SECTION 2 : plan context

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history

The Guild Park and Gardens has a long and illustrious history, which began with the parceling of land tracts for distribution to Loyalists following the American Revolutionary War. One of the property's earliest owners, William Ousterhout, while never having lived on the site, has come to be associated with the log cabin that bears his name. The Ousterhout Log Cabin has been dated back to approximately 1850 and persists to this day as one of four designated heritage buildings on the Park site.

The property changed hands many times in the 19th and early 20th century. In 1914, owner General Bickford, created the Ranelagh Park country estate on the site and built the Bickford House as a summer resort. The estate house formed the nucleus for the Guild Inn, which is now a designated cultural heritage building. In 1932 Rosa Hewetson purchased the over 450 acre property, where she married Spencer Clark. The same year, she and Spencer formed the Guild of All Arts. Inspired by the arts and crafts community at Roycroft, New York State, 'The Guild of All Arts' started as a social contribution in the depression years, providing a home and a forum for artists and artisans, where their work was created and collected for the enjoyment of many. There is still a significant public art collection on the site. The Guild of All Arts was active from 1932 until 1942 and, after the war, from 1947 until Spencer Clark's death in the 1980s. During the war the property served as a training base for the Women's Royal Naval Service, the WRENS. Later, the property became the site of military hospital, a predecessor to Toronto's Sunnybrook Hospital. During the 1950s, the Clarks sold approximately 400 acres of their property which became the Guildwood Village subdivision.

The Bickford House was sited on its large woodland property with spectacular views of Lake Ontario from the heights of the Scarborough Bluffs. The house was set well back from the Bluffs' edge with formal lawns and gardens on direct axis from the residence to the waterfront view at the Bluffs' edge. Formal lawns and gardens defined the cultivated landscape. The Bickford waterfront estate character established the visual character that park users experience today. Large forested areas flank the Bickford Estate landscape on the east and west sides.



View of Bickford House and an event tent, 2000



View of the main garden walk, 2000

Left - Polar Bear by E.B. Cox, assisted by Michael Clay, 2018



View of the main garden walk and swan fountain, 2000



View of Bickford House, 2000

Spencer Clark was an advocate for architectural preservation and heritage. He salvaged important sculptural elements from 19th and early 20th century buildings that were demolished in Toronto and neighbouring communities. They were re-erected in the park setting where they now form part of an extensive heritage collection. The estate landscape and its evolution during the Guild of All Arts period comprise its cultural heritage value, as described in the Culture/ Heritage section of this Plan.

The Clarks were actively engaged with natural heritage and shoreline protection work during their years at The Guild. Interestingly, their work on shoreline protection, natural heritage preservation and trail construction echoes key issues for Guild Park & Gardens today. Spencer Clark's work on shoreline protection and stabilization using sunken structures filled with ballast as groynes to slow erosion at the bottom of the Bluffs opposite the main building was an early forerunner to work by TRCA. In the 1960s Spencer Clark built a roadway down the ravine to permit access to the beach. The Clarks were aware that their property contained an important and rare tract of Carolinian forest. In 1985 a consulting firm recommended that the forest be preserved as an Environmentally Significant Area.

During the Clarks' residency on the property, a number of buildings were constructed in the forested natural heritage areas, adjacent to the manicured park, including Cory Cliff Lodge, Duncan Barn, numerous cottages and administrative buildings, such as Building 191.

TRCA purchased the property in 1978 and the City of Toronto has a long term lease with TRCA to operate the site as a public park (Management Plan, 2014). Following the death of the Clarks in the 1980s the Guild Inn went into decline, closed in 2002, and was shuttered for a period of time between 2012 and 2017. In 2013 Dynamic Hospitality and Entertainment Group received approval by the City of Toronto to move forward with significant renovations to the Inn, including the demolition of building wings and the construction of two new extensions. In 2017 the Guild Inn Estate was reopened as an event venue and banquet hall.

project context

In recognition of the importance of this park, and the need to preserve and enhance the features within it, the City of Toronto adopted the Guild Park and Gardens Management Plan in 2014. Establishing a set of eight visionary pillars, the Management Plan outlines the rich history of the site, the planning context that it is situated in, as well as the existing conditions, issues, and recommendations for the site's natural heritage, cultural heritage, horticulture, and trails.

As a result of the recommendations made in the Management Plan, the City published the Trails Master Plan for the Guild Park and Gardens (2018). The Trails Master Plan revisits the existing conditions and issues present throughout the site, through the lens of trails management and enhancement. The Trails Master Plan proposed a series of trail closures, upgrades, potential new routes, and opportunities for furnishings, gathering spots, and lookouts.

The Horticulture Plan builds upon a series of projects and plans that address the site in particular, or impacts aspects of the site as part of a city-wide initiative. As such, the Plan takes into consideration the impact of these projects in order to limit conflict and to realize the goals already established for the Park and Gardens.

GUILD PARK AND GARDENS MANAGEMENT PLAN (2014)

The Guild Park and Gardens Management Plan was a catalyzing document that suggested the preparation of a horticulture plan for the Park and Gardens. The Management Plan presented an in-depth review of existing conditions and the policy context of the site, and established a vision statement for the site, as well as a framework of eight pillars for achieving it.

The Management Plan outlines the key issues, goals, and implementation strategies for enhancing the themes of natural heritage, cultural heritage, horticulture, and trails throughout the site. A series of four priority actions are proposed by the Management Plan, which are to,

- 1. Enhance cultural heritage landscape structure through horticulture;
- 2. Enhance horticultural display quality;
- 3. Improve amenities: walkways and seating; and,
- 4. Create a lighting master plan.

The Management Plan also identifies the primary issues regarding horticulture throughout the site, as well as establishes a series of guidelines, key initiatives, and priority actions. These issues and recommendations serve as the foundation for this Plan.



Cover of the Guild Park and Gardens Management Plan



Cover of the Trails Master Plan for the Guild Park and Gardens

TRAILS MASTER PLAN FOR THE GUILD PARK & GARDENS (2018)

A major recommendation of the Management Plan was the creation of a Trails Master Plan to address future trail work, including maintenance, closures, and upgrades, throughout the Park and Gardens. The Trails Master Plan contains a focused analysis of the physical conditions impacting circulation throughout the site, including trail quality, safety, and priority. It also outlines recommendations for future trail work, including route revisions, closures, surface treatments, and furnishing strategies. The Trails Master Plan identifies the manicured area of the property as a priority area, and suggests the expansion of the path system in this zone, as well as the enhancement of the surface treatment to be unit paving in place of the existing screenings surface.

The Trails Master Plan calls for several improvements that impact the highly-used cultural grounds, often referred to as the Monument Walk and Gardens. The proposed pathway treatment for the gardens area reinforced the central walkway as a primary formal route and organizing element for the manicured area. It also introduces two formalized arching pathways that run east-west to connect the new event/banquet faculties and parking area. The Trails Master Plan also identifies a lighting strategy for the gardens area, which involves lining the central walkway and new east-west connections with landscape light bollards. The proposed works for this area are intended to formalize and enhance the area that sees the highest levels of activity, including community events, photography, and theatre performances, as well the greatest assemblage of sculptures and architectural artifacts.



Parking Lot and Banquet Hall Planting Plan by the MBTW Group

PARKING LOT AND BANQUET HALL PLANTING (2015)

The MBTW Group

As part of the construction of the new banquet facilities at the Guild Inn Estate a landscape plan was prepared that addressed the exterior of the new building extensions and the expanded parking area. The plans call for a palette of decorative native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous materials. Additionally, restoration planting was completed for all disturbed areas, including along the edge of the natural area, which drew on the species already present in that area.

The plantings proposed by the MBTW Group were considered during the planting design phase of this Plan. Where appropriate these plantings will remain unaltered.

PLANTING DESIGN FOR RELOCATED MONUMENTS (2016)

Eguchi and Associates Landscape Architects

In 2015 nineteen monuments collected by Rosa and Spencer Clark were relocated within the Park to form what is now known as the Monument Walk. To complement and enhance this work a series of small gardens, dominated by native plant species, were also installed. The gardens were designed and placed in order to create a backdrop for displaying the relocated architectural artifacts and sculptures. Also provided was a narrative for storytelling to interpret the relationship between the artifacts and the new garden beds.



Planting design for relocated monuments

The proposed plantings outlined by this plan were considered during the planting design phase of this Plan. Where appropriate these plantings will remain unaltered.

CLARK CENTRE FOR THE ARTS (SCHEDULED FALL 2020)

Taylor Hazell Architects and PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

Building 191, a two-storey concrete and steel structure clad in architectural relics, was built designed by architect J.H.W. Bradfield and built by the Clarks in 1963 to house office spaces and storage. As part of the works on the Guild Inn Estate. Building 191 is set to undergo significant rehabilitation and renovation to transform it into a community arts and culture facility.

In conjunction with the renovation of Building 191, extensive landscaping work will be completed immediately surrounding the new arts and culture facility. The proposed design features a small plaza at the north side of the building, as well as extensive woody and herbaceous planting beds. These planting beds will remain unaltered by the recommendations of the Plan.

MONUMENT GARDENS LIGHTING UPGRADES (2018)

As part of the enhancement works occurring in the Monument Gardens area of the Guild Park and Gardens site, bollard lighting was installed along the central walk and access to the eastern parking lot. The lighting was designed to improve wayfinding and visibility during the evening, especially during events and theatre performances. This proposed lighting plan will be considered in the recommendations for any garden layout changes.



Building 191, site of the future Clark Centre for the Arts



Lighting layout (Trails Master Plan, 2018)



Cover of the Toronto Pollinator Protection Strategy

TORONTO POLLINATOR PROTECTION STRATEGY (2018)

In 2018 the City of Toronto introduced the Pollinator Protection Strategy in an effort to protect the more than 360 species of bees, and more than 100 species of butterflies and other pollinators that contribute to the resiliency of the city's ecosystem and enhance urban biodiversity. The Strategy provides information on the pollinators found in the city and the benefit that they provide to the urban ecosystem, and the threats that they face. Guiding principles provide the framework for the strategy, and actions to be taken by the community and the City to protect pollinator populations.

The priority actions proposed by the Strategy include 1) creating and enhancing habitat, 2) designing and connecting green spaces, 3) partnering and building relationships, 4) investing and incentivizing action, 5) educating and training, and 6) celebrating and recognizing achievements. The recommendations of this Strategy influenced the plant palettes outlined in this Horticulture Plan.



Cover of the Guild Cultural Precinct Plan

THE GUILD CULTURAL PRECINCT PLAN (2009)

The Guild Cultural Precinct Report: Facility and Site Plan Development and Management Study was undertaken by Goldsmith, Borgal & Company Ltd Architects with Artscape, MBTW Group, and Novita in 2009. At that time, a proposal was put forward for an environmentally sensitive hotel development on the site. The City of Toronto contracted with a consultant team to conduct a feasibility study for a new cultural heritage precinct on the 36 hectares of the Guild Park that were not part of the proposed hotel development.

The report proposed the creation of a cultural precinct to re-establish The Guild of All Arts as a prominent centre for the arts. The concepts presented in the report included a sculpture park sited in the existing forest landscape, festival gardens, formal gardens, garden rooms, artisan studios, exhibition space, the revitalized Greek Theatre, and a visitor's centre. The Precinct Plan was an early culturally-focused vision and ideas document, the recommendations of which did not advance beyond the next phase of review, due to natural heritage considerations and budget limitations. The cultural precinct that is proceeding will consist of Building 191 Arts and Culture Centre (Clark Centre for the Arts), which includes studio, gallery, and artist residency spaces within it, and the renovation of the two on-site cabins along with the evolving monument walk. The recommendations of the Horticulture Plan will appropriately consider these limitations while incorporating the key elements of the Precinct Plan.

The cultural precinct also consists of Building 191 Arts and Culture Centre (Clark Centre for the Arts), which includes studio, gallery, and artist residency spaces within it, and the renovation of the two on-site cabins and the evolving monument walk.

PARKS PLAN 2013-2017

The City of Toronto's 'Parks Plan 2013-2017', by Parks, Forestry & Recreation, is a high-level policy document, which will guide the delivery of parks services over the next five years. The four key themes examined in the report include: communicating and connecting with others, preserving and promoting nature, maintaining quality parks, and improving system planning. A number of trends in parks are noted, among them are: increasing competition for limited park space, drinking fountains, washrooms, and community involvement. Another trend of note is the increasing involvement of partners and volunteers in parks.

The Parks Plan also identifies several trends that have implications for the manicured areas of the property, including the high demand for horticulture, community shade, and gardens.

For further information, the full plan is available on the City of Toronto website.

PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY

There is a process in place for the Parks, Forestry & Recreation division to partner with advocacy groups. The Partnership Development Unit helps grassroots community groups with their fundraising projects. There is an active advocacy group working to enhance the Guild Park and Gardens - the Friends of Guild Park and Gardens. This Group was engaged as part of the development of this Plan, and will be involved with the execution of some of the recommendations of the Plan.



Cover of the Parks Plan

RAVINE & NATURAL FEATURE PROTECTION BY-LAW

The purpose of the Ravine and Natural Feature Protection (RNFP) Bylaw is to promote the management, protection and conservation of ravines and associated natural and woodland areas and to prohibit and regulate the injury and destruction of trees. The By-law also prohibits filling, grading, and dumping in ravine lands that are not subject to the TRCA fill regulation. Schedule A of the By-law identifies the areas to which the By-law applies.

The RNFP section of Urban Forestry administers the By-law. Any project or initiative, of any scale, that entails disturbance of a tree or disturbance within the minimum required tree protection zone (TPZ), requires a permit from Urban Forestry. RNFP also ensures that site restoration is implemented in alignment with the principles and guidelines set out in the City's Strategic Forest Management Plan. For additional information the full By-law is available online and can be easily found by searching with the title.

The majority of the Guild Park and Gardens lands is protected under this By-law with the exception of a large section in the part of the site where the existing buildings and formal gardens are located. This manicured portion of the site is the subject of this Plan, but recommendations will ensure that the adjacent natural lands are not negatively impacted.

BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY (FORTHCOMING)

The aim of Toronto's first Biodiversity Strategy is to increase the quality and quantity of natural habitat within the City in order to support healthier, more robust biodiversity and increase access to and awareness of nature. It is intended to address challenges to biodiversity in Toronto such as loss of habitat and connections, loss of species, invasive species, climate change and impacts from humans and pets. The Strategy is intended to position Toronto as one of the leaders in conserving urban biodiversity.

The draft Strategy was developed in collaboration with the Parks Forestry and Recreation Division (PFR), the Environment and Energy Division and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). Input to the Strategy has also been received through work on the Biodiversity Series and the May 2017 former Chief Planner Roundtable on Biodiversity from the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), universities, environmental groups, biodiversity experts and citizen scientists.

CITY TREE BY-LAW AND PRIVATE TREE BY-LAW

The purpose of the City Tree By-law and the Private Tree By-law is to regulate the removal or injury of trees, not located in ravine lands, that are 30cm in diameter or larger, and to ensure replacement plantings are planned to support the City's urban forest expansion goals. In Guild Park & Gardens, these by-laws apply to the large section in the east part of the site where the existing buildings and formal gardens are located. Under these by-laws, any project or initiative, of any scale, that entails disturbance of a tree(s) or disturbance within the minimum required Tree Protection Zone (TPZ), requires a permit from Urban Forestry. For further information the full By-law is available online and can be easily found by searching with the title.

TRCA & CITY OF TORONTO MANAGEMENT AGREEMENTS (1967, 1972)

The 'Memorandum of Agreement made this 11th day of October, 1972 between The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto' delineates the responsibilities (updated from 1961) of The Authority and Metro in acquiring and developing flood plain and conservation lands for park and recreational purposes. The Authority is the designated implementing agency for the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Waterfront Plan, 1970. Per the agreement, The Authority is to acquire the lands and prepare master plans and, when approved by Metro, carry out development. Metro retains the responsibility to maintain the lands for parks, recreation and conservation. Any plans for subsequent development must be approved by The Authority. No permanent buildings are to be erected without consent from The Authority, and The Authority retains control of shoreline management and protection against erosion. City of Toronto now assumes all management responsibilities outlined for Metropolitan Toronto as part of these agreements.



View of the Guild Inn and swan fountain, 2000

ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT

The Guild Park and Gardens is protected under provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act. The former City of Scarborough recognized the cultural heritage value of the Ousterhout Cabin and passed By-Law No. 19126 designating this structure on July 21, 1980. Toronto City Council enacted By-law No. 266-1999 further enhancing the protection of the property by recognizing the significance of the Guild Inn, and the surrounding architectural fragments and sculpture. In 2005 Council amended this By-law to include the Sculpture Studio and Building 191. At the recommendation of City Planning Staff, the existing heritage by-laws have been consolidated into a single by-law that includes all of the heritage attributes on this property. This was approved by Council August 25-28, 2014. These heritage attributes are present throughout the subject area, and will not be negatively impacted as a result of the recommendations of this Plan.

TORONTO ESA STUDY (2012)

A city-wide Environmentally Significant Area (ESA) assessment was undertaken, the result of which established much of the Guild Park and Gardens property as an ESA (ESA #35). The study concluded that there exists many areas of high quality vegetation throughout the site, including 11 significant flora species and 4 significant vegetations communities. Also identified on site are marsh and swamp communities, whose ecological functions contribute to the health of the ecosystem. As ESA's these vegetation communities and landforms are to be protected. This includes the ongoing removal of invasive species and the retention of woody debris on site.

CITY STRATEGIC FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN (2013)

The Forest Management Plan establishes a 10-year and long term vision for the city's urban trees, including a series of strategic goals, which address increasing canopy cover, achieving a more equitable distribution, increasing biodiversity, increasing awareness, promoting stewardship, and improving monitoring.

The Management Plan identifies Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) as the number one health threat facing Toronto forests. The damage inflicted by this threat is easily visible throughout the Guild Park and Gardens property, which has lost approximately 25% of canopy cover as a result. Canopy cover is a key focus of the Management Plan, with the city-wide goal set at 40%. The Park and Gardens likewise is subject to this goal, and presents an opportunity for increasing canopy cover.

THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC PLACES IN CANADA

In 2008 Toronto City Council adopted the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada as the official document guiding planning, stewardship and conservation approach for all listed and designated heritage resources within the City of Toronto. As the Guild Park and Gardens is designated, decisions relating to its ongoing and long term maintenance should be consistent with the Standards and Guidelines.



study methodology

Prior to the establishment of a horticultural vision or recommendations extensive study was conducted to ascertain an understanding of existing conditions, issues, opportunities, and needs for the site. The analysis involved site investigations and stakeholder consultation.

The site inventory and analysis builds upon the findings of the Management Plan. The existing horticulture, natural heritage, cultural heritage, and hydrological conditions were determined through site inspection and discussion with professionals familiar with the property. The findings of this study are illustrated in the maps to follow.

In addition to site inventory and analysis extensive stakeholder engagement was undertaken. A series of four progress meetings were held with the City of Toronto team to review and discuss the findings of the analysis phase and recommendations for future horticultural work. Additionally, a presentation was given to the Guild Resource Group, who provided feedback during the preliminary phase of design, and a public meeting was held, which provided key stakeholders and community members an opportunity to review and provide comment on the conceptual landscape plan and planting scheme.



Presentation panels at the Public Meeting



Site visit to the site in spring, 2018



Ornamental gardens south of the Guild Inn Estate buildings.



Ornamental gardens along the main garden walk.

LEGEND

- --- Assessed Stable Slope Line
- Property Line
- Limit of Study
- Manicured Lawn
- Garden Beds
- Garden Beds Maintained by Guild Inn EstateHistoric Garden Beds
-) Existing Deciduous Tree
- Existing Coniferous Tree

inventory & analysis

HORTICULTURAL FEATURES

A key attraction to the property, and the focus of this study, are the manicured park and property's horticultural display gardens. The current layout of the lawns and gardens has it's origins in the former Bickford Estate, and became an integral part of the Guild of All Arts heritage landscape structure. The park and gardens accent and highlight the Guild Inn Estate building and the heritage landscape structure, especially the formal gardens lining the main garden walkway. Horticultural display beds and ornamental planters enhance the entry. Open lawn areas at the north entrance to the Guild Inn provide a staging area for sculptures and heritage artifacts. A heritage walkway traverses the front lawn and passes under the Bankers Bond Building columns that frame views looking toward the Guild Inn.

Lining the axial walkway that leads from the Guild Inn rear terrace south toward the Bluffs are garden beds, a favorite destination and a draw for both amateur and professional photographers. The manicured park and gardens area has become a favourite destination for permitted wedding photographs. The cultural grounds south of the Inn also serve as a sculpture park, with artifacts and public art works from the Rosa and Spencer Clark collection sited throughout. The former fountain located midway along the north-south walkway has been repurposed as a planting bed due to water damage to the limestone swan centerpiece. The planting beds are predominantly herbaceous, with shrubs and ornamental trees dotted throughout. The gardens feature formal, straight edges that respond to the pathways or architectural elements they parallel. The plant species are mixed, the product of years of gradual replacement and adaptation.

The Park/Horticulture map indicates the location of former historic garden beds at the front of the Guild Inn and along the east-west walkway that leads to the second major axial north-south route, which passes designated Heritage Building 191. The open lawn areas west of the central garden provide open space in relation to Heritage Building 191 and along the second heritage walkway, which runs north-south past Building 191. Some areas of open lawn function as staging areas for parks maintenance operations, such as the lawn near Building 191.

