

Urban changes along Dupont Corridor over the years

Dupont

Avenue

Annex

Bathurst

Seaton Village

Christie

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Introduction

This report intends to outline the major urban changes that have happened along the Dupont Corridor since the first available Goad's Map in 1824 till the present day. By observing the historical changes in land-use along Dupont, between Avenue and Christie, in Toronto, this research will examine possible improvements and changes in land use that will guide development in the Dupont Corridor in future years.

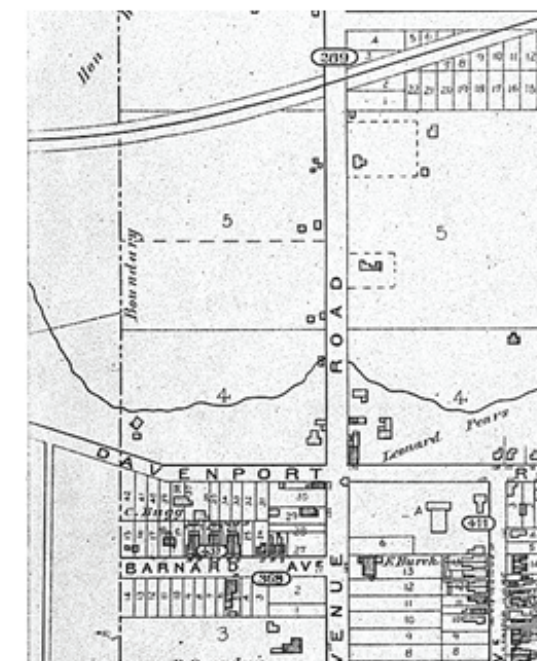


1884

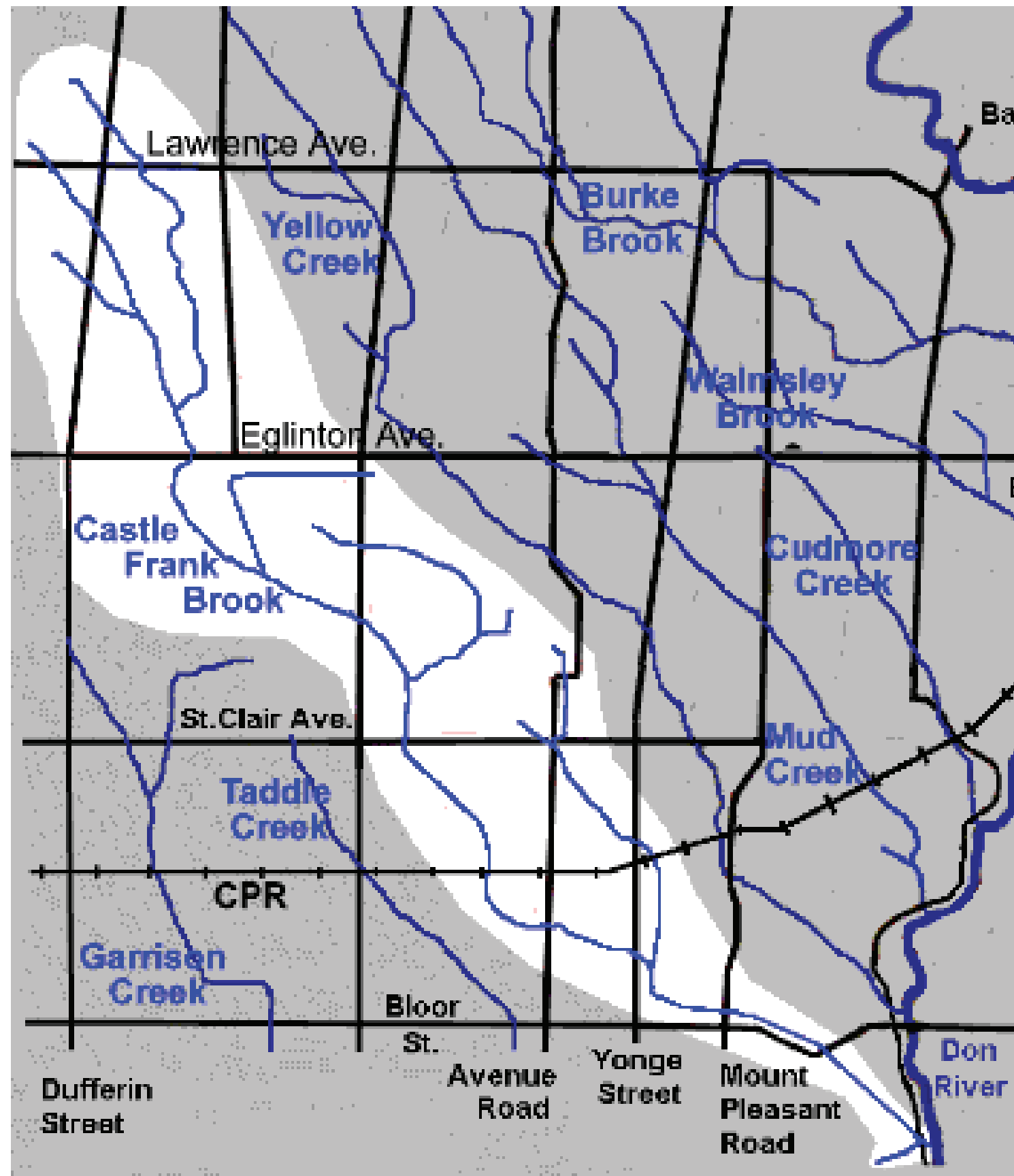
The Corridor is very sparsely developed. Residential houses dot the landscape, interrupted by the Ontario & Quebec Railway Line running parallel to Dupont St.

Detailed maps for the area between Spadina and Christie, and north of the railway are missing, but it can be seen that the area West of Bathurst was divided into tiny parcels of land for residential development while the area between Spadina and Avenue, along Davenport was not touched.

The maps show traces of the Yorkville Reach of Castle Frank Brook running along Davenport Rd and the Nordheimer Reach of the brook north of the railway, intersecting with Poplar Plains.



Urban Rivers

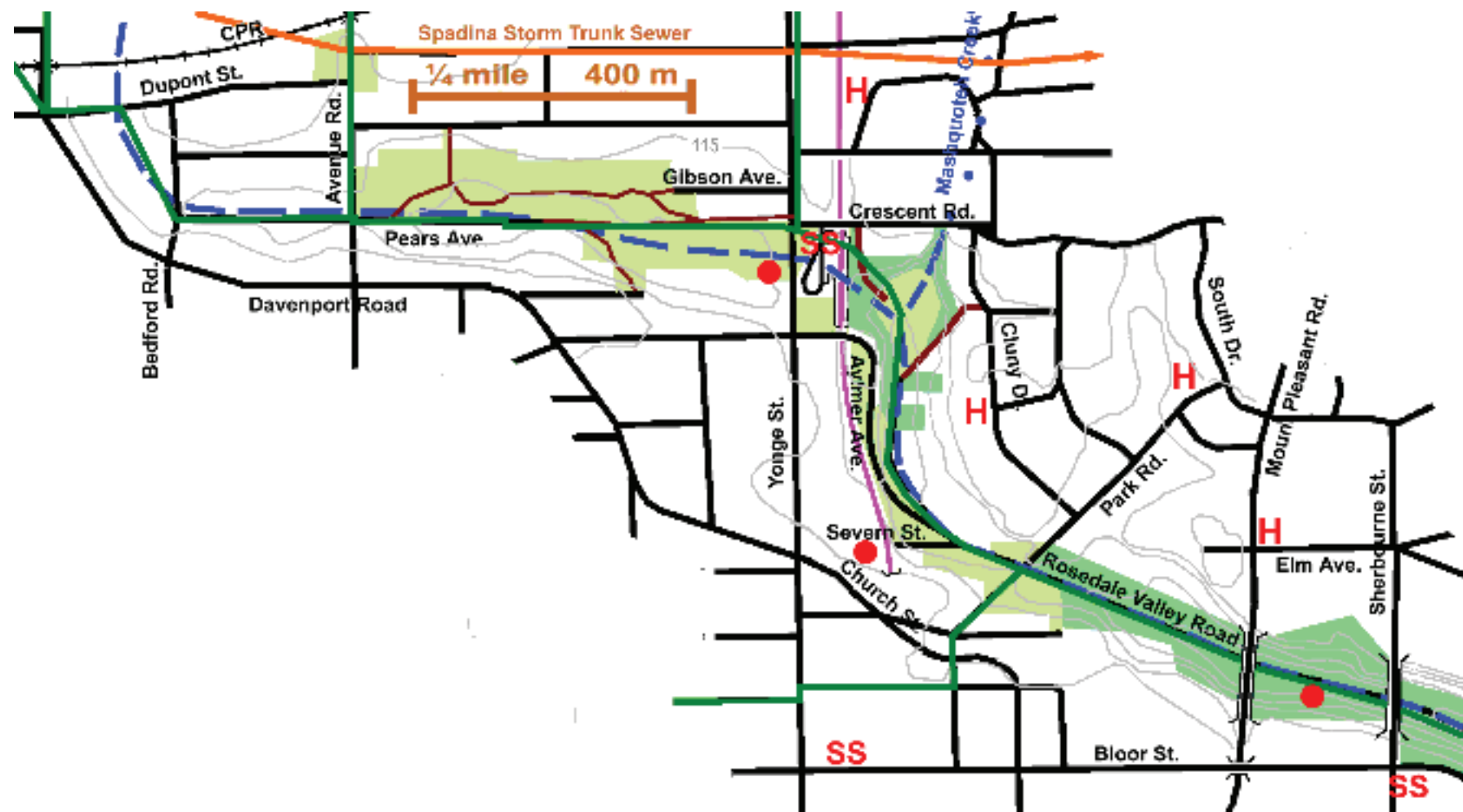
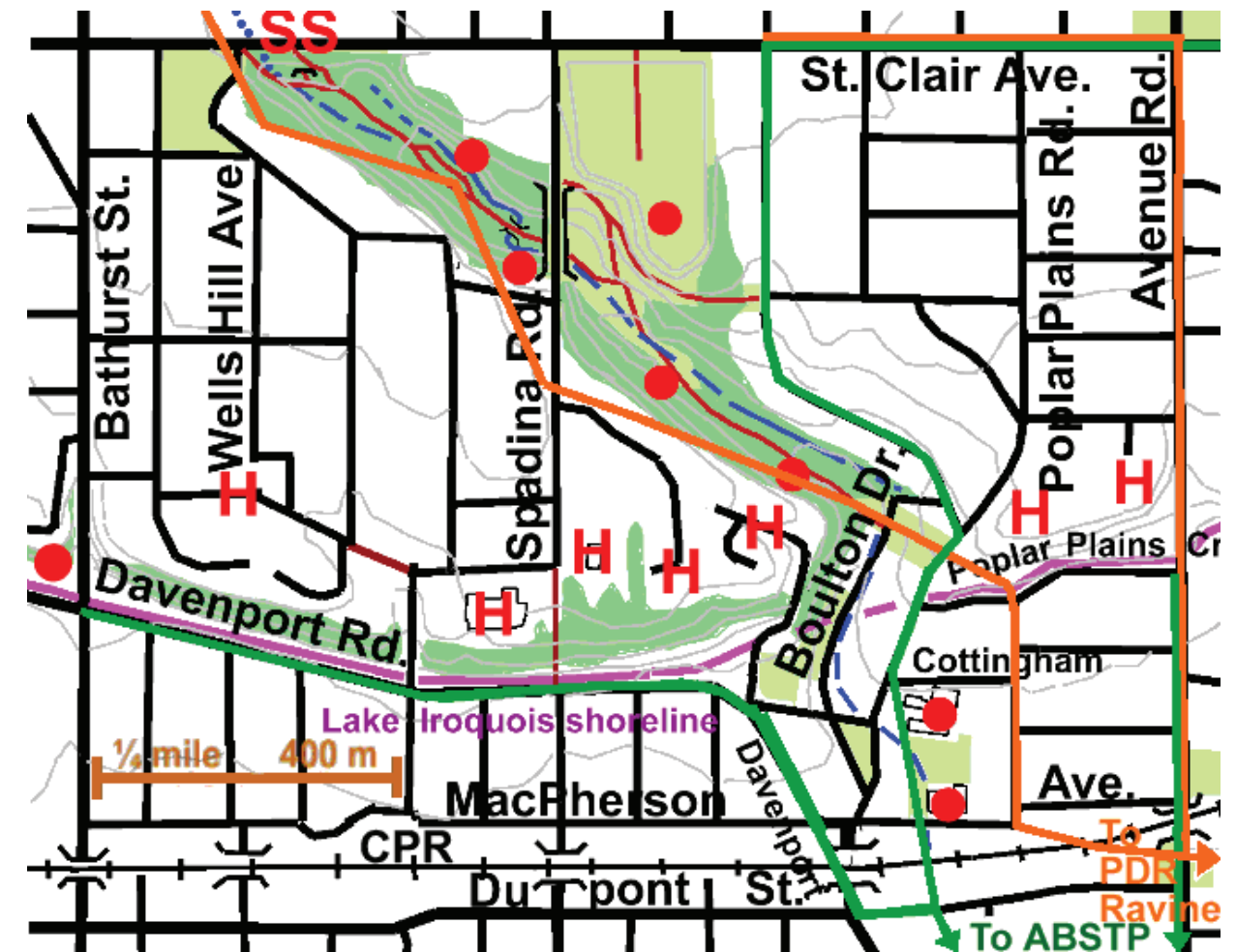


The two main creeks feeding into Castle Frank Brook are the Yorkville Reach and the Nordheimer Reach. Yorkville Waterworks was built along the Nordheimer Reach in 1875 to take advantage of the waterflow, supplying water for domestic use and fire protection. Water hydrants and a fire telegraph system was introduced to the region as a result.

The High Level Pumping Station was built in 1906, on the site of the previous Yorkville Waterworks, to provide water to the new part of the City, then expanding north above the hill. It was enlarged in 1910. It now houses the Central Control for pumping all Toronto water.

Hydro Sub Station H on MacPherson; was built in 1910 and expanded in 1924. It provides power to 12,500 customers from Kilbarry Rd. to Charles St. and from Spadina Road to Mount Pleasant Rd. Its total load is 1212.7 Mega Volt Amps. The playground between these buildings marks the site of an old pond.

Nordheimer Reach: The Spadina Storm Trunk Sewer follows this ravine and sanitary sewers feed to the Core Interceptor Sewer via a trunk sewer that roughly follows the old stream as far as Parliament Street.



Yorkville Reach: In this reach, Castle Frank Brook was known as Brewery Creek or Severn Creek, after John Severn, an Aldermen of the Village of Yorkville, who opened a brewery along this stream in 1835. While the storm water runoff still flows down the valley, it does this in a very large pipe rather than an open stream. Sanitary sewerage flows via the Core Interceptor Sewer to The Main Sewage Treatment Plant at Ashbridge's Bay, except in the case of a Combined Sewer Overflow episode when it is diverted into the storm sewer and enters the Don at the foot of this valley.

1890

The Yorkville Reach has been removed from the landscape. It has been built over. The land around it has been divided into plots and some urban development is taking place. A clear pedestrian pathway is created between the lots in the Davenport- Avenue block, which is currently Designer's Walk. It loosely traces the path of the creek. Residential development is starting in the area, mostly in the form of semi-detached houses. The more notable developments are the emergence of a window blind factory along the curve of Davenport Rd and a church further north along the road.

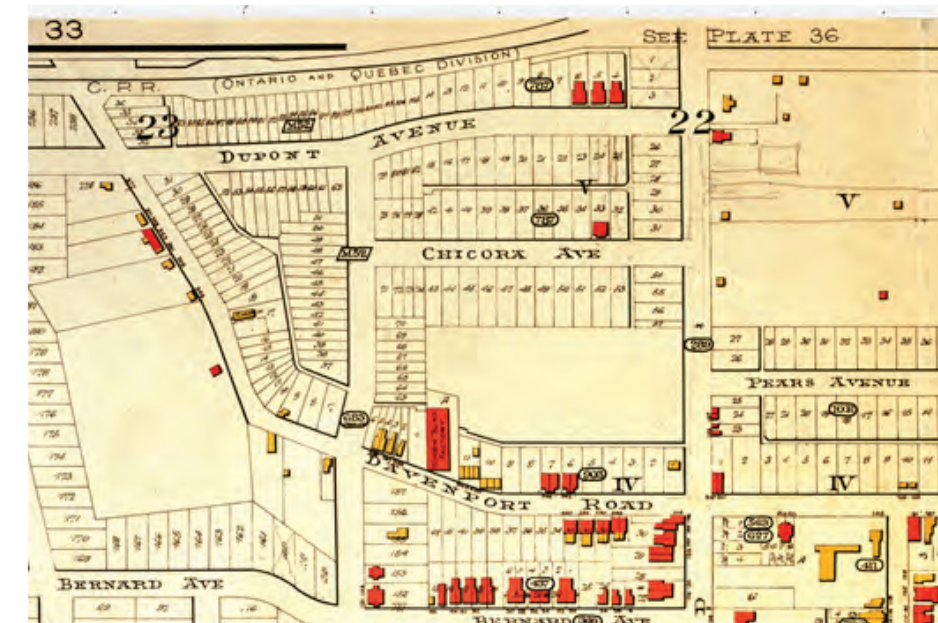
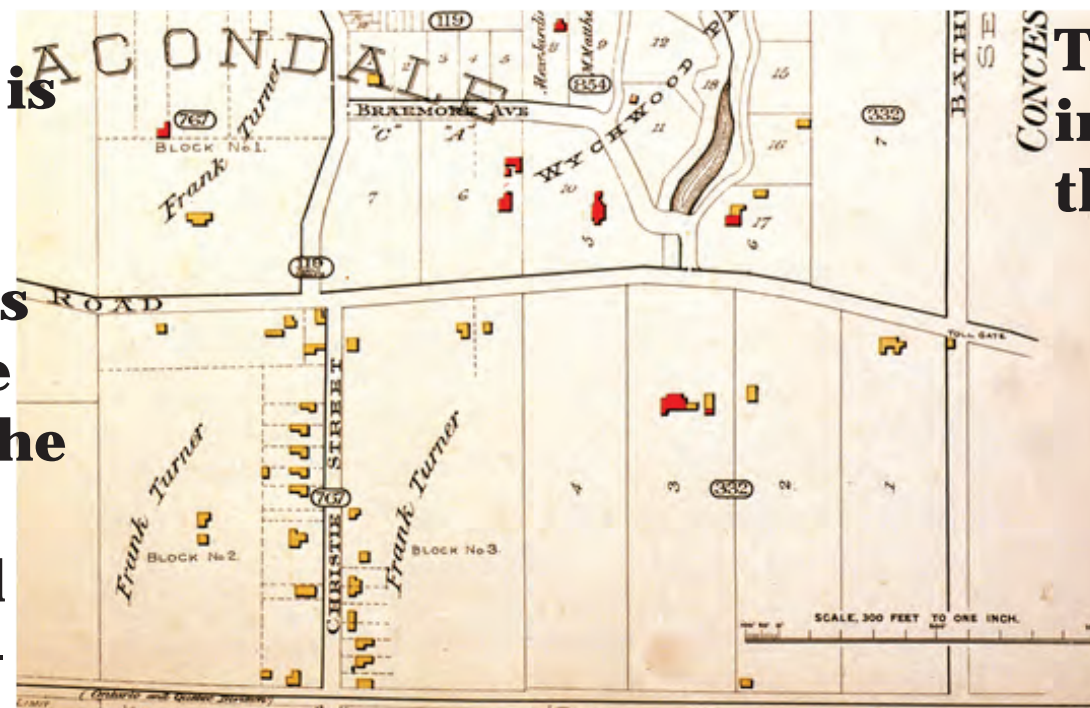
Yorkville Waterworks can be seen on the maps now, although it was built in 1875.

Not much has changed in the urban landscape between Spadina and Christie.

Pears Avenue first appears on the map, east of Avenue Rd, presumably after the land owner Leonard Pears.

A toll gate that appeared at Bathurst and Davenport in the 1884 maps has been relocated to the intersection of Bathurst and Davenport.

Toll gates were set up to finance improvements and changes to the road due to its high usage.

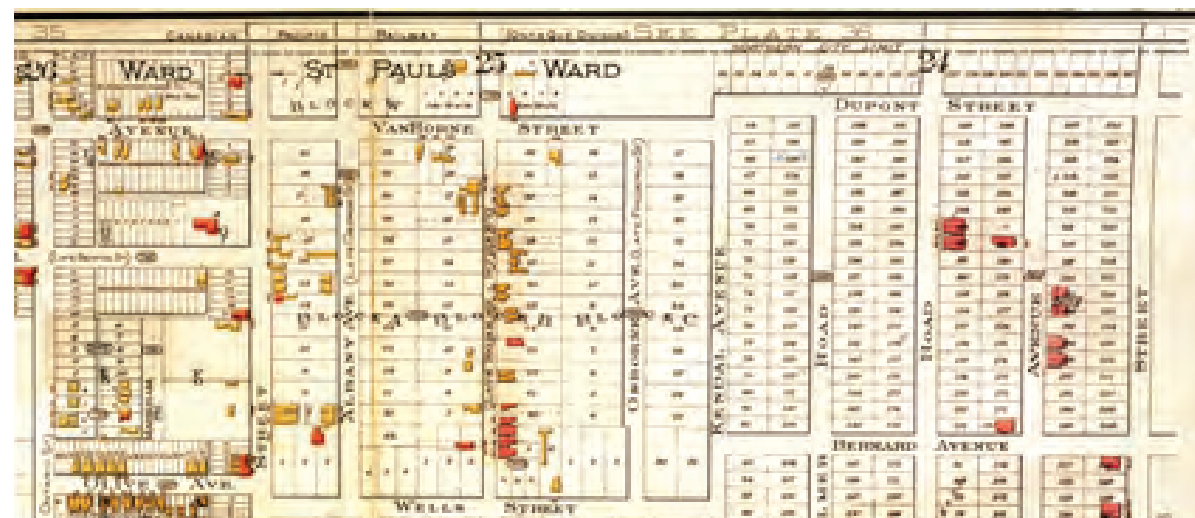


1894

Some more residential houses are being put up along the corridor.

Pears Avenue has been extended further West, past Avenue Rd.

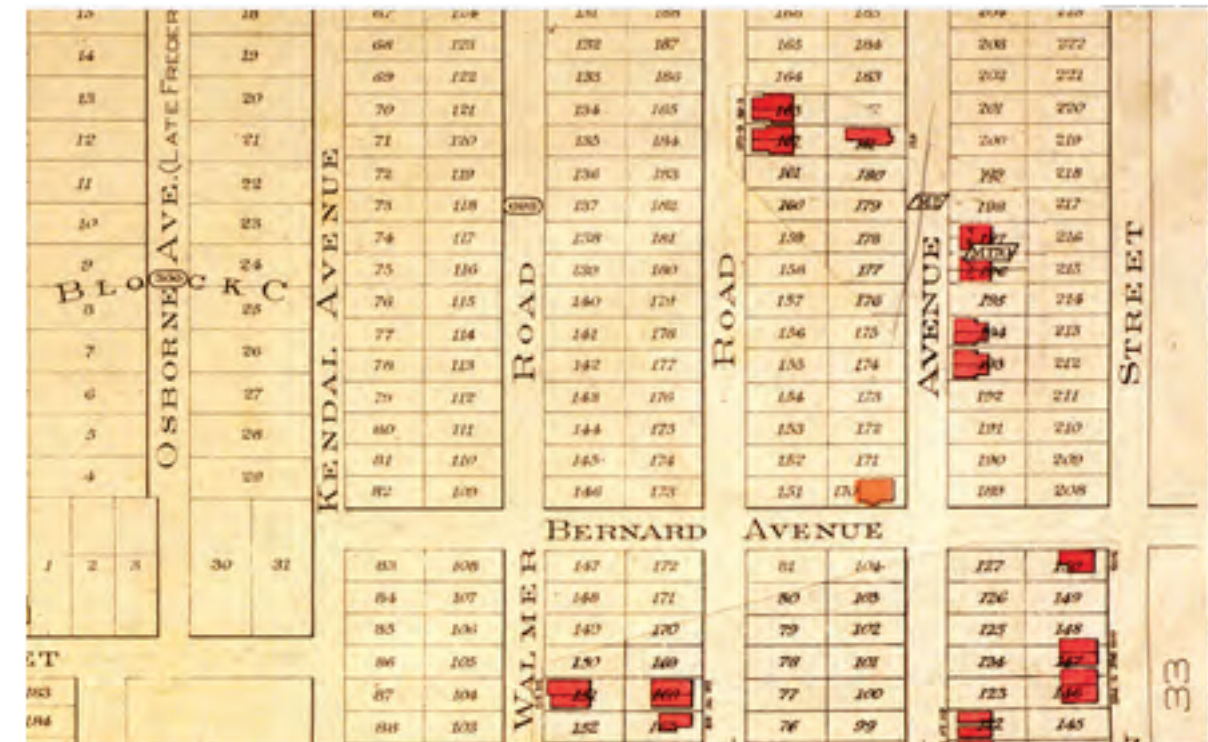
Very little development is seen north of the railway line.



-1903

A large structure appears
South of Pears Ave, East of
Avenue Rd.

Bernard Ave is extended and
connected with what was for-
merly Kendall Ave (seen on
the right in this 1894 map).



1894 map



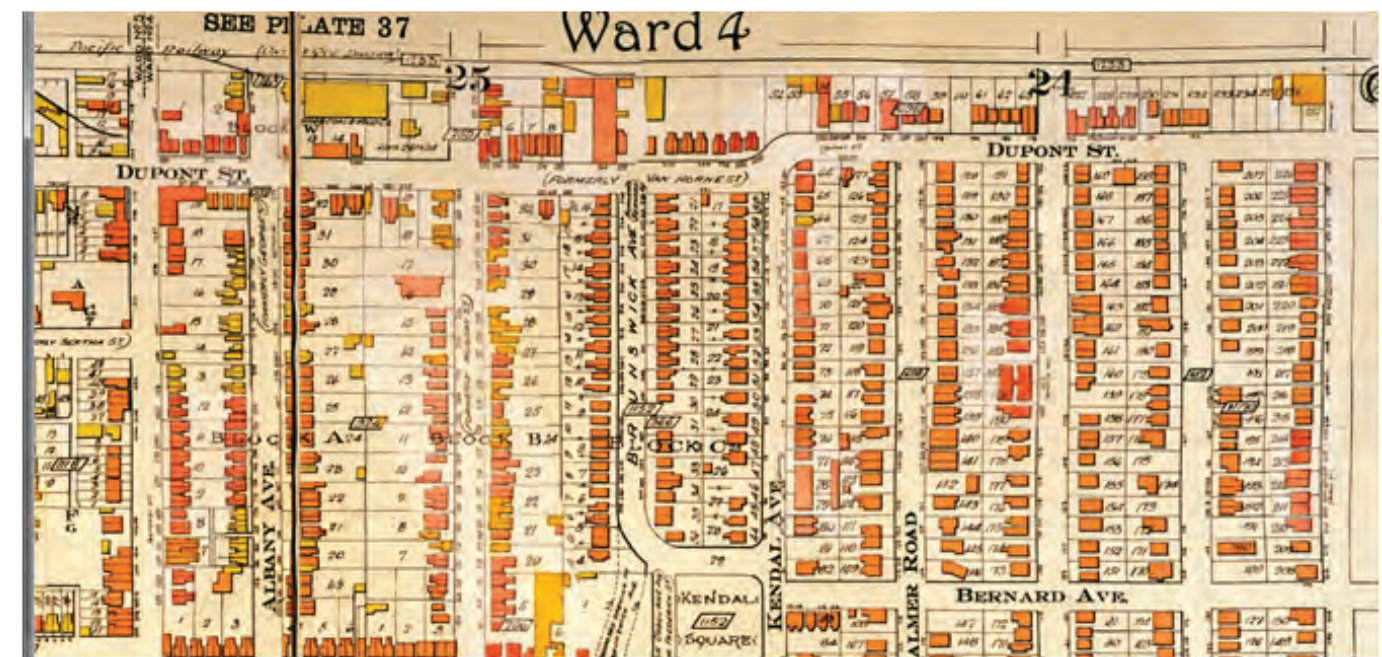
-1913

An explosion of large and residential development is seen throughout the corridor pre-WWI.

Big buildings pop up near the rail corridor between Bathurst and Howland.

A large building, possibly a department store (Clarke's), is seen at the north-east corner of Christie and the CPR rail tracks, to address the needs of local residents.

The toll gate has been removed from its site. It has been relocated to Wychwood Yards, then owned by the TTC.



1913

The High Level Pumping Station is expanded, and the Bridgeman Transformer station is seen clearly on the map along Davenport Rd.

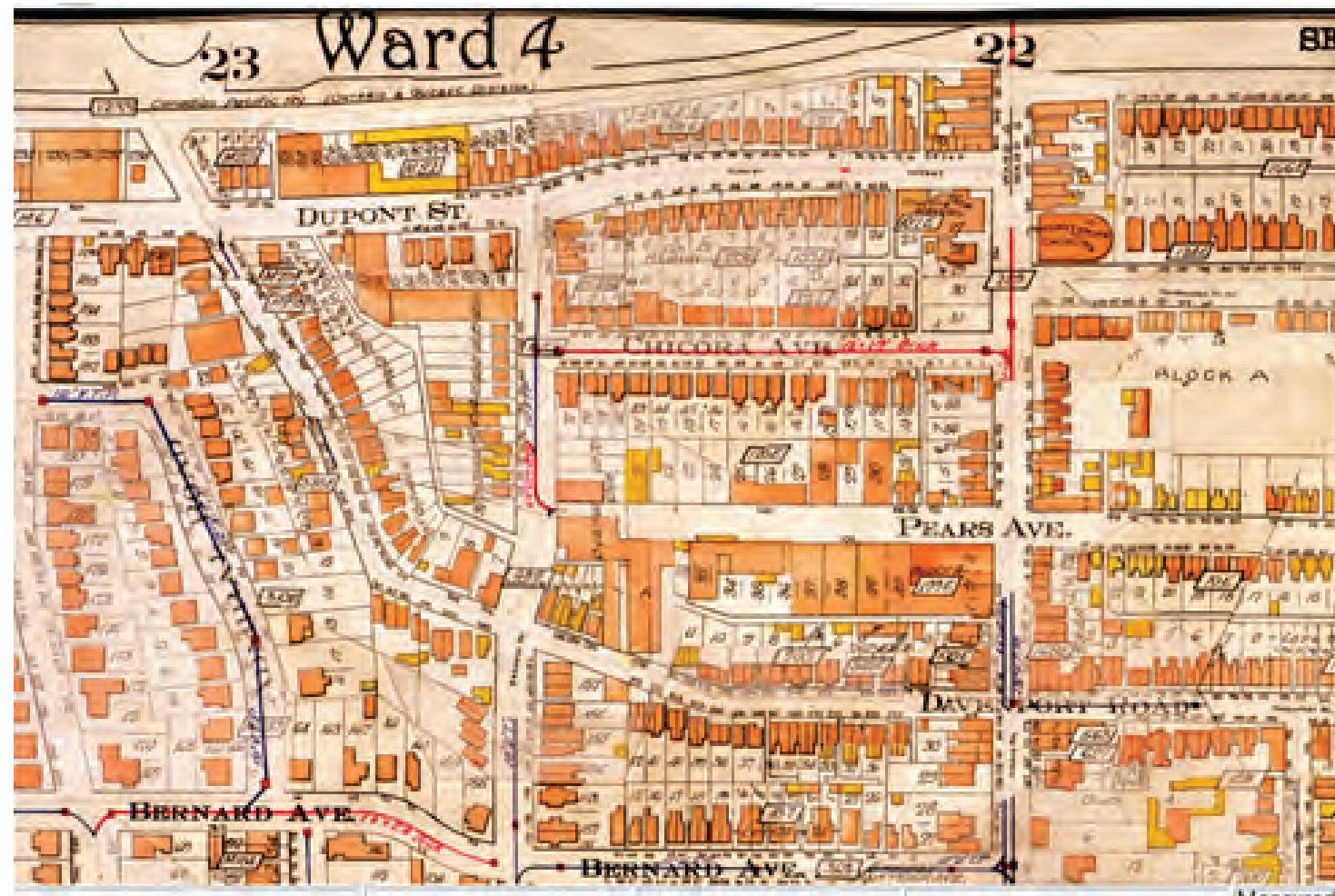


1924

Lots along Pears Ave and Avenue Rd are consolidated for larger commercial properties as seen in these photographs taken in 1930.

The area between the Hydrostation plots have now been divided into smaller plots

The TTC repair shops appear West of Bathurst, taking up nearly the entire space between Bathurst and Christie South of Dupont. This was a repair complex for its streetcar fleet.

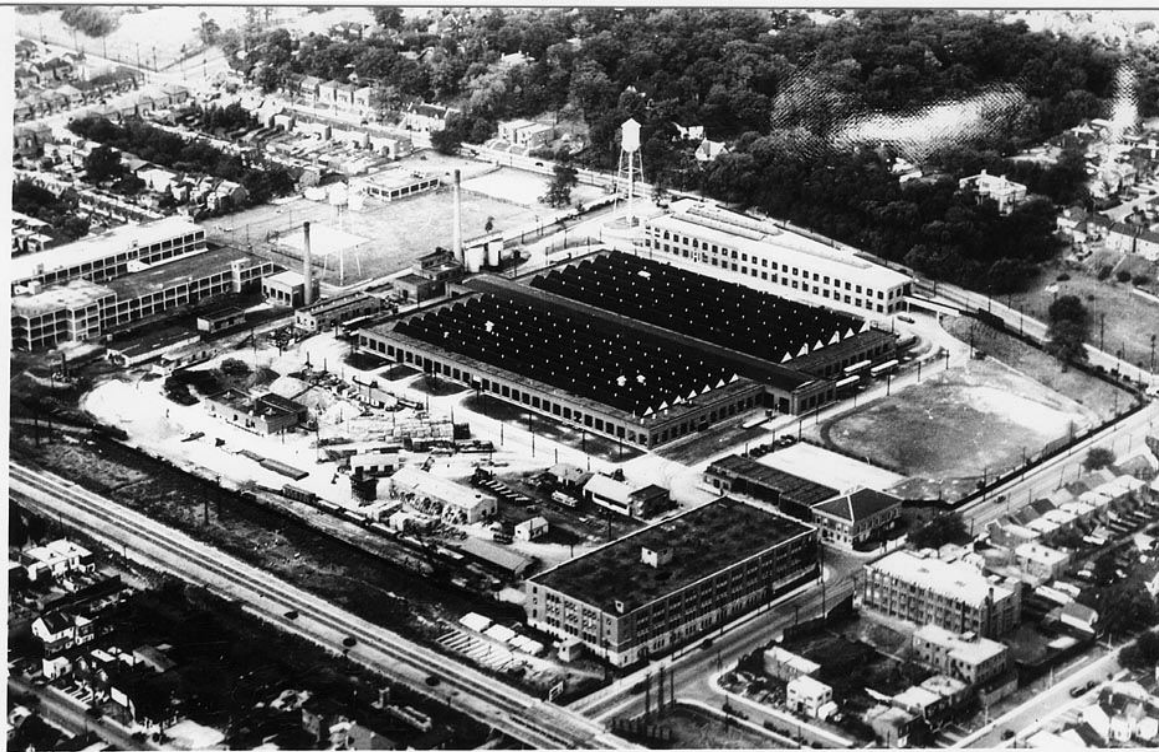


City of Toronto Archives, Series 65, s0066_r0056_id0142



City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, s0372_ss0003_it0983





July 1935
11001 T.T.C. Hillcrest Shops and Davenport Garage. Davenport Rd., and Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ont.

City of Toronto Archives, Series 372 s0372_ss0100_it0231



Road widenings

Davenport Rd

Despite the major urban development in the area, the shape of Davenport has been maintained over the years. The trail was created by Aboriginal people to avoid difficult terrain by following the base of the 13,500-year-old shoreline of Glacial Lake Iroquois. After Europeans arrived, the trail became a route for farmers to bring their goods to the city and a vital link for growing villages like Yorkville and Carlton. While the rest of downtown adopted a straight grid pattern, the old route kept its curves.

Due to greater usage of the road and the introduction of streetcars, the road was widened in 1930. Lots of buildings were removed and lots expropriated to make room for the widening, mostly at the South side of the road



8708 Davenport Road & Avenue Road special track work, looking north-east. (Way) July 13/31.

City of Toronto Archives, Series 71, s0071_it8708



8618 Davenport East from Avenue Rd. (Way) June 10th, 1931.

City of Toronto Archives, Series 71, s0071_it8618

Avenue Rd

Not much information is available regarding the Avenue Rd widening, but it can be seen from the maps and photographs that a lot of buildings, similar to the Davenport widening, were removed to make more room for the road expansion.

The road was widened in 1959 to make room for the growing use of the automobile. Previously brick-laden roads were now removed and covered in asphalt.



City of Toronto Archives, Series 65, s0065_f0034_id0005



City of Toronto Archives, Series 65, s0065_f0034_id0002

-1950

After a gap of more than two decades, aerial photos allow us to follow the urban development for the next few years.

From the 1950 aerial photos it can be seen that almost no plot of land is empty. The corridor has been fully urbanized. It is filled with manufacturing companies, residential areas and commercial strips.

The TTC complex has added a few more structures, and larger buildings are still located immediately north and south of the rail corridor.

Some of the structures that have been altered are circled in the photographs on the right.

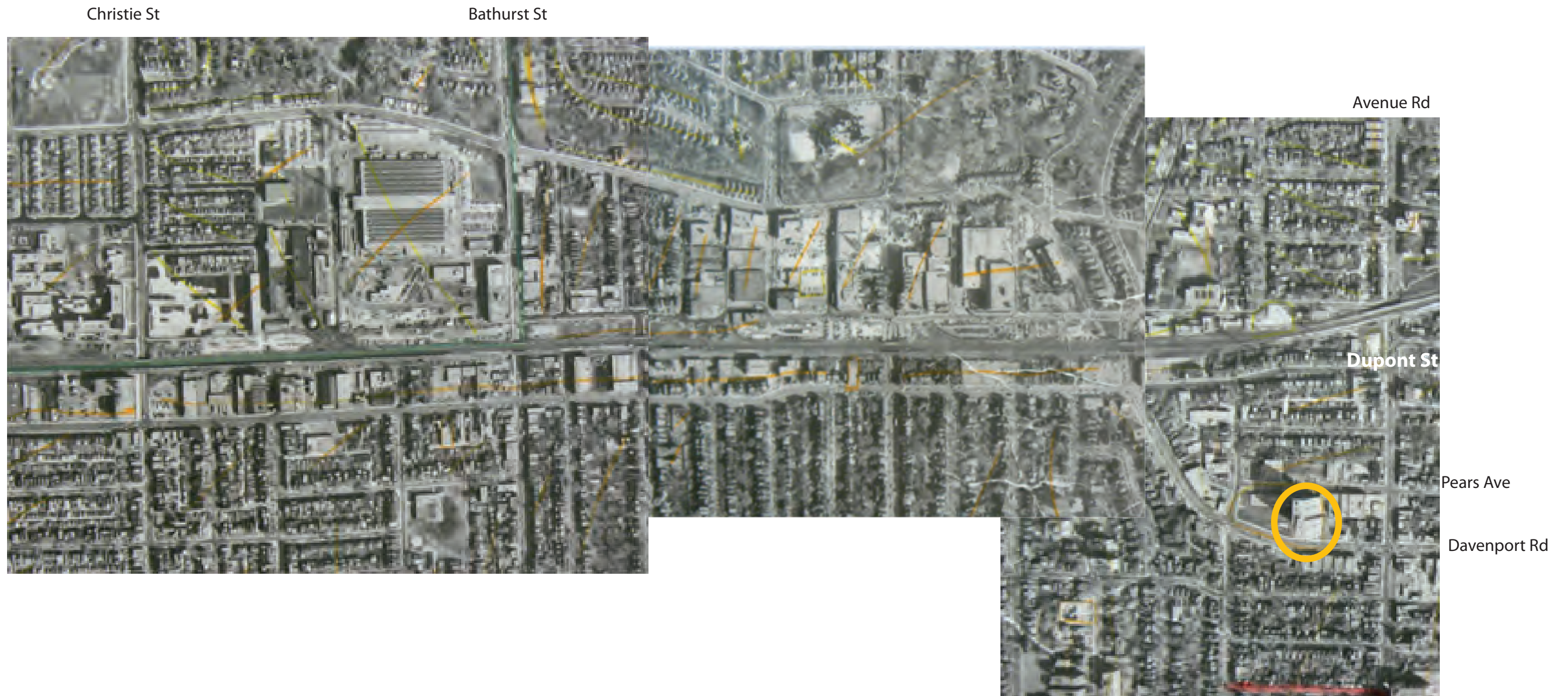


1970

By 1970, almost all of the Corridor is developed.

A new residential tower is built along Pears Avenue, and not much else has changed in the area.

The built form remains relatively consistent to this day.



Issues of Interest

High-rise development has never been common in the Corridor. The only high rise tower there right now is the residential tower at 250 Davenport, which was only introduced in 1969. Currently a 20-storey tower is being built adjacent to 250 Davenport.

The TTC lands occupy quite a large amount of space in the Corridor, although they do not have anything to do with the CPR railway lines.

Beyond the lands immediately adjacent to the rail corridor, the neighbourhoods have primarily been residential.

The railway-line creates a clear division between the north and south of the corridor. It has been historically so, and the connection between the northern and southern neighbourhood needs to be improved in order to create a greater sense of community and connectivity in the area.



Points of action

Development pressures to create condominium towers along the corridor need to be mitigated. It would only create more isolated urban forms, without proper transitioning from the 2-4 storey structures which have been the primary form of built form in the neighbourhood.

Instead, the focus of urban improvement needs to shift to improving connectivity in terms of pedestrian traffic, vehicular traffic and preservation of views and vistas to important local landmarks.

Local landmarks include the Hydro buildings, the Creeds Building (at Bedford and Davenport), Casa Loma, Mono Lino Type-setting (at Bathurst and Dupont), Queen's Club (at Hammond Place and Dupont).

The public realm needs to be improved in terms of connectivity and pedestrian amenities. Very few retail spaces and cafes line the main roads, street frontage is inconsistent, and there are no public areas for people to congregate.

The TTC's work could be relocated elsewhere, and the lands used for mid-rise, mixed-use buildings to address both the development pressures and public realm problems.