

Inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register – Laird in Focus – 90 Laird Drive, 180 Laird Drive and 20 Research Road

Date: October 7, 2019

To: Toronto Preservation Board
North York Community Council

From: Senior Manager, Heritage Preservation Services, Urban Design, City Planning

Wards: Ward 15 – Don Valley West

SUMMARY

This report recommends that City Council include the properties at 90 Laird Drive, 180 Laird Drive and 20 Research Road on the City of Toronto Heritage Register. The properties are located on the west side of Laird Drive between Vanderhoof Avenue and Millwood Road and the north side of Research Road.

As part of the Laird in Focus Planning Study, City Planning initiated a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) to ensure that all properties of cultural heritage value or interest were appropriately identified, understood and conserved as part of an up-to-date planning framework. The three properties identified for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register, along with the four properties already listed on Laird Drive highlight the 1920s -1940s as a period of significance in the development of Leaside, when many finely crafted buildings were constructed as part of the Town of Leaside's growth. Together, the six properties on Laird Drive enrich the understanding of the area's sense of place and demonstrate the continued importance of this historic commercial and industrial spine for Leaside's growth and prosperity. The property on Research Road is one of the rare surviving structures representing Leaside's major contribution to Canada's military in both world wars.

All of these properties meet Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, which the City also applies when assessing properties for its Heritage Register.

Properties on the City's Heritage Register will be conserved and maintained in accordance with the Official Plan Heritage Policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Senior Manager, Heritage Preservation Services, Urban Design, City Planning recommends that:

1. City Council include the following properties on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register:

96 Laird Drive
180 Laird Drive
20 Research Road

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

In 2016, the City of Toronto launched Laird in Focus – a multi-disciplinary study that followed from the Eglinton Connects Planning Study – to examine the potential accommodation of future residential, mixed-use and/or employment growth at Laird Drive and Eglinton Avenue East, the location of a future station for the LRT. The Eglinton Connects Planning Study final recommendations were adopted by City Council on May 6, 2014.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2014.PG32.4>

At its meeting of January 31 and February 1, 2018, City Council authorized Leaside for study as a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.PG25.4>

At its meeting of July 23, 2018, City Council adopted (with amendments) the Laird in Focus Planning Study Proposals Report.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2018.NY32.20>

COMMENTS

Laird in Focus Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA)

Official Plan Policy 3.1.5.14 directs that potential and existing properties of cultural heritage value or interest, including cultural heritage landscapes and Heritage Conservation Districts, will be identified and included in area planning studies and plans with recommendations for further study, evaluation and conservation. Pro-active listing of properties is intended to give greater clarity to property owners with regards to the City's interest and the application of Official Plan policies. The primary aim will be to achieve an informed, timely listing of properties in tandem with local area studies.

As part of the Planning Study, City Planning retained an expert heritage consultant, Architecture EVOQ Inc. (EVOQ), to conduct a Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) of the study area. The CHRA Study Area (noted as 'Study Area' within this report) included properties fronting Laird Drive between Vanderhoof Avenue and Millwood Road and north side of Research Road.

The CHRA helped inform the Laird in Focus Planning Study, by ensuring that all properties of cultural heritage value or interest were appropriately identified, understood and conserved as part of an up-to-date planning framework. The CHRA includes a historical overview of the Study Area and, through the application of provincial criteria, identifies potential cultural heritage resources for inclusion on the City's Heritage Register.

The planning and urban design components of the Laird in Focus Planning Study included two distinct study areas. Study Area A includes four large parcels on the south side of Eglinton between Laird Drive and Aerodrome Crescent (815-845, 849, 939, and 957 Eglinton Avenue East). Study Area B includes properties located on the west side of Laird Drive between Vanderhoof Avenue and Millwood Road.

The CHRA Study Area was expanded to include the properties on the east side of Laird Drive. The study area was later expanded to include the properties on the south side of Vanderhoof Avenue. This is appropriate for understanding the historic context and also responds to the Heritage Focus Group as they expressed concern over the study not including potential heritage buildings east of Laird Drive during the April 2017 meeting with City staff and EVOQ.

The Study Area currently contains four properties that have been included on the City's Heritage Register. Three of these properties have been designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act (33 Laird Drive, 85 Laird Drive, and 211 Laird Drive), and one of them has been listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register (150 Laird Drive - Notice of Intention to Designate under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act was issued on January 7, 2016. The property is subject to a development application that proposes construction of a new retirement condominium).

EVOQ undertook a CHRA from March 2017 to February 2018. The CHRA includes 3 phases supported with robust community consultation:

- Phase 1- Research of Thematic History and Preliminary Area Scan for Heritage Potential;
- Phase 2- Heritage Evaluation; and,
- Phase 3- Recommendations.

The initial phase of the CHRA involved two parallel parts. The first consisted of archival research to document the historical evolution of development within the Study Area, and the key historic, cultural and economic themes that led to its current built form. This was completed through the review of both primary and secondary sources. Sources included historical maps, city directories, assessment rolls, building permits, archival and aerial photographs, as well as recent research and community input.

The second part of Phase 1 included a field and photographic survey of the Study Area to identify properties with potential cultural heritage value. A site review of the Study Area was undertaken by EVOQ in April 2017. Each property was evaluated through this site visit. A total of 22 properties were preliminarily identified as either existing heritage properties or potentially having cultural heritage value. Primary research was conducted for these properties. A second site visit was undertaken by EVOQ in October 2017 to review the identified properties along Vanderhoof Avenue. A total of three properties on the south side of Vanderhoof Avenue (including 20 Research Road) were initially identified as having potential cultural heritage value, and additional primary research was conducted.

In Phase 2, Heritage Evaluation, the 22 surveyed properties with potential cultural heritage value were reviewed and it was determined that 16 of these properties merited further in-depth research and review. This process was based on the initial findings of each building's design, historical, and contextual values. Each property was then assessed according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, under the three categories of Design or Physical, Historical or Associative, and Contextual. 8 of these 16 properties were identified by EVOQ as having sufficient cultural heritage value to merit inclusion on the City's Heritage Register. These properties included 66-72 Laird Drive, 96 Laird Drive, 180 Laird Drive, 20 Research Road, and 11 Brentcliffe Road.

City staff undertook additional research and analysis and concluded that the properties at 66-72 Laird Drive, 134 Laird Drive, 143 Laird Drive and 11 Brentcliffe Road do not have sufficient cultural heritage value and/or lacked integrity to be included on the Heritage Register. A summary of the Heritage Preservation Services (HPS) evaluation for each of these properties is provided below.

66-72 Laird Drive

City staff conducted additional historical research and an internal review, and concluded that these house-form properties do not have sufficient design and physical value as both the buildings and their settings have been substantially altered compromising their integrity.

Research using the City Directories confirms that the properties do not have historical-associative value as housing constructed for Canadian Wire and Cable Company (CWCC). Records indicate that only one occupant of the four houses was a CWCC employee. Suggestions that they represent the original residential character of the west side of Laird Drive is also not evident as from the late 1920s-1930s both sides of the street were occupied by residential, commercial and industrial buildings. In terms of contextual value, the suggestion that these properties represent the few remaining residential buildings on Laird Drive is not evident as there are other houses dating from the same period. They have been subject to alterations of both the houses and their settings to such an extent that they no longer have the integrity to represent residential character supporting the contextual value.

11 Brentcliffe Road

The property shares an important World War II history with 20 Research Road as both properties were developed by Research Enterprises Ltd. (REL) to support the war effort with the manufacture of military equipment. Although the buildings were both designed by Allward & Gouinlock, City staff have determined that 11 Brentcliffe Road, which originally served as a canteen for REL, lacks the design value and integrity to merit inclusion on the Heritage Register. However, the associative value of the property can be conserved with an interpretive plan as part of the development of 20 Research Road.

134 Laird Drive

In the course of undertaking further research and site tour, staff discovered another heritage potential property, 134 Laird Drive, which had not been identified for evaluation by EVOQ but merited further investigation. The property located at 134 Laird Drive was originally owned by Imperial Oil and occupied by a service station from 1929 which is significant for Leaside as a Garden Suburb where the car along with the railway were a part of its creation and growth. However, the loss of the first 1929 building, and the over cladding and alterations of the second c1945 building has resulted in a loss of integrity of its design value. However, City staff recommend that some historic interpretation of the relationship between garden suburbs, service stations and automobiles be included for this property as part of Public Realm improvements to Laird Drive.

143 Laird Drive

A member of the Local Advisory Committee submitted a nomination for the evaluation of 143 Laird Drive on April 20, 2019 which was reviewed by HPS staff. The former bank at 143 Laird Drive is associated with the 1951 bank robbery by the Boyd Gang which was the biggest bank robbery in Toronto up to that date and one of 11 committed by Edwin A. Boyd and his cohort between 1949 and 1952. Although this robbery has historical and associative value, the building had modest design value and its integrity has been substantially compromised by the alterations to the structural openings and cladding of the principal elevation. City staff have determined that due to insufficient integrity and alterations, this property does not merit inclusion on the Heritage Register. City staff recommend that some historic interpretation be included for the property as part of Public Realm improvements to Laird Drive.

Additionally, the proposed Site and Area Specific Policy No. 568 recommends an interpretation strategy for the public realm to commemorate the history of Leaside, including the area's role as a rail and manufacturing hub, and the historic function of Laird Drive as the main connector and transition between the original eastern industrial and western residential portions of the neighbourhood.

Community Consultation

As part of the Laird in Focus Planning Study, a robust consultation process was undertaken to solicit community input including the CHRA.

In order to gain a better understanding of the Study Area, City staff and their heritage consultant sought community input at a Heritage Focus Group meeting held on April 27, 2017. Feedback received during this meeting informed the identification of historical

themes and patterns within the CHRA Study Area, and informed the recommendations regarding potential heritage properties.

On October 10, 2017, a summary of historical evolution of the Study Area, the study methodology and preliminary findings and recommendations was presented to the Local Advisory Committee of the Planning Study (LAC meeting No. 2). The input from this consultation was used to inform the proposed recommendations.

On December 5, 2017, the final draft findings and recommendations that pertained to the larger Planning Study were presented at the Laird in Focus public meeting (Public Consultation Meeting No. 4).

On April 23, 2018, the draft list of identified potential heritage properties was presented again at the Public Meeting No. 5. The public meeting was comprised of a presentation by the project team followed by a “question and answer” session bookended by an open house.

On August 14 and September 9, 2019, a summary of the CHRA and HPS final recommendations including properties identified for inclusion on the Heritage Register were presented to the Local Advisory Committee (LAC meetings No. 6 and No. 7).

On September 17, 2019, the final list of properties identified for inclusion on the Heritage Register, located within the Laird in Focus Planning Study Area, was presented at the public open house meeting (Public Meeting No.6).

Additionally, Heritage Preservation Services interviewed key stakeholders including members of the Leaside Matters to receive their insight on the draft CHRA and recommended potential heritage properties.

Throughout the community consultation and engagement activities, participants have supported the CHRA process and recommendations by City staff.

Properties Recommended for Inclusion on the City's Heritage Register

The three properties recommended for Inclusion on the City's Heritage Register were evaluated according to Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for Part IV designation under the Ontario Heritage Act, which the City also applies when considering properties for its Heritage Register. All of the properties meet the criteria under design or physical, historical or associative, and contextual value.

City staff recommend the properties located at 96 Laird Drive, 180 Laird Drive and 20 Research Road be included on the Heritage Register as these properties meet the provincial criteria of Ontario Regulation 9/06.

A map showing the properties with potential cultural heritage value in the Study Area is appended as Attachment 1. Separate attachments provide the Statement of Significance (Reasons for Inclusion), identifying the cultural heritage values and attributes, along with location maps and photographs for the 3 properties, including 2 on the west side of Laird Drive (Attachment 2) and 1 on the north side of Research Road (Attachment 3). A historic overview of the Study Area is provided in Attachment 4.

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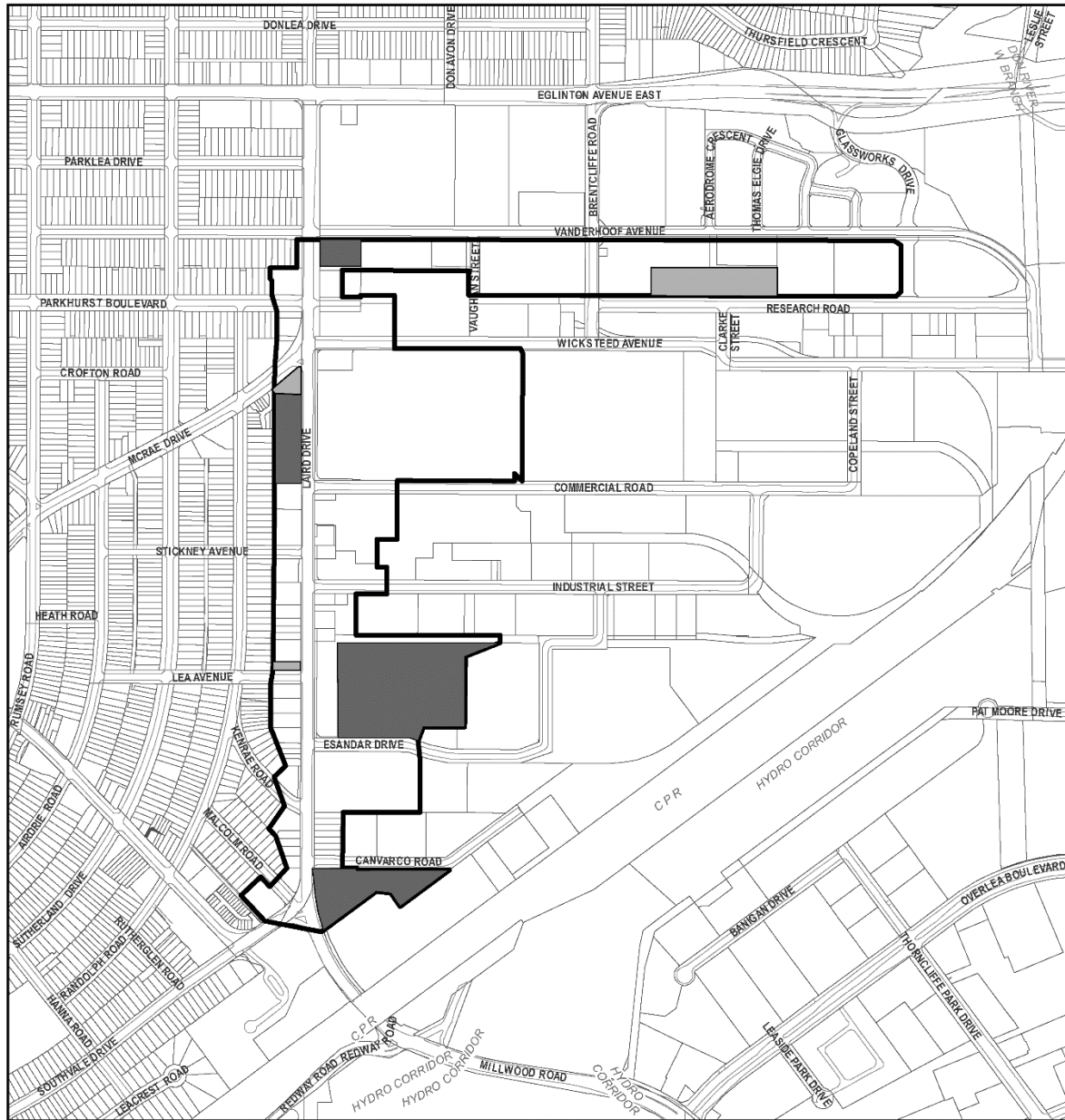
SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS




Attachment 1: Location Map, Laird in Focus Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment
Attachment 2: Laird Drive, West Side – Location Maps, Photographs, and Statement of Significance (Reasons for Inclusion)
Attachment 3: Research Road, North Side – Location Maps, Photographs, and Statement of Significance (Reasons for Inclusion)
Attachment 4: Historic Overview

LOCATION MAP: LAIRD IN FOCUS CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE ASSESSMENT



Laird in Focus Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment

16 186652 NNY 26 TM

-  Study Area Boundary
-  Properties Included on the Heritage Register
-  Properties with Potential to be Included on the Heritage Register

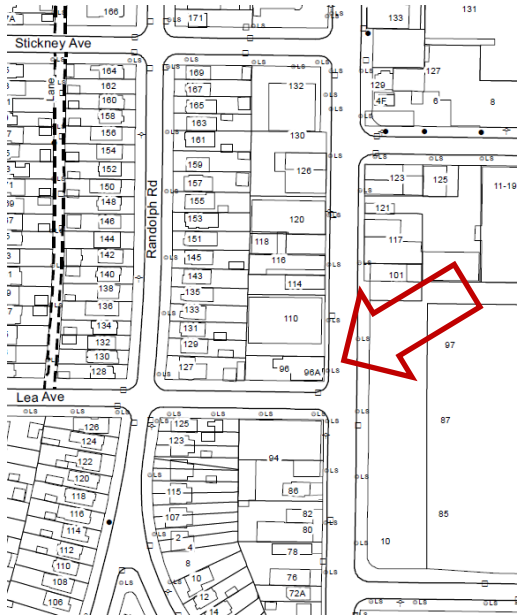


Not to Scale
09/04/2019

LAIRD DRIVE, WEST SIDE
LOCATION MAPS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND
STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE (REASONS FOR INCLUSION)

ATTACHMENT 2

96 LAIRD DRIVE (Osmond's Restaurant):
LOCATION MAP AND PHOTOGRAPH



The arrow marks the location of 96 Laird Drive at the northwest corner of Lea Avenue and Laird Drive. The map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown



96 Laird Drive, south and east elevations showing the original Osmond's Restaurant, c 1923, with the extension to the north on Laird and the extension to the west with the hipped roof skylight on Lea Avenue (HPS, 2019)



96 Laird Drive, east and north (side) elevations showing the original Osmond's Restaurant (left) with the extension to the north on Laird (HPS, 2019)



96 Laird Drive, south and west elevations showing the original Osmond's Restaurant (right) with the extension to the west with the hipped roof skylight and the c1942 north extension behind (HPS, 2019)

96 LAIRD DRIVE (Osmond's Restaurant):
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (REASONS FOR INCLUSION)

The property at 96 Laird Drive (Osmond's Restaurant) is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, which the City also applies for inclusion on its Heritage Register. This assessment indicates that the property meets the criteria under design, historic and contextual values.

Description

Located at the north-west corner of Laird Drive and Lea Avenue, the property at 96 Laird Drive, historically known as Osmond's Restaurant, was constructed as early as 1923. Known as CNR restaurant in 1926 and now known as Olde Yorke Fish & Chips, the building has been in continuous use as a restaurant. The two-storey house-form building originally contained a restaurant at grade with residential accommodation above. Extensions have been added to the property, including a single storey extension to the north (c1942), and an addition with a skylight to the west facing Lea Avenue. The original building had a raised stone foundation with red-brick cladding (still evident on the upper floor of the west elevation) but is now over clad in a stucco-type material.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

Osmond's Restaurant has design value for its unusual representation of a vernacular Georgian style in a house-form typology which is rare in Leaside. The elements of the style are present in the two-storey, rectangular-plan, hipped-roof massing, the stucco cladding and the symmetrical composition of the principal, south, elevation.

This elevation features a central entry with three symmetrically-placed, identical double-hung sash windows above. To the right of the door is a Georgian-style window with a wider central bay flanked by two narrow side bays. A raised, party wall separates the restaurant from the adjacent property. The form and details are indicative of its early date and its unique role in the history of early Leaside.

The property has historic and associative value as one of the earliest buildings constructed in Leaside and with its primary function as a restaurant associated with the railways at Leaside Station and the local industries on the east side of Laird Drive including Canadian Wire + Cable Company and Durant Motors, which were the nucleus of the development of Leaside. The CNR and CPR stations were located on the east side of Laird with the CNR shops on the south side of Lea Avenue. The restaurant first appeared in the City Directories and on Goad's map in 1924 indicating a construction date at least as early as 1923. It was owned by John Osmond from as early as 1923 until 1945 and served as the Osmond's family's home and place of business. The directories frequently noted Alice Osmond as the proprietor. In 1926, the directories first noted it as "CNR Restaurant." It was subsequently identified as a lunch room/confectionary and a cafeteria indicating its importance as a facility for the workers at the local industries.

Located on the north-west corner of Laird Drive and Lea Avenue, Osmond's Restaurant, now known as Olde Yorke Fish & Chips, has contextual value as it represents the early history of Leaside and Laird Drive's development in the 1920s as an industrial centre.

The restaurant's domestic scale and architectural character represents those services which grew as part of that development to support the employees and local community. Its distinctive house-form, stucco cladding and details identify its historic significance as it continues to be a local community landmark.

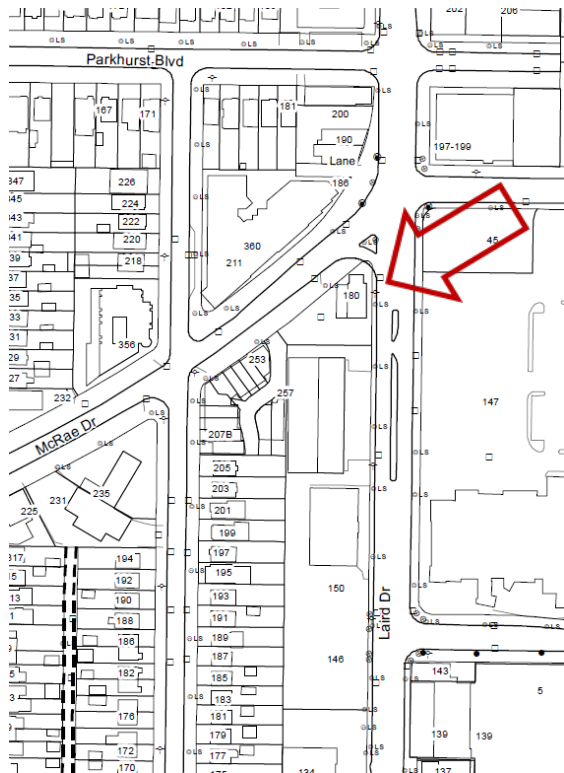
Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the Osmond's Restaurant building are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the west side of Laird Drive at the north-west corner with Lea Avenue
- The scale, form and massing of the two-storey, rectangular-plan building with a hipped roof abutting a raised party-wall on its north side
- On the principal (south) elevation facing Lea Avenue, the arrangement of the door and window openings including three double hung sash windows with multi-pane sash on the second floor and a central entrance opening flanked by a Georgian window to the west
- On the side (east) elevation facing Laird Drive, pair of long rectangular double-hung sash windows on the first floor, the pair in the raised basement and the pair of double-hung sash windows on the second floor with multiple panes in each sash
- The brick chimney on the west elevation

The later additions are not included in the heritage attributes.

180 LAIRD DRIVE (Imperial Bank of Canada):
LOCATION MAP AND PHOTOGRAPHS



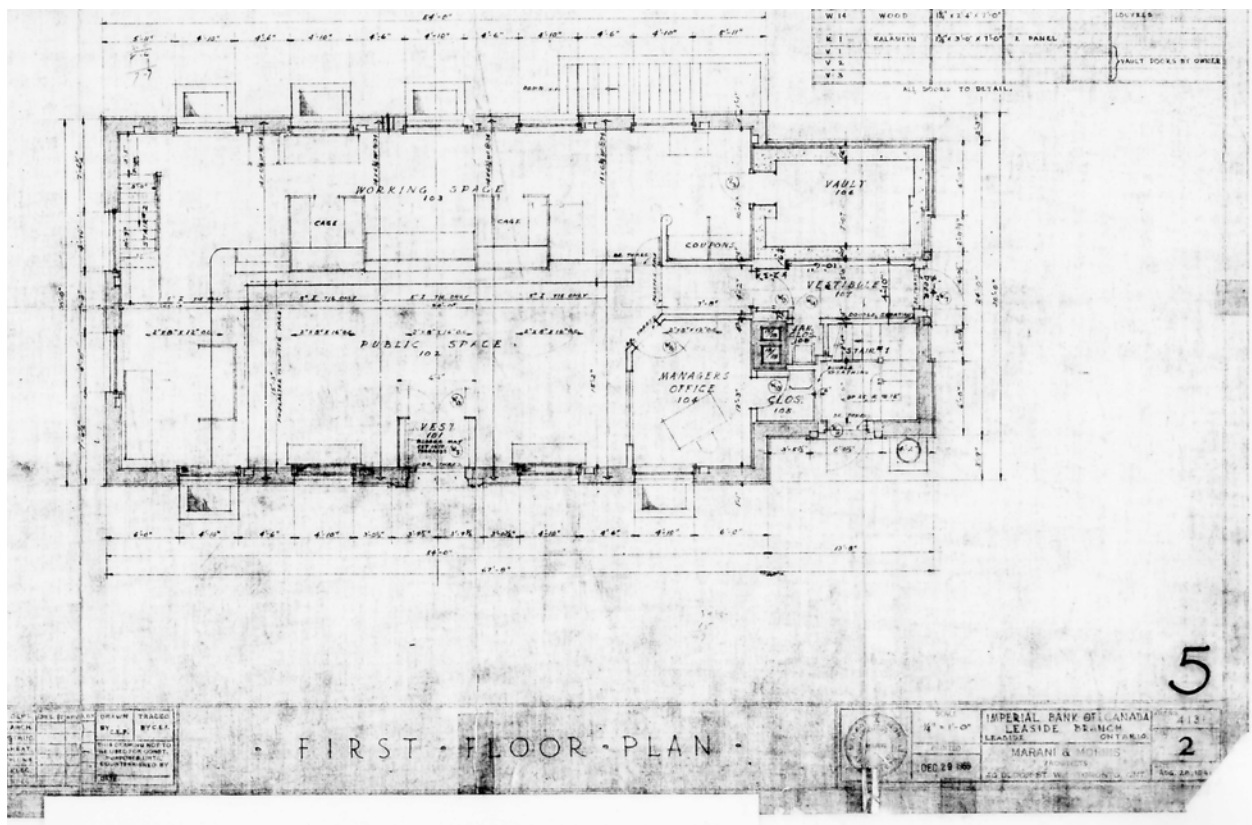
The arrow marks the location of the property at the southwest corner of McRae and Laird drives. The map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown



180 Laird Drive, originally the Imperial Bank of Canada, 1941 principal (east) and north elevations (HPS, 2019)



Imperial Bank of Commerce, 180 Laird Drive, showing the principal (east) and side (north) elevations, photographed shortly after the bank was opened in 1941. (The Link, March 1942)



Detail of the First Floor Plan by Marani & Morris, dated August 1941. (Archives, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce)



Detail of the original principal entry, east elevation now altered (left) and the Imperial Bank of Canada Crest (below) (HPS, 2015)



Rear (west) and side (south) elevations showing the 1961, first floor extension of the bank which matched the original materials and details and the 2013 extensions at the second floor and the glazed stair case on the south elevation (HPS, 2019)

180 LAIRD DRIVE (Imperial Bank of Canada):
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (REASONS FOR INCLUSION)

The property at 180 Laird Drive (originally known as the Imperial Bank of Commerce) is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, which the City also applies for inclusion on its Heritage Register. This assessment indicates that the property meets the criteria under design, historic and contextual values.

Description

Located at the south-west corner of Laird Drive and McRae Drive, the property at 180 Laird Drive, historically known as the Imperial Bank of Commerce, was constructed in 1941. The first Imperial Bank of Canada in Leaside opened in 1928, and was a one-storey stucco-clad building on the north side of McRae Drive between Randolph Road and Sutherland Drive. In 1935, the bank moved to Laird Drive in closer proximity to the industries on the east side, securing premises in the Durant Motors Building, then known as the Dominion Motors Ltd. Building at 180 Laird Drive. When the building was sold in 1941, new premises to the north, at 180 Laird Drive, were constructed to the designs of the Marani & Morris architects and opened in November 1941. The new bank building was a two-storey rectangular block with a small extension to the north and clad in mottled reddish-brown brick with stone trim. Following the merger of the Imperial Bank of Canada and the Canadian Bank of Commerce as the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) in 1961, a one-storey extension, designed by the architect John C. Rankin, was constructed on the rear (west) side of the bank which matched the design and details of the original bank. In 2013, following the closure of the bank branch, the building was converted to a restaurant with an addition at the second floor level above the 1960s extension and an enclosed glazed staircase on the south side elevation. The principal door opening and an adjacent window opening on the east elevation have been altered. The finely-crafted stone details of the original bank have been retained.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

The design and physical value of the former bank building at 180 Laird Drive is evident in its seamless integration of the innovative Style Modern and traditional Georgian Revival styles. The traditional classical elements are present in the symmetrical arrangement of the principal, east elevation, with a sequence of identical window openings flanking a prominent central entrance as well as the reddish-brown brick cladding with stone trim at the base, framing the entrances, the window sills and stone entablature. The Style Moderne, a reductivist style that relies for effect on shallow relief and linear qualities, is present in the suggestion of a classical sequence of pilasters achieved through the shallow relief of the brick panels below the windows in contrast to the adjacent wall surfaces. It is also evident in the simple treatment of the stone entablature and the stone surround of the principal entry which is composed of shallow planes instead of elaborate mouldings and features the carved stone insignia of the bank. The elongated octagonal window on the east elevation of the wing is another popular motif of the Style Moderne. Further value is evident in the brick patterning which features a traditional Flemish bond in the pilasters and wall elements in contrast to the recessed panels below the windows which are composed of brick headers which are stacked in a modern, non-structural manner.

The property has historic and associative value as one of the institutional buildings that represents the growth and establishment of Leaside in the late 1930s and early 1940s following its first phase of development. It is valued as an early representative of the work of the distinguished and Massey-medal winning, Toronto architectural firm of Marani and Morris who were in partnership from 1941-1964.

Contextually, the property has value as an important landmark marking the distinctive triangular block at the south-west corner of the intersection of Laird and McRae drives. Its two-storey scale, brick cladding with stone details link it visually to the historic Durant Motors Building (1928), its southern neighbour at 150 Laird Drive. Together they represent the inter-war development which saw the emergence of Leaside from a railway and industry-focused town to a thriving garden suburb community with its own identity.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the building are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the west side of Laird Drive at the south-west corner of the intersection with McRae Drive
- The scale, form and massing of the two-storey, rectangular-plan building with a wing to the north and the one-storey extension to the west
- On the principal (east) elevation facing Laird Drive, the arrangement of the rectangular window and door openings in five recessed bays
- The principal central entry opening with the stone surrounds and bank insignia and the two entries to the wing with their stone surrounds and fanlight
- The reddish-brown brick cladding with stone details in the entablature, base, window sills and door surrounds
- The elongated octagonal window on the east elevation of the wing

RESEARCH ROAD, NORTH SIDE
LOCATION MAPS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND
STATEMENT OF SIGNFICANCE (REASONS FOR INCLUSION)

ATTACHMENT 3

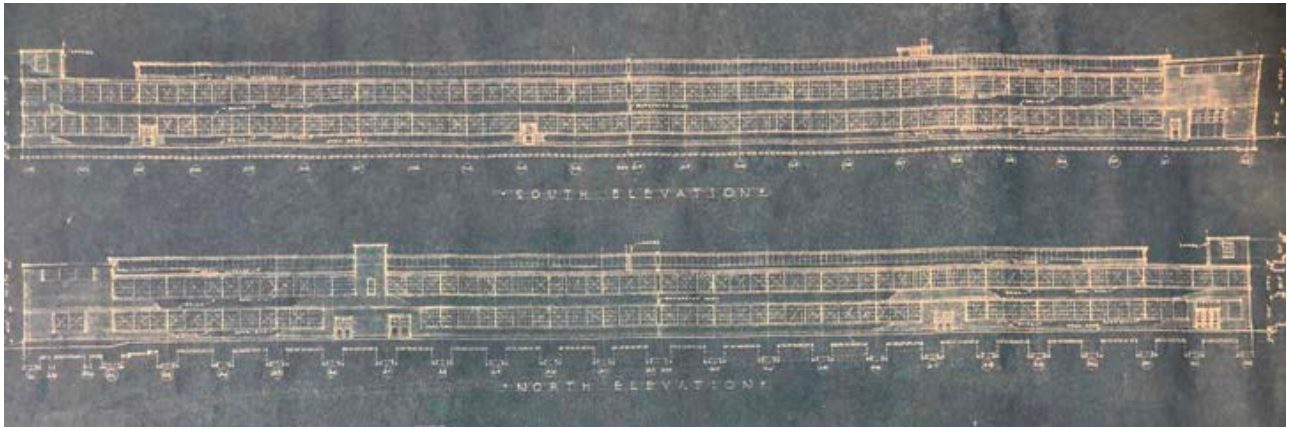
20 RESEARCH ROAD (Research Enterprises Ltd., Radio Stores Building No. 16):
LOCATION MAP, PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS



The arrow marks the location of the property on the north side of Research Road, east of Brentcliffe Road. The map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown.



20 Research Road, Research Enterprises Ltd. Radio Stores Building No. 16, 1942, west and south Elevations, seen from Research Road (HPS, 2019)



Allward & Gouinlock Architects, Radio Stores Building, No. 16, Research Enterprises Ltd., south + north elevations (Detail of Sheet S4), March 1942. (City of Toronto Building Records)



North elevation showing the raised east end and elevator towers in contrast to the horizontal ribbon windows of factory sash glazing (HPS, 2019)



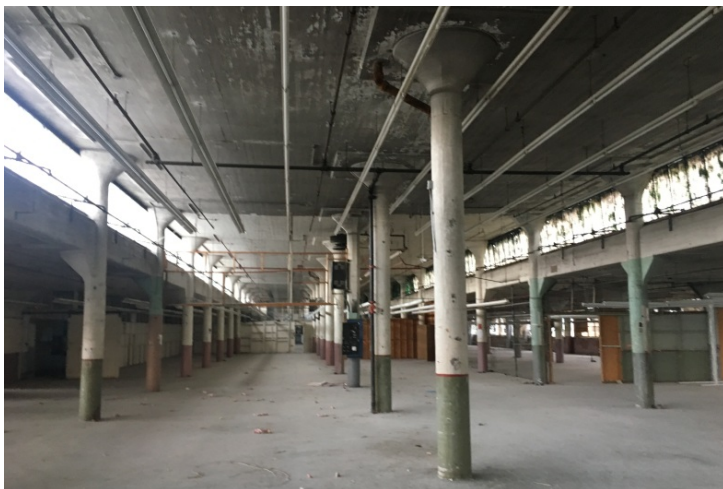
South and east elevations with the raised east end and later additions behind chimney (HPS 2019)



20 Research Road, west elevation (north end) showing the asymmetrical composition of the elevator tower and its 'punctured' window in contrast to the ribbon windows which wrap around the rest of the building (HPS, 2018)



Allward & Gouinlock Architects, Radio Stores Building, No. 16, Research Enterprises Ltd., west elevation (Detail of Sheet S4), March 1942. (Building Records)



20 Research Road, Interior View of the Second Floor showing the concrete structure with the mushroom columns and the glazed roof monitor (left) and detail of the factory sash glazing (right) (HPS, 2018)

20 RESEARCH ROAD (Research Enterprises Ltd., Radio Stores Building No. 16): STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (REASONS FOR INCLUSION)

The property at 20 Research Road (originally known as Research Enterprises Ltd., Radio Stores Building No. 16) is worthy of inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register for its cultural heritage value, and meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the provincial criteria prescribed for municipal designation, which the City also applies for inclusion on its Heritage Register. This assessment indicates that the property meets the criteria under design, historic and contextual values.

Description

Located on the north side of Research Road east of Brentcliffe Road, the property at 20 Research Road, historically known as Research Enterprises Ltd., Radio Stores Building No. 16, was constructed in 1942, with the chimney addition in 1946. Building No. 16 was part of a complex of buildings occupying 55 acres of land east of Laird Drive and south of Eglinton owned by Research Enterprises Ltd. (REL). Incorporated in 1940 with the outbreak of World War II, REL was a Crown Corporation created through the Munitions and Supply Act of Parliament in September 1939. Under the leadership of C D Howe, the Minister of the Department of Munitions and Supply, REL was devoted to the production high technology equipment, specifically optical instruments, and radio and radar equipment to assist with pilots with night flight.¹ The role of Leaside in World War I munitions production and its proximity near the Leaside Railway Station made a compelling case for the location of REL in Leaside on the former aerodrome site.

During its 6 years of operation, REL employed 7,500 people and occupied 750,000 square feet of space.² Other REL buildings, since demolished, occupied the block east of Brentcliffe Road between Vanderhoof Avenue and Research Road (then known as Parkhurst Boulevard) to the north and east of 20 Research Road. These structures included the Radio Building, Rangefinder, Glass Making, Pot Making, Automotive Assembly and a Utility building. The building at 11 Brentcliffe Road served as a canteen. REL closed in 1946 and by 1947, the building was occupied by Dorothea Knitting Mills. During this period, additions including a loading bay and a narrow extension for a dye building were added to the east end of the building. Parkhurst Boulevard was renamed Research Road in 1949 commemorating the highly successful wartime record of REL.

Radio Stores Building No. 16, is a two-storey, narrow rectangular-plan, concrete structure, clad with brick and factory-type metal sash glazing, with a flat roof topped with a glazed roof monitor extending on the long east-west axis. The building was designed by the Toronto architectural partnership of Allward & Gouinlock who were responsible for several other buildings on the site which were featured in the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal in 1942 and 1946. Allward & Gouinlock have been credited with introducing a Modernist stylistic language at the University of Toronto in 1948 with their internationally acclaimed Mechanical and Engineering Building, but the earlier Sunnybrook Hospital, 1944-47, was one of the first uses by the firm of "strip windows

¹ Canadian Encyclopedia, Department of Munitions and Supply
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/department-of-munitions-and-supply>

² Jane Pitman, "Leaside's Proud History," <https://leasidelife.com/leasides-proud-history/>

and planar massing."³ As REL Building No. 16 was designed and constructed in 1942, it is one of the firm's earliest uses of this innovative Modernist language, known as the International Style.⁴

Statement of Cultural Heritage Value

REL Radio Store Building No. 16 has design and physical value as an early representative of the modernist International Style applied to an industrial facility. The elements of the style are present in the flat roof, continuous "ribbon" windows and in the aesthetic interest created by the asymmetrical composition of functional elements such as the elevator towers on the west and north elevations and the craneway which rises as a taller element at the east end of the building. These vertical components contrast with the overall horizontality of the building created by its extensive length and emphasized by the continuous "ribbon" windows which provide the desired effect of transparency favoured by the International Style at the corners. In contrast, the towers are clad in brick featuring off-set punctured windows. The building's structure, a grid of mushroom-capped concrete columns supporting concrete floors and roof, is set back from the external walls allowing them to be non-load-bearing and the glazing to be continuous.

The property has value for its historic association with Research Enterprises Ltd. the Canadian corporation created to produce high technology equipment for air force pilots fighting in World War II. It is associated with Leaside's role as an important site for both world wars in producing equipment, munitions and training pilots. It is also valued as an early example of the pioneering modernist work undertaken by the distinguished Toronto architectural practice of Allward & Gouinlock.

Contextually, the property has value as it maintains and supports the industrial character which was part of Leaside's history, particularly industries associated with the war efforts of both world wars. The extent of the building along Research Road speaks to the vast undertaking to provide the necessary supplies and equipment. Set back from the road in a landscaped setting of lawns with some trees and planting, the two-storey height and International Style character of the building contribute to the early-mid-century modern character of those industries that were part of Leaside's early growth and development.

Heritage Attributes

The heritage attributes of the building are:

- The setback, placement and orientation of the building on the north side of Research Road, east of Brentcliffe Road
- The scale, form and massing of the two-storey, rectangular-plan building with a flat roof with a roof monitor and two elevator towers, a raised east end and a circular chimney
- The cladding of the elevations including the continuous bands of factory-sash glazing, cement sills and brick

³ Robert Hill, editor, Biographical Dictionary of Architects, <http://www.dictionaryofarchitectsincanada.org/node/34>

⁴ The 1937, Leaside Staunton Wallpaper Factory, Mathers and Haldenby, was an earlier example of "ribbon window" factory sash glazing.

- The elevations of the two elevator towers (west and north elevations) and the craneway with their brick cladding punctured by single windows and entry openings
- The landscaped setback on the south side of the building facing Research Road

The later extensions on the east end of the building and the delivery ramp, are not included as part of the heritage attributes.

Historical Timeline:

Key Date	Historical Event
c12000 BCE	The area now known as Leaside is partly submerged by the ancient glacial Lake Iroquois whose shoreline cut across the south-east corner of the area
3000-1000 BCE	Settlement by Laurentians, stone makers
C1400 - 1700	Settlement by the Hurons (briefly) and the Iroquois
c1700	The area is inhabited by the Mississaugas
1793	The Town of York is founded
1820	John Lea Sr. moves to Lot 13 Concession 3 with family (Transaction recorded Jan. 20, 1820)
1829	John Lea Sr. constructs large brick house (may have been at Laird Drive and Lea Avenue)
1841	William Lea (son) purchases 130 acres south of John Lea Sr.'s property
1854	John Lea Sr. leaving Lot 13 to be divided between his sons William and John Jr. William builds the octagonal house known as Leaside and founds the village of Leaside becoming the town's chief magistrate.
1881	The Ontario and Quebec Railway is chartered by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) to build a line across the then northern boundary of the city. Expediency leads the line across the Lea family farm holdings. William sells this portion of his land to the railway.
1884	The CPR, now operating the O&Q line, creates a maintenance shop and sidings at Leaside and builds a line following the Don River to Union Station.
1893	William Lea dies and leaves his land and the octagonal house to his son Joseph, who lives in the octagonal house until 1903, after which time it is vacant
1894	CPR opens a new station, naming it 'Leaside Junction' in honour of William Lea. It served as a passenger station and railway yard until its closure in 1970.
1900c	Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) initiates their plans to connect with the existing CPR line running through Leaside Junction.
1912	To fund their connection CNoR creates the subsidiary York Land Company to purchase over 1000 acres of land including the former Lea family holdings to develop for housing and industry. The York Land Company commissions Frederick Todd (planner and landscape architect) to masterplan a model town and attempts to have North Toronto annex Leaside and provide services and transit, but it was denied.
1913	CNoR (Canadian Northern Railway at the time) demolishes the octagonal home; Frederick Todd completes plan for the model

	town. The Village of Leaside is incorporated as 'Town of Leaside'; Canada Wire and Cable Company (CWCC) moves to Leaside
1916	CWCC subsidiary Leaside Munitions Company is opened to manufacture and supply munitions and shells for World War I
1917	Construction of the Leaside Aerodrome
1927	The Leaside viaduct and underpass is constructed
c1920's-1930's	Increase of industries establishing in Leaside: ie Durant Motors (1921); Canada Varnish Ltd (1924); Lincoln Electric Company (1928); Tremco Ltd. (1931); E.S. & A. Robinson Canada Ltd. (1932); Apco Industries Company Ltd (1935)
1929	By this year only 68 houses have been built
1938	Residential construction has increased over the decade and 328 have been completed by this year
1940-46	Research Enterprises Limited (REL), a crown corporation, is established during World War II, producing radio and optical equipment for the war effort
1956	Eglinton Avenue is extended east over the Don River, providing additional access to Leaside
c1960'S	Planning regulations along Laird Drive allowing for conversion of housing to commercial uses
1967	Leaside is annexed to the Township of East York.
1970	Rail service to Leaside is discontinued and the railway station closed and subsequently demolished
c1990's	Rezoning allowed retail and residential development within the industrial zone; CWCC's property was purchased by Alcatel and later developed into an outdoor shopping centre
1998	East York amalgamates with other municipalities to become City of Toronto

The Natural Landscape & Early Settlement:

Approximately 12,000 years ago, the lands that are now known as Leaside, were submerged in what was known as Lake Iroquois. (*Image 1*) This glacial lake existed at the end of the last ice age. Its northern shoreline cuts southeast of the Study Area. The Leaside lands were shaped with silt, sand and other sediments that washed up to its shores, forming a plateau, part of the Iroquois Plain; this topography is still evident in its flat high elevation today. Over thousands of years, the body of water subsided into what is now Lake Ontario, its shoreline much further south. The Don River, present during the era of Lake Iroquois, carved deep valleys as it wound its way southwards; to this day, it borders the plateau of Leaside to the south and east. The plateaus became densely forested, and a variety of wildlife, such as deer, bison, bears, wolves and musk-oxen, made these lands their home.

Until the late 17th century, the extent of human habitation within the area consisted of temporary encampments and villages along Lake Ontario. The first known people were the Laurentians, stone makers who lived in the area c.3000 to 1000 BCE. It was then occupied by the Huron people for a short period of time, who possibly farmed the area with corn, beans and squash. The Hurons were succeeded by the Iroquois, who hunted and fished in the Toronto region, primarily locating their settlements by Rouge and

Humber Rivers. By late 17th century, the Iroquois were succeeded by the Mississaugas and they lived a subsistence economy of farming, hunting and fishing in the region. The advent of the American Revolution to the South resulted in an influx of British Loyalists into the Toronto region, resulting in the British government negotiating the surrender of the lands around Toronto, known as the “Toronto Purchase” in 1787 for the Loyalists to settle. The Town of York (now known as Toronto) was established in 1793, the lands surveyed, and settlers invited to purchase lots. The Study Area was surveyed in a grid pattern of 200-acre lots.

Lea Family:

Of particular interest was the settler, John Lea who purchased Lot 13 of Concession 3 in 1820. (*Images 2-3*) This lot contained a small log house (potentially where Laird Drive and Lea Avenue now meet) and 200 acres of highly elevated woodlands that could be cleared and farmed. He began to farm the land, becoming rather successful, enabling him to build a brick house for his family in 1829. It is thought to have been one of the earliest brick houses in the York Township. After John’s death, the property was divided between his two sons, John Jr. and William. John Jr., inherited the brick house and 110 acres, raising his family on the property. The brick house burnt down in 1912. William, inherited 90 acres. Just prior to his father’s death, William purchased another 130 acres just south of his father’s property. On this land, c1851, he built a three-storey octagonal house, naming it “Leaside” which was located near today’s Leaside Memorial Gardens at Laird and Southvale drives. The house served not only as a residence but also as town hall, post office and courthouse while it stood from 1851 to 1913.

Railway Development:

An important development to the Study Area was spurred by the construction of a new railway line connecting Toronto with Peterborough and beyond, which cut through the southeast corner of William Lea’s farm. (*Images 7-9*) In 1881, the Ontario and Quebec Railway began to construct this easterly line. In the Study Area, the line ran across a bridge over the Don River and curved northward through the southeast corner of William Lea’s farm. For its right-of-way, the railway company provided generous compensation to William Lea. When the Ontario and Quebec Railway company ran into financial difficulty in 1884, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) took over its operations with a 999 year lease. With the growth of Toronto, CPR looked for a suitable place to locate a maintenance yard. Thus, Leaside Junction, named in honour of William Lea, was opened in 1894 on the former lands of the Lea farm. It served as both a passenger station and a railway yard, running for over 100 years until its closure in 1970. William Lea died in 1893, and his eldest son Joseph, took over the farm. His family lived in the octagonal house, until 1903, when it was abandoned. It was burned down in 1913 to make way for a new planned development.

Planned Development: Model Town:

In the early 20th century, Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR), was seeking to expand their transcontinental railway line into the Toronto area. They found a suitable partner in CPR, resulting in the CNoR proceeding to link its railway line to the CPR Line at Leaside Junction, providing them access to Toronto in return for trackage fees. Principal

shareholders Donald Mann and William Mackenzie of CNoR saw an opportunity to develop the area around Leaside Junction into maintenance facilities and yards for the railway and create a garden suburb in order to fund their railway building. Ambitiously, Mann and Mackenzie established the York Land Company as a CNoR subsidiary and acquired approximately 1000 acres of land adjacent to Leaside Junction in 1912 which included the Lea farms. (*Images 5-7*)

Mann and Mackenzie then commissioned planner and landscape architect Frederick Todd of Montreal to masterplan a town on this land, modeled after his previous successes of Port Mann (Surrey, BC) and Town of Mount Royal (Montreal, QC). Both Port Mann (1911) and Town of Mount Royal (1912) were Garden-City inspired model towns. Leaside became his third Garden-City inspired community. The principles used included planning housing density, spacious radial residential streets, access to green space, and the inclusion of a separated industrial zone to support the residents.

Leaside was intended as an upper class residential neighbourhood, with curving inward-turning radial residential streets. Todd's concept was to separate the residential area from a dedicated industrial zone, with the intent of the industrial zone to offset taxes from the residential areas. Laird Drive became the arterial dividing road, with residential development slated to its west and the industrial zone to its east, located around the railway station for transport access. The original boundaries of this industrial park were defined by Laird Drive on its west, Wicksteed Avenue on its north, and the Railway Corridor to its south and east. Vanderhoof Avenue was perpendicular to Laird Drive, crossing just north of the original slated industrial park. It was originally surveyed to be residential, with small narrow lots facing onto Vanderhoof Avenue. The plan was completed and the developers approached the Town of North Toronto to have Leaside annexed, in return for services and transit. The town council of North Toronto denied this request. Instead, York Land Company formally adopted the plan in 1913, and incorporated the area as the Town of Leaside.

Industrial Leaside and World Wars I and II:

A confluence of factors prevented immediate development of Leaside from its initial drafted lot plan. Leaside was geographically isolated from the main developments and roads in Toronto, the York Land Company experienced financial decline, the CNoR came into financial difficulty and was absorbed into the federally created Canadian National Railway (CNR) and the outbreak of World War I (and subsequent economic depression) happened. This resulted in few homes built in Leaside before 1929.

Development of the industrial zone came first, particularly due to its proximity with the CNR corridor. The Canada Wire and Cable Company (CWCC) was one of the first companies to arrive in the industrial area. In 1912, the company purchased sixteen acres southeast of Laird Drive and Wicksteed Avenue. They erected a factory to manufacture wires and cable, and intended to construct housing within the residential areas for their employees, though only 68 were ever completed. With the advent of World War I, CWCC saw an opportunity to create a new subsidiary, Leaside Munitions Company, to manufacture shells and munitions. A factory was built to house this new company, just south of their original factory. Over 4000 people were employed in the

munitions company during the First World War, providing supplies to Canada, United States and the U.K. In 1921, this property was sold to Durant Motors of Canada Ltd.

In addition, the federal government leased 220 acres of land north of the CWCC, locating an aerodrome there for the war effort. It spanned from Wicksteed Avenue to Broadway Avenue in its north-south direction and from Sutherland Drive to the Don Valley in its east-west direction. It encompassed the northern end of Laird Drive and the entirety of Vanderhoof Avenue. Constructed in 1917, it became the base for the Number 83 Canadian Training Squadron of the 43rd Wing Royal Flying Corp, with approximately 600 servicemen stationed there. The aerodrome also has the distinction of being the arrival location of Canada's first airmail delivery, which occurred in 1918, beginning in Montreal and arriving in Leaside. After the war, it revived briefly in the 1920's as the Toronto Flying Club; however, it was permanently dismantled shortly afterwards and the area was turned over to industrial development.

Between 1921 and 1939, a number of industries established themselves around the Leaside industrial zone, due to cheaper land prices, proximity to Toronto, railway access, and the newly constructed Leaside viaduct and underpass. Opened in 1927, the underpass led below the train tracks and the viaduct over the Don River allowing for vehicular through-traffic from Leaside to East Toronto. This opened up access to and from Leaside, making it a more attractive location for industries. Some companies, such as Durant Motors, Lincoln Electric Company, E. S. & A Robinson and the Sheridan Equipment, became influential contributors to the built form of industrial Leaside, as they commissioned the large manufacturing plants that continue to define the character of the area. Some of these buildings are still occupied by the originals, while others have been adapted for newer light industrial and commercial business.

World War II brought an important but short-lived company to Leaside, named Research Enterprises Limited (REL). Balancing a need for secrecy and discretion coupled with the demand for radio machinery and optical equipment to support the war effort, the government set up this high-technology crown corporation in 1940. REL was a large complex of buildings constructed on 55 acres just north of Wicksteed Avenue, on land that was formerly occupied by the aerodrome. At its prime, REL employed 7500 workers. However, once the war was over, in 1946 REL was dismantled and the complex divided and sold in parcels, becoming part of the industrial park. Companies such as Corning Glassworks, Dorothea Knitting Mills, Canadian Radio Manufacturing Corp, (previously Rogers Majestic Ltd.) and later Philips Electronics Ltd. moved into the obsolete REL buildings, giving them a second life. Vanderhoof Avenue was thus firmly established within the industrial zone. *(Image11)*

The majority of the buildings in the industrial park were small to mid-sized utilitarian factories, repair shops, plants, garages and warehouses. Often one or two storeys high, the structures typically had rectilinear footprints, constructed in concrete and steel and purpose-built to suit the equipment and uses within. The administrative offices were usually integrated within the factories, although for the larger companies, separate administrative buildings were constructed. Of particular note, Durant Motors in 1928, constructed a two-storey neo-gothic office building on the west side of Laird Drive, originally facing the manufacturing plant. *(Image10)*

In tandem with the industrialization of Leaside came an explosion of residential construction. This included the area to the west of Laird Drive, in which the streets beyond turned inwards, with its radial curving streets, cul-de-sacs and crescents following Frederick Todd's plan. Laird Drive became the dividing line, primarily developed for commercial and industrial uses but also included some residential housing, particularly between Kenrae Road and Lea Avenue. In addition, schools, churches, and other community institutions supporting the industrial and residential areas were constructed, though none were situated within the Study Area. The housing stock built was often single-detached or semi-detached houses typically in a style derived from arts and crafts architecture. The majority of them were two storey, wood framed housing. However, few of these houses were built along Laird Drive; within the Study Area only a stretch of housing was constructed between Kenrae Road and Lea Avenue.

Post War development to present:

After the war, the industrial area, now known as Leaside Business Park, continued to expand and develop. Dramatic transit changes occurred when Eglinton Avenue, which originally ended as a dirt path by the Don Valley, was extended across the Don River, towards Don Mills and Scarborough. Originally a residential street, it became a high-volume arterial road. Laird Drive was now an important access road. (*Image12*)

In 1967, Leaside amalgamated with the neighbouring township of East York. The train service to Leaside station was discontinued in 1970, and the station was shuttered and subsequently demolished. Planning regulations in the late 1960's allowed the last of the residential housing along Laird Drive to be converted to commercial uses. Further rezoning in the 1990's has allowed retail and residential use in the industrial park, enabling new types of businesses to thrive in Leaside. The property of CWCC was purchased by Alcatel in c1991, and was later developed into an outdoor shopping centre. In 1998, East York amalgamated and became part of the City of Toronto.

Currently, the south side of Vanderhoof Avenue consists of a mix of low rise industrial and commercial buildings, both new and old. The north side of Vanderhoof Avenue consists of outdoor shopping centres and office buildings. A newer residential subdivision has been constructed on the eastern end of Vanderhoof Avenue. At the south-east corner of Laird Drive and Vanderhoof Avenue is the old Pease Foundry Company building, a well-designed Art Moderne industrial building, representing the northern edge of the location of the first wave of Leaside industries.

The Study Area along Laird Drive consists of a mix of existing mid-20th century building stock, newer low-rise commercial buildings, and some larger scaled developments (primarily east of Laird Drive). Commercial and retail enterprises have moved into the Study Area, sometimes adopting or converting the building stock from its prior use, without drastically changing its form. The series of houses between Kenrae Road and Lea Avenue have been converted to commercial uses, but still retain their house forms. Larger developments have been constructed to the east of Laird Drive, often from the demolition of existing factories and warehouses, to make way for their new uses. The E.S. & A. Robinson Canada (Ltd.) plant and warehouses have been replaced by a new large office building for Telus and stand-alone retail stores. The CWCC property is now

an outdoor shopping mall. From the inception of Leaside, Laird Drive has been a significant corridor for industrial, commercial and residential use, marking the boundary between the railways and major industries on the east side and the residential garden suburb to the west. As the character of the street evolves with increased commercial uses, a number of the earlier buildings remain along Laird Drive creating a timeline charting Leaside's establishment and evolution.

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IMAGES



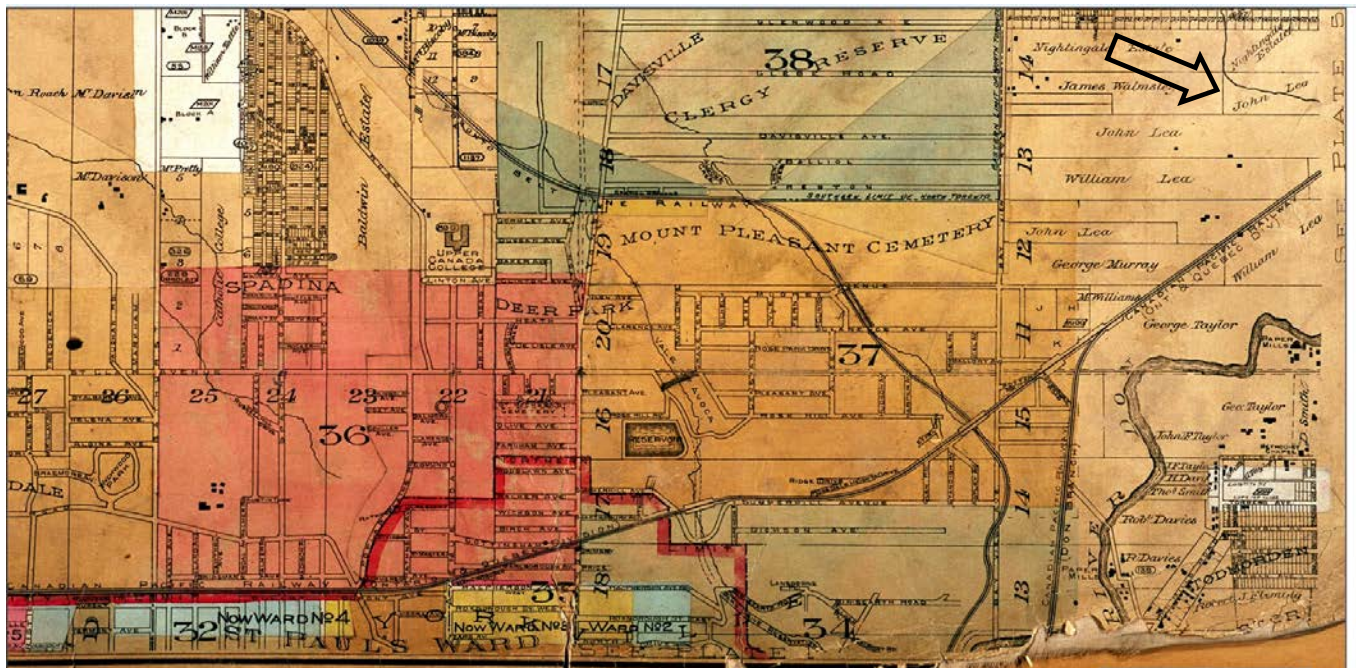
1. A. P. Coleman, *Map of Toronto and Vicinity*, Department of Land, Forestries and Mines, (detail) 1913: The red dashed line indicates the edge of the Iroquois Beach, the thin black line is the Canadian Pacific Railway and the arrow indicates the location of Leaside Junction which is labelled on the map. (University of Toronto)



2. Miles & Co. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of York*, (detail) 1878: showing the landholdings of William and John Jr. Lea on Lots 12, 13 and 14. The arrow points to the approximate location of 150 Laird Drive. The solid arrow indicates the third concession line at St. Clair Avenue. (Ng)



3. "Leaside," William Lea's octagonal house burning in 1913. (Pitfield)



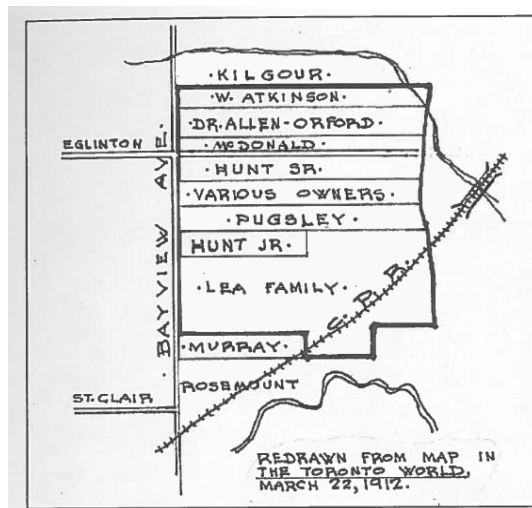
4. Goad's Atlas (detail) 1903: showing the "Canadian Pacific Railway Ontario and Quebec Division" railway line route from just north of Davenport Road in the west (left) and then northeast towards Summerhill and Leaside. The arrow marks the approximate location of 150 Laird Drive between property owned by John Lea Jr. and James Walmsley. (City of Toronto Archives [CTA])



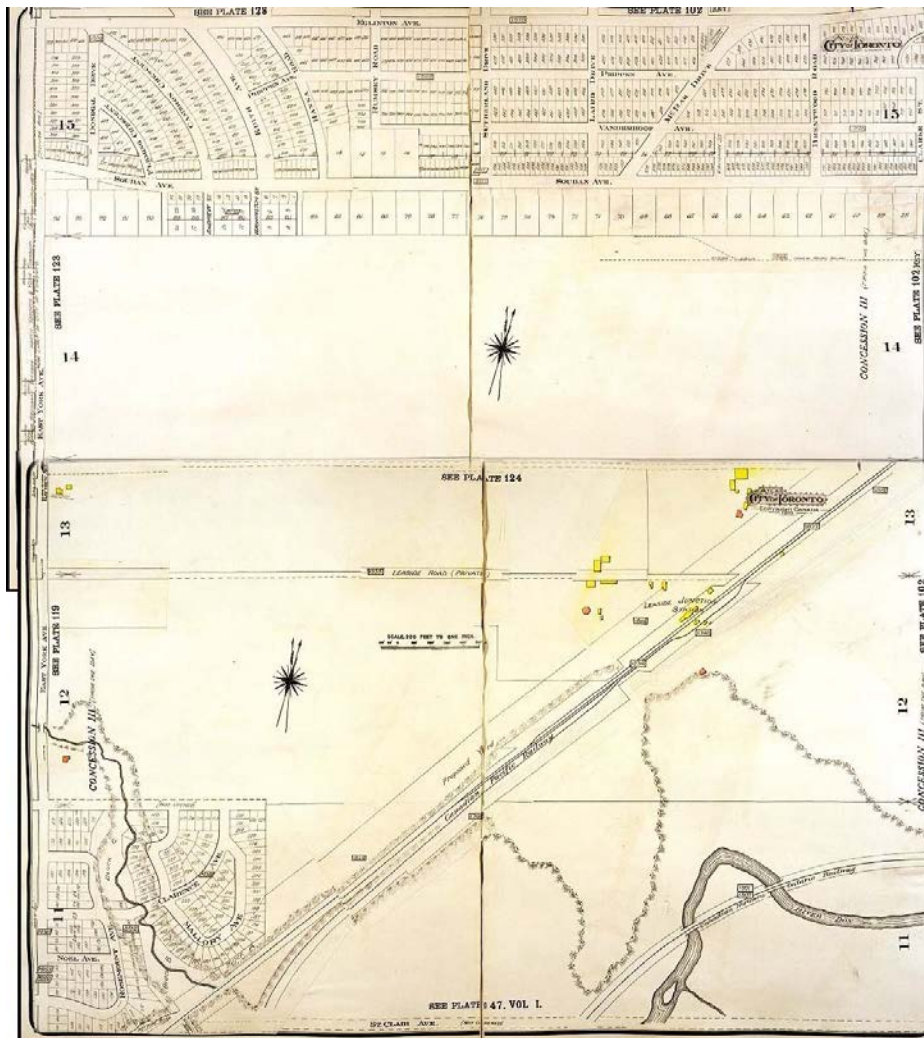
5. CPR Station at Leaside Junction, 1899. (Pitfield, p.18)



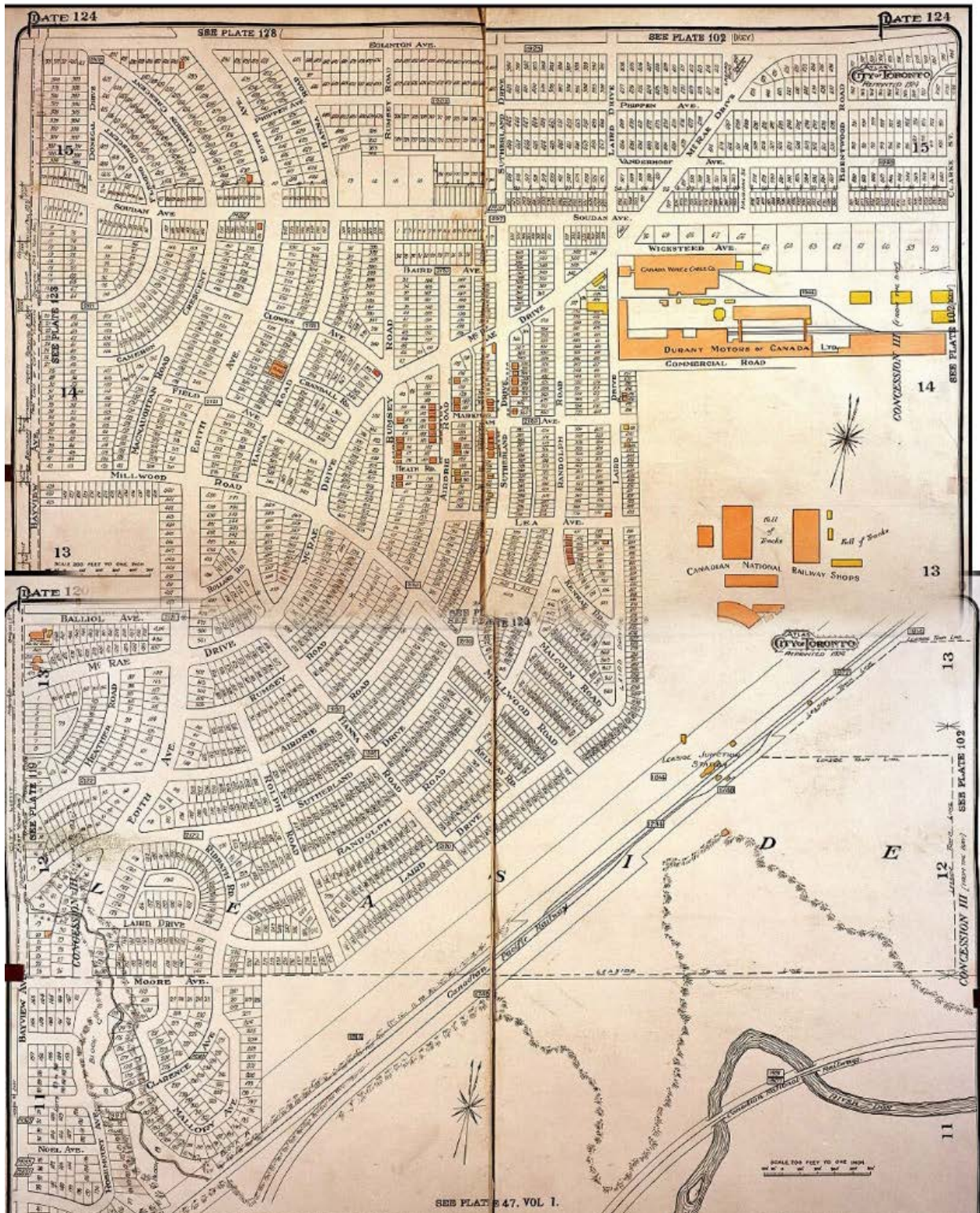
6. CNR Eastern Lines Locomotive Shop, undated (unattributed).



7. York Land Company Property Holdings Map (1912): showing the properties purchased by the company for the new residential development as of March 1912, the Lea family holdings and the CPR line. (*Pitfield*)



8. Goad's Map (plates 120 and 124) 1913: showing the location of the Leaside Junction Station on Lot 12 and the extent of development prior to Todd's plan. (CTA)



9. Goad's Atlas (detail), 1924: showing Frederick Todd's Plan for Leaside in detail and the extent of land occupied by the Canadian National Railway with Leaside Junction Station to the south and other industry (CWCC is shown north of Durant Motors which now occupies former Leaside Munitions buildings) to the north. The map indicates the small amount of actual houses built by this time. Edith Drive is now known as Bessborough. (CTA)



10. 1931 Aerial Photograph looking north east at the junction of Laird and MacRae drives with the Durant Motor Complex and in the foreground the few houses that had been constructed on the west side of Laird by this date. The single storey white-clad, hipped roof on the north side of MacRae is the first Imperial Bank of Canada, which was replaced in 1941 by the a new building at 180 Laird Drive (Rempel, p. 35)



11. Research Enterprises Ltd (REL) at Leaside, 1944 (Pitfield, p. 84)



12. Laird Drive looking north from Parkhurst Blvd, 1955 (Salmon, Courtesy of Toronto Public Library)