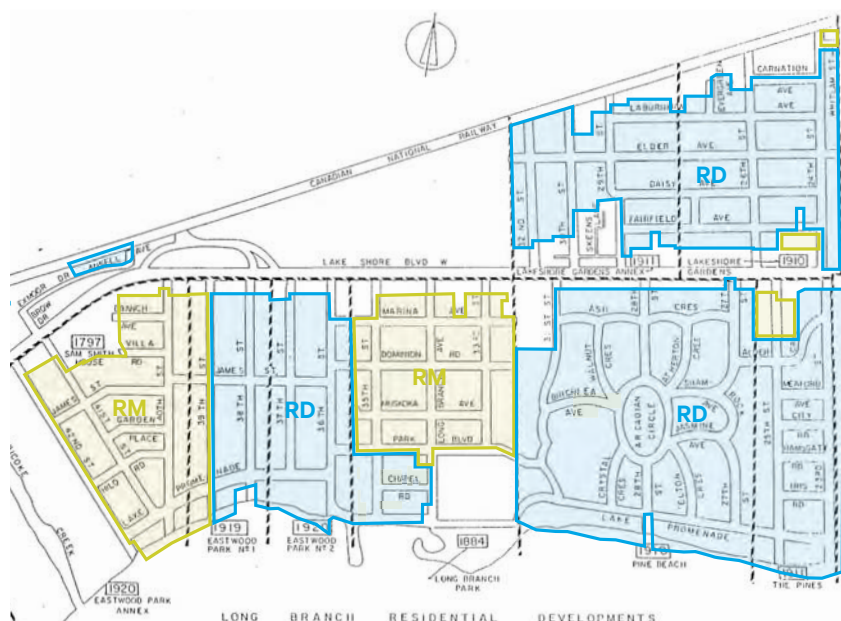
d. f. g.



**Figure 37** Apartment block on 33rd Street within an area of prevailing detached single-family homes.



**Figure 38** Characteristic development on Twenty Seventh Street



**Figure 39** Long Branch Historic Subdivisions (original map courtesy of <http://preservedstories.com>) overlaid with the City-wide Zoning By-law Map



triplexes interspersed among lots with single-family dwellings though some larger apartment blocks also exist along the northern part of Forty Second Street, James Street east of Fortieth Street, Thirty Ninth Street north of Lake Promenade as well as Thirty Third Street north of Park Boulevard and on Birchlea Avenue west of Arcadian Circle. Each of these building types has varying regulations related to massing, setbacks, parking and landscaping. However, where denser types exist, the characteristic condition is described by larger setbacks both due to parking considerations and to provide adequate transition to adjacent dwellings in order to minimize issues related to shadow and overlook.

> *see character defining conditions*

c. e. f.

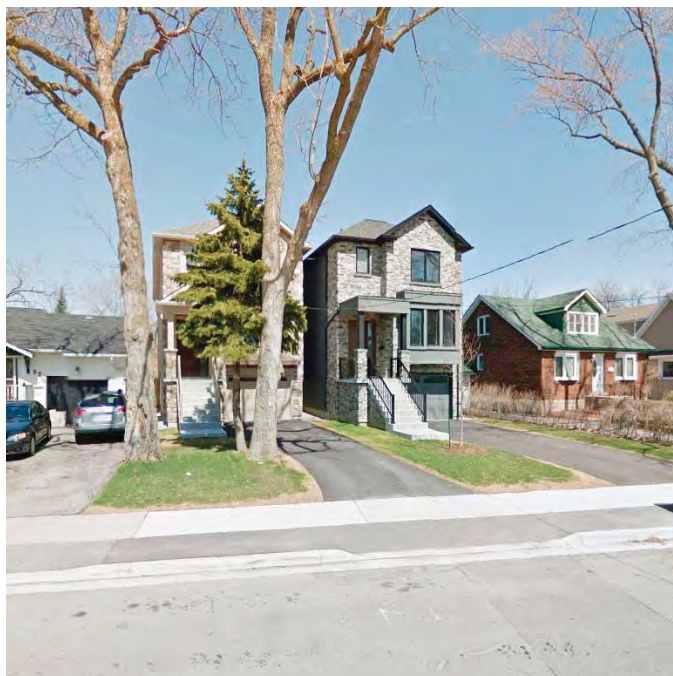
> *see character defining conditions*

c. d. h.

Similarly, in the Pine Beach Subdivision (1910) surrounding Arcadian Circle, the curvilinear street network and irregular lot fabric have resulted, along certain street segments, in incrementally stepping front and rear yard setbacks where adequate transition between adjacent dwellings is an important consideration. Where such conditions exist, as well as on lots directly abutting open spaces (parks, parkettes, schoolyards, parking lots), mature trees and hedges are characteristically used/preserved as valuable naturalized buffers between lots.



**Figure 40** Original lot with detached 2-storey dwelling on a 50' frontage



**Figure 41** Two 2-storey houses with 25' frontages on the severed lot. Both have the appearance of a 3-storey house



By contrast, lots fronting onto the north-south oriented streets south of Lakeshore Boulevard, especially along the elongated north-south blocks in the Eastwood Park Subdivisions, are described characteristically by regular front yard setbacks and side-yard on end lots creating consistent 'street walls' which frame important view corridors to Lake Ontario. Len Ford Park, marked by its canopy of mature willow trees, as well as smaller but heavily treed pocket parks located at the terminus of these streets preserve waterfront views from the public realm and contribute to reinforcing the neighbourhood's broader connection to the lake.

#### **Before & After Development – Quantifying Neighbourhood Character**

The Official Plan states that one of its cornerstone policies is to “ensure that new development in our neighbourhoods respects the existing physical character of the area, reinforcing the stability of the neighbourhood.” However, due to a significant increase in development pressure and lot severances in Long Branch in recent years, both the character and the stability of the neighbourhood have been challenged. While it has been argued that character can be difficult to quantify, it is most effectively illustrated in the context of development. Figures 40 and 41 depict a typical lot in Long Branch before and after development and serve as a case study for a summary analysis of neighbourhood character, applying the three concentric scales of evaluation:

##### **1. Property in relation to adjacent properties:**

The massing of the original two storey dwelling, while taller than both adjacent houses, is articulated such that there are clear horizontal reference lines defined by the porch roof and the overhang of the front gable. The reference lines of the porch roof aligns with the front eave of the side gabled roof of the adjacent houses minimizing the change in height and roof massing. Similarly, the side-entry garages and driveways create generous side setbacks in the primary mass of the houses which aid the transition between differing adjacent volumes and create a perceived street rhythm. By contrast, as a result of developing two new houses on the severed lot, side yard setbacks are significantly minimized, breaking the established street rhythm and visually emphasizes the increased density along the street. In addition, the lack of articulation in the massing of the new buildings does not acknowledge reference lines and results in large, uninterrupted side walls tightly abutting the side lot lines which further stress the discrepancy in height relative to the adjacent homes and may cause issues related to shadow and overlook.

**> Refer to 3.1 Height & Massing**

**> Refer to 3.2.1 Roofs**

**> Refer to 3.4.3 Side Yard Setbacks**



## 2. Property in relation to the street and block segment:

The characteristic condition along the street and on the opposing block fronting the same street is a modest finished ground floor height of 4 to 5 steps above the grade of the street and described by a wide front landing or porch with planting along the base of the front façade to transition from the grade of the yard to the front entrance. Front yards are generously planted with grass lawns and hedges with driveways generally along the side of lots. By contrast, the new 25 foot lots both have driveways leading to integrated garages resulting in a significant loss of softscaping and resulting in finished floor heights double that of houses along the street. Unlike the plantings used to transition between yard and entrance, front entrances are articulated by large staircases that encroach on the front lawn and appropriately placed windows facing the street are replaced by the garage door which dominated the front façade at grade. Importantly, this diminishes the building's perceived connection to the public realm by reducing active uses and casual surveillance along the street.

> [Refer to 3.1.4 Finished Ground Floor Height](#)

> [Refer to 3.4.2 Front Yard Landscape](#)

> [Refer to 3.2.2 Front Entrance Design](#)

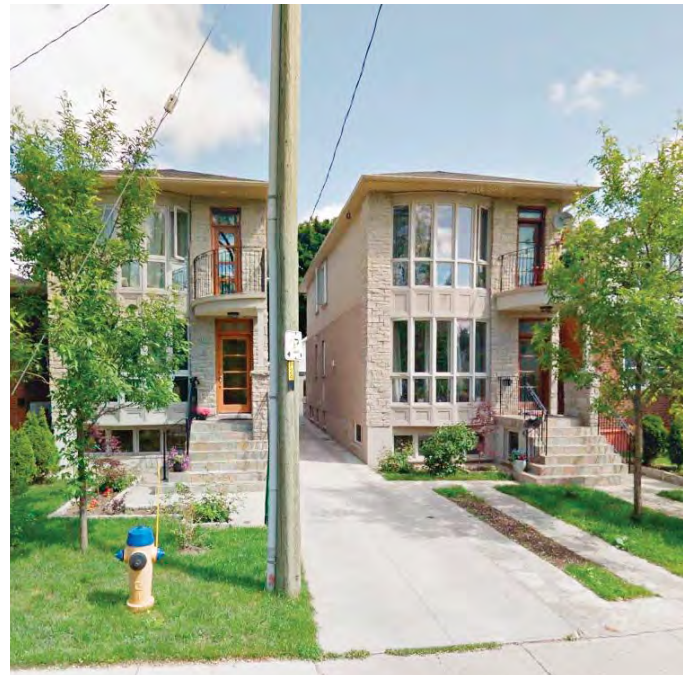
> [Refer to 3.2.3 Windows](#)

> [Refer to 3.3 Driveways & Garages](#)

Design performance of new development on a severed lot



**Figure 42** New development on a severed lot that is not compatible with the Long Branch character (integrated garages and raised finished floor heights)



**Figure 43** New development on a severed lot that is more compatible with the Long Branch character (mutual lane with detached garages at the rear of lot with compatible finished floor heights)

### 3. Property in relation to the broader neighbourhood context:

At the scale of the Long Branch neighbourhood and perhaps the most significant impact of new development is the loss of the mature tree canopy. The mature trees throughout the neighbourhood are both invaluable environmental assets as well as character shaping elements. Trees provide environmental and health benefits by supporting wildlife habitat, reducing air pollution, and managing storm water. Throughout Long Branch, the large and distinctive tree canopy provides shade and cover from the elements, helps to moderate exterior and interior temperatures, and provides a visual signal of the change in seasons as well as serving to frame the streets by providing a visual buffer between the public walkway and the façades of houses. The maturity of the tree canopy is also indicative of the maturity of the Long Branch neighbourhood. New development should not result in the loss of mature trees.

In summation, while development will certainly continue to occur within Long Branch, there exists an opportunity to shape this development in a manner which acknowledges and is respectful of the established character of the neighbourhood, while promoting diverse design solutions and preventing homogenization, and are consistent with existing community character. New development must be responsive to its context.

> Refer to 3.5.1 Street Trees

Design performance of new development on an unsevered lot



**Figure 44** New development on unsevered lot that is compatible with the Long Branch character (generous front yard setback, two storey massing, grade-related building entrance, integrated front porch, recessed garage)



**Figure 45** New development on unsevered lot that is compatible with Long Branch character (generous front and side yard setbacks and landscaping, two storey massing, grade-related building entrance)