

Heritage Evaluation | Wells Hill Avenue

A potential HCD needs to be evaluated based on the criteria for determining cultural heritage value in Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Policies, Procedures and Terms of Reference in order to establish its significance and whether the area merits designation as an HCD. In addition, the area must retain enough integrity so that these values can be communicated.

Contextual Value

Criterion	Yes/No	Significance
Possesses a character that defines, maintains or supports the area’s history and sense of time and place	YES	The district has an excellent representation of early 20th century housing styles. The pitched roofs and dormers, brick cladding with stone, wood and stucco accents, front porches and expressed entrances, and 2 to 2.5 storeys create a visually cohesive historic streetscape.
Contains resources that are interrelated by design, history, use and/or setting	NO	
Is defined by, planned around, or is a landmark	NO	

Design and Physical Value

Criterion	Yes/No	Significance
Has a rare, unique, representative or early collection of a style, type, expression, materials, or construction method	YES	The houses are representative of early 20th century residential architecture styles built predominantly primarily between 1910 and 1930, namely Edwardian, Arts and Crafts, English Cottage and Bungalow. The pitched roofs and dormers, brick cladding with stone, wood and stucco accents, front porches and expressed entrances, and general solid to void 3:1 ratio create a visually cohesive and coherent historic streetscape.
Has a rare, unique, or representative layout, plan, landscape, or spatial organization	YES	The sitting of the houses on the west side of the street create a perception of communal front gardens on the north and south of Nina Street. These gardens are defined by a series of homes with consistent very deep front yard setbacks that are bookended and framed by houses built closer to the street. This layout created the two distinctive oak forested alcoves that give the street its unique character and tree canopy. The lack of sidewalks on one side of the street reinforces the perceived expanse and continuity of the front gardens.
Displays a consistently high degree of overall craftsmanship or artistic merit	YES	The houses in the district are uniquely designed large homes with a high level of craftsmanship.

Social and Community Value

Criterion	Yes/No
Yields information that contributes to the understanding of, supports, or maintains a community, culture or identity within the district	NO
Is historically and/or functionally linked to a cultural group, or organized movement or ideology that is significant to a community, plays a historic or ongoing role in the practice of recognition of religious, spiritual or sacred beliefs of a defined group of people that is significant to a community	NO

Historical and Associative Value

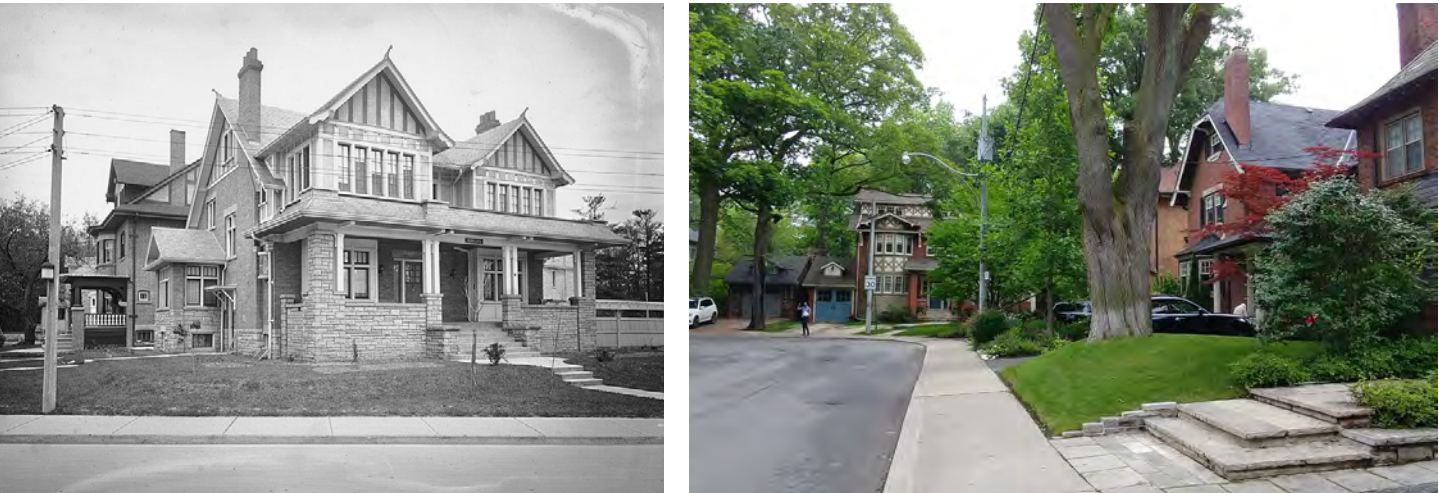
Criterion	Yes/No
Has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community	NO
Yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of the history of a community or area	NO
Demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of a planner, architect, landscape architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community	NO

Natural and Scientific Value

Criterion	Yes/No
Has a rare, unique or representative collection of significant natural resources	NO
Represents, or is a result of, a significant technical or scientific achievement	NO

Heritage Attributes

Heritage attributes are the physical, spatial and material elements within the district that convey its heritage character and that should be conserved. They include buildings, streets and open spaces that are a collective asset to the community. Heritage attributes can range from physical features, such as building materials or architectural motifs, to overall spatial patterns, such as street layout and topography.



Heritage attributes that embody the contextual value of the district include:

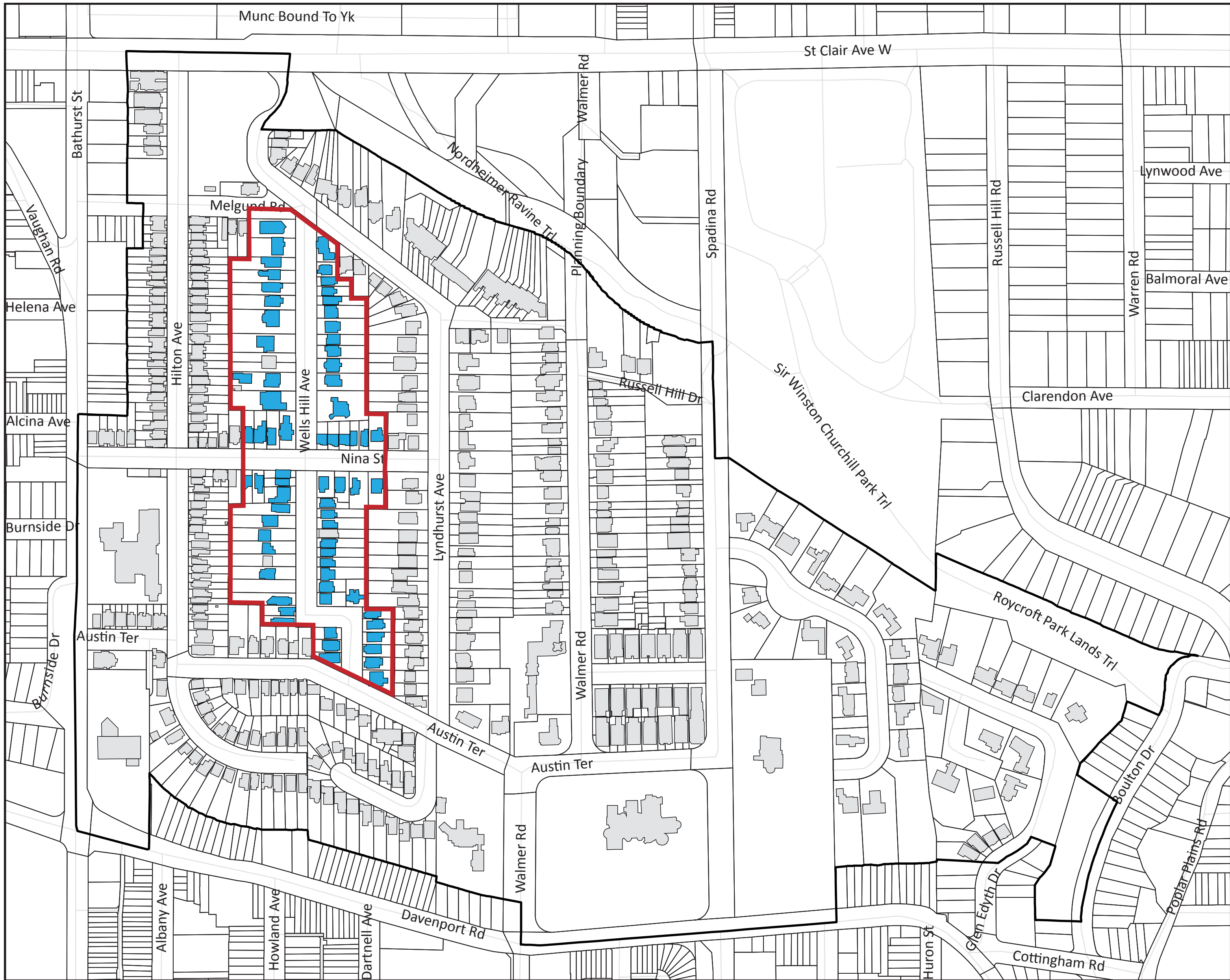
- The defined and enclosed streetscape of early 20th century homes with a high degree of authenticity and integrity.
- The historic homes set back from the street with large front gardens creating a bucolic setting

Heritage attributes that embody the design and physical values of the district include:

- The streetscape reflective of garden suburb principles with large front yard setbacks of varying depths and extensive soft landscaping
- The two garden-like settings north and south of Nina Street created by homes with very deep front yard setbacks
- The side yard setbacks that give each home a strong individual identity and reinforce the bucolic landscapes and streetscape
- The absence of sidewalks from one side of the street
- The defined streetscape enclosed at both ends
- The mature tree canopy with several rows of trees in the front yards, and rear yard trees that create a green backdrop to the houses
- The consistency of historic homes from the 1910s and 1920s that have high integrity
- The variety of early 20th century architectural styles, namely English Cottage, Arts and Craft, Edwardian and Bungalow
- The predominantly low-rise scale of houses, generally 2.5 storeys tall
- The general use of brick, with stone, stucco and wood elements, including wood half-timbers and shingles
- The gabled and hip roofs
- The strongly expressed front entrances often with projecting covered porches

CASA LOMA HCD STUDY: Open House

June 20, 2018 | 5:30pm - 8:30pm



Proposed Wells Hill Ave HCD Contributing Properties in HCDs Casa Loma HCD Study Boundary

Contributing properties

Properties within the proposed Wells Hill Avenue HCD were individually evaluated to determine whether they contribute to the area’s heritage value. Contributing properties are those that have design and contextual value that contribute to the areas heritage character. Properties were identified as contributing if they satisfied the following criteria:

- Constructed during the build out and intensification period (1900-1929);
- Is a prevailing typology;
- Is an Arts and Crafts, English Cottage, Edwardian, Edwardian Two Bay or bungalow; and/or
- Maintain their integrity and have not been significantly altered as seen from the street

Description of Historic Place

Wells Hill Avenue is the second western-most street of the residential neighbourhood of Casa Loma. It is on lands that were originally part of the Davenport estate owned by Colonel Joseph Wells. After Wells’ death in 1853, the property was divided into three narrow lots that ran from Bloor Street to St. Clair Avenue West. The middle lot was inherited by Joseph’s son Robert Wells, which he gradually subdivided and sold off. By 1910, the northern portion of Wells Hill Avenue was laid out, Nena Avenue (now Nina Street) had been extended east, and four properties were built upon. By 1924, the southern portion with the jog down to meet Theodore Avenue (now Austin Terrace) was completed, and most of the properties were built upon.

The houses on Wells Hill Avenue provide an excellent representation of early 20th century housing styles, including English Cottage, Arts and Craft, Edwardian and Bungalow. The pitched roofs and dormers, brick cladding with stone, wood and stucco accents, front porches and expressed entrances, 2 to 2.5 storeys, and general 3:1 solid to void ratio create a visually cohesive historic streetscape. The siting of the homes with their large treed front yard setbacks on the west side of the street creates the perception of unique communal garden settings with large mature tree canopies. The area is an excellent example of an early 20th century upper middle class urban street that has maintained its integrity, authenticity and coherence.

The district’s boundary includes properties on Wells Hill Avenue from Lyndhurst Avenue to Austin Terrace, and on Nina Street from addresses 2-40, and 1-41.

Cultural Heritage Value

Wells Hill Avenue’s cultural heritage value is based on its contextual, design and physical values as an excellent representation of an early 20th century upper middle class residential neighbourhood built between 1910 and 1929.

The district’s design and physical values stem from its representation of early 20th century residential architecture styles built predominantly between 1910 and 1930, namely Edwardian, Arts and Crafts, English Cottage and Bungalow. The visual cohesiveness of the historic streetscape is supported by the pitched roofs with their varying pronounced eaves and dormers; the covered front porches, expressed entrances, and bay windows that articulate the massing and facades; the general 3:1 solid to void ratio and vertically proportioned windows that create continuous datum lines; and the limited garages that are either attached, at the rear, or integrated into the massing of the house and at grade.

The consistency of the historic street character is further supported by the buildings’ cladding materials: the predominant use of brick, punctuated by stone details, half timbering and stuccoed second storeys that gives the street a cohesive material expression.

The siting of the houses underscores the unique character of the area. Two wooded garden landscapes are created by the wide front yard setbacks on the west side of the street north and south of Nina Street. The northern front yard landscape is supported on its west side by the wide lots, deep front yard setbacks, and varying side yard setbacks, which reinforce a natural and fluid garden-like setting, and is framed on the east side by the sloped and raised front gardens that directly abut the street. Both sides of the street have several irregular rows of trees that form a strong canopy. Most of the houses on the west side have front lawns which create a low green landscape interrupted by driveways, and punctuated by trees. The small sloped gardens at the east side of the street are generally planted creating a continuous raised landscape border.

The communal garden on Wells Hill Avenue south of Nina Street between 18-30 Wells Hill Avenue is a clearly defined space created by 6 properties on the west side of the street with very deep front yard setbacks. The front gardens have lawns interrupted by driveways and punctuated by trees, which, with the lack of sidewalk, create a low continuous landscape that abuts the street. The siting of these houses allowed for the preservation of the grove of oak trees, which contribute to the areas unique and distinctive character. While the front yard set backs on the east side of the street are far shallower, their trees help unify both sides of the street reinforcing the enclosed and intimate garden setting.

The extensive tree canopy defines both the streetscape and the backdrop of the houses reinforcing the natural forest like setting. Wells Hill Avenue is also defined by its termini – the jog in the street to the south ending at Austin Terrace and the angled T intersection at the north, which serve to reinforce its boundaries and contribute to a sense of enclosure.

The district has contextual value as a representative example of an early 20th century upper middle class urban neighbourhood built between 1910 and 1929. The houses on Wells Hill Avenue provide an excellent representation of early 20th century housing styles. The siting of the homes with their large treed front yard setbacks on the west side of the street creates unique communal urban forest garden settings.