

## **123 Wynford Drive - Notice of Intention to Designate a Property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act**

**Date:** May 31, 2023

**To:** Toronto Preservation Board

**From:** Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning

**Wards:** Ward 16 - Don Valley East

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council state its intention to designate the property at 123 Wynford Drive under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act for its cultural heritage value.

Located on the south side of Wynford Drive, northeast of Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue East, in the Banbury-Don Mills neighbourhood in North York, the former Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) at 123 Wynford Drive contains an institutional building with designed landscape and gardens that integrates traditional Japanese design with a Canadian context, including its response to the natural qualities of the Don Valley ravine site.

Completed in 1963 through the extraordinary efforts of the 75 founding Japanese Canadian families, members and volunteers, the JCCC blossomed into a flourishing cultural centre at its original location for 37 years. The Brutalist character of the prestressed concrete building combined with a distinct Japanese sensibility was designed by Raymond Moriyama, internationally renowned Canadian architect and a Companion of the Order of Canada. Moriyama designed the JCCC early in his career at the age of 28 and was recognized by the Precast Concrete Institute of Chicago's annual award in 1964. At the June 7, 1964 opening ceremony, Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson highlighted the significance of the JCCC and Japanese Canadians to the country's multicultural mosaic in the post-war period. The JCCC is well known for cultural enrichment to Japanese and non-Japanese audiences in Toronto through its enduring motto, "Friendship through Culture".

Following the sale of the property in 2001, the JCCC relocated to an expanded facility within the neighbourhood, and the former JCCC became the Noor Cultural Centre, a centre for Islamic practice and learning, and celebration of Islamic culture, while respecting the diversity in peoples and religions. The building was adaptively repurposed and sensitively adapted through minor alterations by Moriyama & Teshima

Architects to serve the Canadian Muslim community from 2003 until the facility closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. The property was sold in 2021.

The property is a landmark that contributes to a significant collection of high-quality designed civic and cultural institutions that characterize the Don Mills Crossing area. The property has been identified as one of the 'Significant Modernist Projects' in North York constructed between 1945 and 1981. The property was listed on the North York's Inventory of Heritage Properties on October 6, 1997. Following municipal amalgamation, the North York heritage inventory was included in the consolidated City of Toronto's Heritage Register in 2006.

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 123 Wynford Drive and determined that the property meets Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act under physical and design, historical and associative, and contextual values. As such, the property is a significant built heritage resource.

In July 2022, the City received Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications related to the proposed redevelopment of the subject property. The proposal is for two residential towers of 55 and 48 storeys, and it proposes to retain *in situ* a portion of the historic building with the reconstruction of its west elevation undertaken with salvaged and new materials to serve as the base of the new development. The proposal consists of 78,660 square metres of residential gross floor area containing 1128 residential units, and 463 vehicular parking spaces.

A Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) completed by ERA Architects Inc. and dated July 22, 2022 was submitted to support the application. An HIA is required for all development applications that affect listed and designated properties and will be considered when determining how a heritage property is to be conserved.

In June 2019, the More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019 (Bill 108) received Royal Assent. Schedule 11 of this Act included amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act. The Bill 108 Amendments to the Ontario Heritage Act came into force on July 1, 2021, which included a shift in Part IV designations related to Planning Act applications that would trigger a Prescribed Event. Section 29(1.2) of the Ontario Heritage Act now restricts City Council's ability to give notice of its intention to designate a property under the Act to within 90 days after the City Clerk gives notice of a complete application.

The City Clerk issued a complete application notice on October 14, 2022. The property owner provided a waiver to the City without a time limit to extend the 90-day timeline of the Prescribed Event established under Bill 108. However, the applicant appealed their Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment application to the Ontario Land Tribunal on April 20, 2023, due to Council's lack of decision, as prescribed by the Planning Act.

Heritage staff are seeking Council's decision regarding Part IV designation at this time to inform the planning process.

On November 28, 2022, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) received Royal Assent. Schedule 6 of the More Homes Built Faster Act which amended the Ontario Heritage Act came into effect on January 1, 2023. The application was deemed complete prior to Bill 23 coming into force, however, the Part IV designation must be in compliance with the province's amended O. Reg. 9/06 under the Ontario Heritage Act, which is in effect as of January 1, 2023. The revised regulation establishes nine provincial criteria for determining whether a property is of cultural heritage value or interest. A property may be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act, if it meets two or more of the nine criteria.

The subject property meets eight of the nine criteria relating to design/physical, historical/associative, and contextual values. Designation enables City Council to review proposed alterations or demolitions to the property and enforce heritage property standards and maintenance.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council state its intention to designate the property at 123 Wynford Drive under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act in accordance with the Statement of Significance; 123 Wynford Drive (Reasons for Designation) attached as Attachment 3, to the report, May 31, 2023, from the Senior Manager, Heritage Planning, Urban Design, City Planning.
2. If there are no objections to the designation, City Council authorize the City Solicitor to introduce the Bill in Council designating the property under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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At its meeting on October 6, 1997, North York Council adopted Report No. 11 from Parks and Recreation Committee (September 15, 1997), including Clause 6: Proposed Additions to the Inventory of Heritage Properties, which includes the property at 123 Wynford Drive.

City Council included the subject property at 123 Wynford Drive on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register on September 27, 2006.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/HeritagePreservation/details.do?folderRsn=2437045&propertyRsn=423020>

## **BACKGROUND**

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### **Heritage Planning Framework**

The conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, and healthy and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the Planning Act. Cultural heritage resources are considered irreplaceable and valuable assets that must be wisely protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the Provincial Policy Statement (2020) and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020). Heritage Conservation is enabled through the Ontario Heritage Act. The City of Toronto's Official Plan implements the provincial policy regime, the Planning Act, the Ontario Heritage Act and provides policies to guide decision making within the city.

Good planning within the provincial and municipal policy framework has at its foundation an understanding and appreciation for places of historic significance, and ensures the conservation of these resources are to be balanced with other provincial interests. Heritage resources may include buildings, structures, monuments, and geographic areas that have cultural heritage value or interest to a community, including an Indigenous community.

The Planning Act establishes the foundation for land use planning in Ontario, describing how land can be controlled and by whom. Section 2 of the Planning Act identifies heritage conservation as a matter of provincial interest and directs that municipalities shall have regard to the conservation of features of significant architectural, historical, archaeological or scientific interest. Heritage conservation contributes to other matters of provincial interest, including the promotion of built form that is well-designed, and that encourages a sense of place.

The Planning Act requires that all decisions affecting land use planning matters shall conform to the Growth Plan and shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, both of which position heritage as a key component in supporting key provincial principles and interests.

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>

The Provincial Policy Statement provides policy direction on land use planning in Ontario and is to be used by municipalities in the development of their official plans and to guide and inform decisions on planning matters, which shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement. The Provincial Policy Statement articulates how and why heritage conservation is a component of good planning, explicitly requiring the conservation of cultural heritage and archaeological resources, alongside the pursuit of other provincial interests. The Provincial Policy Statement does so by linking heritage conservation to key policy directives, including building strong healthy communities, the wise use and management of resources, and protecting health and safety.

Section 1.1 Managing and Directing Land Use to Achieve Efficient and Resilient Development states that long-term economic prosperity is supported by, among other considerations, the promotion of well-designed built form and cultural planning, and the conservation of features that help define character. Section 2.6 Cultural Heritage and Archaeology subsequently directs that "significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved". Through the definition of conserved, built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscape and protected heritage property, the Provincial Policy Statement identifies the Ontario Heritage Act as the primary legislation through which heritage conservation will be implemented.  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/provincial-policy-statement-2020>

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020) builds on the Provincial Policy Statement to establish a land use planning framework that supports complete communities, a thriving economy, a clean and healthy environment and social equity. Section 1.2.1 Guiding Principles states that policies in the plan seek to, among other principles, "conserve and promote cultural heritage resources to support the social, economic, and cultural well-being of all communities, including First Nations and Metis communities". Cultural heritage resources are understood as being irreplaceable, and are significant features that provide people with a sense of place. Section 4.2.7 Cultural Heritage Resources directs that cultural heritage resources will be conserved in order to foster a sense of place and benefit communities, particularly in strategic growth areas.  
<https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-place-to-grow-office-consolidation-en-2020-08-28.pdf>

The Ontario Heritage Act is the key provincial legislation for the conservation of cultural heritage resources in Ontario. It regulates, among other things, how municipal councils can identify and protect heritage resources, including archaeology, within municipal boundaries. This is largely achieved through listing on the City's Heritage Register, designation of individual properties under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act, or designation of districts under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Section 27 of the Ontario Heritage Act gives municipalities the authority to maintain and add to a publicly accessible heritage register. The City of Toronto's Heritage Register includes individual heritage properties that have been designated under Part IV, Section 29, properties in a heritage conservation district designated under Part V, Section 41 of the Act as well as properties that have not been designated but City Council believes to be of "cultural heritage value or interest."  
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o18>

Ontario Regulation 9/06 sets out the criteria for evaluating properties to be designated under Part IV, Section 29 of the Ontario Heritage Act. The criteria are based on an evaluation of design/physical value, historical and associative value and contextual value. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.  
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/060009>

On November 28, 2022, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022 (Bill 23) received Royal Assent. Schedule 6 of the More Homes Built Faster Act amended various sections of

the Ontario Heritage Act. A majority of the key changes to the Act came into effect on January 1, 2023.

The City of Toronto's Official Plan contains a number of policies related to properties on the City's Heritage Register and properties adjacent to them, as well as the protection of areas of archaeological potential. Indicating the integral role that heritage conservation plays in successful city-building, Section 3.1.6 of the Official Plan states that, "Cultural heritage is an important component of sustainable development and place making. The preservation of our cultural heritage is essential to the character of this urban and liveable City that can contribute to other social, cultural, economic and environmental goals of the City."

Policy 3.1.6.4 states that heritage resources on the City's Heritage Register "will be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, as revised from time to time and adopted by Council."

Policy 3.1.6.6 encourages the adaptive re-use of heritage properties while Policy 3.1.6.26 states that, when new construction on, or adjacent to, a property on the Heritage Register does occur, it will be designed to conserve the cultural heritage values, attributes and character of that property and will mitigate visual and physical impacts on it.

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan/>

<https://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s+g-eng-web2.pdf>

## COMMENTS

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In July 2022, the City received Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications related to the proposed redevelopment of the subject property. The City Clerk issued a complete application notice on October 14, 2022.

The proposal is for two residential towers of 55 and 48 storeys that retains *in situ* a portion of the historic building and reconstructs its west elevation with salvaged and new materials to serve as the base of the new development. The proposal consists of 78,660 square metres of residential gross floor area containing 1128 residential units, and 463 vehicular parking spaces.

The property sits on the tablelands of the Don River, immediately west of the Don River's east branch. Situated on a wooded ravine lot, the building responds directly to the natural and topographical features of the site. The ravine landscape is within a Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA) regulated area.

In 1997, the Corporation of the City of North York published *North York's Modernist Architecture* and identified 123 Wynford Drive as one of twenty 'Significant Modernist Projects' in North York constructed between 1945 and 1981. The publication was adopted by North York Council in July 1997. The twenty significant modernist properties

identified in the document were subsequently listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. The publication was revised in 2009.

In 2018, City Planning completed the Don Mills Crossing 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 area planning framework. The subject property at 123 Wynford Drive falls within the CHRA Study Area and the Don Mills Crossing CHRA is referenced in the following research and evaluation section of the report to inform the history and context of the property.

To further inform the research and heritage evaluation of the subject property, City staff undertook a site visit on April 13, 2023, including the property's interior and exterior, and participated in two informative meetings with members of the National Association of Japanese Canadians in support of public engagement with the broader Japanese Canadian community and local residents. The evaluation of the property's historical and associative values has been informed by extensive communications received from members of the Japanese Canadian community from across Canada, documenting the social and historical importance of the subject property to the community.

## **123 Wynford Drive**

### **Research and Evaluation according to Ontario Regulation 9/06**

While the research and evaluation of the property referenced above is, in staff's determination, sufficient to support the designation of the property at 123 Wynford Drive, it should be noted that new and additional relevant information on the subject property further expanding on its cultural heritage value following community input and additional access to archival records may be incorporated in the final version of a Part IV designation by-law.



View of the subject property at 123 Wynford Drive, showing the west (principal) and south elevations of the former Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (Heritage Planning, 2023).

## 1. DESCRIPTION

<b>123 Wynford Drive - The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre</b>	
ADDRESS	123 Wynford Drive, North York
WARD	Don Valley East - Ward 16
LEGAL DESCRIPTION	CON 3 EY PT LOT 2 RP R642 PARTS 1 TO 3 RP R590 PARTS 1 TO 3
NEIGHBOURHOOD/COMMUNITY	Banbury - Don Mills <sup>1</sup>
HISTORICAL NAME	Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre
CONSTRUCTION DATE	1962-1963
ORIGINAL OWNER	Japanese Centre of Toronto
ORIGINAL USE	Memorial; Cultural, educational, and recreational
CURRENT USE*	Vacant
ARCHITECT/BUILDER/DESIGNER	Raymond Moriyama
DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION/MATERIALS	See Section 2
ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	See Section 2
ADDITIONS/ALTERATIONS	See Section 2
CRITERIA	Design/Physical, Historical/Associative, Contextual
HERITAGE STATUS	Listed on October 6, 1997
RECORDER	Heritage Planning: Liz McFarland Ana Martins
REPORT DATE	May 2023

## 2. BACKGROUND

This research and evaluation section of the report describes the history, architecture and context of the property at 123 Wynford Drive and applies evaluation criteria as set out in Ontario Regulation 9/06 to determine whether it merits designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Act. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest. The application of the criteria is found in Section 3 (Evaluation Checklist). The conclusions of the research and evaluation are found in the Conclusion of the report. Maps and Photographs are located in Attachment 1. The archival and contemporary sources for the research are found in Attachment 2. The Statements of Significance are contained in Attachment 3.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by the City of Toronto Neighbourhood Maps and Profiles



## i. HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Key Date	Historical Event
	<p>The area now known as the City of Toronto is the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit (1805), and the Williams Treaties (1923) signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.</p>
	<p>The subject property is situated on the tablelands of the Don River, within the Don River watershed. From its headwaters on the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Don River follows a west and east branch, which meet near the intersection of Don Mills Road and the Don Valley Parkway to form a single stream that eventually drains into Lake Ontario in Toronto. The subject property is located immediately west of the east branch of the Don River. The Don River drains a watershed of approximately 360 square kilometres and was used ancestrally by Indigenous Peoples for transportation, fishing, and adjacent settlement.<sup>2</sup></p>
1793	<p>With the establishment of the Town of York as the capital of Upper Canada, land is surveyed to facilitate settlement. Rural concessions of York Township, County of York are surveyed into 200-acre township lots.</p>
1816	<p>As the 19th century settlement of Don Mills begins, amongst the earliest settlers are the Gray brothers, James, William and Alexander, who build a mill at the current intersection of Leslie Street and Eglinton Avenue East. Eglinton Avenue was opened eastwards only as far as the West Don River and did not cross the valley.</p>
1825	<p>Farmers initiate the construction of Don Mills Road, originally known as the Don Independence Road.</p>
1850	<p>A tavern and schoolhouse are built at the intersection of Don Mills Road and the Fifth Concession (today's Lawrence Avenue) providing a centre for the Don Mills village.</p>
1877-1890s	<p>The late 19th century marks the arrival of the first generation of Japanese immigrants or <i>Issei</i> who settle largely on the west coast of Canada, primarily in the village of Stevenson, BC and in Vancouver near Hastings Mill and on Powell Street. These Vancouver neighbourhoods become major settlement areas for Japanese Canadians until WWII.</p>
1902	<p>The Privy Council of Britain supports the BC law which denies the vote to Asian Canadians. The loss of the fight for the franchise has other consequences - Japanese Canadians cannot vote, hold</p>

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Bonnell, *Reclaiming the Don: An Environmental History of Toronto's Don River Valley* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014).

	public office, or become lawyers, pharmacists, architects, chartered accountants or teachers.
1907	The Anti-Asian Riot of 1907, also known as the Powell Street Riot, begins as a racist protest rally organized by the Anti-Asiatic League, which turns into a rampage spurred by the Asiatic Exclusion League against Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian residents in Vancouver. Financial compensation is later paid by the federal government under a commission led by future Prime Minister W.L. Mackenzie King.
1938 to 1940	RCMP keeps surveillance on the Japanese community in BC and requires compulsory registration of Japanese Canadians over 16.
1941	Under the War Measures Act, compulsory registration of all Japanese Canadians with the Registrar of Enemy Aliens is enacted. On Dec 8, 1200 fishing boats are impounded. Japanese language papers and schools are closed.
1942	On February 24, Privy Council empowers the Minister of Justice to control the movement of Japanese Canadians in the protected area, a 100-mile area inland from the West Coast. In October that year, the War Measures Act is used to order the removal of all Japanese Canadians residing within the protected area for national security despite the fact that Canada's senior military officers state that Japanese Canadians pose no security threat to Canada.
1942	Over 20,000 men, women and children of Japanese ancestry, 75% of whom are Canadian citizens are forcibly uprooted and sent to camps in the interior of British Columbia, and to farms in southern Alberta and Manitoba. Those who resist are sent to POW camps in Ontario. Raymond Moriyama, his sister and mother are interned in a camp in Slocan Valley. His father is sent to a POW camp in Ontario. Raymond Moriyama is 12 years old.
1942	The Canadian Press reports that the Mayor of Toronto F.J. Conboy announced that it was inadvisable to allow Japanese families to resettle in Toronto from British Columbia. In April, the Toronto Board of Control passes a resolution prohibiting their entry to Toronto.
1947	The National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association is established in Toronto. In order to own property in Toronto, Japanese Canadians need to secure permissions granted through the Department of Labour, Japanese Division. Local residents object and appeal to the mayor to stop Japanese Canadian settlement in their neighbourhoods.
1952	The 2,200 acres privately developed residential and commercial community of Don Mills is announced. This marks a period of intensive development in North York, characterized by planned communities using the neighbourhood unit as its organizational structure and buildings designed by prominent Canadian Modernist architects.
1953	North York becomes one of 13 municipalities in the new Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto

1956	Eglinton Avenue East is extended eastwards connecting Laird Drive with Victoria Park Avenue.
1958	Raymond Moriyama opens his own architectural practice in Toronto's Yorkville, sharing a space with Jack Klein and Henry Sears.
1958	In February 1958, the Globe and Mail reports that the Japanese Canadian community in Toronto has raised, in the first month of fundraising, over \$70,000 in pledges for the construction of a centre.
1958	Toronto Industrial Leasehold purchases 600 acres of land east of Don Mills Road on both sides of Eglinton Avenue East for the development of Flemingdon Park, a master-planned community directly influenced by Don Mills to the north. The subject property is located on the Radio & Television City lands of the Flemingdon Park master plan, an extension of the industrial lands which was originally reserved for the new headquarters of the CBC. The CBC plans were abandoned in 1960.
1960	In November, the Japanese Canadian Centre of Toronto purchases the subject property, which is an uncleared wooded ravine lot, from Toronto Industrial Leasehold.
1961	The first portion of the Don Valley Parkway is constructed linking Don Mills with downtown Toronto through the Eglinton on-ramps.
1962	In May, 75 families from the Japanese Canadian community sign as guarantors to secure a mortgage from the Bank of Montreal to cover project costs.
1963	In October, the building's construction is complete, and the centre is officially dedicated to the first generation of Japanese immigrants to Canada.
June 7, 1964	The JCCC's official opening ceremony with Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson takes place.
1964	Moriyama receives the Ontario Government's commission to design the Ontario Science Centre, a provincial agency and building designed to commemorate Canada's centennial. This is his largest public commission as an independent architect before entering into partnership with Ted Teshima.
1970s	In celebration of the JCCC's 10-year anniversary, Raymond Moriyama Architects and Planners design a landscape plan for the property that integrates the natural landscape and topography with designed landscape elements and a teahouse. It is known as the Nikka Teien, the Japan-Canada Garden; its sculptural element is dedicated in 1973.
1970	Moriyama enters into a partnership with Ted Teshima to form Moriyama & Teshima. Recognition for their projects quickly accumulate as they receive the Governor General's Medals for Architecture for the Scarborough Civic Centre (1973), the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library (1977), and Sudbury's Science North (1984).
1984 - 1988	In January 1984, the National Association of Japanese Canadians' council meeting unanimously passes resolutions

	seeking an official acknowledgment and redress for the injustices committed against Japanese Canadians during and after WWII. Finally, in 1988, the NAJC and the Government of Canada sign the Terms of Agreement that includes an acknowledgment, apology, and compensation for the injustices suffered by the Japanese Canadian community during and after the war.
1997	'North York's Modernist Architecture' is published by the Corporation of the City of North York. This first publication <sup>3</sup> includes the subject property as one of twenty 'Significant Modernist Projects' in North York.
1997 Oct 6	The subject property is listed on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. <sup>4</sup>
1998	The City of North York is amalgamated with Metropolitan Toronto to form the new City of Toronto. The area of Don Mills and Flemingdon Park become a secondary economic hub for the new megacity.
2001	The subject property is sold and the JCCC relocates to a new facility at 6 Garamond Court.
2003	Noor Cultural Centre opens following the Moriyama and Teshima Architects design of the interior alterations to sensitively repurpose the building for the Muslim community.
2010	Initial construction begins on the new Eglinton LRT. A station is proposed for the intersection of Don Mills Road / Eglinton Ave. E.
2018-2019	The Don Mills Crossing Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment is completed as part of the Don Mills Crossing Study. The former JCCC property is included in the CHRA.
2021	The subject property is sold by The Noor Cultural Centre.
2023	JCCC celebrates its 60th anniversary

**ii. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The following section outlines the history and facts related to the properties which are the basis for determining historical or associative value of Criteria 4, 5 or 6 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The location of the property at 123 Wynford Drive is shown on the property data map (Image 1), northeast of the Don Valley Parkway and Eglinton Avenue East, in the Banbury-Don Mills neighbourhood in North York. The property sits on the tablelands of the Don River, which follows a west and east branch from its headwaters on the Oak Ridges Moraine and drains into Lake Ontario, in downtown Toronto. Due to its geography - just west of the East Don River and the Charles Sauriol Conservation Area - the subject property is characterized by its sloped topography and partly rugged terrain, which are remnant natural landscape features of the Don River watershed. Until the postwar period's rapid growth and urbanization of North York, the subject site

<sup>3</sup> Revised edition is produced in 2009.

<sup>4</sup> The property was added to the amalgamated City of Toronto Heritage Register in September 2006.

remained largely undeveloped and retained the natural features characteristic of ravine lands.

Challenges to settlement posed by the Don River Valley, particularly its width and steep banks, played a significant role in the evolution of the area, which in its early colonial history was part of the Township of York. In the 19th century access to the area north of the confluence of the Don River's west and east branch, approximately 2 km from the subject property, at Don Mills Road and the Don Valley Parkway, was solely via Don Mills Road (originally called the Don Independence Road). The road first appears on the 1851 Browne Map, which also illustrates the road allowance for what would become Eglinton Avenue as well as the densely wooded nature of the subject property. (Image 2) Later maps such as the 1909 National Topographic Survey Map continued to show "Independent Road" as well as the discontinuous nature of Eglinton Avenue and Leslie Street, which extended to and then terminated at the edge of the steep slope leading down into the Don River valley, clearly illustrating the impact topography had on the development of this area. (Image 3)

Mills were the earliest forms of development in Euro-Canadian settlements and the first mills in the area were built near the intersections of today's Eglinton Avenue and Leslie Street and Lawrence Avenue and Don Mills Road. Subsequently the first milling structures were augmented by mills built by the Taylor family who owned property on both sides of Don Mills Road between Eglinton and Lawrence Avenues. With the addition of a tavern and a schoolhouse in the 1850s, and a post office in 1868, the Don Mills village was firmly established at the intersection of Lawrence Avenue and Don Mills Road.

In 1922 the Township of North York was mostly comprised of agricultural lands of the former Township of York. While North York was experiencing growth at its spine along Yonge Street initially, at its intersection with Eglinton Avenue, the area between the two branches of the Don River remained an isolated swath of rural land. (Image 4) Although just northeast of Toronto's city centre, the area was geographically isolated and difficult to access, and as such was late to develop until the postwar period's infrastructure and planning initiatives extended Eglinton Avenue across the Don Valley (1956) providing a critical east-west connection. (Image 5) In 1967, North York Township was declared a borough. The Borough of North York became the City of North York in 1979. It was amalgamated with the rest of Metropolitan Toronto to form the new City of Toronto in 1998, and the areas of Don Mills and Flemingdon Park became secondary economic and residential concentrations for the megacity of Toronto.

### **Planning Suburbia – The Transformation of North York in the Postwar Period**

In the postwar period, development pressures for regional infrastructure and comprehensive planning led to the incorporation of Metropolitan Toronto in 1953.<sup>5</sup> While Toronto's population was growing exponentially in size, growth in the rural township of North York was primarily in the form of suburban development provided by private

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<sup>5</sup> Richard White, *Planning Toronto: the planners, the plans, their legacies, 1940-80* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2016)

sector planning and development firms.<sup>6</sup> At this time, the new government body also began a period of infrastructure investments that triggered and enabled the transformation of North York - investments that serviced the emerging developments and connected the developing suburbs to the downtown core. Improvements in transportation including the 1956 extension of Eglinton Avenue and its bus route connecting to the new subway station, the completion of the Don Valley Parkway (DVP) with an interchange at Eglinton Avenue, and the proximity of Highway 401 facilitated a new wave of residential and industrial development.<sup>7</sup>

The postwar period marked a dramatic shift from the rural and wooded character of North York to an urbanizing one, characterized by modernist planning ideals and architecture. The postwar urbanization of North York was greatly shaped by new ideas of city building - ideas which included the instrumentality of functional planning, the spatial separation of land uses, the introduction of rational transportation planning, and the idea of the neighbourhood unit (recalling Clarence Perry) as the organizing logic with open spaces such as parks and schoolyards at their centre.<sup>8</sup> Development in North York in this period also placed an importance on the landscape setting and on the traditions of park and garden design to both the neighbourhood layout and to individual buildings, with the effect of establishing an interrelationship between landscape and architecture that emerged from the designed integration of the built form into landscaped settings.<sup>9</sup>

Accommodating growth in North York was primarily achieved through master-planned developments instigated by private sector firms. E.P. Taylor's Don Mills development project on 835 hectares of land north of the CPR line and centred at the intersection of Don Mills Road and Lawrence Avenue was the first fully integrated planned community of the post war era in North York - a development project that greatly influenced the planning of Canadian towns and cities and consequently shaped urban growth through planned satellite communities.<sup>10</sup> The fully planned subdivision, which was inspired by Ebenezer Howard's Garden City or satellite town concept, was designed in the spring of 1952 by the urban planner and landscape architect Macklin Hancock while he was a student at Harvard University.<sup>11</sup> Designed to integrate all levels of development including residential, industrial, commercial, and cultural to provide a comprehensive and self-sufficient community, it was also influenced by the Modern fascination with the machine age as evident in its car-oriented circulation patterns.<sup>12</sup> The concept of the "Garden City" was integral to this development, and the natural system of the Don River watershed including ravines and valleys, provided Don Mills with a natural greenbelt.<sup>13</sup>

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6 Graeme Stewart, "Toronto's Modern Suburbs and the Concrete High-Rise," in *Concrete Toronto: A Guide to Concrete Architecture from the Fifties to the Seventies*. Toronto: Coach House Books, 2007, pg.212-214.

7 ASI, "Don Mills Crossing CHRA", 2019

8 Leo deSorcy, "Planning and Landscape in the North York Modernist Tradition," in *North York's Modernist Architecture: A reprint of the 1997 City of North York Publication, 2009 revised edition*, pages 13-15

9 Ibid.

10 "Don Mills Community", in *North York's Modernist Architecture, 1997*, p.6.

11 ASI, "Don Mills Crossing CHRA", 2019, p.27

12 "Don Mills Community", in *North York's Modernist Architecture, 1997*, p.6.

13 ASI, "Don Mills CHRA", 2019, p.28

This master-planned community promoted Modern architecture by requiring buildings to be architect-designed and designs approved by Don Mills Development Ltd. Don Mills became an attractive alternative to downtown living and has become known as a landmark community embodying the principles of Modern Town Planning.

Macklin Hancock also designed Flemingdon Park in 1959 as another master-planned community, located east of Don Mills Road and bound by the CP Rail corridor; the subject property is located within the northeast quadrant of the master plan. (Image 6) The large-scale development project was designed to accommodate 14,000 people and would contain rental buildings, commercial districts, transit, and community facilities. It was marketed as an all-rental housing development targeting an affluent, urbane market. Constructed in the Modernist style, the development project was characterized by common open green spaces, a reliance on pedestrian walkways, the separation of land uses, the rejection of traditional housing forms with a preference for high-rise tower-in-the-park apartments, and a hierarchy of circulation patterns. The ambitious plan also included land designated for industrial use and a portion on the east side of the Don Valley Parkway and north of Eglinton Avenue East, identified as Radio & Television City lands, was intended to become the new headquarters for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).<sup>14</sup> (Image 7) Similar to the Don Mills development, a number of prominent architects were engaged to design properties located in this industrial area, particularly along Wynford Drive.<sup>15</sup>

Within the area, a series of new curvilinear roads responsive to the river valley terrain and to the new picturesque Garden City principles of Don Mills were constructed: Leslie Street was extended to Eglinton Avenue East, and Wynford Drive created a circuitous route from Don Mills Road eastwards across the DVP and south connecting with St. Dennis Drive, which provided a parallel route south of Eglinton Avenue through the residential Flemingdon Park back to Don Mills Road. (Image 8)

As a result of these factors, commerce and industry located, and relocated from Toronto's downtown to Don Mills. Although the focus had been on establishing a zone for clean industry between the two residential areas of Don Mills to the north and Flemingdon Park to the south, a variety of uses, including an expansion of the City's cultural landscape, with first the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre and the Ontario Science Centre, and recently, the Aga Khan Museum, were attracted to the area with its ease of transportation access and well-designed environments.<sup>16</sup>

## **Japanese Canadians and the Second World War**

In the early days of 1942, a few months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour launched World War II in the Pacific, the Canadian government announced plans to remove all people of Japanese ancestry from the coastal region of British Columbia.<sup>17</sup>

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14 ASI, "Don Mills CHRA", 2019, p.29

15 ASI, "Don Mills CHRA", 2019, p.30

16 City of Toronto, "789-793 Don Mills Road - Intention to Designate", April 6, 2023, p.17

17 Peter W. Ward, "British Columbia and the Japanese Evacuation," Canadian Historical Review, Vol 57, No. 3, September 1976, pp. 289

Under the belief of military necessity and national security but also in response to populist, racially-driven fears, the federal government determined that 22,000 Japanese Canadians, of which over 75% were Canadian citizens, were "enemy aliens".<sup>18</sup> However, neither the military or the RCMP shared this view, and in fact, not one Canadian with Japanese ancestry was charged with any act of sabotage or disloyalty during the war.<sup>19</sup> The order made by the federal government marked the beginning of a process that saw Canadians of Japanese ancestry uprooted from their homes, confined in internment camps, stripped of their property, and displaced across Canada or deported to war-torn Japan.<sup>20</sup>

The mass removal of Japanese Canadians from the west coast by the federal government and their involuntary detainment, dispossession,<sup>21</sup> and confinement in remote areas of British Columbia or displacement to other parts of the country can only be understood and explained by the racism at the time. Responding to the swelling tide of anti-Japanese sentiments, the Liberal government reacted by using the *War Measures Act*, a federal law passed by Parliament in 1914, which gave the federal government broad powers to maintain security and order during war, invasion or insurrection by suspending civil liberties. The Act was repealed and replaced by the more limited *Emergencies Act* in 1988.<sup>22</sup>

However, the expulsion of Japanese Canadians from the west coast and their confinement in internment camps was not only a reaction to wartime measures but the consequence of deep and lingering racial prejudice, and discriminatory practices and violence directed at Japanese Canadians since their early immigration to Canada in 1877.<sup>23</sup> Persistent anti-Japanese sentiment sustained prejudicial activities from the late 1870s through the mid-1940s, which meant that Japanese communities existed within a largely hostile environment.<sup>24</sup> Anti-Asian sentiments reached a high point in 1907 with the Powell Street Riot, a racist protest rally organized by the Anti-Asiatic League, which turned into a rampage, causing thousands of dollars worth of damages to Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian homes and businesses. (Image 9)

Along with the denial of voting rights to citizens of Asian ancestry in British Columbia, voting restrictions that also prohibited Japanese and other Asian-ethnic groups from holding public office, becoming lawyers, pharmacists, and architects, the Canadian government also restricted Japanese immigration. In 1908, the Hayashi-Lemieux

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18 Ann Gomer Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1981)

19 Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009)

20 Ibid

21 For more information, the Landscapes of Injustice project is a national collaboration of researchers, community organizations, and museums documenting and making known the history of the forced dispossession of Japanese Canadian-owned property during the Second World War.

22 For more information on the War Measures Act, please see War Measures Act | The Canadian Encyclopedia

23 JCCC, "Japanese Canadian: A Story of Hope, Resilience and Growth," online exhibition.

24 For more information, please see [The Sedai Project](#), an oral history project collecting, documenting, and preserving the history of Japanese Canadians in the pre-war and war years.



"Gentlemen's Agreement" was signed by the Canadian and Japanese governments whereby Japan would voluntarily limit migration, an agreement which was revised various times. In 1923, Canada passed a Chinese immigration act that barred Chinese immigration, and shortly thereafter a bill was introduced to extend the exclusion to Japanese people. However, Prime Minister Mackenzie King entered into an agreement with the Japanese government to reduce the immigration quota and avoid instituting a unilateral ban, a decision which took into consideration economic relations between the two countries.<sup>25</sup> By 1929, under the Gentleman's Agreement, the total immigration quota was reduced to 150 persons per year, of which half were women.<sup>26</sup>

Racial discrimination continued with the start of the Second World War when the RCMP kept surveillance on the Japanese community living on Canada's west coast and required compulsory registration of Japanese Canadians over 16 years of age.<sup>27</sup> On February 24, 1942 the Privy Council empowered the Minister of Justice to control the movement of Japanese Canadians in the protected area, a 100-mile area inland from the coast. (Images 10 and 11) In October that year, the War Measures Act was used to order the removal of all Japanese Canadians residing within the protected area, under the notion of national security despite the fact that Canada's senior military officers stated that Japanese Canadians posed no security threat to Canada. Over 20,000 men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry, 75% of whom were Canadian citizens, were forcibly uprooted and sent to camps in the interior of British Columbia, and farms in southern Alberta and Manitoba. (Image 12) Those who resisted were sent to POW camps in Ontario.<sup>28</sup> While confined to camps or farms, families were required to sign over their property, including homes, land, businesses, and belongings to the Custodian of Enemy Property.<sup>29</sup> Their property was subsequently sold in 1943, and the proceeds of these sales were used to pay for the costs associated with their internment.<sup>30</sup> In 1949, the restrictions imposed under the War Measures Act were lifted and voting rights were given to Japanese Canadians.

### **Resettlement in Toronto**

Towards the end of the Second World War, the Japanese Canadian community was forced under a government directive to either relocate east of the Rocky Mountains or be deported to Japan. Their blanket expulsion from British Columbia resulted in an emerging Japanese Canadian community in Ontario. Census data from 1941 showed 233 persons of Japanese ancestry living in Ontario, of which a small number resided in Toronto, but by 1949, the number had increased to 8000 persons.<sup>31</sup>

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25 Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 2009.

26 Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 2009.

27 "World War II and the War Measures Act," <https://japanesecanadianhistory.net/historical-overview/reference-timeline/>

28 For individual accounts of the confinement and dispossession of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War, please see the online oral history project: [The Sedai Project](#).

29 Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 2009, p.179.

30 Ibid.

31 Jennifer Hashimoto, "Turbulent Beginnings," *The Toronto Star*, October 15, 1992.

The small community of Japanese Canadians living in Toronto during the Second World War had grown only minimally during the war. Those from the west coast who had ties to the community in Toronto managed to resettle in the city, residing in the Dundas-McCaul area and in the Spadina neighbourhood near the Jewish garment industries, where many found employment.<sup>32</sup> However, Japanese Canadians resettling in Toronto continued to face discriminatory practices in a city that was not eager to receive them.

In 1942, the Toronto Board of Control sought to prohibit Japanese Canadians from entering the city, resulting in their resettlement in Hamilton, London, Guelph, and Windsor.<sup>33</sup> In a newspaper article published by the Canadian Press in 1942, Toronto Mayor F. J. Conboy stated that "it was inadvisable to allow Japanese families to move here [i.e., in Toronto] from British Columbia" citing that "we have a tremendous number of war industries which make us just as vulnerable as British Columbia". (Image 13) At the time, wartime resettlement of Japanese Canadians was controlled by the British Columbia Security Commission until it was dissolved in 1943 and replaced with the Department of Labour's placement commissioner, George Collins.<sup>34</sup> As reported in the article, business, labour, and patriotic organizations were lobbying the municipal government to refuse (Japanese) Canadians from British Columbia from resettling in the city. The Mayor also received letters from local residents voicing their objection. (Image 14) When the order was lifted in 1943, the Japanese Canadian community in Toronto continued to face racist practices: there was opposition to granting Japanese Canadians business licenses<sup>35</sup>, discriminatory hiring practices, refusal of services at restaurants, property-owning restrictions, and amongst other discriminatory practices.<sup>36</sup>

By the 1950s, Toronto was home to the largest postwar resettlement population of Japanese Canadians in Canada.<sup>37</sup> However, their resettlement was dispersed throughout the city to avoid establishing an ethnic enclave similar to Toronto's Chinatown and becoming once again an easily identifiable and targeted group.<sup>38</sup> Anti-Japanese racism continued with overt racist policies of the day and discriminatory practices which meant that finding housing and jobs in Toronto were a challenge.<sup>39</sup>

### **Japanese Community in Toronto - Building the JCCC and its Stewardship**

It was in response to this pre- to post-war context that the diasporic Japanese Canadians in Toronto came together to conceptualize a place that would help re-establish the community in Canadian life and respond to the impacts that the Second World War had had on the fractured community.<sup>40</sup> In the early 1950s, a group of Japanese Canadians living in Toronto conceived the idea of establishing a *nikkai kaikan*

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32 Ibid

33 Ibid

34 Robinson, p.189.

35 For more information, see *The Enemy that Never Was* by Kenneth Adachi.

36 Jennifer Hashimoto, "Turbulent Beginnings," *The Toronto Star*, October 15, 1992.

37 Jennine Locke, "Japanese-Canadians Happy as Hyphenated Citizens," *Toronto Star*, April 18, 1959

38 Ibid; Oral history accounts with community members

39 Les Kojima, President of the National Association of Japanese Canadians, letter dated May 15, 2023 to Heritage Staff

40 Susan Hidaka, "How it all began", letter dated June 1, 1980. Susan Hidaka Collection, JCCC Archives.

or community centre as a collective endeavour to build a centre for the community that would serve as a living memorial or "lasting tribute to the enduring optimistic spirit of the early Japanese immigrants or *Issei* to Canada"<sup>41</sup> and also meet the social, recreational and cultural needs of the fractured, diasporic community. The centre would also function as an educational facility where knowledge of Japanese cultural heritage would be shared with other Canadians to promote cultural exchange.<sup>42</sup>

On September 26, 1958, a fund-raising event in Toronto comprising over 200 Issei and Nisei community members met at the Golden Dragon Restaurant to launch a community fundraising campaign to raise the necessary funds to construct the centre. The centre was initially estimated to cost \$400,000 but had increased to \$520,000 by 1962. By the spring of that year, community fund-raising efforts including door-to-door canvassing, donations, bazaars, dances and other community events had resulted in community contributions totalling \$300,000. The remaining amount or \$220,000 was covered by a mortgage with 75 individuals in the community acting as guarantors to secure the loan from the Bank of Montreal - "a testament to the community's courage, conviction, and faith in the project".<sup>43</sup>

The total cost of the project was \$600,000 with another \$80,000 secured by another short-term bank loan undertaken by members of the community. As the project would be community funded, a budget was set at \$14 per square foot. The actual cost was \$14.18 per square foot, a very modest budget which dictated the materials used such as concrete - raw, precast for cost saving measures, and the structural composition using massing and voids in a bold but also cost-effective manner.<sup>44</sup>

The Japanese Canadian Centre of Toronto completed its negotiations with Toronto Industrial Leaseholds for the 3-acre wooded ravine lot in November of 1960, which at the time was an undeveloped part of Flemingdon Park and part of the industrial lands identified as 'Television City' for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).<sup>45</sup> It was reported that the community wanted the centre to be accessible,<sup>46</sup> close to a park, and

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41 JCC Conference Summary, AGM, May 25, 1962. Susan Hidaka Collection, JCCC Archives

42 Susan Hidaka, "How it all began..." Speech written by Susan Hidaka on the final payment of the JCCC mortgage, June 1, 1980. Susan Hidaka Collection, JCCC Archives

43 Susan Hidaka Collection; Yuki Nakamura, the first president of the JCCC's women's auxiliary and whose husband and father-in-law were among the 75 original guarantors of the mortgage, stated "The building was our dream...Most of us who moved to Ontario came because we were evacuated...we had lost our homes and all our sundry chattels under the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property Act. We came east for education because the future was so bleak."

44 Raymond Moriyama, "Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre," *Canadian Architect*, March 1, 1964, p. 40.

45 North York Planning Board, Staff Report, December 9, 1960. The document concerns the Amendment Application submitted by Webin Community Consultants in regard to permission to establish the Japanese-Canadian Cultural Centre on the east side of the Don Valley Parkway. Staff recommends that the application be approved as it is their opinion that the JCCC will be a valuable contribution to North York.

46 Board of Directors for the Japanese Canadian Centre of Toronto indicated the site would be within 15 minutes of downtown Toronto once the Don Valley Parkway was completed

on a location where it would serve the greatest number of Toronto citizens.<sup>47</sup> The site was eventually purchased because of its affordability as ravine lands - an important consideration for the community whose assets had been stripped away during the war and who would be financing its purchase. Once the site was acquired, community members volunteered to clear the wooded lot of trees and brush to prepare it for construction. (Image 15)

Architect Raymond Moriyama became involved in the project in 1957, which was from its inception to be a place that would be a living memorial to the early Japanese immigrants, a place for cultural transmission, and be a centre for, not only the diasporic community, but also open to the wider Canadian public.<sup>48</sup> In September 1960, Moriyama went on a five-week study in Japan to seek inspiration for the centre's design. The centre was to be "an expression in Canadian terms of the spirit and heritage of the Japanese".<sup>49</sup> (Image 16)

The cornerstone was laid in October 1963, and by this time, the concept for the centre had been revised to emphasize its broader cultural functions and the Japanese Canadian Centre of Toronto became the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. The JCCC also ran a national design competition for a new logo to accompany the Moriyama building. The winning design, submitted by Stanley Shikatani, was an abstract expression of the merging of two cultures - Japanese and Canadian. (Images 17 and 18)

The community-funded centre was also carefully planned with community members undertaking roles in various committees including building, planning, programming, financing, public relations and issei programming. Volunteer hours and donations supported the JCCC's early years covering operating and programming costs.<sup>50</sup> Aspects of planning, financing, and programming the JCCC was conceived and actualized through extensive community consultation, volunteer hours, and managed by community members resulting in a community deeply invested in the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre.<sup>51</sup> Oral history accounts and textual records indicate that individuals of Japanese heritage saw the JCCC as a second home, as a place to meet and socialize with other Japanese Canadians and to participate in Japanese cultural heritage in community, and as a place free of racism and discrimination. For many, the JCCC building is a symbol of both the oppression and racism encountered by Japanese Canadians as well as the strength, resilience, and hope of the first- and second-generation Japanese Canadians.<sup>52</sup>

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47 Kay Kritzwiser, "The Japanese plan a delight: A Toronto architect has designed a centre to suit the activities of a community," *Globe & Mail*, February 28, 1959.

48 Kay Kritzwiser, "The Japanese plan a delight: A Toronto architect has designed a centre to suit the activities of a community," *Globe & Mail*, February 28, 1959.

49 "Architectural odyssey: seeks design inspiration in Japan," *Globe & Mail*, September 30, 1960.

50 Information provided by community members

51 Correspondence received in April and May 2023 from past and present members of the JCCC and the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC).

52 Ibid

Moriyama, a person of Japanese heritage who lived through the trauma of wartime internment, displacement, and dispossession of Japanese Canadians, noted in his essay accompanying a 10-page spread on the just-completed JCCC published in the March 1964 edition of *The Canadian Architect* that the JCCC was a direct response to the war's aftermath: "One may expect an outcome of bitterness and disillusionment. On the contrary, the end of internment and rigid control brought forth a new ideal: to become re-established in the mainstream of Canadian life, avoiding any cliquishness; to contribute positively to the cultural mosaic of Canada—a necessity to fulfil the responsibility of a regained freedom."<sup>53</sup>

The community centre was designed to be a living memorial to the early Japanese immigrants in Canada (*Issei*) and as a site for cultural transmission and exchange. Moriyama expressed architecturally an optimism and sense of stability. Through its detailing, he quietly challenged the community: "Are we still prisoners or do we see an opening to the future?"<sup>54</sup> The JCCC was officially opened on June 7, 1964 by the Prime Minister of Canada at the time, the Late Honourable Lester B. Pearson, with 600 community members in attendance. In his remarks, Pearson criticized the government's wartime actions against Japanese Canadians.<sup>55</sup> The first community event on record is Issei Day held on October 27, 1963, a tradition that continues to this day. The JCCC's motto was, and continues to be, "Friendship through Culture". The *Nikka Teien*, shortened from *Nihon Kanada Teien* and translated as Japan Canada Garden, was completed for the 10-year anniversary of the JCCC in 1973.

## Community Life

Founded in 1963, the JCCC is celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2023 (sixty is an auspicious number in Japanese culture signifying regeneration or rebirth).<sup>56</sup> Throughout its long history of promoting "Friendship through Culture"<sup>57</sup> the JCCC has offered a broad range of cultural, recreational, social, and educational programming that celebrates and fosters Japanese culture and Japanese Canadian heritage. The property at 123 Wynford Drive served as the site of annual festivals such as the Spring Festival or *Haru Matsuri* in March, *Mochitsuki* in April, the Annual Bazaar in May, Caravan in June, Issei Day, and the site for countless family celebrations.<sup>58</sup> These popular annual events were organized and managed by community members who contributed volunteer hours and resources; these events were attended by the wide participation of Toronto residents. (Images 19-23) For community members who formed part of the second and third generation Japanese Canadians, it provided the first introduction to their Japanese heritage outside of the home, with opportunities to learn martial arts; *odori* (dance); *ikebana* (flower arranging) and *bonsai*; *sumi-e* and *shodo* (painting) and *bunka shishu* (punch needle embroidery); *Nihongo* (*Japanese language studies*) and *Nihon ryori* (*Japanese foods*) amongst many others.<sup>59</sup>

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53 Raymond Moriyama, "The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre," *Canadian Architect*, March 1964.

54 Hanna Deirdre, "Cultural Evolution," *Canadian Architect*, September 1, 2002.

55 "PM Deplores Treatment of BC Japanese," *Globe and Mail*, June 8, 1964.

56 "Our Toronto," CBC, May 20, 2023 Our Toronto - May 20, 2023 | CBC.ca

57 JCCC's Mission Statement Who We Are | Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (jccc.on.ca)

58 Correspondence with community members in April and May 2023.

59 Correspondence with community members in April and May 2023.

Since its founding, the JCCC has promoted the arts, culture, and heritage of the diasporic Japanese community and Japanese Canadian community. The JCCC has organized and managed an online oral history project known as the Sedai Project which collects, documents, and preserves the history of Japanese Canadians in the pre-war and war years. The JCCC also contains a Heritage Department that curates online and on-site exhibitions with a curatorial emphasis on the diasporic Japanese community throughout the world, and manages its own Archives and Collections pertaining to Japanese Canadian history. The organization offers gallery spaces to promote excellence in contemporary art and design by Canadian and International artists of Japanese heritage and of the larger Asian community.<sup>60</sup>

A number of notable Canadians of Japanese heritage are associated with the JCCC including David Tsubochi - the first Japanese Canadian elected to a provincial legislature, Janice Fukakusa - a member of the Order of Canada, Bill Hatanaka - a celebrated athlete with the Ottawa Rough Riders football team, and architect Bruce Kuwabara, amongst many others.<sup>61</sup>

### **Noor Cultural Centre**

In 2001, the JCCC at 123 Wynford Drive was sold to the Lakhani family as the site for an Islamic cultural centre, known as the Noor Cultural Centre. The JCCC community had moved into a larger facility at 6 Garamond Court. The property's adaptive reuse as a centre for Islamic practice and learning and as a centre for Canadian Muslims by the Noor Cultural Centre has continued the legacy of the building's community use and celebration of culture. Moriyama & Teshima architectural firm was hired to make interior alterations to accommodate the needs of the new cultural group and its faith-based practices.

### **Raymond Moriyama**

Raymond Moriyama is one of Canada's foremost architects of the twentieth century. A Companion of the Order of Canada, winner of a Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts, and recipient of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Gold Medal, the Vancouver-born architect is renowned for his humanistic approach to design, and has been recognized for several landmark buildings both in Canada and abroad.

Moriyama received his Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1954 from the University of Toronto, where he studied under Eric Arthur, and a Master of Civic and Town Planning in 1957 from McGill University in Montreal. Moriyama worked for Eric Arthur, then a partner in the firm of Fleury, Arthur, and Barclay, while he was an undergraduate student. As a planner and architect, he also worked briefly with Metropolitan Toronto's new planning board on various urban renewal studies.<sup>62</sup> He opened his first architectural office as a sole practitioner in 1958 during a period when Asian-Canadians

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60 Information sourced through the JCCC website

61 Information gleaned from the JCCC website (<https://jccc.on.ca/>) and input received directly from members of the community.

62 Richard Wright, Planning Toronto, Vancouver, UBC Press, 2016, p.142 and 191.

continued to face discriminatory practices. Moriyama's early commissions included the Halfway House for George Crother's private golf course (1958) and the Crothers Used Equipment Centre (1959), which won him recognition within the industry.

At the age of 28, Moriyama was commissioned by the Japanese Canadian community in Toronto to design a cultural centre that would "serve as the foundation for the community to re-establish itself within Canadian society rather than apart from it" following the trauma of wartime internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War.<sup>63</sup> The assertive Brutalist character of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (1963) elegantly combined with a distinct Japanese sensibility clearly articulating the purpose and power of the centre. Moriyama and his family had been profoundly impacted by the Canadian government's unjust and racial policies of the Second World War. The internment had shaped his worldview and underscored the potential of humanistic values - social justice, equality and inclusion - to be embodied in and articulated through architecture.

In 1964, Moriyama received the commission to design the Ontario Science Centre to commemorate Canada's Centennial, a career-making public commission and one which offered a new paradigm for museum design.<sup>64</sup> In 1970, he entered into a partnership with fellow architect Ted Teshima.<sup>65</sup> Moriyama & Teshima Architects is well-known for such notable projects as the Scarborough Civic Centre (1973) which received the Governor General's Medals for Architect, the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library (1977), the Bata Shoe Museum (1995), and the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa (2005), as well as the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo. The firm has received more than 200 awards including six Governor General's Medals in Architecture. In 2003, Moriyama and Teshima retired from the firm, transitioning to emeritus partners.

Raymond Moriyama has been the recipient of numerous awards and honours including the Confederation of Canada Medal, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Gold Medal, the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts and the Queen Elizabeth Golden Jubilee Medal, and the Order of the Rising Sun, which was conferred by Emperor Akihito in recognition of Moriyama's outstanding contribution towards enhancing public relations between Canada and Japan and of his pursuit of excellence in architecture.<sup>66</sup> Moriyama has also received honorary degrees from several universities. He is an Officer of the Order of Canada and the Order of Ontario.

In 2014, the Moriyama RAIC International Prize was announced and is awarded to projects that exhibit not only design excellence, innovation and environmental responsibility, but also those that further humanistic values. Throughout his career, Moriyama has believed that "architecture has to be humane and its intent, the pursuit of

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63 Elsa Lam, "A new building helped the Japanese Canadian Community to re-establish itself as part of the society that had exiled it." *Canadian Architect*, No.2, 2020.

64 Stefan Novakovic, "Magical Imperfection: a new documentary explores the life of Raymond Moriyama, Azure, August 11, 2020.

65 "Raymond Moriyama", *Japanese Canadian Artists Directory*

66 "Raymond Moriyama receives award from Emperor of Japan," *Canadian Architect*, February 4, 2004

true ideals, of true democracy, of equality and of inclusion of all people"<sup>67</sup> - concepts that have been steadfast throughout his life's work.

### **iii. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

The following section provides an architectural description and analysis related to the property which will establish the basis for determining design or physical value of Criteria 1, 2 or 3 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

"One may expect an outcome of bitterness and disillusionment [by the Japanese community in Canada following their treatment during WWII]. On the contrary, the end of internment and rigid control brought forth a new ideal: to become re-established in the mainstream of Canadian life, avoiding any cliquishness; to contribute positively to the cultural mosaic of Canada - a necessity to fulfil the responsibility of a regained freedom. After many years of soul-searching the idea was born that a structure might fulfil this end." - Raymond Moriyama, 1964

#### **Site**

Located on the south side of Wynford Drive, just east of the Don Valley Parkway, project architect Raymond Moriyama describes the subject property: "after studying nearly twenty sites, using ecological survey, time-distance charts, etc., the site chosen was a three-acre wooded ravine lot in an undeveloped part of Flemingdon Park near Don Mills, Ontario. The heavily travelled Don Valley Parkway ran full length along the west side of the property and a ravine and stream bisected the property."<sup>68</sup>

The principal elevation of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) building faces onto Wynford Drive and the primary parking lot. Vehicular access along the east elevation leads to a later secondary parking lot at the south portion of the site and connects to the garden and creek to the south and west. A third parking area conceived as part of the original design and subsequently expanded is located along the west lot line.

#### **Building - Exterior**

Archival photographs and the original drawings by Raymond Moriyama for the JCCC show the design for the current two-storey Brutalist style building inspired by traditional Japanese architecture principles and set into its steeply sloped ravine site. The building's structure is composed of pre-cast concrete cladding and poured-in-place concrete elements, including cast-in-place spread footings, foundation walls, and a mix of poured-in-place and pre-cast framing, all of which are defining features of Brutalism. At its four corners, the building is anchored by four massive poured-in-place concrete pylons that the architect describes as "strong landscape elements"<sup>69</sup> whose individually unique forms and angles are determined by the ravine property's extreme topographical changes. The pylons retain the rough-textured vertical striations of their forming boards,

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67 "Raymond Moriyama," Japanese Canadian Artists Directory

68 Moriyama, 40.

69 Moriyama, 40.



which is a defining feature of Brutalist architecture. These buttress-like forms "symbolize stability and permanence"<sup>70</sup> of the building and community alike. A bronze plaque set into the pylon at the northwest corner of the building contains the name of the project architect, Raymond Moriyama, and the general contractor, J. Robert Page Ltd. (Images 24-30)

## North Elevation

The principal (north) elevation of "Moriyama's charming concrete jewel box"<sup>71</sup> stands atop a basement or lower level that is exposed on the east, west and south elevations of the building, where the ravine topography falls away from the principal (north) elevation. The two-storey principal (north) elevation contains a centred main entrance at the main floor level, which is accessed by a broad set of concrete stairs leading up from the north parking lot to a concrete landing and perimeter terrace with pre-cast concrete railings. The landing and perimeter terrace are an extension of the main floor concrete slab. This seamless transition of the landing to the interior lobby is made visible by the main level floor-to-ceiling glazing. The resulting blurring of boundaries between exterior and interior space is a defining feature of Japanese design.

The upper floor level is cantilevered over the main floor on a concrete floor slab, creating a deep overhang for the main entrance and perimeter terrace below. The upper floor is organized into a centred floor-to-ceiling wooden screen derived from traditional Japanese architecture and containing glazing, flanked at either end by pre-cast concrete panel cladding that returns around the north ends of the east and west elevations and is composed of fine aggregate bisected by three horizontal courses of coarse aggregate pre-cast panels. The vertical planks defining the wooden screen have been suggested to evoke the imprisonment of Japanese people in Canada during WWII.<sup>72</sup> The screen is flanked by two large concrete forms that extend past the roof level to support two large, rectangular wood plank lanterns surmounted by flagpoles and inscribed on their north face with the JCCC symbol until replaced with Arabic calligraphy after 2001 when the Noor Cultural Centre acquired the property. In his original drawings and 1964 article for Canadian Architect, Moriyama refers to this traditional Japanese design element as 'beacons' that serve to illuminate the building entrance in the evenings, which is when most of the community's cultural activities took place on the site.<sup>73</sup> (Images 31-37)

## East and West Elevations

The east and west elevations rise three storeys (exposed basement or ground floor, main floor and upper floor) and are terminated by the building's flat roof. The ground floor is composed of concrete block walls with raked horizontal joints and flush vertical joints and accessed by sets of metal-framed glass doors including sliding doors that

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70 Ota, A Place of Pride Exhibition, Panel #3: The Building.

71 Whiteson, 81.

72 Ota.

73 Moriyama, 40.

evoke traditional Japanese moving screens (shoji) and once again allow the outdoors to be understood as an extension of the interior, particularly on the west side where a flagstone garden terrace conceived as an experimental garden abuts the building elevation.

At the main floor level, the perimeter terrace of the north elevation wraps around and continues across the width of the east and west elevations and terminates with two separate stairs leading down to grade at the south end of the building. The perimeter terrace is accessed from the interior on these two elevations by openings containing glass doors, including sliding glass doors. The concrete double-T beams that comprise the main floor ceiling on the building interior continue uninterrupted to the exterior as the underside of the perimeter terrace overhang.

At the roof level on the east and west elevations, eight galvanized iron chains (four per side) are suspended from evenly-spaced concrete troughs that project beyond the parapet wall. Each chain is affixed to a large granite boulder secured on the ground and together function as rainwater leaders/rain chains (kusari-doi). This traditional Japanese landscape feature provides an appealing visual and auditory experience for the viewer, while also serving in this case as a clever design solution for directing stormwater away from the property and avoiding the costly alternative of pumping it uphill to the storm sewer at street level on Wynford Drive.<sup>74</sup> (Images 38-42)

### **South elevation**

The three-storey south elevation has a T-shaped form composed of a poured-in-place concrete wall that is clad on the main and upper level in the same pattern of fine aggregate pre-cast panels with coarse aggregate panel horizontal band detailing, though here there are four courses of coarse aggregate banding rather than three. The stairs of the perimeter terrace at the east and west sides of the south elevation descend to grade where their orthogonal concrete structure transitions to natural stone vertical forms that decrease in height as they move away from the building and originally transitioned to the south garden; however, the northern section of the south garden landscape was removed in the 1990s to accommodate an additional parking lot. (Images 43-46)

### **Building - Interior**

#### **Ground Floor**

Original drawings by Moriyama show the interior ground floor comprising an open space below the auditorium lined with structural columns connected by sliding glass panels in the manner of Japanese shoji screens. This level originally contained a judo hall, social room, craft rooms, and a communal kitchen, partitioned with concrete block walls with raked horizontal joints and flush vertical joints. The ground floor ceiling is composed of double-T pre-cast concrete panels. (Images 47 and 48)

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74 Ibid.

## **Main Floor**

The building's most significant interior space, a double-height auditorium hall and stage, occupies the majority of the main floor. On the east and west elevations of the upper level of the auditorium, wooden screens filter the outside light to provide the interior space with a warm glow. Outdoor access to the wrap-around, concrete walkways of the perimeter terrace is provided at the main floor level of the room. The double-T concrete panel ceiling of the auditorium is clad with tongue-and-groove wooden planking.

The main entrance lobby at the north end of the main floor, the perimeter of the space is punctuated by the five concrete block base structures with coping on the exterior that extend into the lobby to create benches clad in horizontal wooden planks. The polished terrazzo lobby floor is interrupted around the base of the benches by a surface comprised of small pebble stones. The exposed double-T concrete ceiling beams are adorned with "bespoke light fixtures".<sup>75</sup> Designed by Moriyama, these economical light boxes are also a literal interpretation of Japanese shoji screen design with their wooden plank framing filled with translucent plastic to filter the electric lighting behind them. These unique ceiling light fixtures are also found at the ground and upper floor levels. (Images 49-59)

## **Upper Floor**

The upper level or mezzanine contains a lounge, an office, a library, and conference rooms. The north elevation of the lounge is defined by a wall-to-wall wooden window screen with wood framing and six small, operable window units that is also visible on the exterior of the north elevation and described above. Through the screen in the lounge can be viewed the Nikka Teien stone sculpture in the property's north forecourt. The flooring is wood parquet and Moriyama's shoji screen ceiling light fixtures are found throughout the mezzanine. A tall and narrow rectangular window opening on the south wall of the east and west mezzanine conference rooms frame views of the rain chains and the south garden beyond. (Images 60-63)

## **Landscape**

Designed with traditional Japanese garden design principles, the site's exterior grounds are highly contextualized by adapting to the existing site's topography and ravine through a series of terraces and stone stairs. The three primary garden areas, as conceived by Moriyama, include the ground floor garden terrace or experimental garden, the "'wild' or meadow' and pond to the west, and the ravine stroll garden to the south<sup>76</sup>. All three garden areas feature use of natural stone for the various garden elements. The landscape and designed stroll type garden was given the name 'Nikka Teien,' which is a shortened form of Nihon Kanada Teien, translated as Japan (Nihon) Canada (Kanada) Garden (Teien). Directly north of the building entrance rises a massive stone slab sculpture also designed by Moriyama. (Images 64-66)

Archival photos indicate that landscape construction began in the 1960s and was completed by 1973, when the massive stone sculpture in the north forecourt was

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75 Lam, 2020.

76 Ibid.

dedicated. The sculpture is made up of a series of large stone slabs stacked vertically and horizontally on a gravel bed with a small cluster of multi-stemmed small trees (added during the parking lot expansion) in the east section of the parking island. The sculpture includes a bronze plaque commemorating the opening of the garden. (Images 67-69)

The garden terrace on the west side of the building is comprised of flagstone with undulating paving stone edging. A stone staircase and its sculptural stone boulder edging provides access to the north parking lot and an additional stone stair to the south leads down to the mouth of the creek on the west side of the ravine lot. At the top of the slope, a lawn and mature trees define the garden terrace condition. The four Japanese rain chains and their granite boulders located on the west side of the building are anchored on the garden terrace flagstone. (Images 70-73)

Downhill from the garden terrace, winding stone stairs and paths lead down to the creek that runs along the west and south ends of the property to a Japanese garden based on the “stroll garden” type which was meant to be seen by walking through the garden and stopping at a series of view points. At the west end of the ravine and mouth of the creek, the landscape is less designed or manipulated and what Moriyama called the “wild”. This is where the Japanese tea house was once located and where traditional tea ceremonies were carried out on tatami mats on the tea house floor. Near the southwest corner of the ravine landscape, at the base of a stone staircase, stands an elegant large stone lantern comprised of two stacked rectangular slabs of granite, the top slab balancing above the bottom one upon four small pink granite boulders. To the south of the lantern and along the stepping stone path that follows the creek southward are two granite slab benches followed by a stone bridge that crosses the creek. Another stone stair ascends from the west side of the creek bridge, up the west embankment to the west parking lot. The design of the ravine landscape at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre is based on the traditional Japanese stroll garden type. (Images 74-78)

The Nikka Teien at the JCCC may also follow a tradition of friendship gardens in Canada by the Japanese Canadian community whereby a garden is constructed in line with traditional Japanese garden principles but incorporates local materials, plantings, and landscape to create a distinct Canadian-Japanese aesthetic. Friendship gardens are distinct from traditional Japanese gardens in Canada, such as the Nitobe Memorial Garden. Nikka Yuko, the Japan (Nihon) Canada (Kanada) Friendship (Yuko) Garden in Lethbridge, Alberta, was completed during Canada’s centennial in 1967 and developed around the same time as Nikka Teien, is an example of a Canadian garden built in the Japanese style using local materials. As described by the Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden website, “in Japanese garden design philosophy, nature is interpreted through abstract and artistic symbolism...A Japanese garden not only reflects the local natural landscape, but also the culture.” Nikka Yuko “was built to recognize contributions made by citizens of Japanese ancestry to the multicultural community of Lethbridge, Alberta, and as a symbol of international friendship.”<sup>77</sup>

Within Japanese Gardens, the North American Japanese Garden Association (NAJGA) identifies the three essential elements as stone, water, and plantings. According to

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77 “History.” NikkaYuko.com. <https://www.nikkayuko.com/detail.asp?ID=85&CatID=1>.

NAJGA, the ancillary elements include paths, bridges, lanterns, stone towers, gates, walls, architecture, and borrowed scenery. Garden typologies include stroll gardens which are exemplified by features such as the chisen or pond spring and the kaiyū, a circuit or excursion relaxed. NAJGA states that friendship gardens, such as Nikka Yuko, could be considered a type of stroll gardens.<sup>78</sup> The Nikka Teien at the JCCC employs all of these aforementioned traditional Japanese garden elements in its design and draws upon the stroll, courtyard, and tea gardens typologies as described by the NAJGA. Like Nikka Yuko, as seen through the application of Japanese design principles to local materials and landscape, Nikka Teien could be seen as symbolizing the relationship between Japan and Canada. The Nikka Teien was supported by the Nihon Banpaku Kinen Kyokai World Expo 1970 and dedicated by Akira Nishiyama, ambassador of Japan and the Honourable Robert Stanbury, Minister of National Revenue.<sup>79</sup>

### **Building and Landscape**

The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre property, as a living memorial to the Japanese pioneers in Canada, is most fully expressed through an understanding of the interrelationship of the building and its landscape, which is aptly conveyed by an early sketch by Moriyama showing the building and site topography. (Image 79)

With respect to the siting and design of the building, Moriyama felt that a “well mannered relationship to the surroundings, nature and other structures was essential, but strength and vitality were mandatory 'to express freedom, growth and civic mindedness.’”<sup>80</sup> The latter qualities of the building are aptly conveyed through the abundant use of concrete for the structure and cladding of the monolithic edifice, yet even before designed landscape construction commenced, there was a deliberate connection made between the building and the retained mature trees on the site. (Image 80)

Set into its terraced ravine lot, the orientation of the building was carefully considered according to Japanese garden design principles so that the building's most important space (the auditorium) is oriented toward the moonlight which is reflected off of the babbling creek in the ravine below.<sup>81</sup> As a child sitting by his grandfather's moon-gazing platform, Moriyama learned about the moon's spiritual beauty; how it is reflected not only in the lake but also in a mere handful of water drawn from the lake. As a young architect, Moriyama spoke often in early interviews about the importance of his grandfather's teachings about the moon and how this particular lesson showed him how even the smallest project could be beautiful.<sup>82</sup> The aesthetic principle of asymmetry is evident in the diagonal view afforded of the elevated building or temple, as seen from the base of the stone staircase on the east embankment in the south stroll garden. From the same location can be appreciated the principle of borrowed scenery, whereby the building located beyond the stroll garden proper is pulled into the view to enlarge the apparent extent of the garden. Finally, the rain chains (kusari-doi) on the west elevation

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78 Ibid.

79 Information from these two paragraphs gleaned from ERA, 33-35.

80 Moriyama, 40.

81 Whiteson, 81.

82 Snell, 7.

serve as both an architectural and landscape element that literally anchor the building to its designed flagstone garden terrace and Japanese stroll garden ravine setting. (Images 81-83)

### **2003 Alterations**

The site was acquired by the Noor Cultural Centre in July of 2001. By the time of the purchase, the JCCC outgrew the site and moved to 6 Garamond Court.<sup>83</sup> Moriyama and Teshima Architects designed the alterations, which included the removal of the central enclosed corridor on the ground, an accessible ramp on the main level and an elevator serving all levels. The east-facing space of the ground floor was converted into a prayer hall and the former Judo room became the children's room. The locker room by the washrooms was refurbished for ritual ablutions. The women's locker room was converted into an apartment for a caretaker, equipped with a shower and kitchenette. The terraced rear green space abutting the south end of the building was converted into a surface parking lot. Arabic calligraphy has been installed on the wood screens, wooden door pulls, and the two lanterns on the principal (north) elevation.<sup>84</sup> (Images 84 and 85)

### **Recognitions and Legacy**

On June 7, 1964, Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson stood at the podium at the entrance of the building and officially opened the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre before hundreds of spectators. Pearson's speech highlights the role of the property in cementing Canada's future as a world leader in diversity and multiculturalism: "for me, this centre is a reminder of the multi-racial heritage on which our nation is being built, surely and strongly. It is a new living monument to the fact that our Canadian purpose which seeks a Canadian identity, need not and does not mean any loss of the traditions and cultures, the arts and skills brought to Canada by our Canadians from other lands."<sup>85</sup> (Images 86 and 87)

In October of the same year, Moriyama was recognized with the Precast Concrete Institute of Chicago's annual award for his design of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre.<sup>86</sup> The PCI design award was established 60 years ago "to bring to light unique and informative applications of prestressed concrete."<sup>87</sup>

While the JCCC sold the property at 123 Wynford Drive 1999 in pursuit of a larger site to accommodate their growing membership, the original location dreamt up by the founding members and conceived by Moriyama continues to hold deep significance for many members of the Japanese Canadian community in Toronto and beyond today.<sup>88</sup>

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83 Before selling the property at 123 Wynford Drive, the JCCC considered an expansion plan for the existing building. However, the \$8M design by Raymond Moriyama's son, Ajon, ultimately proved to costly and the JCCC relocated to their present location nearby at 6 Garamond Court.

84 Noor Cultural Centre website <https://noorculturalcentre.ca/about-2/>

85 Ota, Panel #4: Opening Day.

86 Rockman, 36.

87 Matthews, 12.

88 Members of the public from whom Heritage Planning staff received written communications are listed in the Sources section of this report.

#### iv. CONTEXT

The following section provides contextual information and analysis related to the property which is the basis for determining contextual value of Criteria 7, 8 or 9 according to O. Reg. 9/06 Criteria.

The City of Toronto Property Data Map attached as Figure 1 (Attachment 1) shows the site of the property at 123 Wynford Drive.

The former Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) located at 123 Wynford Drive is situated on a steeply sloped site on the south side of the street, east of Don Mills Road and just north of Eglinton Avenue East. The property is bounded along its western edge by the Don Valley Expressway (DVP). On both sides of Eglinton Avenue East between Don Mills Road and Wynford Drive, east of the DVP, a significant collection of civic and cultural institutions are located, including the current Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (6 Garamond Court), the Aga Khan Museum (77 Wynford Drive), the Ismaili Centre (49 Wynford Drive), the Presbyterian Church of Canada (50 Wynford Drive), and the Ontario Science Centre (770 Don Mills Road). The Ontario Science Centre was also designed by Raymond Moriyama in 1969 and has been recognized on the City's Heritage Register since April 2006. Along its curvilinear route, the properties at 20, 90 and 100 Wynford Drive were included on the City's Heritage Register in January 2020.

The subject property at 123 Wynford Drive contains TRCA regulated lands, and the aforementioned lands is subject to the Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 658 Ravine and Natural Feature Protection by-law.

### 3. EVALUATION AND APPLICATION OF O.REG 9/06 CRITERIA

The following evaluation applies Ontario Regulation 9/06 made under the Act: Criteria for Determining Cultural Heritage Value or Interest. The criteria are prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Act, and the City of Toronto is also required to use these criteria when assessing properties for inclusion on the City of Toronto's Heritage Register. There are a total of nine criteria under O. Reg 9/06. A property may be designated under Section 29 of the Act if it meets two or more of the provincial criteria for determining whether it is of cultural heritage value or interest.

The evaluation table is marked "N/A" if the criterion is "not applicable" to the property or "✓" if it is applicable to the property, with explanatory text below.

#### DESIGN OR PHYSICAL VALUE

The property has design value or physical value because it	
1. is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.	✓
2. displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit	✓
3. demonstrates high degree of scientific or technical achievement	N/A

*Representative example of a style and type*

The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre located at 123 Wynford Drive has design value as a unique example in Toronto of Brutalist architecture combined with landscape inspired by traditional Japanese garden design. Largely constructed of concrete, the two-storey building on an exposed basement level and containing a double-height auditorium hall and mezzanine is nestled into its deeply sloped and treed ravine lot containing a designed Japanese stroll garden amongst the existing natural conditions of the site. Traditional Japanese rainwater leaders or rain chains (kusari-doi) serve as significant visual and auditory landscape design elements, while also cleverly providing a cost-saving role for the re-direction of stormwater away from the property.

The property is also valued for the interrelationship of the building and landscape designs, which similarly combine traditional Japanese architectural principles and elements with Canadian topography and materials. The property's Nikka Teien (Japan Canada Garden) integrates existing ravine conditions of the property at the west and south sides of the building, including retention of select mature trees and a meandering creek tributary of the Don River, with a designed Japanese stroll garden landscape that can be viewed and accessed from the building and is comprised of stone steps, paths, bridges, seating and sculpture amongst verdant plantings. The diagonal orientation of the building, as viewed from the landscape garden below, is derived from the Japanese garden aesthetic principles of asymmetry and borrowed scenery (skakkei). Traditional Japanese design intent is also expressed through the building's blurring of boundaries between interior and exterior space (using sliding doors, balconies with deep overhangs, and continuous floor and ceiling planes that extend beyond the vertical elevations defining inside and outside), and the orientation of the building's main rooms toward the moonlight and the water below in the Nikka Teien. The significance of the Nikka Teien to the property's overall design is celebrated by a bronze plaque which was presented on October 20, 1973 by Akira Nishiyama, Ambassador of Japan to Canada, and affixed to Moriyama's dynamic stone slab sculpture situated on an island in the parking lot directly north of the building's main entrance.

*Displays high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit*

Despite budgetary constraints, the building displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit in its creative use of cost-effective materials such as wood and concrete, as well as concrete block. This is evidenced by the extensive use of poured-in-place and pre-cast fine and coarse aggregate concrete structural elements and cladding, concrete block partition walls and the decorative cedar plank woodwork of its traditional Japanese wall screens, lanterns and ceiling light fixtures.

**HISTORICAL OR ASSOCIATIVE VALUE**

The property has historical value or associative value because it	
4. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	✓
5. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture	✓
6. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	✓



*Direct association with an organization that is significant to a community*

The property is valued for its association with the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, a non-profit organization founded in 1963 through the dedicated voluntary leadership of individual members of the Japanese Canadian community in Toronto. At the 60th anniversary of the JCCC, the organization is stronger than ever continuing to offer a broad range of cultural programming that promotes and honours Japanese cultural heritage, and this building stands as the central legacy of the "friendship through culture" motto.

The property's adaptive reuse as a centre for Islamic practice and learning and as a centre for Canadian Muslims by the Noor Cultural Centre, which purchased the property in 2001, has continued the legacy of the building's community use and fostering of culture. The building was sensitively adapted for the Noor Cultural Centre to accommodate faith-based practices by Moriyama and Teshima Architects.

*Yields information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture*

The property at 123 Wynford Drive stands as a living memorial to the enduring optimistic spirit of the early Japanese immigrants to Canada despite their experiences of racially-driven injustices, discrimination, and hostility. The property is a physical testament to the Japanese Canadian community's resiliency, as well as hope and belief in a more culturally tolerant and inclusive future and to the community's hard work towards contributing to and participating in the cultural plurality that defines Canada.

The property holds significant associative value with respect to the Japanese Canadian community who resettled in Toronto following their experience of the Canadian government's unjust and racist policies during and after the Second World War and as a racialized minority in Toronto's discriminatory environment. The property also holds associative value as a cultural centre and community hub that was conceived, financed, and stewarded by the broad participation of the diasporic Japanese Canadian community in Toronto. The purchase of the property in 1960 and the construction of the building in 1963, which was designed at a budget of \$14 per square foot using modest materials, was financed by the diasporic Japanese Canadian community through individual donations and community fundraising events, as well as with 75 families acting as guarantors on a bank mortgage.

*Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community*

One of Canada's finest and respected architects, Raymond Moriyama is a contemporary Canadian architect of Japanese heritage who established an architectural practice in Toronto in 1958 and entered into partnership with Ted Teshima in 1970. Raymond Moriyama has received numerous awards for his work including being made an Officer of the Order of Canada (1985), receiving the RAIC Gold Medal (1997) as well the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts and the Queen Elizabeth Golden Jubilee Medal (2012). He is renowned for his humanistic approach to design and sensitivity in connecting the built form and landscape. The JCCC was Raymond

Moriyama's first major commission. Moriyama designed the JCCC within the context of Japanese Canadian's postwar resettlement in Toronto and in the nascent period of Canadian multiculturalism as a national identity.

## CONTEXTUAL VALUE

The property has contextual value because it is	
7. important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.	✓
8. physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.	✓
9. a landmark.	✓

### *Important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area*

The property at 123 Wynford Drive is valued for maintaining the character of the area which features a number of important cultural and institutional buildings of distinctive high-quality design surrounding Don Mills, including the Ontario Science Centre (1969) at 770 Don Mills Rd, an iconic heritage property, and the Aga Khan Museum and Ismaili Centre (2014) at 77 Wynford Drive and across the street is the expanded facilities of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (2001) located at 6 Garamond Court.

### *Physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings*

The integrated and inextricable relationship of the building and landscape designed together at 123 Wynford Drive responds to, and provides continuity with, the adjacent Don Valley River ravine. As the first Japanese cultural centre built in Canada, the property at 123 Wynford Drive is visually, physically and historically linked to its surroundings.

### *A landmark*

Situated on a garden terrace located within a steeply sloped site, contained by the historic factors of Wynford Drive, Eglinton Avenue and the Don Valley Parkway and ravine, the property at 123 Wynford Drive has contextual value as a physical and cultural landmark in Toronto.

## CONCLUSION

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Nestled into a steeply sloped site on the south side of Wynford Drive, directly east of the Don Valley Parkway, the former Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) completed in 1963 at 123 Wynford Drive is valued for its associations with the history of the Japanese community in Canada in the post-war period, the genesis and growth of the 60-year old Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre as a volunteer-led organization responsible for the reestablishment and promotion of Japanese heritage in Canada, and with the internationally renowned architect, Raymond Moriyama. Understood to be Moriyama's first large commission, the property has design value for its integration of

traditional Japanese architecture and garden principles within a Canadian context, including the way it embraces and responds to the natural qualities of the Don Valley ravine site.

As the first Japanese Cultural Centre in Canada, this unique property is a defining element in the country's post-war efforts at multiculturalism as a national identity. Contextually, the JCCC has been a landmark in the community, emphasizing the natural topography of the ravine site and contributing to a significant collection of high-quality designed civic and cultural institutions that characterize Don Mills and Flemingdon Park, several of which also involved Moriyama and of which the former Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre stands proudly as the earliest. The property at 123 Wynford Drive is a cultural landmark in Toronto.

Staff have completed the Research and Evaluation Report for the property at 123 Wynford Drive and determined that the property meets 8 out of 9 criteria in Ontario Regulation 9/06, the criteria prescribed for municipal designation under Part IV, Section 29 of the Act. As such, the property should be designated.

The Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation): 123 Wynford Drive (Attachment 3), comprises the Reasons for Designation, which is the Public Notice of Intention to Designate.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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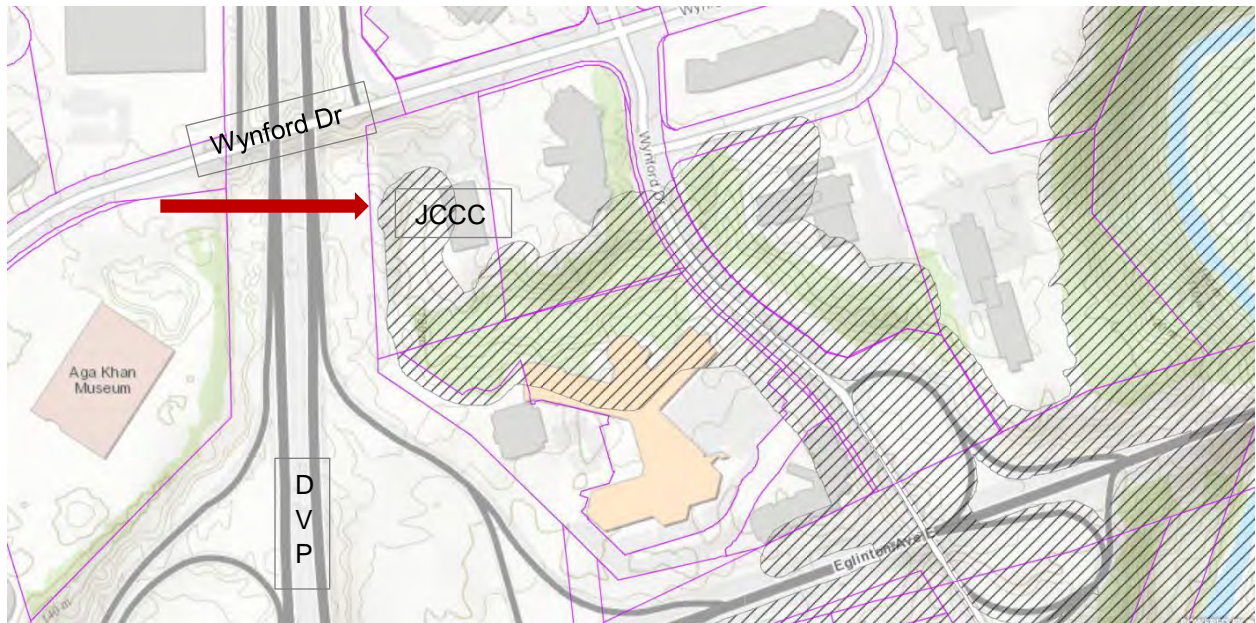
Mary L. MacDonald, MA, CAHP  
Senior Manager, Heritage Planning  
Urban Design, City Planning

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Maps and Photographs  
Attachment 2 – List of Research Sources

Attachment 3 – Statement of Significance (Reasons for Designation): 123 Wynford Drive



1. This location map is for information purposes only; the exact boundaries of the property are not shown. The arrows mark the location of the subject property at 123 Wynford Drive, situated on the east side of the Don Valley Parkway and north of Eglinton Avenue East. The hatched markings indicate lands protected by the City of Toronto's Ravine and Natural Feature Protection By-law and the TRCA Regulation Limit (iView, City of Toronto)



2. 1851 Browne Map of Township of York in the County of York Upper Canada showing the approximate location of the subject property (Toronto Public Library, Digital Archive)



3. The 1909 National Topographic Survey Map showing the Don Independent Road and the relatively inaccessible area between the forks of the Don River (Department of Militia and Defence, McMaster University Archives)



4. A 1939 aerial view of the subject property with hatching marks indicating the current lands protected by the City of Toronto's Ravine and Natural Feature Protection By-law and the TRCA Regulation Limit. The lands to the west of the subject property are agricultural (iView, City of Toronto)



5. The Eglinton Avenue extension across the Don Valley, 1956 (City of Toronto Archives, Series 65, File 119, Item 4)



6. Overall Site Plan for Flemingdon Park. The planned community was divided into zones with a high-density residential area taking up about one-third of the entire 500-acre development. Another one-third was for industrial/office/commercial and the final one-third was for green space. The subject site, approximation marked by the red arrow, is situated in the “Radio & Television City” industrial lands portion of the plan (Flemingdon Park, RAIC Journal, October 1961)

## Flemington Park Project Now Underway



Construction began recently on the \$100,000,000 Flemingdon Park project located at Eglinton Avenue East and Don Mills Road. This unusual project is designed as a high density, integrated rental housing community with built-in shopping centres, schools, community buildings and churches. An office building campus of some 35 acres is being developed as a part of the programme.

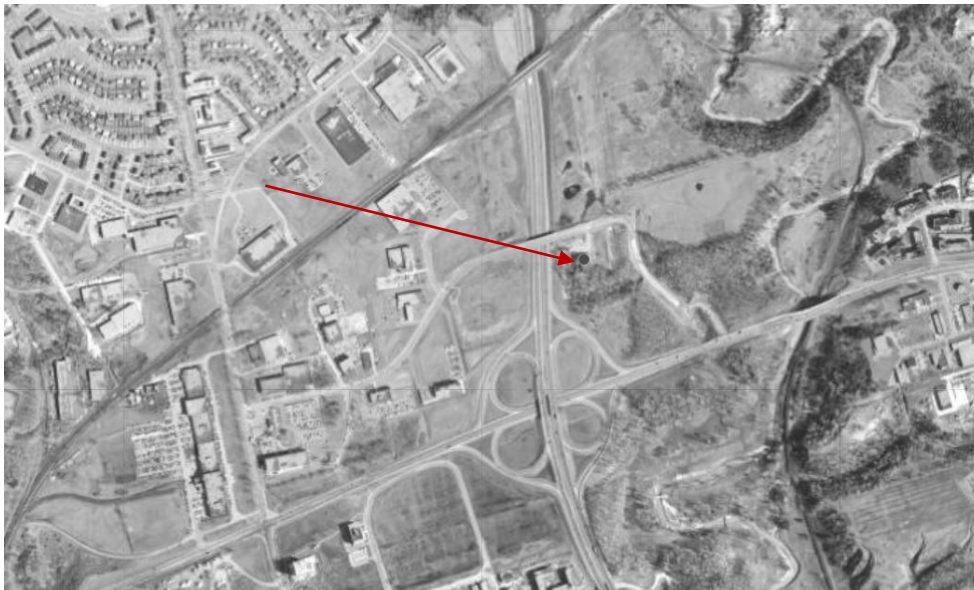
Work on the essential services is well underway and the basic roads are being constructed. Development of the Don Valley Parkway in this area is well advanced, and it would appear, will open on schedule in 1961.

The Planning Board has approved of the architectural plans for one 10-storey unit apartment building, units of garden court housing and an office building for the Ontario Hospitals Association. All of these buildings are now under construction.

One of the unusual features is the provision of large underground parking garages for the apartment buildings.

Approval has also been given to the development of approximately 120 acres of land lying north of Eglinton Avenue and east of the Don Valley Parkway, which lands are also under the control of the same Company that is developing Flemingdon Park. The proposal is to create a Television City north of Eglinton Avenue, to contain the offices of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, approximately 45 acres of industrial office buildings to house industries and companies associated with the television industry and 25 acres of high density residential accommodation for persons employed therein.

7. The planned community of Flemingdon Park. The clipping (n.d.) notes the proposed CBC complex to be constructed north of Eglinton Avenue East and east of the DVP (Coby Kobayashi Collection, JCCC Archives)



8. 1965 aerial view of the subject property with the DVP to the immediate left; the planned community of Don Mills at the top left and the construction of Flemingdon Park, completed in phases, was underway. To the west, properties along Wynford Drive have been built, set back from the street (iView, City of Toronto)





9. The Anti-Asian Riot of 1907, also known as the Powell Street Riot, began as a racist protest rally organized by the Anti-Asiatic League, which then turned into a rampage against Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian residents and businesses in Vancouver ("A Story of Hope, Resilience and Growth", online exhibit, JCCC)

**ORDERS FROM THE  
B.C. SECURITY COMMISSION**  
*Notice to Vancouver Japanese*

Persons of Japanese origin residing in Vancouver should terminate, not later than the 30th April, 1942, all leases or rental arrangements they may be working under. They must also be prepared to move either to Hastings Park or to work camps or to places under the Interior Housing Scheme at twenty-four hours notice. No deferments whatsoever on business grounds may be made to the above orders.

晩香坡市内に居住する日本人にして總てのリース又は家屋レントの取極めをしてある者は四月三十日まで之れを解除すべきである。而してヘステンダス・パーク若しくは労働キャンプ乃至は奥地住居計畫地へ二十四時間の豫告のうちに移動出来る用意をして置くべきである。右の移動命令はビジネス上で如何なる理由があらうとも猶豫はしないのである。

ビーシー・セキユリティー・コミッション

**NOTICE TO ALL  
JAPANESE PERSONS  
AND PERSONS OF  
JAPANESE RACIAL ORIGIN**

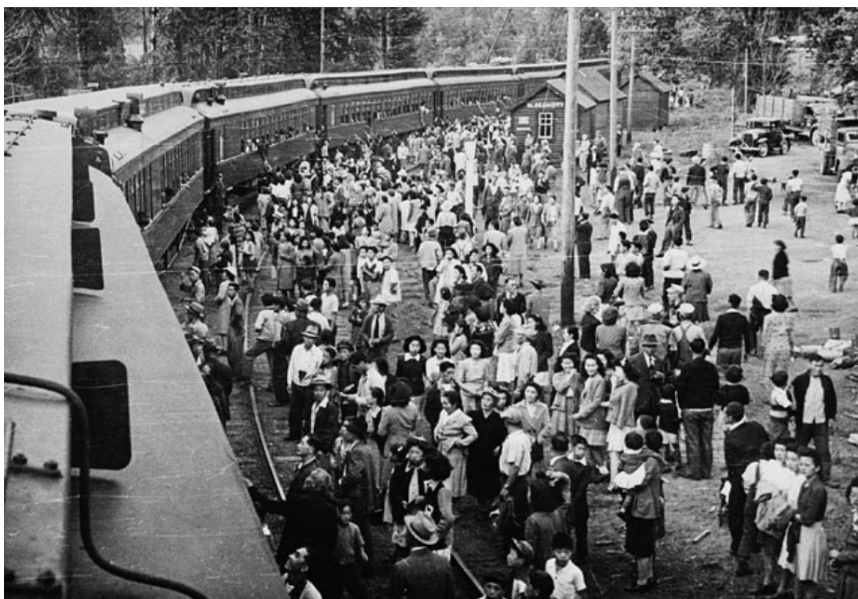
TAKE NOTICE that under Orders No. 21, No. 22, No. 23 and No. 24 of the British Columbia Security Commission, the following areas were made prohibited areas to all persons of the Japanese race:-

LULU ISLAND (including Straveston)	PORT MOODY
SEA ISLAND	PORT COQUITLAM
EBURNE	MAILLARDVILLE
MARPOLE	FRASER MILLS
DISTRICT OF QUEENSBOROUGH	CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER
SAPPERTON	CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER	
BURQUITLAM	

AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that any person of the Japanese race found within any of the said prohibited areas without a written permit from the British Columbia Security Commission or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police shall be liable to the penalties provided under Order in Council P.C. 1665.

AUSTIN C. TAYLOR,  
Chairman  
BRITISH COLUMBIA SECURITY COMMISSION

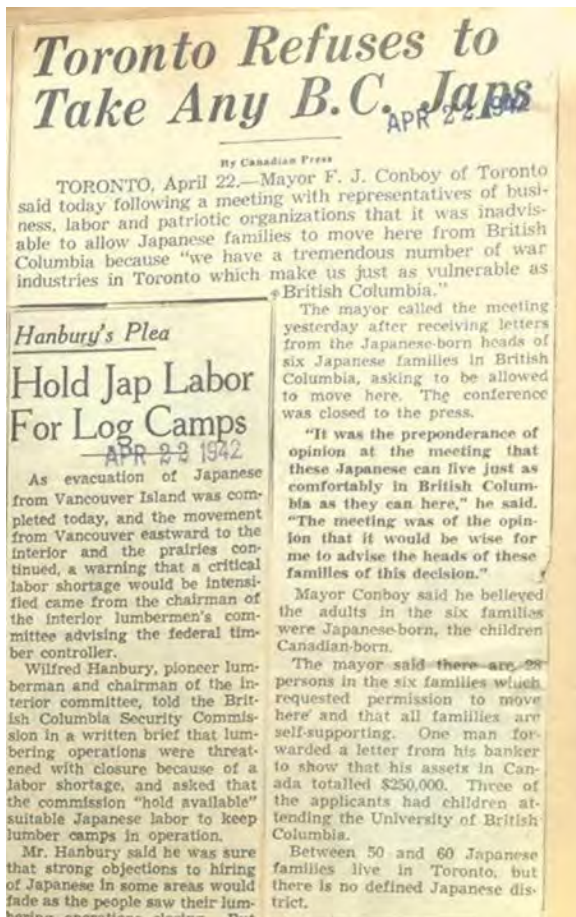
10. Japanese Canadian relocation from the B.C. Coast - notice in Vancouver Sun and Vancouver Province newspapers, June 19, 1942 (Simon Fraser University Digitized Collections)



11. Under the War Measures Act, the mass deportation of Japanese Canadian families living on the west coast of Canada to the BC interior, 1942 (Library Archives of Canada)



12. Internment camp in the BC interior used to confine Japanese Canadians living on the west coast of Canada during the Second World War (Library Archives of Canada)



13. Japanese Canadians were restricted by the Toronto Board of Control from resettling in Toronto during the Second World War. This newspaper article was part of a collection of documents submitted to Heritage Planning staff by community members who have documented Toronto's response to the resettlement of Japanese Canadians during and after the war (NAJC, Toronto Chapter)

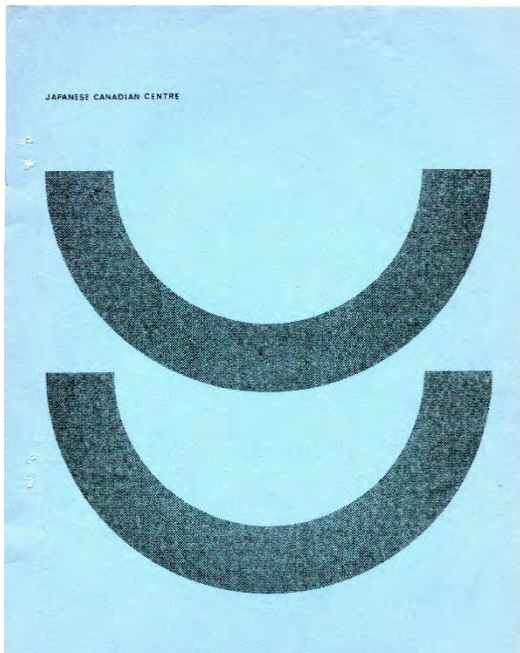




16. Raymond Moriyama became involved in the planning of the JCCC in 1957. In 1960, he travelled to Japan to gain an understanding of Japanese architecture and seek inspiration for the design of the building at 123 Wynford Drive (Toronto Public Library, 1964)



17. The JCCC under construction c. 1963 (JCCC Archives)



18. An abstract expression of the merging of two cultures. A logo designed by Stanley Shikatani for the new Japanese Canadian Centre (Coby Kobayashi Collection, JCCC Archives)



19. Spring festival at the JCCC, c.1960s (JCCC Archives)



20. Taiko drumming performance held in the auditorium of the JCCC, n.d. (JCCC Archives)



21. Community members volunteering at a Spring festival in the 1960s. These fundraising events were an important component to the stewardship and viability of the JCCC (JCCC Archives)



22. Community members of the JCCC volunteering to make tempura for a fundraising event (Toronto Star, 1984)



23. Volunteers at the JCCC making mochi for the annual bazaar, 1991 (JCCC Archives)



24. Site plan by Raymond Moriyama, 1962 (Toronto Building Records)



25. Moriyama and a model of the project (JCCC Archives)



26. JCCC building under construction, structural elements, 1963 (JCCC Archives)



27. Completed JCCC building but prior to commencing landscaping, 1964-1975 (JCCC Archives)



28. Northeast corner of the building showing the concrete pylon, 2023 (Heritage Planning)

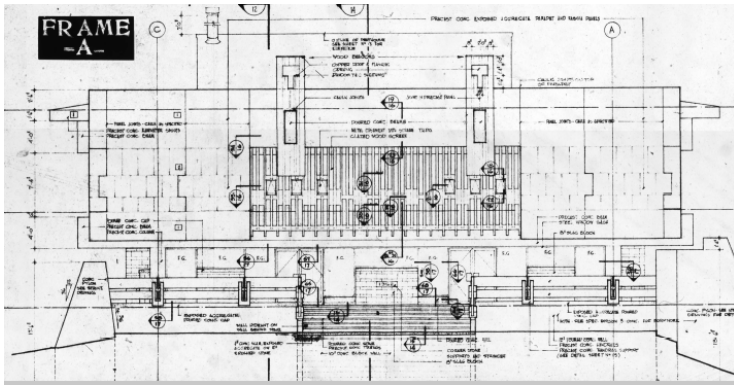


29. Concrete pylon at the northwest corner of the building, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



30. Bronze plaque on the northwest pylon with architect and contractor names, 2023 (Heritage Planning)





31. Original drawing of the north elevation, 1962 (Building Records)



32. Archival photo showing the north elevation and stone slab sculpture, 1963 (JCCC Archives)



33. Current photo of the north elevation, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



34. Current photo showing a detail of the wooden screen and west lantern on the north elevation, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



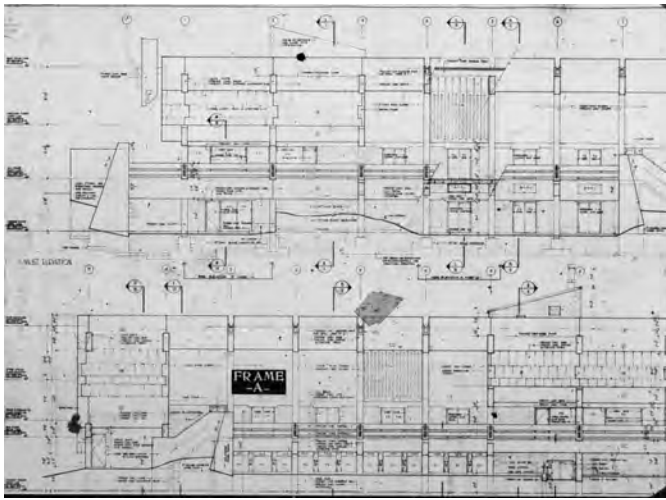
35. Current photo looking up at the wooden screen and east lantern on the north elevation, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



36. Current photo showing a detail of the main entrance stair on the north elevation, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



37. Current photo showing the date stone with "1963" located next to the main entrance on the north elevation, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



38. Original drawing showing the east and west elevations, 1962 (Building Records)



39. Current photo showing the east elevation, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



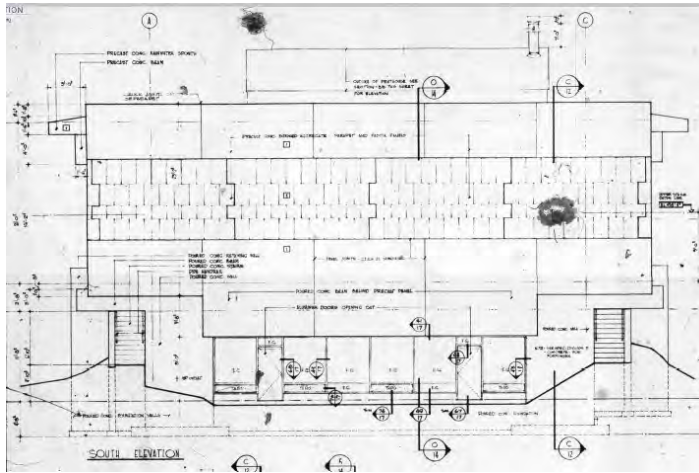
40. Current photo showing a detail of the concrete roof troughs with suspended rain chains on the east elevation, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



41. Current photo looking south along the west perimeter terrace and the pre-cast concrete railing, the wood screen detailing, double-T ceiling beams, and sliding glass doors to the auditorium, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



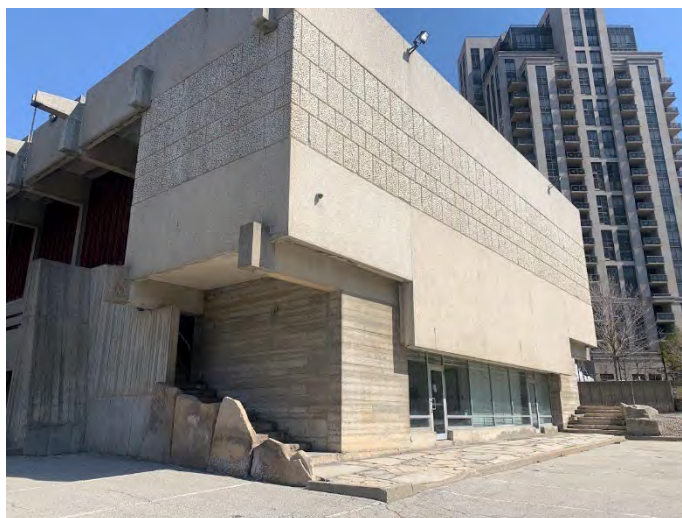
42. Current photo showing the west elevation and massive concrete pylon in the foreground, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



43. Original drawing showing the south elevation, 1962 (Building Records)



44. Current photo showing the south elevation with its four courses of coarse aggregate pre-cast concrete panel banding, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



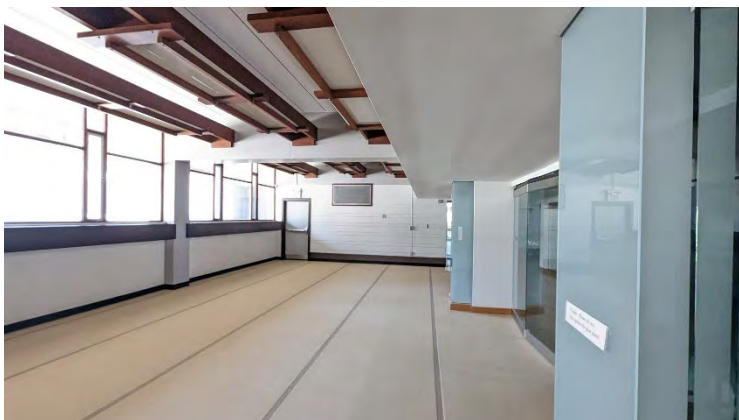
45. Current photo showing south and partial west elevations with the poured-in-place concrete walls at the ground level, flagstone terrace and natural stones leading from the main floor perimeter terrace, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



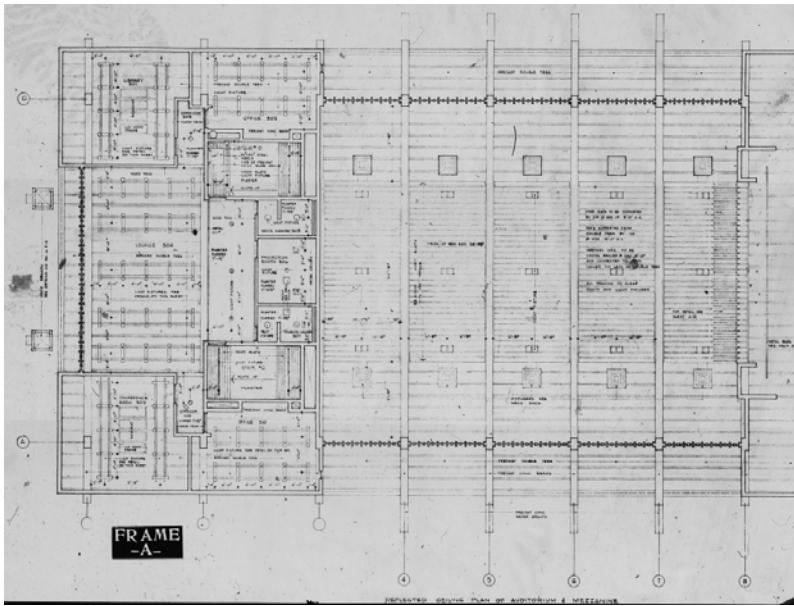
46. Current photo showing perimeter terrace stair from ground level at the southeast corner of the building, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



47. Current photo showing a detail of the ground floor interior with its parquet flooring and concrete block wall at right, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



48. Current photo showing a detail of the ground floor interior including the window detailing and shoji screen ceiling light fixtures, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



49. Original drawing of the reflected upper floor ceiling plan, which also shows the location of the auditorium at right, 1962 (Building Records)



50. Archival photo looking south across the auditorium toward the stage, 1964-1975 (JCCC Archives)



51. Archival photo showing a detail of the auditorium interior, 1980 (JCCC Archives)





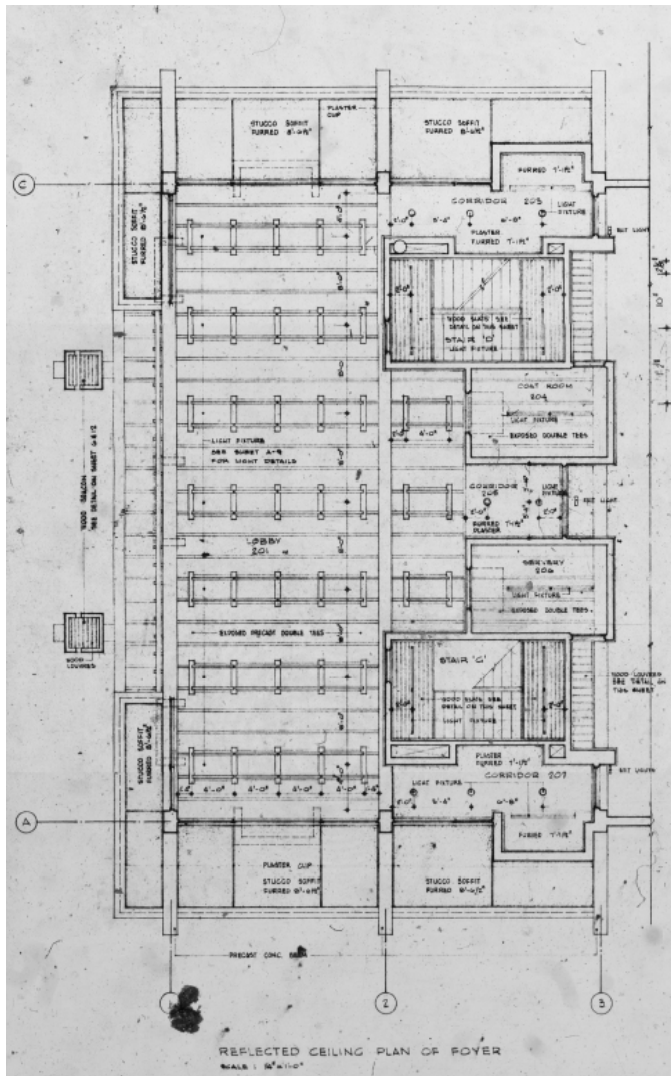
52. Current photo looking south toward the stage in the auditorium with its parquet floor and wood plank drop ceiling, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



53. Current photo showing a detail of the west elevation interior with its detailed wooden screens at the upper level and sliding doors to the perimeter terrace at the main floor level, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



54. Current photo showing the stage at the south end of the auditorium, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



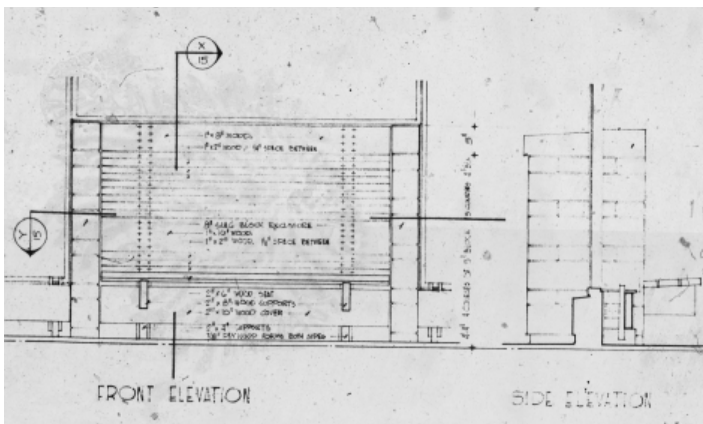
55. Original drawing showing the reflected ceiling plan of the foyer/lobby, including the shoji screen style light fixtures, 1962 (Building Records)



56. Current photo looking east across the lobby and showing the ceiling lighting and built-in bench seating along the exterior wall, d2023 (Heritage Planning)



57. Current photo showing a detail of the shoji screen style ceiling lighting in the lobby and the double-T pre-cast concrete ceiling beams, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



58. Original drawing showing an example of the lobby bench seating on the interior whose concrete block form straddles the interior and exterior of the building, 1962 (Building Records).



59. Current photo showing the bench seating in the lobby and polished terrazzo flooring with exposed pea gravel finish detailing, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



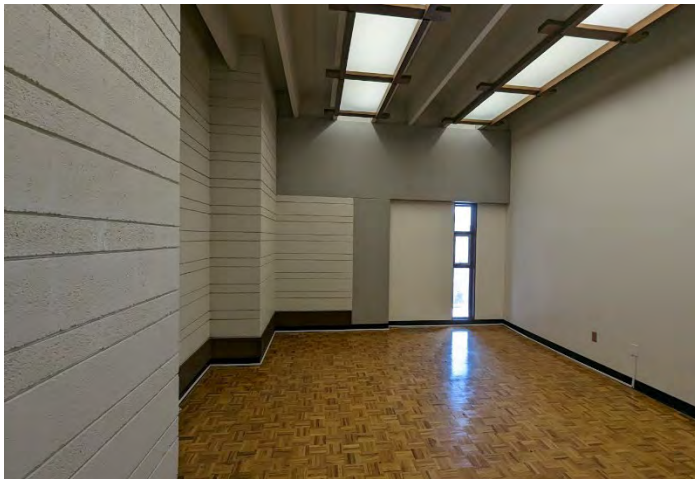
60. Current photo showing a detail of the west interior stairwell, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



61. Current photo looking north across the lounge on the upper level to the wood screen, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



62. Current photo looking northeast across the lounge and showing the ceiling light fixtures, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



63. Current photo of the southwest room on the upper level with its tall, narrow wood framed window looking out to the south garden, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



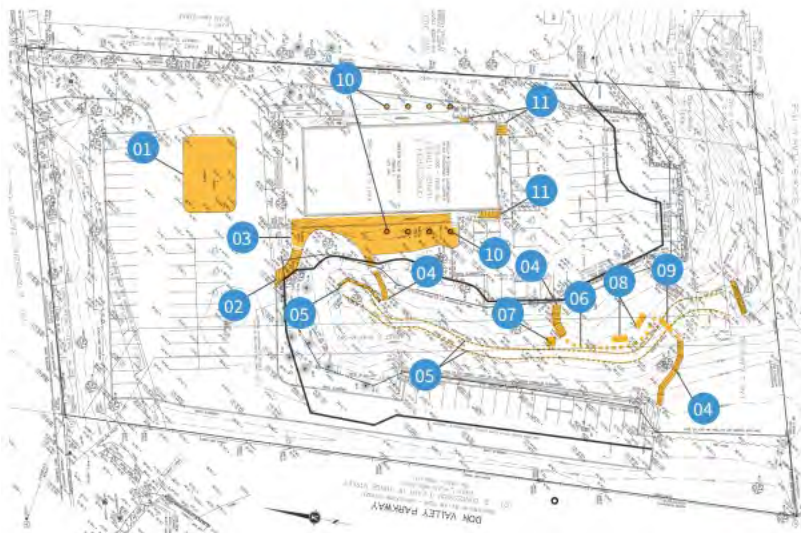
64. Drawing showing the landscape plan, 1971 (Moriyama & Teshima Architects)



65. Drawings showing elements of the landscape plan including the view of the building from the ravine garden, a rain chain and ravine bridge 1971 (Moriyama & Teshima Architects)

Legend

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 01 Slab Stone Sculpture                 | 06 Stepping Stones                    |
| 02 Slab Stone Staircase to Terrace      | 07 Granite Lantern                    |
| 03 Landscape Terrace                    | 08 Horizontal Granite Bench           |
| 04 Slab Stone Staircase to Ravine       | 09 Slab Stone Bridge                  |
| 05 Ravine Stone Retaining Wall & Riprap | 10 Rain Chains & Stone Boulder Anchor |
|   | 11 Staircase to Landscape             |



66. List of current landscape features and elements, 2022 (ERA)



67. Current photo looking south at the north elevation and the Nikka Teien stone slab sculpture in the foreground, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



68. Current photo looking north toward the Nikka Teien sculpture from the main entrance stair, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



69. Current photo of the 1973 Nikka Teien dedication plaque, 2023 (Heritage Planning)

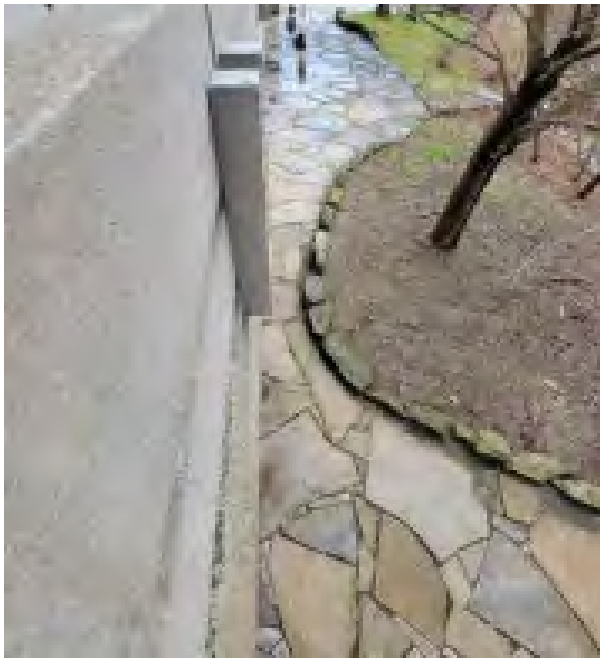


70. Archival photo of the landscaping under construction. Note the massive concrete pylon at right, 1964-1975 (JCCC Archives)



71. Current photo looking northwest from the west garden terrace up the stone stair to the north parking lot. Note part of the massive concrete pylon at right, 2023 (Heritage Planning)





72. Current photo looking down from the perimeter terrace to the west garden terrace with its undulating stone landscape edging, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



73. Current photo looking southwest to the ravine gardens from the west garden terrace, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



74. Archival photo showing the west garden landscaping called the 'wild' with its pond and meadow before the tea house was constructed, 1964-1975 (JCCC Archives)



75. Archival photo showing the Japanese tea house that once straddled the creek in the ravine garden setting, 1980 (JCCC Archives)



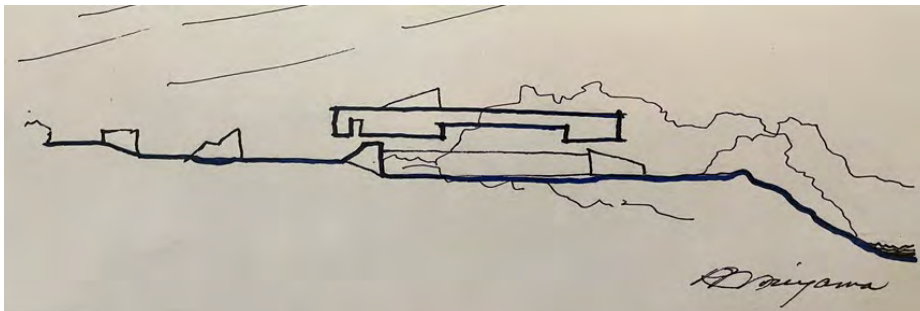
76. Current photo looking down the stone stair toward the ravine setting below, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



77. Current photo in the stroll garden, showing the stepping stone path and horizontal granite slab bench, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



78. Current showing a stone slab bridge crossing over the creek and the stone stair up the ravine connecting the west parking lot, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



79. Archival sketch of the building and site topography by Moriyama (JCCC Archives)



80. Archival photo showing the poetic relationship between the newly-constructed building and the existing ravine landscape, 1964-1975 (JCCC Archives)



81. Current photo showing the relationship of the building and the landscape, looking from the stroll garden to the building with the stone stair and rough granite lantern in the foreground, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



82. Current photo showing the relationship of the building and landscape, looking south along the west garden terrace from under the main floor building overhang and showing the rain chain boulders anchoring the building to the landscape, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



83. Current photo looking south where the building and landscaped garden setting merge, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



84. Archival photo of the west elevation during its time as the Noor Cultural Centre, 2003-2021 (NCC)



85. Current showing the Arabic calligraphy added to the wooden door pulls, 2023 (Heritage Planning)



86. Archival photo showing the spectators present at the opening ceremony, June 7, 1964 (JCCC Archives)



87. Archival photo showing Lester B. Pearson who spoke at the opening ceremony, June 7, 1964 (JCCC Archives)

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### **Communications Received with Thanks from Heritage Planning Staff**

David Tsubouchi, April 17, 2023  
 Sid Ikeda, April 18, 2023  
 Nobu Yoshimitsu, North Vancouver, April 18, 2023  
 Lillian Blakey, April 19, 2023  
 Diana Bennett, April 19, 2023  
 Gail Burgin, April 20, 2023  
 Mari Galloway, April and May 2023  
 Nomu Desu, April 23, 2023  
 Sally Ito, Winnipeg, April 23, 2023  
 Susan Hartman, April 26, 2023  
 Barbara Miiko Gravlin, April 27, 2023  
 Mary Morris, May 3, 2023  
 Pat Adachi, May 11, 2023  
 Ron Shiomi, Thunder Bay, May 8, 2023  
 Wilmer, May 8, 2023  
 Gord Sato, May 9, 2023  
 Seiji Ohtake, May 10, 2023  
 Les Takahashi, May 10, 2023  
 Elinor Dunlop, May 11, 2023  
 Diana Morita Cole (Nelson, British Columbia), May 12, 2023  
 Yoko Galloway, May 13, 2023  
 April Sora, May 14, 2023  
 Lynn Deutscher Kobayashi, President, Toronto Chapter of the National Association of Japanese Canadians  
 Kevin Okabe, Executive Director, National Association of Japanese Canadians, May 16, 2023  
 Michelle (Maeda) Chibba, May 16, 2023

## **JAPANESE CANADIAN CULTURAL CENTRE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (REASONS FOR DESIGNATION)**

### **Description**

Located on the south side of Wynford Drive, northeast of Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue East, in the Banbury-Don Mills neighbourhood in North York, the property at 123 Wynford Drive, originally known as the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, contains a two-storey institutional building on an exposed basement level and designed landscape garden by Order of Canada Companion and internationally-renowned architect, Raymond Moriyama. Completed in 1963, the property served as the city's community hub for the re-establishment, promotion and sharing of Japanese culture in the post-war period. From 2003 to 2021, the property was adaptively reused to serve the Canadian Muslim community as the Noor Cultural Centre with only minor interventions to the original building undertaken by Moriyama & Teshima Architects. The property sits on the tablelands of the Don River, immediately west of the Don River's east branch. Situated on a wooded ravine lot, the building responds directly to the natural and topographical features of the site. The ravine landscape is within a Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA) regulated area.

The property at 123 Wynford Drive was identified as having cultural heritage value in the inventory included in *North York's Modernist Architecture*, first published in 1997 with a revised edition in 2009. It identified 123 Wynford Drive as one of twenty 'Significant Modernist Projects' in North York constructed between 1945 and 1981.

The property was listed on the North York Inventory of Heritage Properties on October 6, 1997.

### **Statement of Cultural Heritage Value**

#### **Design/Physical Value**

The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre located at 123 Wynford Drive has design value as a unique example in Toronto of Brutalist architecture combined with landscape inspired by traditional Japanese garden design. Largely constructed of concrete, the two-storey building on an exposed basement level containing a double-height auditorium hall and mezzanine is nestled into its deeply sloped and treed ravine lot containing a designed Japanese stroll garden amongst the existing natural conditions of the site. Despite budgetary constraints, the building displays a high degree of craftsmanship and artistic merit in its creative use of cost-effective materials such as wood and concrete, including concrete block. This is evidenced by the extensive use of poured-in-place and pre-cast fine and coarse aggregate concrete structural elements and cladding, concrete block partition walls and the cedar plank woodwork of its traditional Japanese wall screens, lanterns and ceiling light fixtures. Traditional

Japanese rainwater leaders or rain chains (kusari-do) serve as significant visual and auditory landscape design elements, while also cleverly providing a cost-saving role for the re-direction of stormwater away from the property.

The property is also valued for the interrelationship of the building and landscape designs, which similarly combine traditional Japanese architectural principles and elements with Canadian topography and materials. The property's Nikka Teien (Japanese Canada Garden) integrates existing ravine conditions of the property at the west and south sides of the building, including retention of select mature trees and a meandering creek tributary of the Don River, with a designed Japanese stroll garden landscape that can be viewed and accessed from the building and is comprised of stone steps, paths, bridges, seating and sculpture amongst verdant plantings. The diagonal orientation of the building, as viewed from the landscape garden below, is derived from the Japanese stroll garden aesthetic principles of asymmetry and borrowed scenery (skakkei). Traditional Japanese design intent is also expressed through the building's blurring of boundaries between interior and exterior space (using sliding doors, balconies with deep overhangs, and continuous floor and ceiling planes that extend beyond the vertical elevations defining inside and outside), and the orientation of the building's main rooms toward the moonlight and the water below in the Nikka Teien. The significance of the Nikka Teien to the property's overall design is celebrated by a bronze plaque which was presented on October 20, 1973 by Akira Nishiyama, Ambassador of Japan to Canada, and affixed to Moriyama's dynamic stone slab sculpture situated on an island in the parking lot directly north of the building's main entrance.

### **Historical/Associative Value**

The property at 123 Wynford Drive stands as a living memorial to the enduring optimistic spirit of the early Japanese immigrants to Canada despite their experiences of racially-driven injustices, discrimination, and hostility. The property is a physical testament to the Japanese Canadian community's resiliency, as well as hope and belief in a more culturally tolerant and inclusive future and to the community's hard work towards contributing to and participating in the cultural plurality that defines Canada.

The property holds significant associative value with respect to the Japanese Canadian community who resettled in Toronto following their experience of the Canadian government's unjust and racist policies during and after the Second World War and as a racialized minority in Toronto's discriminatory environment. The property also holds associative value as a cultural centre and community hub that was conceived, financed, and stewarded by the broad participation of the diasporic Japanese Canadian community in Toronto. The purchase of the property in 1960 and the construction of the building in 1963, which was designed at a budget of \$14 per square foot using modest materials, was financed by the diasporic Japanese Canadian community through individual donations and community fundraising events, as well as with 75 families acting as guarantors on a bank mortgage.

The property is valued for its association with the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, a non-profit organization founded in 1963 through the dedicated voluntary leadership of individual members of the Japanese Canadian community in Toronto. At the 60th

anniversary of the JCCC, the organization is stronger than ever continuing to offer a broad range of cultural programming that promotes and honours Japanese cultural heritage, and this building stands as the central legacy of the "friendship through culture" motto.

The property's adaptive reuse as a centre for Islamic practice and learning and as a centre for Canada's diverse Muslim community by the Noor Cultural Centre, which purchased the property in 2001, has continued the legacy of the building's community use and celebration of culture. The building was sensitively adapted for the Noor Cultural Centre to accommodate faith-based practices by Moriyama and Teshima Architects.

One of Canada's finest and respected architects, Raymond Moriyama is a contemporary Canadian architect of Japanese heritage who established an architectural practice in Toronto in 1958 and entered into partnership with Ted Teshima in 1970. Raymond Moriyama has received numerous awards for his work including being made an Officer of the Order of Canada (1985), receiving the RAIC Gold Medal (1997) as well the Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts and the Queen Elizabeth Golden Jubilee Medal (2012). He is renowned for his humanistic approach to design, commitment to addressing social justice issues and advancing the public good through the built form, and sensitivity in connecting the built form and landscape. The JCCC was Raymond Moriyama's first major commission. Moriyama designed the JCCC within the context of Japanese Canadian's postwar resettlement in Toronto and in the nascent period of Canadian multiculturalism as a national identity.

### **Contextual Value**

Situated on a garden terrace within a steeply sloped site, contained within the context of Wynford Drive, Eglinton Avenue and the Don Valley Parkway & ravine, the property has contextual value as a physical and cultural landmark within the community for 60 years. It is also valued for maintaining the character of the area which features a number of important cultural and institutional buildings of distinctive high-quality design surrounding Don Mills, including the Ontario Science Centre (1969) at 770 Don Mills Rd, an iconic heritage property, and the Aga Khan Museum and Ismaili Centre (2014) at 77 Wynford Drive. Like the original Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre, both the Ontario Science Centre and the Ismaili Centre were also designed with Raymond Moriyama's "humanistic touch".

The integrated and inextricable relationship of the building and landscape designed together at 123 Wynford Drive responds to, and provides continuity with, the adjacent Don Valley River ravine. As the first Japanese cultural centre built in Canada, the property at 123 Wynford Drive is visually, physically and historically linked to its surroundings.

The property at 123 Wynford Drive is a cultural landmark in Toronto.

## **Heritage Attributes**

The heritage attributes of the original Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre property at 123 Wynford Drive are:

### **Exterior Heritage Attributes**

- The placement, set back and orientation of the building, as it is located on the south side of Wynford Drive and east of the Don Valley Parkway
- The scale, form and massing of the two-storey building on a rectangular plan with exposed basement level on the west, south and east sides
- The setting of the building set into a terraced slope, surrounded by the topographical condition and natural elements of a ravine landscape, including mature trees and a tributary creek of the Don River wrapping around the west and south ends of the property
- The flat roof of the building
- The rain water leaders (kusari-doi) comprised of four cantilevered concrete downspouts emerging from the roof parapet on the east and west elevations (eight downspouts in total), with their suspended galvanized iron chains tethered to large stone boulders at grade
- The combination of poured-in-place and pre-cast concrete structural columns, beams and floors of the building
- On all four elevations, the precast concrete exterior cladding with a variety of finishes including smooth, exposed small white marble aggregate, and exposed medium marble aggregate composed within faux units with deep v-shaped joints
- On the north, west and east elevations, the elevated terrace with precast guardrail, accessed on the north elevation by a set of concrete stairs and anchored by four large board-formed, poured-in-place concrete pylons, one at each corner of the building's footings
- Inset bronze plaque identifying Architect and General Contractor on the northwest concrete pylon
- Date stone with "1963" inscribed in the central concrete block element on the north elevation
- On the north elevation, the main entrance and lobby glazing with entrance doors with concrete block and precast concrete elements interrupting the glazing
- The precast concrete clad second floor supported on precast concrete columns and cantilevered beams, with small windows on the south return walls
- The second floor (mezzanine level) and deeply recessed glazed wooden screen with inset metal windows
- Wood-clad lanterns or beacons mounted on cantilevered concrete beams at the roof level with cut out opening facing north and flag poles projecting above
- The deeply recessed central portion of the building at the basement and main floor levels with exposed columns and cantilevered beams with block infill flanking doors, and wood screens with inset glazing above
- Cantilevered soffit with precast concrete double-t structure that continues seamlessly into the lobby at the west end of the building, and precast cladding with projecting beams
- At the south end, a precast concrete clad building element enclosing the existing backstage, supported on cantilevered beams

### **Interior Heritage Attributes**

- In the lobby, the wood benches, terrazzo floor with typical smooth finish and exposed pea gravel finish at the bench locations, precast concrete block partition walls of alternating unit height with flush vertical and recessed horizontal joints, and the wood and glass screens between the double-t concrete beams
- The double-height central auditorium hall with its wood screens and glazing and tongue-and-groove wood plank drop ceiling
- The lounge in the mezzanine level, with its wood screen and glazing
- The wood plank and plastic ceiling light fixtures on all three floors with their traditional Japanese shoji screen styling

### **Landscape Heritage Attributes**

- North of the building, the slab stone sculpture designed by Raymond Moriyama and arranged around a concrete cylinder with the Nikka Teien (Japan Canada Garden) dedication plaque mounted on one of the vertical slabs
- At the north-west corner of the building, a slab stone staircase descending from the ground floor to the lower-level terrace
- The interrelationship between the west elevation of the building, the flagstone landscape terrace at the lower (ground floor) level and the ravine landscape beyond which also includes the designed Japanese stroll garden (Nikka Teien)
- In the ravine landscape, three slab stone staircases descending to the creek level, two on the east slope and one on the west slope
- In the ravine landscape, a stone slab bridge over the creek
- In the ravine landscape, three granite elements: a rough stone granite lantern and two horizontal granite benches