

JANE FINCH CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

FINAL
MAY 29, 2024



PREPARED FOR
HERITAGE PLANNING
CITY PLANNING DIVISION
CITY OF TORONTO

COMMON
BOND
COLLECTIVE



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Cover Image: Mural at 292 Grandravine Drive (*CBCollective 2022*).

JANE FINCH CHRA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on research, consultation, field survey, analysis and evaluation, the Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) makes the following recommendations to conserve, commemorate, and interpret the cultural heritage values identified in this CHRA. The recommendations reflect the various approaches, tools, and legislation that have been considered as the most effective means to conserve the study area's diverse cultural heritage values.

The CHRA recommends the following properties as meriting inclusion on the Heritage Register:

- Driftwood Community Centre (4401 Jane Street)
- York Woods Public Library (1785 Finch Avenue West)
- Former Yorkwoods Community Centre (20 Yorkwoods Gate)

The CHRA also recommends the following properties as requiring further research:

- Yorkwoods Village
- Edgeley Village

Finally, the CHRA recommends a study of the 'Tower-in-the-Park' typology to better understand the defining characteristics of the type within the context of Toronto. The study should provide a basis for understanding where potential heritage values lie within these sites, how to best identify significant examples, and how they can most appropriately be conserved.

Detailed recommendations are located in Section 10.0 of the CHRA.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CULTURAL HERITAGE RESOURCE ASSESSMENTS (CHRAs)

City of Toronto Heritage Planning uses CHRAs to document and analyze an area's history and ensure that properties of potential cultural heritage value or interest are appropriately identified, understood and conserved.

This CHRA includes: an explanation of the relevant heritage and planning policy frameworks (Section 2); a description of the community consultation process (Section 3); the CHRA methodology (Section 4); the historic evolution of the Jane Finch area (Section 5); an analysis of themes (Section 6) and building types (Section 7); summary Historic Context Statement (HCS) (Section 8); identification of properties with heritage potential (Section 9); recommendations (Section 10) and sources (Section 11). Archaeology was not included in the scope of work for the CHRA.

In July 2021, Heritage Planning engaged Common Bond Collective to prepare the Jane Finch Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA). The CHRA is being undertaken as part of, and coordinated with, the Jane Finch Initiative. The consultant team for the CHRA was composed of David Deo (BA, Dipl. Heritage Conservation, CAHP) and Ellen Kowalchuk (MA, CAHP), both partners at Common Bond Collective.

1.2 JANE FINCH INITIATIVE

The Jane Finch CHRA has been completed as part of the larger Jane Finch Initiative and has been coordinated with several aspects of the initiative including the Secondary Plan, Urban Design Guidelines and Community Development Plan.

In anticipation of transit investment and the potential for growth and change in the area, several City Divisions are collaborating on a community planning exercise in the area. The aim of the Jane Finch Initiative is to develop an integrated plan for the Jane Finch area that advances social equity and economic inclusion for current and future residents, encourages the appropriate kinds of growth and development in the area, and guides investment in community improvements.

The Jane Finch Initiative will update the land use planning framework for the area with Official Plan policies and zoning to shape the development of a transit-supportive complete community. A Community Development Plan will also be produced which will guide change and growth in the community and advance initiatives to enhance social cohesion, community safety, inclusive economic opportunities and stronger neighbourhoods. The updated land use planning framework and the community development plan are companion documents that are intended to work in tandem.

1.3 JANE FINCH CHRA STUDY AREA

The boundaries of the Jane Finch CHRA study area align with Neighbourhood 24 - Black Creek, and Neighbourhood 25 - Glenfield-Jane Heights. The study area is bounded by Steeles Avenue West (north); Black Creek (east); Sheppard Avenue West (south) and Highway 400 (west) and is approximately 8.75 km² in size (Figure 1). The study area covers portions of Concessions IV (Lots 17 to 25) and V (Lots 17 to 25). Concession IV is bounded by Keele and Jane streets and Concession V is bounded by Jane Street and Weston Road. Major east-west roads in the study area are Steeles and Finch avenues.

The study area is characterized by residential use, both in single family and multi-unit residential buildings constructed between the 1960s and 1980s. Light industrial use is located on Norfinch Drive/Oakdale Road and on Eddystone Avenue. The Finch Hydro Corridor runs east-west through the study area between Norfinch Drive and Black Creek and features a recreational trail. Black Creek defines the eastern boundary of the CHRA study area. It is a tributary of the Humber River and a major natural feature of the study area. Other green spaces include the Black Creek Parklands, Derrydowns and Hullmar parks.

The study area contains two properties on the Heritage Register: 4504 Jane Street (Jane Junior High School) and 4929 Jane Street (Black Creek Pioneer Village).

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The CHRA began with an in-depth review of primary and secondary sources to inform an understanding of the study area's history and the evolution of its built form. In addition to books and archival plans, aerial photography was relied upon in conjunction with contemporary planning documents, architectural trade journals, and registered subdivision plans. A detailed list of sources is provided in Section 11.0 Sources.

In summer and fall of 2021 the consultants undertook several preliminary windshield surveys to document and understand the study area's natural features, urban morphology, and built environment. Two Heritage Focus Group (HFG) meetings were held during fall 2021 to introduce the study, gather additional research sources, and identify community interests or values that were relevant to the study. The consultants attended a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting in January 2022.

The preceding research, engagement and fieldwork informed the development of a draft Historic Context Statement (HCS), summarizing the historical evolution of the study area with reference to significant themes and the built form that developed in the various periods of development. The draft HCS was reviewed by Heritage Planning and revised by the consultant.

Development of the draft HCS was followed by detailed field review between March and June 2022. The purpose of this fieldwork was to review the entire study area, and

based on research and the draft HCS identify any properties with the potential to have cultural heritage value or interest. Such properties were documented and flagged for followup research and analysis, based on their potential design, historical or contextual values, or additional research required.

A database was developed to help track flagged properties and field review findings. A database of individual properties would be difficult to track, given the roughly 6,000 properties in the study area. Instead a simplified database was created: large sites and developments were individually identified, but smaller houses and industrial facilities were grouped into larger entries based on their streets or subdivision plans.

To organize and provide structure, the study area was divided into the three zones ('N' - North; 'P' - Secondary Plan; and 'S' - South), with each zone having numbered sub-areas (ie. N.5, P.3 and S.2). Within each sub-area, individual properties or groupings were identified by another number which was identified on a master plan (ie. N.5-3; P.3-7 and S.2-5). These individual properties and groupings were then transferred into a digital database file, containing 218 individual entries, across 18 sub-areas within the three zones.

The database was used to track fieldwork progress and flagged properties, and as an important working repository for information. Data such as date of construction, architect and related archival sources was stored in the database, in addition to community engagement comments pertaining to individual properties. In total 71 database entries were flagged for followup research and analysis.

Following field review of the entire study area, additional research was carried out on flagged properties, typically to identify the architect and comments from community engagement inputted into the database. This resulted in a refined list of 40 properties to be screened for inclusion on the city's Heritage Register. These properties and their potential merits were reviewed and discussed with Heritage Planning.

To complement the physical analysis undertaken through the Historic Context Statement, Heritage Planning commissioned a social history of the Study Area and provided it to the consultants in Fall 2023. The piece, entitled *It Happened Here: Places of Community Organizing and Activism in Jane-Finch*, was written by long-time resident and community activist Wanda MacNevin. It is informed by over 40 years experience working and volunteering with local community organizations, including interviews and documents collected over that time. *It Happened Here* provides a history of community organizing and activism in the Jane Finch area, with a focus on specific community groups, organizations and initiatives, as well as the facilities and spaces they inhabited. It is included as Appendix A of this report.

The consultants reviewed *It Happened Here* as an important source of information, and its findings on community organizing and activism were integrated into the history and thematic sections of the CHRA. It also provided additional information on which

properties had potential heritage value related to these themes, and the list of flagged properties was adjusted accordingly. Around the same time Heritage Planning also provided feedback on the HCS, which resulted in new sections providing specific analysis of select themes and development types being added to the report.

Following refinements to the list of flagged properties, the consultants engaged in another round of consultations focused on flagged properties and potential recommendations. The HFG was consulted twice and the CAC once more in Fall 2023.

These short-listed properties were then screened for their potential to meet two or more criteria¹ in O. Reg. 9/06 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA). This process identified a number of properties meriting inclusion on the Heritage Register (see Section 10.1), as well as several larger sites recommended for further study (see Section 10.2). Several other recommendations reflect the CHRA's analysis and additional findings (see Sections 10.3 & 10.4).

¹ Given recent changes to the OHA requiring two 9/06 criteria to be met to qualify for designation under section 29, it was determined to use this threshold for identifying properties with heritage potential through the CHRA.

2.0 HERITAGE AND PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT

The *Ontario Heritage Act* (OHA) is the key piece of legislation for the conservation of cultural heritage resources in the province. Among other things, it regulates how municipal councils can identify and protect heritage resources including archaeological sites within their boundaries.

The OHA permits municipal clerks to maintain a register of properties that are of cultural heritage value or interest. The City of Toronto's Heritage Register includes: individual properties that have been designated under Section 29(1) of the OHA; properties in a heritage conservation district designated under Section 41(1) of the OHA; and properties that have not been designated, but that City Council believes to be of cultural heritage value or interest under Subsection 27(1.3) of the OHA.

The OHA includes nine criteria that are used for determining cultural heritage value or interest (O. Reg. 0/9):

1. The property has design value or physical value because it is a rare, unique, representative or early example of a style, type, expression, material or construction method.
2. The property has design value or physical value because it displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit.
3. The property has design value or physical value because it demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.
4. The property has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community.
5. The property has historical value or associative value because it yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture.
6. The property has historical value or associative value because it demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.
7. The property has contextual value because it is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area.
8. The property has contextual value because it is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings.
9. The property has contextual value because it is a landmark.

A property may be included on a heritage register under subsection 27(3) of the OHA if it meets one or more of these criteria. In order to be designated under subsection 29(1) of the OHA, a property must meet two or more criteria.

The Ontario Heritage Act can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o18>

2.2 THE PLANNING ACT

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 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan) and shall be consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), both of which position heritage as a key component in supporting key provincial principles and interests.

The Planning Act can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>

2.2.1 PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT

Conservation of cultural heritage resources is an integral component of good planning, contributing to a sense of place, economic prosperity, health and equitable communities. Heritage conservation in Ontario is identified as a provincial interest under the *Planning Act*. Cultural heritage resources are considered assets that should be wisely protected and managed as part of planning for future growth under the PPS.

Section 2.6 pertaining to Cultural Heritage and Archaeology states that “Significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved (Section 2.6.1).”

Significant means: “in regard to cultural heritage and archaeology, resources that have been determined to have cultural heritage value or interest. Process and criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest are established by the Province under the authority of the Ontario Heritage Act.

Built heritage resource: means a building, structure, monument, installation or any manufactured or constructed part or remnant that contributes to a property's cultural heritage value or interest as identified by a community, including an Indigenous community. Built heritage resources are located on property that may be designated under Parts IV or V of the Ontario Heritage or that may be included on local, provincial, federal and/or international registers.

Conserved: means the identification, protection, management and use of *built heritage resources, cultural heritage landscapes and archaeological resources* in a manner that ensures their cultural heritage value or interest is retained. This may be achieved by the implementation of recommendations set out in a conservation plan, archaeological assessment, and/or heritage impact assessment that has been approved, accepted or adopted by the relevant planning authority and/or decision-maker. Mitigation measures and/or alternative development approaches can be included in these plans and assessments.

Protected heritage property: means property designated under Parts IV, V or VI of the Ontario Heritage Act; property subject to a heritage conservation easement under Parts II or IV of the Ontario Heritage Act; property identified by the Province and prescribed public bodies as provincial heritage property under the Standards and Guidelines for Conservation of Provincial Heritage Properties; property protected under federal legislation, and UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The Provincial Policy Statement can be found at: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/provincial-policy-statement-2020>

2.3 CITY OF TORONTO OFFICIAL PLAN

2.3.1 HERITAGE POLICIES

The City of Toronto 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. Section 3.1.5 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."

The heritage policies of the Official Plan not only promote the preservation of important heritage buildings and structures but also the public views of them for the enjoyment of Torontonians. The Official Plan recognizes that "as Toronto continues to grow and intensify this growth must be recognized and balanced with the ongoing conservation of our significant heritage properties, views, natural heritage system, and landscapes."

Policy 3.1.5.2 states that properties of potential cultural heritage value or interest "will be identified and evaluated to determine their cultural heritage value or interest consistent with provincial regulations, where applicable, and will include the consideration of cultural heritage values including design or physical value, historical or associative value and contextual value. The evaluation of cultural heritage value of a Heritage Conservation District may also consider social or community value and natural or scientific value. The contributions of Toronto's diverse cultures will be considered in determining the cultural heritage value of properties on the Heritage Register."

Policy 3.1.5.3 states that heritage properties "will be protected by being designated

under the *Ontario Heritage Act*, and/or included on the Heritage Register.” This includes individual properties that have been designated under Section 29(1) of the OHA; properties in a heritage conservation district designated under Section 41(1) of the OHA; and properties that have not been designated, but that City Council believes to be of cultural heritage value or interest under Subsection 27(1.2) of the OHA.

Policy 3.1.5.4 states that heritage resources on the City’s Heritage Register “will be conserved and maintained consistent with the Standard and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, as revised from time to time and adopted by Council.” Policy 3.1.5.6 encourages the adaptive re-use of heritage properties while Policy 3.1.5.26 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. Policy 3.1.5.8 indicates that when a City-owned property on the Heritage Register is no longer required for its current use, the City will demonstrate excellence in the conservation, maintenance and compatible adaptive reuse of the property.

Policy 3.1.5.13 states that, in collaboration with First Nations, Métis and the Provincial Government, the City will develop a protocol for matters related to identifying, evaluating and protecting properties and cultural heritage landscapes on the Heritage Register, archaeological sites and artefacts where they may be of interest to First Nations or Métis.

Regarding Cultural Heritage Landscapes, Policy 3.1.5.43 states that “Potential cultural heritage landscapes will be identified and evaluated to determine their significance and cultural heritage values. Significant cultural heritage landscapes will be included on the Heritage Register and/or designated under either Part IV or Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act.”

Regarding commemoration, Policy 3.1.5.17 states that “Commemoration of lost historical sites will be encouraged whenever a new private development or public work is undertaken in the vicinity of historic sites, such as those where major historical events occurred, important buildings or landscape features have disappeared or where important cultural activities have taken place. Interpretation of existing properties on the Heritage Register will also be encouraged. Additionally, Policy 3.1.5.48 states that “Commemoration of lost historical sites will be encouraged whenever a new private development or public work is undertaken in the vicinity of historic sites, such as those where major historical events occurred, important buildings or landscape features have disappeared or where important cultural activities have taken place. Interpretation of existing properties on the Heritage Register will also be encouraged.”

Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs) are required for development applications that affect designated properties and those included on the Heritage Register. A HIA shall be considered when determining how a heritage property is to be conserved.

The Official Plan can be found at: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/official-plan>

3.0 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND PRACTICES

*Indigenous Peoples in Toronto*²

For time immemorial, Toronto has been home to Indigenous peoples. Ojibway oral histories speak of Ice People, who lived at a time when ice covered the land.³ Following the retreat of glaciers approximately 13,000 years ago, small groups of Indigenous peoples moved from place to place, hunting and gathering the food they needed according to the seasons. Over millennia, they adapted to dramatically changing environmental conditions, developing and acquiring new technologies as they did so. Waterways and the lake were vital sources of fresh water and nourishment, and shorelines and nearby areas were important sites for gathering, trading, hunting, fishing, and ceremonies. Long-distance trade moved valuable resources across the land.

After corn was introduced to Southern Ontario, possibly as early as 2300 years ago, horticulture began to supplement food sources. Between 1300-1450 years ago, villages focused on growing food appeared in the Toronto area and became year-round settlements surrounded by crops. These villages were home to ancestors of the Huron-Wendat Nation, who would continue to occupy increasingly larger villages in the Toronto area and beyond. These villages were connected to well-established travel routes which were part of local and long-distance trail networks, including the Carrying Place trails on the Don, Rouge and Humber rivers that connected Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay. Beads made from sea shells from the eastern seaboard were found at the Alexandra site in North York, which was a community of 800-1000 people in approximately 1350.⁴

By 1600, the Wendat had formed a confederation of individual nations, and had concentrated most of their villages away from Lake Ontario, in the Georgian Bay area. Following contact with French explorers and missionaries in Southern Ontario in the early 1600s, European diseases decimated First Nations. Competition for furs to trade with Europeans and the desire to replenish numbers through absorption of captives, among other factors⁵, contributed to the Beaver Wars, which after 1640, saw the Haudenosaunee Confederacy expand into Southern Ontario, dispersing the Wendat. Within the boundaries of today's Toronto, the Seneca Nation, a member of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, then occupied villages on the Carrying Place trails on the

2 This section's text and footnotes have been provided by Heritage Planning staff with the City of Toronto.

3 With thanks to Philip Cote for the reference to Benton-Banai, Edward, *The Mishomis book : the voice of the Ojibway*. (Indian Country Press, 1985), 26.

4 Information drawn from various Archaeology reports, including "Stage 1 Archaeological Resource Assessment of the Frank Faubert Woodlot Park Improvements, 165 Borough Drive", prepared by ASI (17 May 2021).

5 <https://histindigenouspeoples.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/chapter-5-colonial-wars-looking-east/>; Warrick, Gary. "The Aboriginal Population of Ontario in Late Pre-history," in Munson and Jamieson, eds., *Before Ontario: The Archaeology of a Province*. (McGill-Queens University Press, 2013), 72.

Humber and Rouge Rivers from approximately the 1660s to the 1680s.

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy left their villages in the Toronto area in the late 1680s. Anishinaabe people from the Lake Superior region then moved into the Toronto area. While the Wendat and Haudenosaunee people lived in year-round villages surrounded by crops, the Anishinaabe people continued to live primarily by seasonally moving across the land to hunt, fish and gather resources that were available at a specific time, including migrating birds and maple syrup. To the west of Toronto, the Anishinaabe people became known as the Mississaugas of the Credit. To the east, they became known as the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama and the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island.⁶

In 1787, as the British began to prepare for an influx of colonists into the area following the American Revolution, the British Crown negotiated the Toronto Purchase with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation to obtain title to the land. The flawed and poorly documented agreement was invalidated, and Treaty 13 was negotiated in 1805 for lands now including much of the City of Toronto. In 1923, the Governments of Ontario and Canada signed the Williams Treaties for over 20,000 km², including portions of eastern Toronto, with seven First Nations of the Chippewa of Lake Simcoe (Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama) and the Mississauga of the north shore of Lake Ontario (Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island). While the Mississaugas, Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, or the Wendat did not traditionally regard land as a commodity to be sold or owned exclusively by individuals, the British government quickly set out to survey the land into lots which were either sold or granted into private ownership of settlers. In 2010, the Government of Canada settled the Toronto Purchase Claim with the Mississaugas of the Credit after agreeing that the Mississaugas were originally unfairly compensated. In 2018, the Williams Treaties First Nations settled litigation about land surrenders and harvesting rights with the Governments of Canada and Ontario.

The City of Toronto remains 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 also covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with seven Mississaugas and Chippewa First Nations.

Indigenous Peoples in the Study Area Vicinity

Archaeological investigations have uncovered dozens of Wendat sites located along the tributaries of the Credit, Humber, Don, and Rouge-Duffins rivers. These sites demonstrate Wendat inhabitation of the area until the end of the 16th century. The remains of a large Huron-Wendat village are situated on the east bank of the Black Creek, north of Finch Avenue, between Jane and Keele streets. Inhabited around the

⁶ Mississaugas of the Credit, "The History of Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation." ND.

late-fifteenth to mid-sixteenth century, the site is thought to have been created during the period when the Huron-Wendat confederacy was forming and when ancestral Wendat villages were being relocated northward from Lake Ontario towards Wendake.⁷

The site (known as the Parsons Site) was a large, ancestral village on a rise of land overlooking Black Creek. Nearly three hectares in size, the village was twice as large as previous sites and contained numerous longhouses, semi-subterranean sweatlodges and a defensive palisade. A series of Heritage Toronto plaques discuss the history of the Huron-Wendat in Toronto. One of these is located in the study area on the Hydro Corridor.

The Wendat today live in four different communities: the Huron-Wendat Nation at Wendake (Quebec); the Wyandot of Anderdon Nation (Michigan); the Wyandotte Nation (Kansas); and the Wyandotte Nation (Oklahoma). Currently, the Wendat number approximately 10,000 people. The Huron-Wendat Nation at Wendake are leading the efforts to connect and protect their ancestral remains and sites in the Toronto region and Ontario.⁸

7 L. Anders Sandberg, Jon Johnson, Rene Gualtieri and Louis Lesage, “Re-Connecting with a Historical Site: On Narrative and the Huron-Wendat Ancestral Village at York University, Toronto, Canada,” *Ontario History*, 113(1), 2021, pp. 80–105. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1076079ar>

8 Ibid.

4.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community consultation for the Jane Finch CHRA was integrated with engagement strategy for the Jane Finch Initiative which included a variety of opportunities for stakeholders and the public to provide feedback. The engagement strategy for the Jane Finch Initiative included:

- Heritage Focus Group
- Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Public Meetings

A complete list of meetings as well as meeting summaries is available on the Jane Finch Initiative [website](#).

4.1 HERITAGE FOCUS GROUP

Heritage Focus Groups (HFG) are advisory in nature and the group for the Jane Finch CHRA was composed of residents, local historians and heritage experts who each have insight into the history of the study area. Four HFG meetings were held, both virtually through Zoom. The meetings were attended by City Planning Staff, and the CHRA consultants. The meetings were facilitated by the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre. All of the HFG meeting notes are provided in Appendix B of this CHRA and are available on the Jane Finch Initiative [website](#).

4.1.1 HFG #1

The first HFG was held on November 3, 2021 and its purpose was to gain an understanding of the historical development of the study area, including its social and community values. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Introduce the Jane Finch Initiative to HFG members
- Describe the scope of work, process and timing of the CHRA
- Discuss the heritage of the study area

The HFG members discussed the history of cultural communities in the area including:

- Vietnamese Communities and their impact in the community (1979 onward)
- Ghanaian Communities and presence in Jane and Finch
- Caribbean Peoples History – 1970s onward

Members also shared information about important buildings and sites of gathering such as:

- Yorkwoods Library
- Firgrove Learning and Innovation Community Centre (FLICC)

- 15 Tobermory
- Jane and Finch Mall
- Oakdale Community Center
- Schools (Driftwood, Westview)

4.1.2 HFG #2

The second HFG meeting was held on November 23, 2021. The purpose was to recap the first HFG meeting and discuss what is missing from the heritage discussion about Jane Finch. Members were asked which topics related to Jane Finch's history were not captured during the HFG #1.

Members responded that Jane Finch relates to the broader community and adjacent areas such as York University and Black Creek Pioneer Village. The Jane Finch neighbourhood is connected to Weston Road and Finch Avenue West. There is a broad community of newcomers with many different languages and dialects spoken. Members noted that they wanted to sustain some places like Yorkgate and Jane Finch Mall.

4.1.3 HFG #3 & #4

Heritage Focus Group meetings #3 and #4 took place on October 4 and November 2, 2023, respectively. The purpose of HFG #3 was to talk about the types of important places in Jane Finch that had been identified through the CHRA process while the purpose of HFG#4 was to present and discuss the CHRA's preliminary findings and recommendations.

Key themes that emerged from the two HFG discussions included:

- Identification of buildings and housing complexes which have interesting or unique designs that should be preserved
- Commemorating local heroes and influential individuals through murals, statues, honorary plaques in community centres
- Continue community engagements particularly in determining the specific ways that people and events are commemorated

Specific comments from each HFG meeting are discussed below.

At HFG #3 important places in Jane Finch that had been identified through the CHRA process were presented in the following categories:

- Natural Environment and Trails
- Murals and Memorials
- Community Centres and Libraries

- Malls and Plazas
- Schools

There were several comments relating to murals and memorials which included suggestions for specific places for new murals as well as topics for commemoration. These included:

- a mural wall at Steeles and Jane to highlight the historical legacy of the community and contributions of local residents
- a mural at Corner Commons
- commemorating local heroes/inspirational individuals at malls or community centres
- having physical gathering spaces as a commemoration is more important than a plaque
- a Jane Finch Walk of Fame to highlight individuals from the neighbourhood such as Anthony Bennett (NBA player), Winston LaRose (Local Activist) and Jilly Black (Singer, Songwriter, Actress)

Comments about community centres and libraries generally noted how important these spaces are as meeting places and events venues. Specifically, York Woods Library was noted as being a significant place for hosting a lot of major events.

Schools were also noted as being important meeting spaces for community organizations with Brookview Middle School noted as being important as it was the first high school in the neighbourhood.

Jane Finch in general was noted as a place with examples of early walkable communities which integrate schools, buildings and shopping centres.

Some members discussed the challenges of identifying cultural heritage in Jane Finch, specifically noting that value lies in people and stories, rather than bricks and mortar.

At HFG #3, Wanda MacNevin provided a summary of her piece *It Happened Here: Places of Community Organization and Activism in Jane-Finch* that she created specifically for the CHRA project. It provides the history of community organizations and their services as well as the spaces they used to deliver their programs. Wanda MacNevin is a well-known and respected member of the Jane Finch community with over 40 years of experience gained by living, working and volunteering there.

At HFG#4, the draft findings of the CHRA were presented for discussion. The presentation provided information about the OHA and the criteria used to evaluate and add properties to the Heritage Register. The presentation also discussed other tools, such as the Secondary Plan and Community Development Plan that can identify places of importance to the community. The draft findings were grouped around three categories: heritage potential properties; sites of community interest; and sites where further input is required.

Regarding heritage potential properties, the following places were identified by HFG members as being important - either for the spaces they provide for community organizations or for their unique/unusual design:

- Northwood Community Centre for its role as a community banquet hall
- Oakdale Community Centre for its value to people in the nearby social housing development
- York Wood Library, notable for its round theatre
- Church at Finch and Driftwood [University Presbyterian Church] has an unusual design
- Yorkwoods Village is well-designed and visually interesting
- Firgrove, particularly elements that allow for communal gathering including parks, benches and seating

Regarding sites of community interest, the following were identified by HFG members:

- 15 Tobermory Drive for its programs and services which created community such as a thrift shop, food bank, community meeting and events and a family exchange program.
- 2999 Jane Street as a space utilized by the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre, most recently the Centre for Green Centre.

Additionally, sites of community interest were identified in Wanda MacNevin's *It Happened Here*.

4.2 COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Regular Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings were held throughout the course of the Jane Finch Initiative with the CHRA consultants participating in two of the meetings. The CAC is a group of community members selected in part through a civic lottery to reflect local diversity. The CAC provides community oversight and accountability in the approach to engagement and in the development of the integrated plans.

4.2.1 CAC MEETING - JANUARY 18, 2022

At the CAC meeting held on January 18, 2022, the focus was on community heritage. The meeting was attended by City Planning Staff and the CHRA consultant team. The consultant team presented an overview of the CHRA scope of work, work completed to date and summarized input from the HFG meetings.

CAC members were presented with a series of questions. When asked about parts of Jane Finch that have made it what it is today, the commonly cited places included:

- Yorkwoods Library
- Sporting facility often located within schools and community centres
- Parks and trails
- Jane Finch and Yorkgate malls

When asked about important moments, milestones and movements that help define the story of Jane Finch, commonly cited topics included:

- LGBTQ+ histories
- Caribana Festivals
- Story of political activism
- Plazas and parking lots as places of gathering
- Local restaurants and food shops situated in malls and on Eddystone Avenue
- The importance of music including the rich history of steel pan
- The importance of places such as Yorkwood Library in hosting cultural events

4.2.2 CAC MEETING - OCTOBER 17, 2023

At the CAC meeting held on October 17, 2023, the City Planning staff and the CHRA consultants recapped the presentation given at the HFG #3 meeting held on October 3, 2023.

4.3 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETINGS

Several public open houses were held throughout the Jane Finch Initiative. A Public Open House was held on November 30, 2022 by Zoom. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Present the Jane Finch Initiative Phase 1 findings
- Update participants about the engagement undertaken to date and initial policy ideas
- Receive input through polls, Zoom chat and Jamboard

City Planning staff presented an update on CHRA work to date.

Feedback was organized by the following themes:

- Favourite places around Jane Finch
- Inclusive Economic Development
- Social Development

- Arts & Culture
- Parks & Public Realm
- Getting Around
- Housing
- Urban Design
- Climate Action

Favourite places around Jane Finch included:

- Yummies best poutine in the area! [Yummy Chicken and Burger]
- Black Creek community farm and the community gardens
- Favourite parts are parks. E.g. Rudy's Garden in Black Creek ravine!
- York Gate Mall parking lot is a beautiful place to catch a sunset.
- Jane and Finch is really a central spot to animate the community.
- Love the diversity, Black Creek community farm and trails.
- Parks and the walkable spaces as well as community facilities in the area including Black Creek Community Farm, Driftwood Parkette, San Romano Way, Yorkwoods Library etc.

Meeting notes are available on the Jane Finch Initiative [website](#) and included in Appendix B.

4.4 ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION INITIATIVES

As a result of the feedback received from the HFG, CAC and CCMs City Planning staff arranged two additional consultation initiatives.

The first was a series of five oral interviews with local residents which were conducted by the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre. The purpose of the interviews was first, to identify places that should be conserved and maintained as cultural heritage resources including properties to be included on the City's heritage register, and second, to consider site-specific approaches to commemorating and interpreting heritage value.

Key themes to emerge from the interviews were:

- Commemorating Community Work and Leaders
- Celebrating Cultural Diversity
- Preserving Nature and Green Spaces

- Maintaining the Integrity of Meeting Spaces and Landmarks
- Recognizing and Commemorating Arts and Artists
- Indigenous Heritage Recognition

The second initiative was a history of community organization and activism in Jane Finch by local author Wanda MacNevin. It is summarized Section 6.2 (Theme: Community - Community Organizations and Activism) of this CHRA and a full version is provided in Appendix A.

Both of these initiatives informed the identification of heritage potential properties (Section 9.0) as well as the recommendations (Section 10) of this CHRA.

5.0 HISTORIC CONTEXT OF THE JANE FINCH STUDY AREA

The historic context provides an understanding of how and why the current built form and character of the Jane Finch CHRA Study Area were developed. It describes the historical evolution of the study area, including the identification of periods of development as well as themes and building types associated with each period.

The historic context of the study area is organized into six parts, based on periods of development in the area's historical evolution:

- Natural Environment (Section 5.2)
- European Settlement and Agricultural Communities - 1790s to 1920s (Section 5.3)
- Township Growth - 1930s to 1940s (Section 5.4)
- Emergence of a Suburban Community (Section 5.5)
- Transformation - 1950s to 1970s (Section 5.6)
- Community Based Studies and Activism - 1970s to present (Section 5.7)

Each section provides: a narrative description of the period of development; a list of themes and sub-themes that were significant in shaping the CHRA study area; and a summary of the existing built form as related to the themes and sub-themes.

The historic context serves as an evaluative tool when screening properties for heritage potential.

5.1 THEMES

The themes and sub-themes related to the evolution and development of the Jane Finch CHRA Study Area were developed by the consultant team through research, analysis and consultation with the Heritage Focus Group (HFG) and Heritage Planning staff. The themes provide a broad organizing structure with the sub-themes providing a greater level of specificity.

Theme	Theme Description	Sub-themes
Natural Environment	This theme relates to the ways in which the natural environment has shaped the study area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Creek
Organization of European Settlement	This theme relates to the ways colonial settlement and land division have shaped the study area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Townships, Concessions and Lots • Early Settlements

Theme	Theme Description	Sub-themes
Government & Institutions	This theme relates to how government entities have shaped the study area through the services and institutions they created.	<p>Federal Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation • Social Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority <p>Provincial Government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Ontario Housing Corporation ◦ Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority <p>Regional Government: Metropolitan Toronto (1953-1998)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Housing • Education • Recreation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Metropolitan Toronto Regional Conservation Authority • Land Use Planning <p>Municipal Government: York Township (1793-1922); Township of North York (1922-1967); Borough of North York (1967-1979); Amalgamated City of Toronto (1998-present)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Use Planning
Transportation	This theme relates to how transportation networks have shaped the study area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Networks • Highways • Public Transit

Theme	Theme Description	Sub-themes
Residential Development	This theme relates to how the development of residential areas and buildings have shaped the study area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Housing
Commercial Development	This theme relates to how the development of major economic activities have shaped the study area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture
Community	This theme relates to how the study area has been shaped by local groups, clubs, organizations and associations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Organizations & Activism
Arts & Culture	This theme relates to how the study area has been shaped by art and culture activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music • Food • Artwork • Recreation

5.2 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Black Creek runs from its source in Vaughan southwest to the Humber River in Toronto. Within the study area, Black Creek flows in a natural setting passing in short culverts underneath Shoreham Drive, Finch Avenue West, Grandravine Drive and Sheppard Avenue West, before turning to the west and arriving back at Jane Street south of Sheppard Ave. Black Creek and its surroundings provides recreational and parkland areas including Black Creek Parkland, Derrydowns Park, and Northwood Park.

5.3 1790s to 1920s EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT AND AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Early Settlement

Following negotiation of the Toronto Purchase, the British Parliament created Upper Canada and appointed John Graves Simcoe Lieutenant-Governor. Upper Canada was divided into a series of counties and then further surveyed into townships, concessions and lots. York County was created in 1792 and York Township the following year. Simcoe travelled extensively in Upper Canada in 1793 and 1794 noting towns that had already developed such as York and Chatham and those recommended for development, notably London which he proposed as the capital. Eager to make Upper Canada a place where settlers found land easy to acquire, Simcoe initiated a system of land grants to them. His surveyor general, David Smith, developed a method of

surveying and distributing lands within townships that set aside lands for settlers, the crown and clergy. Known as the ‘chequered plan’, it was used consistently throughout Upper Canada (Figure 2).

York Township was surveyed into 200-acre farm lots and in the study area, the first land grants were to ex-military men and Loyalists who accompanied Simcoe to York in 1792. Later, Pennsylvania Germans who left the United States and travelled overland with their families settled in Upper Canada, creating small communities in the study area such as Elia and Emery (Figure 3).

Settlers to the study area found dense forest covering the land and their first task was to clear enough land to build a log house. It could take years to clear a typical farm lot by hand, but most farmers left some trees standing, for firewood and maple sugar production. The land would eventually produce wheat, Upper Canada’s cash crop, but farm families also grew fruit and vegetables and kept livestock for household use and sale.

The community of Elia developed in the area between Dufferin and Jane streets, and Sheppard and Steeles avenues. While its amenities including the school and post office were located outside the study area, several families developed sizable properties including the Snider, Kaiser and Stong families (Figure 4).

Samuel Snider and his family came to Upper Canada from Pennsylvania in 1806 and settled in a small log cabin near the Black Creek, south of Finch Avenue. In the early 1800s, the Snider family purchased all four farm lots between Jane Street, Finch Avenue, Keele Street and Sheppard Avenue (Concession IV, Lots 17 to 20). A Pennsylvania German farm developed with a bank barn, carpenter and blacksmith shops, smoke house, sugar bush, saw mill and a second home overlooking the mill pond.

The Stong and Kaiser families developed properties east of Jane Street and south of Steeles Avenue. Peter Kaiser settled in the area around 1803, eventually owning 300 acres of property. In 1816, Daniel and Elizabeth Fisher Stong cleared their land and built a log house in the area of Jane Street and Steeles Avenue. The Stong property developed into an extensive farm.

Portions of the Kaiser and Stong properties are now part of Black Creek Pioneer Village. Many Stong buildings remain in their original locations including the log cabin (1816), smokehouse (1820), grain barn (1825), and their second house (1832).

The community of Emery was centred around Weston Road and Finch Avenue and Finch and Islington avenues (Figure 5). John Crosson and his family arrived in the area about 1799 after walking from Pennsylvania with their possessions and a two year old colt. In exchange for his horse, Crosson obtained one hundred acres of land at the northwest corner of Jane Street and Finch Avenue (Concession V, Lot 21) The Crosson

homestead with its apple orchard and family cemetery is now divided by Highway 400. The area with the apple orchard is on the west and the family cemetery on its east side (Figure 6).

Township of North York

Between the 1850s and 1920s, about a dozen areas separated from York Township and incorporated as individual municipalities thus reducing the township's size and tax base considerably. Several of these municipalities, including Yorkville, Brockton, Parkdale, East Toronto, West Toronto and North Toronto, were eventually annexed to the City of Toronto.

The southern part of York Township, bordering the City of Toronto became a 'lunch-pail suburb' - an area close enough to streetcar lines for residents to make the daily commute to factories. While the southern part of the township became increasingly urbanized, the northern part remained primarily agricultural (Figure 7). Farmers were outnumbered by urban residents and politicians grew increasingly concerned with urban issues. Farmers resented paying taxes with little representation and few services and organized a vote on separation which was approved by voters. In August 1922, the northern part of York Township became a separate municipality known as the Township of North York.⁹ (Figure 8).

5.4 1930s to 1940s - TOWNSHIP GROWTH

The Township of North York was hit extremely hard by the Great Depression as farmers had trouble selling their products and many were unable to pay their taxes. In 1933, North York defaulted on its payments to bondholders and two years later was placed under government supervision. This meant that all government expenditures required provincial approval. By 1937, North York had paid off its debts and in 1941, it was released from provincial supervision.

North York was not the only municipality placed under government supervision. In fact, the majority of municipalities in the Toronto area were also insolvent and the Province was forced to take charge of their financial affairs. In 1934, the provincial government established the Department of Municipal Affairs to supervise municipalities whose tax revenue collapsed during the Great Depression. The department also advised municipalities on community development and land use planning and was responsible for meeting the housing needs of low and moderate income families in Ontario. In 1944, the provincial government established the Department of Planning and Development and in 1946 it created the Planning Act which laid the foundation for land use planning in the province for a generation.

Need for a Land Use Plan

Acting under authority of the Planning Act, North York's council designated the

⁹ Boundaries were Humber River to the west, Steeles Avenue to the north, Victoria Park Avenue to the east and roughly around Lawrence or Eglinton Avenue to the south.

township as an Urban Development Area and appointed a planning board to advise on planning measures and regulate land sub-division. The Board sought to ensure growth, servicing and taxation in the Township would be orderly and economical. This was due to the increase in population between the 1940s and 1950s.¹⁰ This rapid rate of growth led to demand for a variety of buildings: residential housing, commercial shopping centres, industrial properties, educational facilities and hospitals.

In 1948, the Township's first land use plan was submitted to council. It indicated rural, urban and industrial areas. Subdivision was permitted in urban areas, which were eligible for services (water services, sewers, roads, transportation facilities, etc). Rural areas comprised the majority of the area, set aside for agricultural use, and could only be subdivided to lots of 2 acres or more. Services such as water were not extended to rural areas as they were major items of taxation. The plan also indicated the location of a new north-south highway which was to become Highway 400 (Figure 9).

5.5 1950s EMERGENCE OF A SUBURBAN COMMUNITY

This period of development saw the study area begin its transformation from an agricultural hinterland to a dense, modern suburb. The opening of Highway 400 in 1952, and the formation of Metropolitan Toronto the following year primed the area for suburban growth. The study area's rapid development began in the late 1950s, shaped by North York's 1952 Official Plan. Key principles from this plan would be built upon by the 1962 and 1969 district plans.

5.5.1 PLANNING FOR CHANGE IN THE 1950s

Toronto and its surrounding areas grew rapidly following the Second World War. Development quickly moved north from Toronto's urbanised areas into North York, and its population more than doubled from 35,000¹¹ to 84,000¹² between 1948 and 1952. This period coincided with the emergence of urban planning as a professional discipline in Ontario, and municipal governments increasingly relied on planners to help articulate visions and guidelines for anticipated growth. In 1952 the township released its Official Plan, which was far more comprehensive than the 1948 land use plan, and represented the start of urban planning in earnest for the study area.

That same year Highway 400 opened along the western edge of the study area, as per the 1948 Official Plan. The road connected Highway 401 and Barrie, tying the study area into the region's nascent highway network. Also in the 1950s, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario (HEPC) built a series of transmission lines in Toronto

10 Progress, Economy and Heart - Celebrating 100 Years of North York <https://www.toronto.ca/explore-enjoy/history-art-culture/online-exhibits/web-exhibits/web-exhibits-community-neighbourhoods/progress-economy-heart-celebrating-100-years-of-north-york/progress-economy-heart-from-farmland-to-township/>

11 Township of North York Report of the Planning Board: March 1948, 1.

12 E. G. Faludi, "The Official Plan and Zoning By-law of the Township of North York," February 1952, 2.

known as the Finch Corridor which paralleled Finch Avenue between Highway 400 and Pickering (Figure 10).

Creation of Metropolitan Toronto

In 1953 the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto was incorporated, and North York became one of thirteen lower-tier municipalities. Planners had previously identified a need for a regional planning framework, and the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board played an important role guiding suburban growth beyond Toronto's limits. Whereas rural municipalities typically needed to develop a stronger tax base before building the intensive infrastructure required for suburban development, Metropolitan Toronto had the means to finance critical infrastructure projects (major roads, water supply and sewers) irrespective of a local tax base. This allowed Metropolitan Toronto to first build the infrastructure, and then use plans to coordinate the population densities needed to support it, bypassing the incremental growth patterns that both slowed suburban growth and made it uneconomical. The intention was for a Metropolitan Toronto Official Plan to guide growth around this framework at high level, in conjunction with more detailed district plans that would translate policies to local conditions.

Governments helped plan for several important sites within and around the study area in the 1950s. By 1955 a federal-provincial partnership, through the Metro Interim Housing Committee acquired 600 acres of land south of Steeles Avenue between Jane and Keele streets for future social housing. In 1958, the Metropolitan Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority (MTRCA) was formed through the merger of other local conservation authorities. The following year, it acquired the Stong property on the south-east corner of Steeles Avenue and Jane Street. It provided the nucleus of buildings for Black Creek Pioneer Village which officially opened on June 1, 1960 (Figure 11).

Land Use Planning and Development in North York

Despite the regulatory and infrastructural changes in anticipation of development, the study area remained almost entirely agricultural in the early 1950s and was primarily defined by cultivated fields on the flatlands and the forested Black Creek river valley (Figures 12 & 13). The only discernible non-agricultural development to this point was a small number of homes built by 1950 northwest of Jane and Sheppard streets. However many of these appear to have been rural, rather than suburban in nature, generally adhering to established agricultural roads, sometimes with a relationship to nearby crops or gardens (Figure 14).

In the mid-1950s two influential communities were being developed in North York - Don Mills and Flemington Park. Located east of the study area, these master-planned developments were important for establishing some of the hallmarks of post-war suburbs in the Toronto area: abundant open space, pedestrian pathways, new housing types, separation of land use, and curved discontinuous roads.

In February 1952, the Township of North York Planning Board and consultant E. G.

Faludi released the Official Plan and Zoning By-law of the Township of North York (1952 Official Plan). Far more comprehensive than the 1948 Official Plan, the document recognized the municipality was part of a broader Toronto Metropolitan Area, and was intended to guide development of the municipality over a 25 year period. Noting the township's recent growth trends, the 1952 Official Plan provided guidance for residential, industrial and commercial development; transportation routes; and for school, park and recreational sites.

The corresponding zoning by-law, designed to implement the official plan's land use designations, was passed in June the same year (Figure 15).¹³ The map shows how zoning was used as a tool to shape development based on new ideas about separate land uses. Industrial areas were to be situated on open sites, with ready access to both highways and railways. Nearby residential communities would provide a labour force, though buffer areas were planned between industrial areas and homes. Manufacturing was to be centrally located within industrial blocks, with warehousing and service shop uses around the outer edges. Industrial roads were designed to be 86' - 100' (26m - 30.5m) wide to attract heavy traffic away from residential streets.

In a clear shift toward automobile-centric development, the 1952 Official Plan encouraged commercial development in the form of planned shopping centres over traditional main street mixed-use buildings. Planned shopping centres comprise groups of stores with ample off-street parking areas. Lacking off-street parking and loading areas, traditional mixed-use commercial buildings were expressly discouraged by the plan.

Residential areas were provided in single and multiple family types, each having five different densities. Multiple family types are listed as duplexes, garden apartments, and multiple attached apartment houses. The zoning plan shows higher densities located closer to arterial intersections, arteries, and industrial areas. The plan notes that 10% of residential areas should be designated for rental uses.

Within the study area, the 1952 Official Plan organized these land uses around several major features - the arterial concession roads, Highway 400, the hydro-electric power corridor, and the Black Creek river valley (Figure 16). On the western edge of the study area were industrial uses, located adjacent to Highway 400. This represented a northward extension of a pattern established by the 1948 Official Plan, but which stopped at Sheppard Avenue. The eastern and southeastern edges of the study area corresponding to the river valley were greenbelt zones, with the lands in between primarily residential. Multiple family residential zones were concentrated about the intersections of the arterial concession roads. An additional multiple family residential zone was located directly south of the industrial tract. Single family residential zones occupied most of the large swathes of remaining land, with several golf courses and

¹³ Town Planning Consultants Limited, "Key Zoning Map Schedule "B" By-law 7625 Township of North York," 1952.

open spaces interspersed within. Finally, planned shopping centres were situated directly at the corners of arterial intersections, with multiple family residential zones extending further behind. The plan also called for intersection alignments at arterial intersections.

Overall, the 1952 Official Plan established a framework for growth in the study area based on concepts that were defining the emerging practice of land-use planning. These included the intention to design communities for automobile-based living, and the clear delineation between different land uses, densities and resulting building types.

Being the first plan to dictate the township's land-uses in detail, the 1952 Official Plan was foundational in establishing the underlying shape of the study area's urban form. Despite minimal development in the study area until the 1960s, the underlying principles and logic of the plan would heavily inform subsequent plans in 1962 and 1969, and ultimately play an important role in the study area's morphology and character.

5.5.2 STUDY AREA DEVELOPMENT: 1952-1961

In the decade following the release of the 1952 Official Plan, growth in the study area was modest, concentrated in the south end (Figure 17). The trend of rural house construction continued in the area northwest of Jane Street and Sheppard Avenue (see Section 7.1.1), and by 1953 a golf course was under development immediately east of Jane Street. Black Creek Pioneer Village opened in 1960, with most of the site situated immediately east of the study area.

Subdivision plans preceded the construction of several larger developments on both sides of Sheppard Avenue in the late 1950s. These were primarily residential developments, though subdivision plan M-770 created both industrial and residential lots, helping to establish the patterns that would define industrial areas as the area grew (Figure 18). The subdivisions reflected the 1952 zoning by-law at a high, but not granular level. For example, plan M-770 did create industrial and residential lots as per the plan, but the industrial area extended further south than indicated, and no reference was made for a distinction between manufacturing and warehousing / storage uses.

By 1961 large subdivisions on both sides of Sheppard Avenue had been built or were under construction. The developments were predominantly multiple-family (duplex) homes (see Section 7.1.2), with the study area's first extant school (Calico Public School) built within the Oakdale Park subdivision south of Sheppard Avenue (see Section 7.3.1). Roughly a dozen industrial structures were straddling Oakdale Road east of Highway 400 (see Section 7.4.1), a combination of steel and brick-clad concrete block structures (Figure 19).

The residential subdivisions from this period have a rectilinear layout, largely dictated by the confining grid of arterial concession roads. Roads tend to be straight and intersect

at right angles, usually parallel to Jane Street and Sheppard Avenue. The internal circulation system connects to the major arteries by way of limited outlets, though a clear hierarchy of internal and collector roads is not fully developed or formalized.

5.6 1960s to 1970s TRANSFORMATION

Much of the study area's layout and built form were cast during this period, and its morphology was heavily influenced by emerging ideas about suburban growth. Post-war planning frameworks played a fundamental role in defining the area's transportation networks, variety of building types, and separation of land uses, including very large areas of social housing.

With development starting to transform the study area by the early 1960s, a number of plans were prepared in response to, and in anticipation of the area's imminent growth. Local district plans were prepared for the area in 1962 and again in 1969. A number of other plans and reports targeted specific local issues related to public housing sites¹⁴ and the new university^{15,16}. Large numbers of immigrants were drawn to the area, many of whom were Italian. The Township became the Borough of North York in 1967.

5.6.1 DISTRICT PLANNING PHASE 1 (1962 DISTRICT PLAN 10)

In the early 1960s the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board was piloting a system whereby district plans would be used to implement the Metropolitan Official Plan¹⁷ at the local level, with local planning authorities retaining jurisdiction over the details of new development. The 1962 District Plan 10 was the first district plan prepared, an important step forward for the Metro Planning Board.

District Plan 10 encompassed an area bounded by the Humber River to the west, Highway 401 to the south, Steeles Avenue to the north, and both Dufferin Street and the CNR railway to the east. The main content of the plan concerned major land uses, road systems, and matters related to residential development, including population densities, elementary schools, local parks, and local commercial requirements.

It built upon population distributions prescribed by Metropolitan Toronto that were critical to effective regional planning. The plan prescribed a gross density of 30 persons per acre in residential areas, equating to a population of 144,000 for the district. This progressive approach allowed regional planners to ensure suburban areas had a

¹⁴ Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation / Environment Planning Associates, *Planning Report for the Federal-Provincial North Jane Street Project Township of North York, Toronto* (Toronto: The Associates, 1965).

¹⁵ North York Dept. of Planning, *Report on York University Site: Federal-Provincial housing lands Jane Street and Steeles Avenue* (Willowdale, Ont.: The Department, 1960).

¹⁶ Project Planning Associates, *Jane-Finch Commercial Study, Township of North York* (Toronto: The Associates, 1963).

¹⁷ The Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board prepared official plans in 1959 and 1966, though neither was adopted by Metro Council. Both remained unofficial in standing.

sufficient density (and tax base) to support the municipal services associated with urban living. It also represented a significant increase from the 1952 Official Plan, which anticipated a population of 200,000 for the entire township within 20 years. These suburban densities were unique to Metro Toronto in a North American context, and would play a major role in shaping the study area's urban fabric. At the same time, the plan discouraged an over-abundance of apartment towers:

*...it is preferable to avoid excessive concentrations of apartment buildings, unless a large concentration of apartments forms part of a central area development which provides a full range of community facilities, on a scale which is possible only in a few suburban locations.*¹⁸

Despite the increased densities, District Plan 10's prescribed land uses (Figure 20) fundamentally followed the patterns and principles set out by the 1952 Official Plan. However it did provide greater direction with regard to housing types and locations. Specifically, it advocated for a balanced approach to housing stock via the following principles:

- a) *Diversification of dwelling types at varying densities to avoid the sharp division or firm segregation of rental homes from purchase homes.*
- b) *Provision of rental dwellings mainly in lower and medium density schemes to satisfy the demand for rental family accommodation in the suburbs.*
- c) *High density residential development restricted to sites having special advantages for this use and where provision is made for adjoining local parks [...] and for a full range of community facilities within walking distance, and where the transportation system [...] can deal efficiently with the traffic created.*¹⁹

In contrast to the 1952 Official Plan, the 1962 District Plan 10 anticipated a large number of rental units in the area in response to the nearby employment opportunities. It was particularly concerned with providing an appropriate range of rental unit types. Lower density rental units in the form of 'plexes' were seen as ideal for the suburban context and were encouraged. These forms included town-houses, maisonnettes, and garden apartments, some examples of which had been demonstrated at Don Mills and Flemingdon Park in the 1950s.²⁰

High-rise apartments were necessary to meet the regional density requirements imposed by Metropolitan Toronto, but were to be carefully located. Access to arterial roads, public transportation, and open space (parks or Black Creek river valley) were critical considerations for locating apartment sites, more so than proximity to schools, stores and community centres, which could be provided after construction.

18 "District Plan 10 Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area," 1962, p. 35.

19 "District Plan 10 Metropolitan Toronto Planning Area," 1962, p. 8.

20 John Sewell, *The Shape of the City: Toronto Struggles with Modern Planning* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp.126-127.

Commercial uses were provided as dedicated commercial land uses, and local commercial uses. The former constituted a distinct land use, located about the Jane Finch and Jane-Sheppard intersections in similar fashion to the 1952 Official Plan. The Jane Finch intersection was designated as one of two major commercial areas, intended to serve regional needs. Local commercial uses constituted sites smaller than five acres, and were permitted within residential areas.

District Plan 10's industrial land uses follow the general principles established by the 1952 Official Plan, forming a strip along the eastern side of Highway 400. The exact areas have been somewhat revised in response to subsequent development, in addition to a strip extending east to Jane Street.

District Plan 10's approach to transportation was influential on the study area, formally introducing the collector street system. Collector streets were envisioned as an intermediary between the major arterial and local residential streets. They were to provide carefully spaced outlets from residential areas to the arterial grid (Figure 21), limiting intersections with the arterial streets and providing convenient and regular locations for transit stops. Collectors were intended to be an important factor in subdivision design. The plan also prescribed a number of improvements to the arterial and highway road systems. These included grade separations at Highway 400 and Steeles Avenue, as well as a new interchange where the highway intersects with Finch Avenue. Of the arterials, the right-of-ways at Steeles Avenue, Finch Avenue and Jane Street were all increased to 120' (36.5m), jogs were removed at the Jane Finch and Jane-Steeles intersections, and intersections were channelized throughout.

York University

A major impact just east of the study area was the 1962 decision to allocate 400 of the 600 acres of land set aside for affordable housing to the future York University campus.²¹ Since this reality was not substantially reflected in the 1952 Official Plan or the 1962 District Plan 10, the North York Planning Board hired Project Planning Associates Limited to consider the impacts of the new university site.²² The study proposed rerouting Jane Street and Finch Avenue to support a new undivided commercial centre, but was never implemented (Figure 22).

Edgeley Village

The loss of the university lands left 96 acres for social housing (rental), which the Metro Interim Housing Committee noted could still support 500 units. The site's programme was prepared by the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation in 1964, and was "based on the central idea that a community should be created with as much diversity

21 Metropolitan Toronto Interim Housing Committee, "Metropolitan Toronto Interim Housing Committee Annual Report June 1962," 5.

22 See Project Planning Associates, "Jane Finch Commercial Study Township of North York," February 1963.

of population and income as is reasonably possible.”²³ The programme called for social housing to be built and managed by the Ontario Housing Corporation, alongside developer-built private housing, as well as schools, seniors’ housing, churches, shops, a community centre, and parks to round out the community. It resulted in a 1965 master plan²⁴ that would inform the neighbourhood now known as Edgeley Village.

The plan was premised on a central pedestrian mall surrounded by residential groupings. The central mall contained park space and community facilities (including churches, schools, and seniors housing), and surrounding residential groupings were clustered according to private and public ownership. Both public and private housing were located in towers and clustered townhouses, with private housing predominately rental stock (Figure 23). The plan separated path and road networks, in an attempt to create different experiences for pedestrian and vehicular traffic (Figure 24). Car access was via two curved collectors off Jane Street - one connecting to York University and the other to Finch Avenue. Pedestrian networks were focused toward the central mall, using bridges to avoid automobile routes.

While Edgeley Village was not developed until the early 1970s, several public housing sites were developed elsewhere in the study area through the 1960s. The developments usually took the form of low-rise housing complexes.

5.6.2 STUDY AREA DEVELOPMENT: 1962-1968

Under the guidance of District Plan 10, a number of the key patterns that would come to define the study area began taking shape by the mid-1960s. These include the street patterns, separate and intentionally located land uses, and different building types that would come to characterize suburban form in Metro Toronto (Figure 25).

There was considerable development of residential subdivisions (see Section 7.1.2) throughout the study area after 1962, with a large number built by 1968. The shape of these new neighbourhoods shows the influence of the 1962 District Plan 10 in their integration of curved collector roads (Figure 26). Following the land uses established earlier, residential subdivisions were built away from arterial roads. Schools were often built in conjunction with planned subdivisions, with about a dozen built during this period. Several churches (see Section 7.3.4) were built adjacent to major arterial roads, and several community centres (see Section 7.3.5) were built within neighbourhoods.

Medium density housing complexes (see Section 7.1.3) first appeared by the mid-1960s as an emerging suburban form. Yorkwoods Village was an early example of the type premised on an experimental ownership model whereby all exterior

²³ Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, “Planning Report for the Federal-Provincial North Jane Street Project Township of North York Toronto,” 1965, 3.

²⁴ The master plan was designed by Environment Planning Associates (planning and urban design), Sasaki, Strong & Associates (landscape and site development), and Irving Grossman (housing consultant).

maintenance was assumed by the managing corporation (Figure 27).²⁵ Yorkwoods Village was developed as part of a larger semi-planned community, including at least four phases of housing complexes, with a corresponding plaza and private community centre (Figure 28). Housing complexes developed quickly within the study area, with around fifteen substantial developments built by 1968.

Initially built adjacent to major arteries, housing complexes were also found on interior streets, often along collectors. They often utilised broad sites, sometimes a full block in depth. Underground parking was common, leaving the landscape to support internal circulation systems or open spaces as per the suburban trend (Figure 29). The majority were located off Jane Street, or other arterials, however a large section of housing complexes also emerged on Driftwood Avenue between Arleta Avenue and Venetian Crescent. Housing complexes could operate under ownership, rental, and public housing models.

Residential high-rise apartments (see Section 7.1.4) did not appear in the study area until 1965, but their development was swift thereafter. At least eight apartment towers had been built or were under construction by 1968. The concrete slab buildings typically occupied medium to large sites, with a combination of hard and soft landscaping. Most sites were located on Jane Street or arterials, often adjacent to medium density housing complexes. Two towers off Jane Street were located along the Black Creek valley, and amongst the Driftwood Avenue housing complexes.

The 1960s also brought the first substantial commercial developments to the study area, in the form of plazas, malls and service stations (see Sections 7.2.1, 7.2.2 & 7.2.3). By 1965 Wycliffe Jane Plaza had been built at the northwest corner of the Jane-Sheppard intersection, with at least three more plazas emerging on Jane Street by 1968. Several malls had also been built by that year, Jane Finch Mall and Jane-Sheppard Mall, both named for their respective locations. The malls correspond to areas zoned for shopping centres or commercial land uses, while the plazas correspond to residential or commercial areas along arterial streets.

By 1965 there was continued industrial development (see Section 7.4.1) on Oakdale Road, and a new area industrial cluster had been established further north on Norfinch Drive. Both areas continued to expand, and Eddystone Avenue was established off Oakdale Road. By 1968 the study area boasted significant industrial stretches supporting well over fifty buildings.

5.6.3 DISTRICT PLANNING PHASE 2 (1969 DISTRICT 10 PLAN)

In 1969 a new plan for District 10 was released by the North York Planning Board. It officially superseded the 1952 Official Plan for North York, and effectively replaced the 1962 District Plan 10 for the local area. As with the 1962 district plan, it was intended to

²⁵ "These townhouses are for sale on terms that take the onus out of ownership." Canadian Builder 15, no. 7 (July 1965): 26.

complement the Metropolitan Toronto Official Plan by applying it to local conditions and circumstances.

The 1969 District 10 Plan introduced conscious efforts to create defined communities within the district, characterized by central visual and social reference points. It divided the district's residential areas into seven communities, which were then further divided into neighbourhoods. Wholly within the study area was the Black Creek community, containing York Town and University Village neighbourhoods, and the Jane Heights community, composed of Cook Village, Yorkwoods, Glenfield, and Spenvale. South of Sheppard Avenue the Northover neighbourhood was also in the study area, part of the larger Roding community.

The plan responded to increased demand in the area, providing for increased densities and population projections over the 1962 plan. The revised gross residential density was increased from 30 to 36.4 persons per acre for the whole district, but the increases were more drastic within the study area - planned densities were 50 and 44 persons per acre in the Black Creek and Jane Heights community respectively. The plan relied on multiple-family housing units to support the population increases. Two-thirds of all housing units were to be in multi-family types, and over half of all units were to be in the form of high rise apartments.

The land use map is more detailed than previous plans, but still carries forward the general principles established by the 1952 zoning map (Figure 30). The plan added a distinction between major and minor commercial uses. The former were only located at the Jane Finch intersection, while the latter along Jane Street. It also provided a more granular depiction of residential densities than previous maps, showing higher densities along arterial roads, collectors, and the Black Creek valley.

In addition to designating communities within the district, the plan encouraged the development of community sub-centres that would provide visual and social focal points within them. Key components of such sub-centres could be high rise apartments, commercial centres, public open space, community centres, libraries and high schools. Community nodes were thus included as a criteria for siting high rise apartments.

5.6.4 STUDY AREA DEVELOPMENT: 1969-1975

The study area continued developing rapidly following the release of the 1969 District 10 Plan. While growth generally adhered to established patterns, the period is distinguished by an increase in high density developments. By 1975, the study area had been fundamentally built out and reflected the typical characteristics of a planned post-war suburb in Metro Toronto (Figure 31).

Residential subdivisions (see Section 7.1.2) remained the dominant form on interior areas off major arteries. Major subdivision plans continued to shape and define large

vacant areas, particularly southwest of the Jane Finch intersection (Figure 32). Infill subdivisions developing smaller leftover areas were also common, usually resulting in shorter streets or courts. Duplexes were generally more common than detached homes.

Housing complexes (see Section 7.1.3) remained popular as well, utilizing both large and infill sites. Several larger scale public housing complexes were built during this period, including the Firgrove-Grassway complex, and the innovative neighbourhood-scale Edgeley Village (Figure 33).

Apartment towers (see Section 7.1.4) were quick to respond to the 1969 plan's increased densities, with over twenty-five new towers built or under construction between 1969 and 1975. For the first time these buildings were being used for public housing in the study area. The scale of structures built during this period increased, with the introduction of Y-shaped plans, sites with multiple towers, and generally larger structures. About half a dozen low-rise apartments (see Section 7.1.4) were built during this period as well.

Five new schools (see Section 7.3.1) were built during the period, four of which were Catholic. A number of existing schools were expanded to serve the growing population. York Woods Public Library (see Section 7.3.2) was built by 1970 off Finch Avenue West in brutalist style using both brick and concrete (Figure 34). Several churches (see Section 7.3.4) were built along arterial and collector streets, employing modernist and functional styles. John Booth arena was built by 1975, and Edgeley Village's associated Driftwood Community Centre was completed two years later (see Section 7.3.5).

Commercial expansion took place alongside the residential growth, almost exclusively along the study area's major arteries. At least six new plazas (see Section 7.2.1) were built during the period, with those along Steeles Avenue West catering to construction and automotive products. Jane Finch Mall (see Section 7.2.2) underwent a substantial expansion and several medical centres were built along Jane Street and Finch Avenue. Industrial infill continued (see Section 7.4.1), with Norfinch, Oakdale and Eddystone streets almost entirely built-out by 1975.

5.7 1970s COMMUNITY INITIATIVES - 1970s to PRESENT

Residential growth in the study area developed much more quickly than anticipated in the District 10 Plan, prompting dissatisfaction and concern that public facilities and services were not expanding to keep pace. The plan projected the population for the area to be 64,700 by the year 1990. However, by 1975, the population was already 53,265. The increased growth was particularly noticeable in the communities of Jane Heights and Black Creek where the population increased from 1,301 in 1961 to 33,030 in 1971, an astounding increase of 2,438%.²⁶ Several studies were commissioned

²⁶ Klein & Sears, *A review of planning policies re. lands bounded by Finch Avenue, Highway 400, the HEPC Right-of-Way and Jane Street*, 1975, p. 22.

by ratepayer groups, community organizations and local government to address the population increase and lack of adequate facilities and services.

This section describes some of the community initiatives that occurred in the study area. A more comprehensive description of community initiatives and activism by Wanda MacNevin entitled *It Happened Here* is included in Appendix A.

Review of District 10 Policies

In 1974, the University Village Ratepayer Association submitted a brief to North York's Council entitled *Too Much Too Fast: Breathing Space for Ward 3*. The submission asked Council to re-evaluate what constitutes a desirable land use for the 50 acres of undeveloped lands bounded by Finch Avenue, Highway 400, the hydro corridor and Jane Street. Then, the Downsview West Action Community (DWAC), an umbrella organization representing social service agencies, expressed concern that the "rate of population growth, the high concentration of low income households, and the recent immigrant influx have all contributed to a sense of instability with a resulting loss of community feeling and awareness."²⁷ It made an application to amend the District 10 Plan to decrease the residential density.

In 1975, North York Council requested that the Planning Board undertake a study of the District 10 policies relating to the 50 acres of undeveloped lands bounded by Finch Avenue, Highway 400, the hydro corridor and Jane Street. The architectural firm of Klein & Sears completed the report. The owner of the lands was Elderbrook Development Ltd. and it had an application pending before the Planning Board and Council. The report noted that in Ward 3, 22.5% of all dwelling units were owned by the Ontario Housing Corporation (OHC) and operated as assisted rental family housing - representing the highest concentration of OHC family housing in Metro Toronto.²⁸ The report recommended that public housing should not be provided on the lands in question. If residential development was to take place on these lands, it would be best located on the central portion of the site after school and park sites were set aside and should provide a mixture of high-rise, non-family as well as low-rise, family accommodation. It also found that existing densities were overloading transportation infrastructure, and that this issue would also need to be addressed prior to further proposed residential and commercial development.

In 1976, the DWAC undertook a study to identify available social services in the area. The study found shortfalls in services compared to other areas in Toronto. In Jane Finch, there were fewer information and counselling centres, subsidised day care spaces, recreational facilities, commercial outlets, services for immigrants as well as insufficient library services and overcrowded schools.

²⁷ Verney, p. 1.

²⁸ Klein & Sears, p. 21.

Project Rebirth

Project Rebirth was a process established to identify the needs of the Jane and Finch neighbourhood based on broad stakeholder involvement including individuals, community organizations and government agencies as well as building consensus among participants. In 1989, a community conference was held to bring together diverse interests united in their commitment to Jane and Finch and its improvement. Attendees included individual residents and those representing organizations who participated in one of thirteen discussion groups.²⁹ One attendee explained that they wanted “to show the world Jane Finch is a great community and make them jealous.”³⁰

Each of the groups engaged in discussions to identify key problems and issues and create a list of short and long term solutions proposed. One of the actions resulting from the conference was the PRIDE programme which provided \$800,000 for community improvements including lighting, walkways and landscaping including trees along Driftwood and Grandravine drives.

Murals

In the 2000s several murals were created in the study area. These include two murals commissioned by BeLovEd Movement: *Strong Women Strong Community* (2009; 10 San Romanoway) and *Be Inspired, Love Yourself, Educate Others* (2011; 25 San Romanoway). The BeLovEd Movement was launched in 2009, as a community response to the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment in high schools. Youth, agencies and community partners in the Jane and Finch community joined together as part of the BeLovEd Movement, educating to end violence against young women and promoting healthy relationships. The third mural is the Black Creek Community Farm Mural (2013; Fence on 4929 Jane Street) which illustrates the topic of food security. For many years, the community lacked access to healthy food and was often referred to as a food desert by residents.³¹ Together, these murals have created a lasting legacy in the community with many residents expressing a sense of pride in their creation, and indicating that the murals are landmarks for the community.³²

These community initiatives are representative of the strong, local culture of grassroots organization, social advocacy and activism. Diverse cultural expressions, local organizations, and strong community leaders emerged as hallmarks of the study area during this period. They remain active forces as the study area faces contemporary

29 The discussion groups were: 1) Northern Neighbourhood of JF; 2) Central & Southern Neighbourhoods of JF; 3) Transportation; 4) Physical Issues & Lighting/Landscaping; 5) Community Relations & Development; 6) Health; 7) Education & Employment; 8) Communication; 9) Citizenship; 10) Recreation, Parks & Open Space; 11) Social Services; 12) General Housing Stock and 13) Public Safety & Security.

30 *Project Rebirth: A Community in Action: An Assessment of the Needs and Problems of Jane and Finch, 1990*, p. 8.

31 Talisha Ramsaroop, *Murals Talk Back: An Understanding of Community Murals in Jane Finch*. MA Thesis, York University. 2016, p. 34.

32 Ramsaroop, p. 49.

challenges including large-scale transportation projects, development pressures and years of deferred maintenance at many buildings.

Development Since the 1970s

The study area was fundamentally built out by the mid-1970s. Since then, development has consisted of localized infill as well as intensification of existing sites that is in keeping with previously established patterns (Figure 35).

In the early 1980s the Northview Country Club was redeveloped as a residential subdivision (see Section 7.1.2). The development included primarily duplex house types, and tied into the surrounding street network of local and collector streets. Smaller infill projects continued to fill gaps in the suburban fabric, including typical subdivisions (such as Clubhouse Court), and numerous housing complexes (including San Marino Way). Only a few high-rise apartments were built, clearly denoting the end of the boom from the 1970s.

School construction (see Section 7.3.1) also slowed, though a number of facilities were expanded. Monsignor Fraser College's Norfinch Campus was built at the south end of Norfinch Drive, a location far-removed from residential areas. Community amenities (see Section 7.3.5) built after 1975 include the Norfinch Cricket Ground, the Oakdale Community Centre, and the Huron-Wendat Trail. The York Woods Public Library received an addition in 1995 and a full renovation in 2023, and a Jane/Sheppard Public Library was built in 2009 (see Section 7.3.2).

Yorkgate Mall (see Section 7.2.2) was a major commercial development by the early 1990s, adding a third large shopping site to the Jane Finch intersection. Both the Jane Finch and Jane-Sheppard Malls received additions during this period. Several smaller plazas (see Section 7.2.1) were built, and others were expanded with additional buildings in parking lots. Some existing industrial sites were expanded, though new sites altogether were limited. A cluster of sites with disparate uses at the south end of Norfinch were developed, featuring chain hotels, a contemporary police station, assisted living facilities, and a medical laboratory.

6.0 ANALYSIS OF SELECTED THEMES

The study area is associated with several themes which are described in Section 5.0. This section analyzes specific themes to determine those which have “direct associations ...that is significant to a community.” (Ontario Heritage Act, Ontario Regulation 9/06). In determining which themes to analyze, Common Bond took into consideration those that: were identified and discussed during the Heritage Focus Group and Community Advisory Committee meetings; emerged through research; and became evident during the course of the survey work.

6.1 THEMES: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT/GOVERNMENT & INSTITUTIONS - SOCIAL HOUSING

The study area has direct associations with the themes of residential development and the government initiatives that resulted in the social housing units constructed in the Jane Finch neighbourhood during the 1960s and 1970s. The legislation and programs developed by the federal, provincial, regional and municipal governments were aimed at addressing the severe housing shortages that occurred at the end of the Second World War.

Social housing is a broad term used in this CHRA which includes programs related to rental housing, both publicly and privately owned as well as programs geared towards home ownership such as mortgage support/loans.³³ This includes:

- Rent-geared-to-income, sometimes referred to as subsidized housing, where rent is a percentage of income.
- Affordable rent, where rent is set at or below average market rent.
- Affordable housing, where homes are priced below market value.

Federal and Provincial Policy

Both the federal and provincial governments entered the housing market in the 1940s. In 1944, Mackenzie King’s government enacted a new National Housing Act (NHA) and a year later established the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to administer the act. The 1944 act and its administrator, CMHC, focused almost entirely on extending financing to home owners and private builders.

The province entered into Ontario’s housing market in 1948 in order to make available large numbers of owned and rented housing for low and middle income earners. Legislatively, this was done through the Housing Development Act, 1948. Following amendments to the federal National Housing Act in 1950, the province made changes to its housing act. This dovetailing of federal and provincial legislation allowed the two

³³ Public housing typically refers to rental properties owned and operated by a government entity, such as a municipality. In the study area, this historically includes the City of Toronto, Metropolitan Toronto and Toronto Community Housing.

levels of government to jointly acquire and develop land for housing purposes, and to construct houses for sale or for rent on a cost-sharing basis.

Social Housing In Toronto

Social housing programs emerged in Toronto during the Second World War when emergency shelters were established to provide temporary relief for the city's housing shortages. At that time, more than 30,000 families were sharing dwellings, while several hundred families lived in abandoned stores and condemned buildings.³⁴ With families already living doubled and tripled up in rooms and flats, there was no room for returning servicemen who returned to Canada by the thousands. As a result, the temporary shelter program expanded at the end of the war when the Canadian military demobilized. In the years immediately following the war, Toronto's existing housing shortages were compounded by high immigration, lack of serviced land to build upon and low numbers of new dwellings being constructed.

The construction of social housing by the municipality began in Toronto in the late 1940s. In fact, Toronto was the birthplace of Canada's first social housing project in 1949, when Torontonians voted overwhelmingly in favour of building and financing Regent Park North. Regent Park North and the several subsequent social housing developments in Toronto - Regent Park South (1960), Moss Park (1960s), Alexandra Park (1968) and the St. Lawrence Neighbourhood (1974) - were urban renewal projects whereby existing residential or industrial properties were redeveloped for housing purposes.

Although CMHC recognized as early as 1947 that rental units were the most pressing housing need in Canadian cities, the corporation did little to entice private builders into the market. In Toronto, the growth of apartment houses remained slow until the mid-1950s, when both rent control and the rapidly expanding market for single-family suburban dwellings came to an end. The shortage sent rents in the city soaring. Additionally, in the 1950s, nearly half a million people arrived in the city.³⁵ At this time, Toronto ranked near the bottom of Canadian cities for dwellings completed per capita. Between 1947 and 1954, the number of new dwellings constructed in Toronto represented only one-tenth of the city's population growth. Even the addition of more than 141,000 dwellings in Toronto's suburbs in the latter half of the 1950s made only a small dent in overcrowding.³⁶

Unlike many other Canadian cities, Toronto had limited spaces to build. While the suburbs of North York, Scarborough, and Etobicoke had sufficient space to house the city's growing population, they lacked serviced land. This lack of serviced land was a chief impediment to solving Toronto's housing crisis and was one of the reasons behind

34 Kevin Brushett, "'Where Will the People Go': Toronto's Emerging Housing Program and the Limits of Social Housing Policy, 1944-1957." *Journal of Urban History*. Volume. 33, Issue 3 (March 2007), p. 378.

35 Brushett, p. 376.

36 Brushett, p. 385.

the formation of the Metropolitan Toronto in 1953.

The Role of Metropolitan Toronto in Social Housing

The Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority was created in 1955, to operate and administer social housing projects constructed jointly by the federal and provincial governments. By 1963, the Authority had constructed Regent Park South (732 units), Scarlettwood (150 units) and Lawrence Heights (1081 units). Regent Park North (1,397 units) was built and administered by the City of Toronto Housing Authority. Rents in all these developments were geared to the incomes of the tenants. Another 347 units were under construction on Warden Avenue. Further projects were planned for O'Connor Drive in North York (300 units) and Thistletown in Etobicoke (500 units).³⁷

Thus, rent-geared-to-income family housing increased between 1953 and 1963 from 650 to nearly 3,500 units, but 90% of these were concentrated at Lawrence Heights and Regent Park South. Realizing that more subsidized housing was required, Metropolitan Council gave the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority more power for the initiation and construction of social housing. Until this time, the Authority had been functioning as a provincial body responsible only for managing social housing projects, not their construction. It set a target of 6,300 subsidized rental units in its 10-year capital works project - considered a minimum to address existing waiting lists.³⁸

The Role of the Province of Ontario in Social Housing

The Ontario Housing Corporation was established in 1964 to oversee the provincial government's housing policies and programs. This included the Home Ownership Made Easy (HOME) Plan which provided or assisted in the provision of residential accommodation, both for rent and sale, for Ontarians in need at a price they could afford. The HOME Plan included programs specific to senior citizens and students and also programs to support tenant purchase, mortgage lending and condominium ownership.

One of the roles of the OHC was to distribute social housing across all parts of Metropolitan Toronto as a way of integrating tenants into communities rather than concentrating them into large projects. The OHC tended to build public housing as high-rise, high-density apartment buildings due to: government-imposed limits on what it could spend; local opposition to public housing in their neighbourhoods; and a shortage of suitably zoned sites.³⁹

Unable to build or acquire enough housing to meet demand, the OHC designed a system to identify applicants in the greatest need. This resulted in the concentration of Metropolitan Toronto's lowest-income families in relatively few areas. As these areas became associated with various social problems, "public opposition hardened not just

³⁷ Metropolitan Toronto Annual Report, 1961, p. 36.

³⁸ Metropolitan Toronto 1953-1963: Ten Years of Progress, p. 37.

³⁹ Frances Frisken, *The Public Metropolis: The Political Dynamics of Urban Expansion in the Toronto Region, 1924-2003*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc., 2007, p. 131-2.

toward social housing, but toward all forms of low-rental, multiple-unit housing in most parts of the region."⁴⁰

By 1971, the OHC had 28,871 units either in pre-construction, construction or management in Metropolitan Toronto in the following areas:

- Toronto Centre - 9,490 units
- Scarborough - 8,526 units
- York North - 6,949 units
- Etobicoke - 2,416
- York - 1,186
- York East - 304 units⁴¹

However, as social housing became increasingly unpopular, so did the OHC. In the mid-1970s, it began to decentralise responsibility for its stock of public housing to local housing authorities, saying that it wanted to put social housing in the hands of local citizens who are sensitive to the particular needs in the area. "There was little scope, however, for community participation and initiative in the authorities that OHC set up. Not only were most of their members appointed by the federal and provincial governments, but they were authorised only to administer the existing stock of rent-geared-to-income housing, not to add to it. Only non-profit agencies, housing co-operatives, and private developers could do that."⁴²

In 1974 the OHC was dissolved and replaced by the Ontario Mortgage Corporation. By the time it was dissolved, the OHC added more than 15,000 assisted rental family housing units to the existing 3,700 in Toronto. Metro Toronto had 60% of the assisted rental family housing stock in Ontario.

Another provincial initiative in this period was the 1967 introduction of the Condominium Act as one solution to the issues of rising land, construction costs and high interest rates. Condominiums would allow people to buy and hold title to an individual home in a multiple-unit building and thus benefit from lower land and building costs than those for single and semi-detached homes. By 1971, OHC was associated with 10,000 condominium unit starts in Metropolitan Toronto. OHC also provided condominium financing through its mortgage lending program.⁴³

Downloading Social Housing

In 1997, the provincial government declared its intention to transfer administrative and funding responsibilities for social housing to Ontario's municipalities. The following year, full responsibility for the province's annual funding commitment for social housing was transferred to municipalities. The next step was to transfer provincial administrative responsibility to municipalities. Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) was

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ontario Housing Corporation, Policies, Programs and Structure [1971], "Total Ontario Housing Units for Families and Senior Citizens by Municipality," December 1971, Appendix C, p. 5.

⁴² Frisken, p. 168.

⁴³ Ontario Housing Corporation, Policies, Programs and Structure [1971], p. 10.

formed by the City of Toronto in 2002 through the amalgamation of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Corporation and the former Toronto Housing Company.

Currently the TCHC portfolio contains 1,347 buildings, consisting of townhouses and walk-ups (879 buildings), houses (276 buildings), high-, mid- and low-rise apartments (123 buildings). TCHC provides homes to more than 43,000 households which accommodate 89,000 residents.

Social Housing in Jane Finch

Social housing in Jane Finch was constructed on land that was previously agricultural and almost entirely underdeveloped. This is similar to the Lawrence Heights neighbourhood which was constructed in the 1950s, in the area north of Lawrence Avenue between Bathurst and Dufferin streets.

The following chart identifies some of the Toronto Community Housing developments in the study area that are primarily Rent Geared to Income (RGI) units. The TCH properties in the study area are concentrated along Needle Firway, Sheppard Avenue West, Edgley Village and Driftwood Avenue/Grandravine Drive.

Address/Name	Date of Construction	Type	TCH ID
20 Yellowstone	1965	Family/RGI (52 units)	TCH 4
1862-1886 Sheppard	1965	Family/RGI (147 units)	TCH 12
10-44 Driftwood	1968	Family/RGI (306 units)	TCH 44
415 Driftwood	1968	Family/RGI (403 units)	TCH 25
367-383 Driftwood	1968	Family/RGI (403 units)	TCH 25
388-404 Driftwood	1968	Family/RGI (403 units)	TCH 25
1-25 Shoreham Crt	1968	Family/RGI (176 units)	TCH 325
35 Shoreham Drive/ Edgley Apartments 123	1968	Senior/RGI, Market (323 units)	TCH 123
1901 Sheppard West	1968	Family/RGI (80 units)	TCH 41
7-11 Arleta	1975	Seniors/RGI, Market (372 units)	TCH 131
4400 Jane Street	1975	Family/RGI (171 units)	TCH 3
2999 Jane/Jane Yewtree	1975	Family/RGI (188 units)	TCH 24
2-14 and 22-36 Needle Firway	1975	Family/RGI (152 units)	TCH 42
5 Needle Firway	1975	Family/RGI (152 units)	TCH 42
15 Tobermory	1975	Family/RGI (374 units)	TCH 52

The study area contains a number of condominium buildings. While not considered a form of social housing today, the provincial government began promoting condominiums in the late 1960s as a way of achieving home ownership by allowing people to buy and hold title to an individual home in a multiple-unit building, thus benefiting from lower land and building costs than those for single and semi-detached homes. The following table provides examples of condominium buildings in the study area.

Address	Name	Date	ID
2901 Jane Street	Yorkwoods Village Phase 1	1965	YCC 123
12-20 London Green Court/71-87 Driftwood Avenue	Yorkwoods Village Phase 3	1965	YCC 6
10-92 London Green Court & 53-61 Driftwood Avenue	London Green Condominiums	1968	YCC 14
366-386 Driftwood Avenue		1968	YCC 17
10 Eddystone Avenue	Oakstone Mews	1975	YCC 164
5 Firth Road	Flowertown Place	1975	YCC 36
4645 Jane Street	Edgeley in the Village	1975	YCC 82
2645 Jane Street		1975	

6.2 THEME: COMMUNITY - COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS & ACTIVISM

At the first HFG meeting, activism was noted as being an important part of the community's history. As a result, the City Planning division engaged long-time community resident and organizer Wanda MacNevin to identify local organizations, programs and services, as well as the spaces they used in the Jane Finch neighbourhood. Her report, entitled *It Happened Here* is included as Appendix A.

The report provides the following summary:

“Spaces in both Toronto Community Housing Corporation buildings and in city community centres were instrumental in community development. For example, the work of residents in developing community services could not have been done without utilizing space within the following TCHC locations:

- *4400 Jane Street*: Jane/Finch Centre (office and program space), programs for youth groups, community meetings
- *415 Driftwood Avenue*: YWCA Life Skills Group, Action for Neighbourhood Change, Getting in Touch, community meetings
- *15 Tobermory Drive*: Life Skills Group, moms and tots programs, Mennonite Community Ministry (had a thrift shop, food bank), meeting spaces

- *2999 Jane Street*: Life Skills Group, Centre for Green Change, meeting space
- *5 Needlefirway*: Life Skills Group, Women's Group, United Church's Community Ministry utilized 5 Needlefirway and then they had one of the townhouses – now demolished
- *San Romanoway*: programs and services, community meetings

Meetings, celebrations and events were mostly conducted in the following community centres:

- *Driftwood Community Centre*
- *Oakdale Community Centre*
- *Northwood Community Centre*

The following malls had, or continue to have, community services in their spaces:

- *Jane Finch Mall* – formerly had the Downsview Weston Information Post and continues to have Jane/Finch Centre's Early ON and JVS Employment Services, Corner Commons
- *Jane-Sheppard Mall* – (northeast corner) Black Creek Community Health Centre was there for about 6 years
- *Jane-Sheppard Plaza* – (northwest corner) Northwood Neighbourhood Services was there for several years as was Delta Family Resource Centre
- *Sheridan Mall* – Black Creek CHC has a site there
- *Yorkgate Mall* – Black Creek CHC has a second site there; also York University-TD Community Engagement Centre, Jane/Finch Centre's The Spot, and Seneca College"

6.3 THEME: ARTS & CULTURE - ART, FOOD, MUSIC

At the HFG meetings, the role of art, food and music in shaping the community was raised.

The community murals at San Romanoway, Black Creek Farm, Driftwood/Grandravine were identified as significant artworks that need to be preserved. It was noted that each mural has its own backstory and history.

The wide variety of international food in the study area was also noted by the HFG. There was a desire to protect and support these restaurants. Restaurants in Yorkgate Mall (Caribbean/Montego Bay), Yorkwoods Plaza (Debe's Roti) and along Eddystone (bakeries/pizza) provide different foods and authentic experiences.

Hip Hop and Rap subculture was noted as a strong and significant feature of Jane Finch. Community events are documented in these songs and are part of the Jane Finch identity. Artists Jilly Black, Dream Warriors and Keenan were all noted as coming

from the Jane Finch community. Steelbands were also noted (Pan Fantasy Steel Band) which would use schoolyards as gathering places.

6.4 THEME: GOVERNMENT & INSTITUTIONS - URBAN PLANNING

Urban planning is considered an important theme because of its impact in shaping the study area's urban morphology.

In Ontario, urban planning emerged in the mid-20th century as a means for municipal governments to regulate change and growth. The 1946 Planning Act allowed municipalities to regulate growth through policies primarily contained in official plans and zoning by-laws. Such documents governed established urban areas, but had far greater impacts in undeveloped areas where they effectively prescribed road systems, land uses, building types, and parkland, thus shaping new communities through planning regulations. Post-war planning in Toronto and North York was influenced by modernist ideas about growth and new communities, which were automobile-centric and premised on distinct land uses. Jane and Finch developed within this planning paradigm and reflects these ideas in its urban morphology and built form.

The study area's rapid transformation from farmland in the mid-1950s to a dense modern suburb by the mid-1970s reflects the ideas of several important planning documents: the North York 1952 Official Plan, and two Metro Toronto district plans from 1962 and 1969. Each building off the previous, these plans contained the ideas for growth and urban planning that ultimately shaped the study area's road networks, distribution of land uses, building types, and park systems.

Within the study area, the 1952 Official Plan⁴⁴ established a framework for growth that prescribed distinct land uses based on existing features such as the arterial concession roads, Highway 400, the hydro-electric power corridor, and the Black Creek river valley. These ideas and trends were largely carried forward and refined by subsequent plans.

The 1962 District Plan 10⁴⁵ provided for land uses that fundamentally adhered to the principles and patterns set out by the 1952 Official Plan, while increasing prescribed densities. It also introduced the collector street system of curved roads serving as intermediaries between smaller residential streets and arterials. Substantial population growth through the 1960s made District Plan 10 influential in establishing many of the street patterns, locations of land uses, and different building types that define the study area. As Metro's first district plan, it provides an instructive articulation of contemporary modernist planning ideas about diverse building types, abundance of open space, density limits, and road systems.⁴⁶

44 The 1952 Official Plan is described in greater detail in Section 5.5.1, and its physical impacts are summarized in Section 5.5.2

45 District Plan 10 is described in greater detail in Section 5.6.1, and its physical impacts are summarized in Section 5.6.2.

46 Sewell, p. 127.

The 1969 District 10 Plan⁴⁷ generally adhered to the land use patterns from the 1952 and 1962 plans. It provided for substantially increased densities, relying on a much higher proportion of multiple-family housing types to achieve them. It also attempted to foster local community nodes, by designating distinct communities and promoting the development of visual and social centres for each. The study area had been effectively built-out by 1975, with growth from this period distinguished by an increase in high-density housing types.

⁴⁷ District Plan 10 is described in greater detail in Section 5.6.3, and its physical impacts are summarized in Section 5.6.4.

7.0 ANALYSIS OF SELECT DEVELOPMENT TYPES

In order to assist in understanding and grouping properties, a list of development types has been created based on the built form in the study area. Given the study area's large size, and growth on a suburban scale in response to defined planning constraints, understanding the overall patterns of development are more instructive than individual buildings. As such 'development types' rather than 'building types' have been used, to account for developments of multiple buildings in addition to single structures.

The list of different development types was created based on the field survey, and is intended to convey the built form of the study area. While these development types may exist elsewhere in the city, this list is intended to convey the characteristics of the specific built form as it exists in Jane Finch.

Where sufficient examples of a given type allow for its analysis within the Jane Finch context, a description of the development type is provided, followed by a summary of their typical locations within the study area. Other types are given more cursory description and analysis. In all cases charts are provided indicating which periods are associated with the construction (or noteworthy modifications) of development types, as well as examples illustrating the types.

- Residential
 - Single Dwellings
 - Subdivisions (Major/ Neighbourhood & Infill)
 - Housing Complexes
 - Apartment Buildings (Towers and Low-Rise)
- Commercial
 - Plazas
 - Shopping Malls (new and expansion of)
 - Other: Medical Centres
 - Other: service stations
- Institutional
 - Schools (new and expansion of)
 - Libraries
 - Healthcare (hospital)
 - Places of Worship
 - Community Centres
 - Parks
- Industrial
 - Industrial Buildings

7.1 RESIDENTIAL

7.1.1 SINGLE DWELLINGS

Description

This development type refers to homes that were built on an individual basis, rather than in relation to larger suburban subdivisions. They reflect rural development patterns, whereby small outside portions of agricultural land were sold for housing. Such areas were usually along existing roads or property lines, retaining the core of the larger property in behind.

In 1942 the federal government established the Veterans' Land Act (VLA) program to allow ex-service members to purchase land with a government loan and small down payment. One of the holding types under the program was part-time farmers / small holders. Originally envisioned to allow holders to supplement income through a market garden, this type evolved to provide land for veterans who wished to live in semi-rural areas.⁴⁸ The single dwelling development process was evident by the early 1950s in the study area (see Figures 12 and 14), and may have been influenced or driven by the VLA.

Single dwellings are low-density single family house forms, displaying ranch-style characteristics, indicative of the larger lots available. They are typically one storey, with low hipped roofs, featuring picture windows, brick and angelstone materials. Despite their similarities single dwellings typically have distinctive designs, symbolizing their construction by individuals rather than developers. They also often differ from neighbouring subdivision properties in terms of form, orientation, lot size and landscaping.

Prevalence in the Study Area

Single dwellings were originally concentrated north of Sheppard Avenue and west of Jane Street. Surviving examples remain at 21 Oakdale Road, 83 and 92 Stanley Road, and 57 Laura Road.

Prevalence over time: Single Dwellings							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Single Dwellings	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	X

⁴⁸ Tricia E. G. Shulist, "My Little Piddly House and All This Land - The Veteran's Land Act in Canada and The Hamilton-Wentworth Region" (MA thesis, McMaster University, 1998), 92-93.

Examples: Single Dwellings		
		
21 Oakdale Rd.	83 Stanley Rd.	92 Stanley Rd.

7.1.2 SUBDIVISIONS

Description

Subdivisions are a low-density development type that comprises large areas of dwellings and their related road systems. Residential subdivisions were created in response to land-use planning and zoning with the study area, designing lot patterns and road networks imposed on previously agricultural, recreational, or fallow lands. As such, subdivisions were critical to establishing new urban fabric within their suburban locations. Subdivisions have a homogenous character, both in terms of land-use and building types. This reflects the land-use planning and zoning context they emerged from, which dictated both land use and density.

Subdivisions are defined by large areas of repetitive houses, which are set on internal road networks rather than arterial streets. Subdivisions include both single family and duplex types. They were usually built out by developers, resulting in stretches or entire areas with identical or similar house forms, types, and designs.

Two broad types of subdivision were identified within the study area:

Major / Neighbourhood Subdivisions - are large subdivisions that were usually the first urban fabric prescribed for their area. They established the local characteristics of the area in terms of lot sizes, orientation, and street layouts. Given their size they often include numerous streets with similar shapes or layouts, sometimes within a hierarchy involving collectors. Examples include subdivision plans M-770, M-1004 and M-1320 (see Figures 18, 26 & 32).

Infill Subdivisions - are more localized subdivisions filling smaller spaces left undeveloped by major or neighbourhood subdivisions. They are typically limited in size, often comprising a street or two, often with cul-de-sacs. Naturally, infill subdivisions followed major / neighbourhood subdivisions, and so tend to be built later.

Typically the house forms of detached and duplex types are one- to two-storeys in height, with split level types being common. Designs range from traditional forms with neo-historical detailing to more modern expressions of massing and design.




Typical materials include brick, angelstone, picture windows and wrought iron railings. Common design tendencies include low roof profiles, round arches, and front porches, sometimes created by recessed sections of the massing. The combination of round-arches, wrought iron and covered porches on subdivision houses is often associated with the influence of Italian immigrants.⁴⁹

Subdivisions rely on interior road networks, usually established by the same subdivision plans that created building lots. The approach to roads responded to local plans, particularly the district plans of 1962 and 1969. Early subdivisions featured interior streets with rectilinear layouts, with straight roads and right angle turns/intersections (see Figure 17). By the mid-1960s however, interior roads the use of curved collector roads becomes a defining characteristic, along with more fluidity in the shape of smaller streets (see Figures 25 and 31).

Prevalence in the Study Area

Subdivisions were typically located away from major arterial streets. This was in response to emerging ideas about land-use planning and zoning, which prioritized higher-density residential uses and commercial uses along arteries. These trends are most clearly conveyed on the District Plan 10's 1969 Land Use plan (see Figure 30), but are also evident on land use plans from 1952 and 1962 (see Figures 16 and 20).

Prevalence over time: Subdivisions							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Major Subdivision	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Infill Subdivision	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓

Examples: Subdivisions		
		
100-106 Shoreham Dr.	Blaney Cres. east to Picaro Dr.	136-134 Topcliff Ave.

49 Alessandro Tersigni, "Toronto's suburban houses are culturally valuable even while reflecting imperfect urban planning," *Toronto Star*, August 17, 2022. https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/toronto-s-suburban-houses-are-culturally-valuable-even-while-reflecting-imperfect-urban-planning/article_d360d15b-3ca5-5a2c-9a42-c04dc8e83cc9.html

Examples: Subdivisions		
		
Northeast from 41 Elana Dr.	East from 136 Firgrove Cres.	67 Blacksmith Cres.

7.1.3 HOUSING COMPLEXES

Description

Housing complexes are medium-density residential developments comprising groups of connected housing units within a shared or common site. Housing complexes reflect conscious efforts to harmonize multiple housing structures within a designed landscape. This contrasts with earlier, usually urban row-housing, most often composed of interconnected repeated dwellings developed along an existing public street system.

Multiple housing structures are a defining feature of the type, always composed of a range of units, including maisonette, back-to-back, and stacked apartments types. At their best, the structures made use of modern layouts and configurations to provide ample accommodation for families within a suburban context. The structures reflect contemporary design trends, integrating conventional domestic materials and concrete within innovative forms that met functional and programmatic needs. The results are contemporary structures, often expressed as geometric volumes while articulating individual units.




Landscape is the other important aspect of housing complexes, especially given the integrated nature of the type. They are found on medium to large sized sites, with typical examples ranging from 3 to 10 acres. Early examples put heavy emphasis on designing landscapes to be contextual and automobile free, defining pleasant pedestrian circulation routes for users. Such sites are organized around considered landscaped pedestrian circulation networks, with most parking underground and limited surface parking. Some housing complexes rigorously adhere to these principles, and some are more functional combining all services and parking at grade. Many demonstrate a combination of surface and underground parking.

Housing complexes were innovative building types in 1960s Toronto, emerging in response to a need for appropriate housing for families. They employed early condominium management structures to allow rental or ownership of individual units within a site that was commonly managed.

Prevalence in the Study Area

Earlier examples were built adjacent to major arteries, but later examples are found along collector streets, particularly along Driftwood Avenue, Grandravine Drive and Shoreham Drive.

Prevalence over time: Housing Complexes							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Housing Complex	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X

Examples: Housing Complexes		
		
12-14 London Green Ct. (Yorkwoods Village)	30 Venetian Cres. (Yorkwoods Village)	5 Shoreham Ct. (Edgeley Village)

7.1.4 APARTMENT BUILDINGS (TOWERS AND LOW-RISE)

Description

The apartment building development type refers to high-density residential buildings. They display a range of sizes and, but are typically expressed as a single massing with entry to units provided via shared common spaces. This differentiates them from housing complexes, which have less density and usually express units as individual, albeit connected, massings. They occupy large sites, often with large parking and landscaped areas.

Apartment buildings were an important means to achieving the densities prescribed by the 1962 and 1969 district plans. As such, despite a slow uptake they were built in high numbers between 1965 and the mid-1970s.

Apartment buildings demonstrate a range of modern styles and materials, including brick, glazed brick, concrete tile and structural concrete. In some cases new claddings have been added over time. The massings are also highly modern in their geometric volumnar tendencies, often enlivened by the balconies of units.

Apartment buildings in the study area can be divided into two categories:

Apartment Building - Tower: these have massings with a clear vertical emphasis, and typically range in height from 8 to 19 storeys. They have highly rectilinear plans. These higher density developments typically feature landscaped areas to provide green space for their residents. Many reflect configurations associated with the “Tower-in-the-Park”, a term for the popular post-war development type combining residential towers with landscaped or park settings.




Apartment Building - Low-Rise: these have massings defined by horizontality, often featuring more complex or meandering plans that frame the landscape or courtyards. These range in height from 3 to 7 storeys.




Prevalence in the Study Area

The siting of high-density apartment buildings was an important consideration in both the 1962 and 1969 district plans. Priority was placed on locations providing access to roads, public transportation and open spaces. The 1969 land use plan is helpful in visualising these priorities in space (see Figure 30).

Most apartment buildings are located on Jane Street or arterials, often adjacent to medium density housing complexes. Two towers off Jane Street were located along the Black Creek valley, and amongst the Driftwood Avenue housing complexes.

Prevalence over time: Apartment Buildings							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Tower	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X
Low-Rise	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X

Examples: Apartment Buildings - Tower		
		
4645-4771 Jane St.	2775 Jane St.	5, 10 & 25 San Romanoway

Examples: Apartment Buildings - Low-Rise		
		
2645 Jane St.	10 Eddystone Ave.	101 Driftwood Ave.

7.2 COMMERCIAL

7.2.1 PLAZAS

Description

Plazas are commercial developments with multiple businesses occupying exposed frontages within a continuous structure. They emerged in North York as a new type of planned shopping centre, favoured over traditional mixed-use commercial buildings which lacked loading areas and off-street parking. Commercial units in plazas are directly accessible from the exterior (in contrast to shopping malls accessed via internal corridors). Plazas feature at-grade parking areas, usually located between the businesses and public right-of-way. Sometimes plazas support secondary office uses above grade. Plazas range in size from one storey strip malls containing several businesses to larger shopping centres containing over a dozen.

The 1962 and 1969 district plans anticipated two principal types of commercial development - Major and Minor/Local commercial. The former was intended to support large shopping sites intended to serve regional areas, whereas the latter were envisioned to serve local customers at the neighbourhood level. Plazas reflect the Minor/Local commercial type, which could either be zoned specifically, but also permitted within residential land uses up to a limited size.

Plazas are typically simple, low-lying structures with a rectilinear plan presenting a continuous elevation of businesses. The elevation is usually fronted by a covered, sometime colonnaded walkway that allows for sheltered access between units. Designs include a variety of modern and contemporary design gestures. Materials are also varied, including brick, sheet metal siding, fieldstone, copper cladding, and shingles (asphalt and cedar) usually over short mansard roofs.

Prevalence in the Study Area

The district plans provided for Minor/Local commercial uses to be zoned specifically or located within residential land uses. In practice all of the study area's plazas are located on arterial streets, with most on Jane Street and the others on the south side of Steeles Avenue West.

Prevalence over time: Plazas							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Plazas	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X

Examples: Plazas		
		
1925-1959 Sheppard Ave. W.	1947-2011 Finch Ave. W.	2512-2546 Jane St.

7.2.2 SHOPPING MALLS

Description

Shopping malls are large commercial developments defined by a single shopping centre containing multiple businesses. They emerged in North York as a new type of planned shopping centre, favoured over traditional mixed-use commercial buildings which lacked loading areas and off-street parking. Unlike plazas, shopping malls are accessed and organized about internal circulation systems. Businesses' frontages are primarily located inside the mall, although certain tenants are afforded direct exterior frontages. Shopping malls are surrounded by very large surface parking areas to support the volume of business that is regional rather than local in scale.

The 1962 and 1969 district plans anticipated two principal types of commercial development - Major and Minor/Local commercial. The former was intended to support large shopping sites intended to serve regional areas, whereas the latter were envisioned to serve local customers at the neighbourhood level. Shopping malls reflect the Major commercial type, which was zoned specifically at the intersections of arterial streets to maximize access.

From a design perspective, shopping malls are wide and low-lying structures. They generally have very functional rectangular massings, with a range of cladding materials including brick and glazing. Signage and other branding features associated with businesses are the main aesthetic features of the structures. As well the major entrances to the mall buildings usually feature distinguishing or otherwise articulate design gestures. It is common for malls to expand over time, expanding their dedicated shopping buildings.

Prevalence in the Study Area

Shopping malls are located at the intersections of arterial streets, strongly reflecting the ideas of land use planning. There are three shopping malls in the study area, with the Jane Finch Mall and Yorkgate Mall located at the intersection of Jane and Finch streets, and Jane Sheppard Mall located at Jane and Sheppard streets.

Prevalence over time: Shopping Malls							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Shopping Malls	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X

Examples: Shopping Malls		
		
2707 Jane St.	1911 Jane St.	1 York Gate Blvd.

7.2.3 OTHER: MEDICAL CENTRES

Medical centres are specialized commercial structures supporting medical businesses and services. The buildings vary in size and reflect a range of contemporary materials and designs. Medical centres are typically located on arterial streets, with larger examples located close to the hospital.

Prevalence over time: Medical Centres							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Medical Centres	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X

Examples: Medical Centres

		
2698 Jane St.	4640 Jane St.	2065 Finch Ave. W.

7.2.4 OTHER: SERVICE STATIONS

No description is provided as service stations are not considered a prominent development type in Jane Finch.

Prevalence over time: Service Stations

	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Service Stations	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓

Examples: Service Stations

	
4000 Jane St.	3900 Jane St.

7.3 INSTITUTIONAL

7.3.1 SCHOOLS

Description

The school development type is focused on elementary, middle and high school sites, for both public and Catholic school systems. The location of schools within the study area was influenced by the plans of 1952, 1962 and 1969. Generally the plans called for schools to be located within the prescribed residential areas. By 1962 middle and high schools were differentiated from elementary schools – the latter were related to planning of residential areas, whereas the former were considered alongside

institutional uses. The 1969 district plan called for middle and high schools to be located on arterial or collector roads. These trends are evident on the 1969 plan's land use map (see Figure 30). That plan also called for public open space adjacent to schools wherever possible.

Schools are a specialized building type, most often two storeys in height with a range of plans. Designed by architects, they usually reflect contemporary building styles. Early examples display strong influences from the International Style, with more expressive modernist examples emerging over time. Early schools are characterized by compositions of brick, large windows or curtain walls, while later examples introduce more complex massings, and diverse cladding, types including masonry block, aggregate panels and metal roofing. Many schools have been modified over time, including alterations to materials and significant expansions to the facilities themselves. School sites also incorporate parking areas and open spaces, which may include sportsfields. In some cases schools are adjacent to public parkland.

In the late 1960s rapid population growth was putting immense pressure on the North York School Board. By 1967 there were over 12,000 students without permanent schools needing to be accommodated using emergency measures.⁵⁰ The problem was exacerbated by the conventional construction tendering process, which was delayed until the detailed completion of design drawings. In 1968 the board implemented a bulk contracting process, that effectively minimized design and construction timelines through the use of contract management services to expedite the tendering process based on initial designs and upset limits.⁵¹

At the same time, a number of school facilities in the study area were designed to permit flexible interior spaces based on an 'open plan approach' to delivering education. These ideas manifested in the primacy of large multi-use open spaces supporting shared aspects of education delivery. Within this system the flexibility of spaces was prioritized, and removable or operable partitions were often used. Courtyards were also commonly implemented to provide access to natural light and outdoor spaces. These ideas were implemented at Yorkwoods Public School, the extension to Driftwood Public School, Shoreham Public School, and Brookview Middle School (formerly Jane Junior High School).^{52, 53, 54}

Prevalence in the Study Area

In accordance with planning ideas, schools are most commonly found in the study

50 "An Experiment in School Construction Project Management North York, Ontario." *Architecture Canada* 45, no. 3 (March 1968): 49.

51 "How the trend to school bulk contracting moves forward in the Toronto Area." *Canadian Builder* 18, no. 9 (Sept. 1968): 33.




52 "Flexible Schools." *The Canadian Architect* 13, no. 9 (Sept. 1968): 58-64.

53 "Shoreham Drive Public School, North York, Ontario." *The Canadian Architect* 15, no. 12 (Dec. 1970): 53-58.

54 "Jane Junior High School." *The Canadian Architect* 14, no. 5 (May 1969): 55-60.

area's residential areas, on collector or local streets, and often adjacent to parkland or other community facilities. Several Catholic schools are located on arterial streets, and a high school is located on Oakdale Road, adjacent to industrial properties and the hospital.

Prevalence over time: Schools							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Schools	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Examples: Schools		
		
Westview Centennial Secondary School	Oakdale Park Middle School	St. Jane Frances Catholic School

7.3.2 LIBRARIES

No description is provided as there are not enough libraries in Jane Finch to ascertain trends of the development type.

Prevalence over time: Libraries							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Libraries	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓

Examples: Libraries	
	
Yorkwoods Library	Jane/Sheppard Branch

7.3.3 HOSPITAL

No description is provided as there is only one hospital in Jane Finch.

Prevalence over time: Hospitals							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Libraries	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X

Examples: Hospitals



Humber River Hospital

7.3.4 PLACES OF WORSHIP

Places of worship comprise purpose-built church structures in the study area. They display a range of modernist design tendencies, with varying materials. Places of worship are typically located on arterial streets, away from major intersections.

Prevalence over time: Places of Worship							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Places of Worship	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X

Examples: Places of Worship



University Presbyterian Church



Northminster Baptist Church






St. Jane Frances Roman Catholic Church

7.3.5 COMMUNITY CENTRES

Community centres are buildings designed to provide recreational or gathering space for residents of a community. Jane Finch contains examples that were both publicly and privately constructed. They vary considerably in style and form, and are typically located on local or collector streets.

Prevalence over time: Community Centres							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Community Centres	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓

Examples: Community Centres		
		
Driftwood Community Centre	Oakdale Community Centre	Former Yorkwoods Village Community Centre

7.3.6 PARKS

Parks are naturalized environments maintained as public recreational spaces. Park types include neighbourhood parks, characterized by large grassed spaces and sports fields, as well as the Black Creek valley lands, which are more heavily treed, and feature pathways as well as open areas. Neighbourhood parks are typically located within residential neighbourhoods away from arterial streets, often linked to school sites.

Prevalence over time: Parks							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Parks	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Examples: Parks		
		
Firgrove Park	Driftwood Park	Topcliff Park

7.4 INDUSTRIAL

7.4.1 INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

This development types refers to buildings supporting a range of industrial uses. They are usually one to two storeys in height, but vary in footprint depending on the scale of operations. Industrial buildings use functional, rectangular massings, and reflect modern design influences in their cladding types and window configurations. Industrial buildings are concentrated on Oakdale Road, Norfinch Drive, and Steeles Avenue West.

Prevalence over time: Industrial Buildings							
	1790s - 1930s	1930s - 1950s	1952 - 1961	1962 - 1968	1969 - 1975	1976 - 1989	1990 - Present
Industrial Buildings	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Examples: Industrial Buildings		
		
100 Norfinch Dr.	4101-4113 Steeles Ave. W.	149 Norfinch Dr.

8.0 SUMMARY OF THE HISTORIC CONTEXT OF THE STUDY AREA

8.1 DESCRIPTION

The study area comprises an 8.75 km² portion of North York bounded by Steeles Avenue West, the Black Creek river valley, Sheppard Avenue West and Highway 400. The Black Creek river valley is a tributary of the Humber River and a major natural feature of the study area defining its eastern boundary. The Finch Hydro Corridor runs east-west through the study area between Norfinch Drive and Black Creek and features a recreational trail. The former concession roads form the area's underlying grid of east-west (Steeles Avenue West, Finch Avenue West and Sheppard Avenue West) and north-south (Jane Street) traffic arteries.

Most of the study area is residential uses, featuring single family, multi-unit and tower buildings. Plazas and shopping malls are found on arterial streets, while light industrial uses are located on Norfinch Drive/Oakdale Road and on Eddystone Avenue. Institutional uses are found throughout the area, with schools and places of worship widely dispersed. Parks are located in the Black Creek river valley and in residential areas.

8.2 DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

The study area developed very rapidly within the context of heavy suburban growth in the post-war years of Metropolitan Toronto. This period coincided with the widespread adoption of urban planning by municipalities as a tool to direct and shape growth, alongside the emergence of new building and development types.

As a result, the vast majority of the study area, including its urban morphology, was almost entirely cast in a short amount of time between the late 1950s and mid-1970s, with strong adherence to plans. It clearly reflects modernist planning ideas from the post-war period combined with conventional and emerging forms of development. It is best understood as a post-war planned suburb in Metro Toronto.

By the 1950s the study area remained entirely rural in character, comprised of agricultural lands set within the grid of concession roads established by township surveys. Amidst rapid post-war growth, North York township prepared a new Official Plan in 1952 to guide development. In conjunction with its corresponding zoning by-law, the 1952 Official Plan prescribed separate land-uses within the study area, one of the hallmarks of modern planning. It also specified corresponding building types. Land-uses were arranged according to prominent elements including the arterial streets, the hydro corridor, Highway 400 and Black Creek river valley.

The following year the municipality of Metropolitan Toronto was incorporated, with a planning board established to provide a regional framework for growth. In 1962, District

Plan 10 was prepared for an area that extended beyond the study area. As the first district plan prepared by the new planning board, it was an important pilot project to implement new ideas about the design and growth of suburban communities. District Plan 10's prescribed land uses fundamentally followed the patterns and principles set out by the 1952 Official Plan, but with additional detail on housing types and new circulation ideas in the form of collector streets.

The district plan was revised seven years later with the 1969 District 10 Plan. It generally adhered to the land-use patterns established in 1952 and carried through 1962, while calling for increased densities along with more multiple-family housing types to achieve them. It also attempted to create new community nodes defined by intentional social and visual centres.

The study area experienced strong growth through the 1960s and into the early 1970s, and so was heavily influenced by the practice of urban planning through official and district plans. As such the study area is a suburb that reflects contemporary, largely modernist ideas about growth and planning.

At the same time that municipal planning was dictating the shape of suburban growth at a land-use level, a number of new building types were being developed in response to modernist planning ideas and emerging suburban contexts. New multi-family housing complexes were first developed in the late 1950s to create new mid-density residential forms, and shopping centres were promoted as an improvement over conventional mixed-use commercial buildings. Residential tower developments increased in size and complexity, often set within generous landscaped sites.

8.3 URBAN MORPHOLOGY AND EXISTING BUILT FORM

The urban morphology and built form of the study area contain the following elements relating to its history as a post-war planned suburb in Metropolitan Toronto:

- Distinct and separate land-uses, organized about the study area's arterial street grid, river valley, hydro corridor, and Highway 400:
 - Residential neighbourhoods, primarily located on interior street networks, and featuring:
 - Subdivisions of single family and duplex homes
 - Housing complexes
 - Institutional amenities (schools, churches, community centres and parks)
 - Arterial streetscapes, lining Jane Street, Steeles Avenue West, Finch Avenue West, and Sheppard Avenue West, featuring:
 - Apartments and apartment towers
 - Housing complexes

- Plazas
- Shopping Malls (exclusively at arterial intersections)
- Places of Worship, Schools and Libraries
- Industrial zones, near Highway 400 and characterized by wide streets with large industrial facilities
- A hierarchy of streets including:
 - The underlying grid of arterial concession roads
 - Local residential streets
 - Curved collector streets providing regular access to arterial roads from local residential streets
- Building types associated with modernist suburban development, including:
 - Housing complexes
 - Apartment towers
 - Plazas
 - Shopping malls
- The use of a range of modernist building styles, including but not limited to the International Style and Brutalism
- High proportion of social housing projects, including the master planned community of Edgeley Village


9.0 IDENTIFICATION OF PROPERTIES WITH HERITAGE POTENTIAL

Based on primary and secondary research, field review, community consultation, analysis and evaluation, the Jane Finch CHRA recommends the following as property having heritage potential. Each property was screened against the criteria in O. Reg. 9/06, taking into consideration: the information provided in Wanda MacNevin's *It Happened Here* (Appendix A) and the significant time periods and themes identified in the Historic Context Statement (Section 5.0).

The following properties have all been screened to meet one or more provincial criteria:


- Driftwood Community Centre (4401 Jane Street)
- York Woods Public Library (1785 Finch Avenue West)
- Former Yorkwoods Community Centre (20 Yorkwoods Gate)

Additional research may determine if a property meets other criteria. Where this is the case, the table indicates 'tbd'.


Driftwood Community Centre - 4401 Jane Street	
Driftwood Community Centre	
Date of Construction	1977 (based on aerial photograph)
Associated Theme(s)	Government & Institutions - Social Housing Community - Community Organizations Arts & Culture - Recreation
Building Type	Community Centre

Screening Against 9/06 Criteria: 4401 Jane Street	
The property displays potential for 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;	Yes: The Driftwood Community Centre's articulated plan, volumnar massing, and use of brick walls, large glazed openings, and standing-seam metalwork is representative of 1970s modernist design.
2. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit;	TBD
3. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	TBD
The property displays potential for 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;	Yes: Driftwood Community Centre was one of the first three community centres in the neighbourhood and has a direct association to the theme of community organization and activism as it is a place for members of the community to meet, celebrate and attend events.
5. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture;	TBD
6. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	TBD
The property displays potential for contextual value because it:	
7. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area;	Yes: Driftwood Community Centre supports the character of the area through a shared scale, modernist aesthetic and massing with the surrounding Edgeley Village buildings, especially Shoreham Public School, another community building located around the central mall.

Screening Against 9/06 Criteria: 4401 Jane Street	
8. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings;	Yes: Driftwood Community Centre is functionally related to its surroundings, as one of the public amenities designed to serve the local residents. While the original community centre was located elsewhere on the original master plan, the Driftwood Community Centre still reflects this functional component of the overall plan.
9. is a landmark.	Yes: Driftwood Community Centre is the location of the Breanna Davy Memorial Garden of Thought. The shooting of Brianna Davy galvanized community organizations to come together to create a reference group to address some of the concerns within the community at available community spaces.

York Woods Public Library - 1785 Finch Avenue West	
York Woods Public Library	
Date of Construction	1975 (based on aerial photograph)
Associated Theme(s)	Government & Institutions - Municipal Government - Borough of North York Community - Community Organizations
Building Type	Library

Screening Against 9/06 Criteria: 1785 Finch Avenue West	
The property displays potential for 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;	Yes: The original portion of the York Woods Library remains a representative example of the Brutalist style.
2. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit;	TBD
3. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	TBD
The property displays potential for 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;	Yes: York Woods Public Library has direct associations to the theme of community organization and activism as it is a place (particularly the theatre) for members of the community to meet and attend events.
5. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture;	TBD
6. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	No: Although Thomas Ibronyi has been identified as the architect, no information about his architectural career has been located during the course of this research. As such it cannot be determined how the York Woods Library reflects his work or ideas or that his work was significant to a community.
The property displays potential for contextual value because it:	
7. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area;	TBD
8. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings;	TBD
9. is a landmark.	Yes: York Woods Library was identified by community members several times as an important place for the community.

Former Yorkwoods Community Centre - 20 Yorkwoods Gate	
Former Yorkwoods Community Centre	
Date of Construction	1965 (based on aerial photograph)
Associated Theme(s)	Government & Institutions - Social Housing Community - Community Organizations & Activism Arts & Culture - Recreation
Building Type	Community Centre

Screening Against 9/06 Criteria: 20 Yorkwoods Gate	
The property displays potential for 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;	Yes: The former Yorkwoods Community Centre is a unique example of neo-expressionist style applied to a local community centre.
2. displays a high degree of craftsmanship or artistic merit;	TBD
3. demonstrates a high degree of technical or scientific achievement.	TBD
The property displays potential for historical value or associative value because it:	

Screening Against 9/06 Criteria: 20 Yorkwoods Gate	
4. has direct associations with a theme, event, belief, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community;	Yes: The former Yorkwoods Community Centre was one of the first three community centres in the Jane Finch neighbourhood and it has a direct association to the theme of community organization and activism as it was a place for members of the community to meet, celebrate and attend events.
5. yields, or has the potential to yield, information that contributes to an understanding of a community or culture;	TBD
6. demonstrates or reflects the work or ideas of an architect, artist, builder, designer or theorist who is significant to a community.	Yes: Klein & Sears Architects are responsible for the design of the Former Yorkwoods Community Centre. Klein & Sears are significant within Toronto's modernist movement, particularly for designing and promoting new, low-cost forms of residential housing and communities.
The property displays potential for contextual value because it:	
7. is important in defining, maintaining or supporting the character of an area;	Yes: The former Yorkwoods Community Centre helps maintain the aesthetic of the adjacent Yorkwoods Village Phases 1 & 2 development through its use of complementary modernist forms clad in white.
8. is physically, functionally, visually or historically linked to its surroundings;	Yes: The former Yorkwoods Community Centre is historically linked to its surroundings, being designed and built as a community centre for residents of Yorkwoods Village.
9. is a landmark.	TBD

10.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 CONCLUSIONS

Through research, fieldwork, and community engagement, this CHRA has identified several important aspects of cultural heritage within the study area. These include a number of built heritage resources associated with the modernist planned suburb, a rich cultural heritage related to the history of diverse cultural communities, and a long-standing tradition of self-organization and political activism. The latter points are social rather than physical in nature, and as cultural heritage, are expressed through intangible processes like art and commemoration, the food in local restaurants, and through the use of gathering sites for social and advocacy purposes.

Conservation of these various aspects of cultural heritage requires several approaches. Where properties of heritage potential have been identified, conservation under the OHA may be appropriate. In these cases cultural heritage values are at least in part related to unique aspects of a site's physical fabric, which could be effectively conserved as identified heritage attributes.

However the OHA is limited to conserving real property, and factors related to use, finances, or tenancy cannot be protected as heritage attributes. As such, the OHA has a limited ability to safeguard social values, which are usually intangible in nature, and expressed through ongoing processes and practices. As an alternative, the concurrent planning initiatives to this CHRA have been considered for any specific tools that can be used to support and sustain the identified intangible processes. In this way, they represent a broader approach to effectively conserving the cultural heritage values identified in the CHRA. These include the Jane Finch Secondary Plan, the Community Development Plan and the Urban Design Guidelines.

Jane Finch Secondary Plan

The Jane Finch Secondary Plan contains several policies that reflect the input received during community consultation meetings, including those conducted for this CHRA. These include policies for the:

- Conservation of buildings and spaces within Jane Finch that are rich in their cultural heritage value.
- Mall and plaza sites at the corners of Jane and Finch which are important community gathering places and home to many community-serving uses and locally owned businesses.
- Public realm network which is comprised of all public spaces and private areas to which the public has access. It includes parks and open spaces, streets and lanes, trails, pedestrian connections and natural areas such as ravines. Public art

should be diverse and reflect the history and vibrancy of Jane and Finch. Public art will facilitate expression of community heritage, community identity, cultural diversity, and community values of pride, sustainability and connectivity, and other themes that will contribute to a sense of place.

- Reflection of Indigenous identity and the local heritage of Jane Finch communities in the design of public spaces and inform the identification of existing public spaces to be conserved.
- Retail built form which encourage small-scale, community-serving retail and services are throughout the Plan Area where retail uses and services are permitted.
- Creation of public art which encompasses a broad range of artistic practices including sculpture, murals, graffiti and street art, video and digital art.
- Development of community service facilities including community recreation centres, libraries, child care, public schools and community agency space for the provision of a range of social services such as public health services, human services, cultural services and employment services.

The Secondary Plan recognizes that community service facilities at Jane Finch play an important part in the area's unique history of community organizing and activism. These places are identified on a map entitled *Places of Importance to the History of Community Organization and Activism*.

The Secondary Plan requires that development on these parcels demonstrate, through a required planning rationale or Site Plan Control application, how it will consider the historical or cultural value of the site in the proposed redevelopment plans. Applicants will be required to demonstrate how they plan to work with the local community to develop an interpretation and/or commemoration response.

Jane Finch Community Development Plan

The Jane Finch Community Development Plan, a companion document to the Secondary Plan, will advance social equity and economic inclusion for current and future residents. It was developed through comprehensive engagement with local communities, with a focus on Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving groups including but not limited to seniors, newcomers, persons with disabilities, 2SLGBTQ+ residents, youth, children, local businesses, groups and non-profit organizations.

The Community Development Plan is guided by three core principles -- Indigenous reconciliation; equity for Black and other deserving groups; and resources, partnerships and engagement. It includes:

- An anti-displacement strategy for residents and businesses
- Policies to support the continuity of small-scale, independently owned, locally

serving businesses and create opportunities for people to access flexible, attainable, affordable spaces where new and existing businesses and social enterprises can grow and thrive.

Jane Finch Urban Design Guidelines

The Urban Design Guidelines provide recommendations for the:

- Natural heritage system including Black Creek Ravine and its adjacencies.
- Public Realm with specific reference to parks and open spaces as well as the Hydro Corridor as a possible location for public art or educational plaques.
- Public and Signature Squares.
- Public Art with specific reference to areas that offer opportunities for ‘signature’ art, including:
 - Gateway by Highway 400 as an entry to the neighbourhood
 - Large sites such as Jane-Finch Mall, Yorkgate Mall and Jane Sheppard Mall, in particularly the corner locations
 - Ravines and trailheads to celebrate the Huron-Wendat trail and natural heritage system.
 - At community hubs such as the York Woods Library and Theatre
 - Black Creek Community Farm

Commemoration, Interpretation & Public Art

During the community consultations for this CHRA, many participants indicated a desire for public art, interpretation and commemorations as a way to celebrate the history of the area. These comments have been captured in the meeting notes from the Heritage Focus Group and Community Advisory Committee meetings as well as the five cultural heritage interviews with local residents.

The comments touch on places, topics, and types of commemoration as well as the process and people involved in making determinations about commemoration.

Murals were identified several times throughout the CHRA process. Specifically:

- Creating opportunities for new murals, but also protecting murals if buildings are demolished.
- Identifying locations for murals at Steeles Avenue and Jane Street, as well as at Corner Commons.

Local leaders and role models was another common theme related to commemorations. Specifically:

- Community leaders from organizations such as Northwood Neighbourhood Services, Jane Finch Community and Family Centre, Jane Finch COncerned

Citizens ORganization and ACORN should be recognized for their contributions and promoted as role models.

- Notable individuals from the area such as Anthony Bennett (NBA player), Winston LaRose (Local Activist) and Jully Black (Singer, Songwriter, Actress) should be recognized
- Community leaders and notable individuals could be recognized at malls, community centres or through a Jane Finch Walk of Fame

Celebrating cultural diversity including the ethnic diversity was identified as important. Specifically:

- A recognition of the Vietnamese community through a plaque.
- The importance of music including Hip Hop and Steel Pan music.

The role of arts and artists was also noted as significant. Specifically:

- Involving local artists to creatively commemorate community movements, events and leaders.
- The need to conserve the works of notable artists who created the murals, statues and signage in Jane Finch.

The Secondary Plan contains policies for public art, and Urban Design Guidelines identifies opportunities for public art locations. Prior to planning of future public art, interpretation or commemoration projects, it is recommended that the CHRA recommendations as well as the meeting notes for the HFG and the CAC be referred to and referenced.

10.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided to conserve, interpret and commemorate the cultural heritage values identified in this CHRA. They reflect the various approaches, tools, and legislation that have been considered as the most effective means to conserve the study area's diverse cultural heritage values.

10.2.1 PROPERTIES MERITING INCLUSION ON THE HERITAGE REGISTER

As outlined in Section 9.0, the following properties have been identified as meriting inclusion on the Heritage Register. Although these properties have all been screened to meet two or more provincial criteria (O. Reg. 9/06), they may have additional values as determined through further research. These are:

- Driftwood Community Centre (4401 Jane Street)
- York Woods Public Library (1785 Finch Avenue West)
- Former Yorkwoods Community Centre (20 Yorkwoods Gate)

10.2.2 PROPERTIES FOR FUTURE STUDY

The Jane Finch area is notable for the number of housing complexes and social housing developments it contains. Several of these amount to planned communities in their own right – Yorkwoods Village and Edgeley Village. Considering the complex histories of these sites, and their landscape scales, further study is recommended for these sites to determine whether they merit conservation, and if so under what mechanism.

Both sites were designed in the 1960s as considered modernist landscapes designed to provide affordable housing. Yorkwoods Village was a privately developed community, comprising four phases of housing complexes arranged in intentionally landscaped sites, with associated community features including a community centre and plaza. It used emerging multi-family housing forms with condominium tenancy models to promote affordable home ownership options.

Edgeley Village on the other hand was a public initiative. It was designed to provide social housing alongside developer-built private housing within a master planned community that also included schools, seniors' housing, churches, shops, a community centre, and parks. It also relied on emerging housing complex forms, in addition to other building types set within the overall landscape.

Both sites reflect contemporary design and modernist planning ideas, employed at a landscape if not neighbourhood scale. However over time several of these very ideas have attracted criticism, and even prompted efforts for substantial revision. In 1987 Edgeley Village was the subject of a redesign study by planner Alan Littlewood. His proposed solution rejected a number of modernist planning principles in favour of more conventional urban forms.⁵⁵ While the proposed changes were never implemented, they raise challenging questions for conservation approaches. On these sites, it is imperative to understand with great nuance the relationship between the physical fabric, and the potential underlying heritage values. This is necessary to avoid a situation where an overly strict material bias negatively impacts a site's long term resilience.

As such additional study is recommended to inform decisions on conservation for these sites. Research should confirm how the sites' designs relate to the theme of social housing. The analysis will need to be complemented by meaningful stakeholder engagement to determine how the communities value the area. This input should inform a decision on the cultural heritage value of these properties as well as the appropriate conservation approach - whether it is designation under the OHA, undertaking a cultural heritage landscape study, or applying other planning tools.

⁵⁵ Sewell, pp. 224-229.

10.2.3 TYPOLOGIES FOR FURTHER STUDY

The Jane Finch area is also notable for its concentration of residential towers. Many are high-rise residential buildings set within green spaces, reflecting the characteristics of what is popularly referred to as the ‘Tower-in-the-Park’. This type of development was extensively built in post-war Toronto, and can be found throughout the city’s downtown, midtown, and suburban contexts.

The ‘Tower-in-the-Park’ has received much interest as an urban resource over the last two decades.^{56,57,58} Description has focused on its historical context and how the development type reflected modernist planning ideas as high-density residential structures situated adjacent to a landscaped or park setting.

While this configuration makes the type obvious and easily recognized, its defining features tend to be general in nature and specific details about the ‘Tower-in-the-Park’ remain undeveloped. The towers themselves are generically defined, and include both slab and point massings. Towers lack differentiating styles, with aesthetics largely determined by their concrete structural systems.⁵⁹ While a green setting is understood as critical to the type, specific details about landscape form, design, plantings and amenities remain undefined.

From a heritage planning perspective, such details are essential to establishing the parameters that first define a specific typology, and then provide a basis for comparing different examples to determine whether a property has heritage value.

As such, a typology study of the ‘Tower-in-the-Park’ is recommended to better understand the defining characteristics of the type within the context of Toronto. The study should provide a basis for understanding where potential heritage values lie within these sites, how to best identify significant examples, and how they can most appropriately be conserved.

56 Graham Stewart, “The Suburban Tower and Toronto’s Legacy of Modern Housing,” *Docomomo Postwar Mass Housing* 39 (September 2008), pp. 22-29.

57 E.R.A Architects and University of Toronto, *Mayor’s Tower Renewal* (The City of Toronto: 2008), p.16.

58 Michael McClelland and Graham Stewart, eds., *Concrete Toronto: A Guidebook to Concrete Architecture from the Fifties to the Seventies* (Toronto: Coach House Books, 2007), p.212-215.

59 *Mayor’s Tower Renewal*, p.16.

11.0 FIGURES

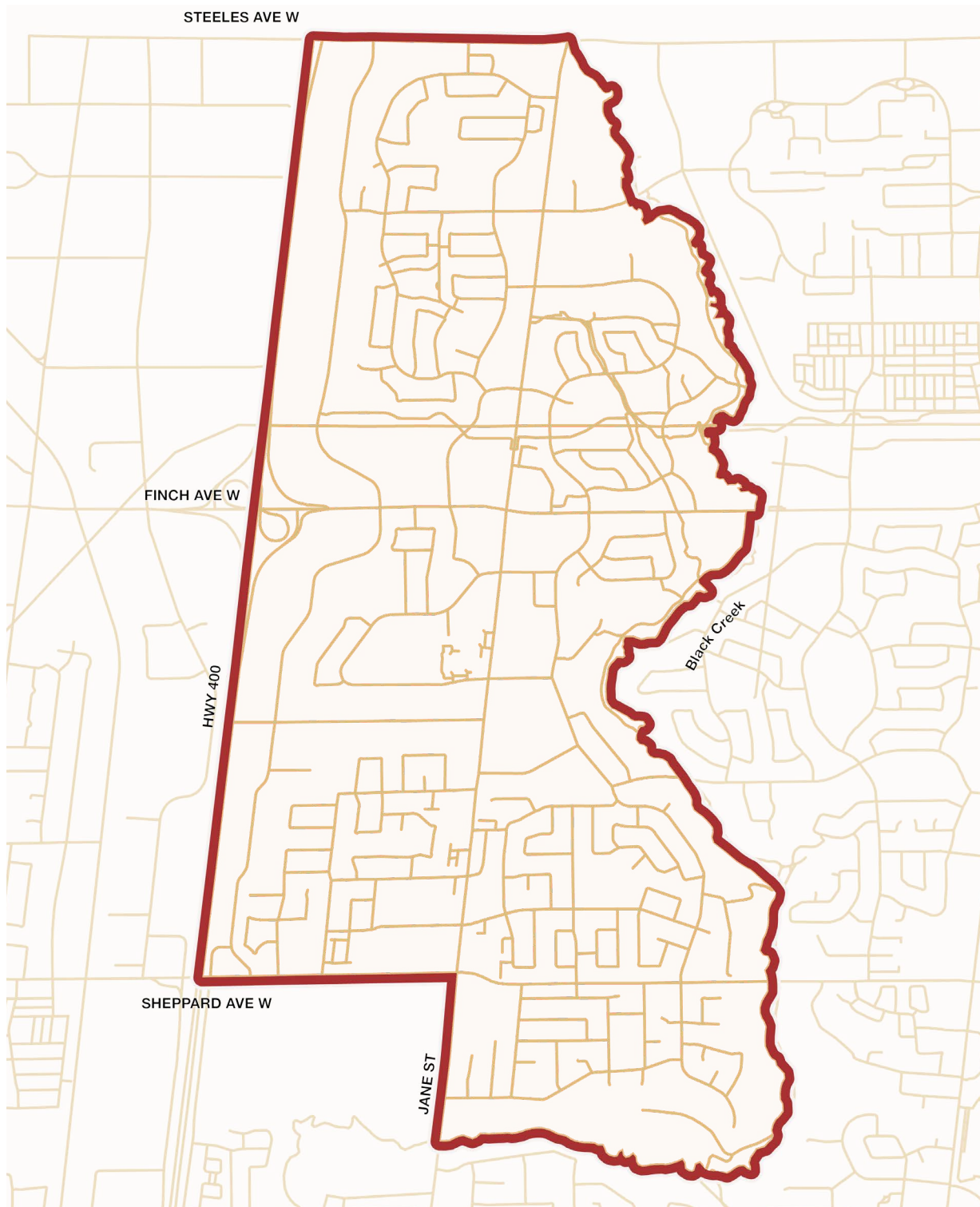


Figure 1: The Jane Finch CHRA study area outlined in red (City of Toronto & CBCollective, 2022).

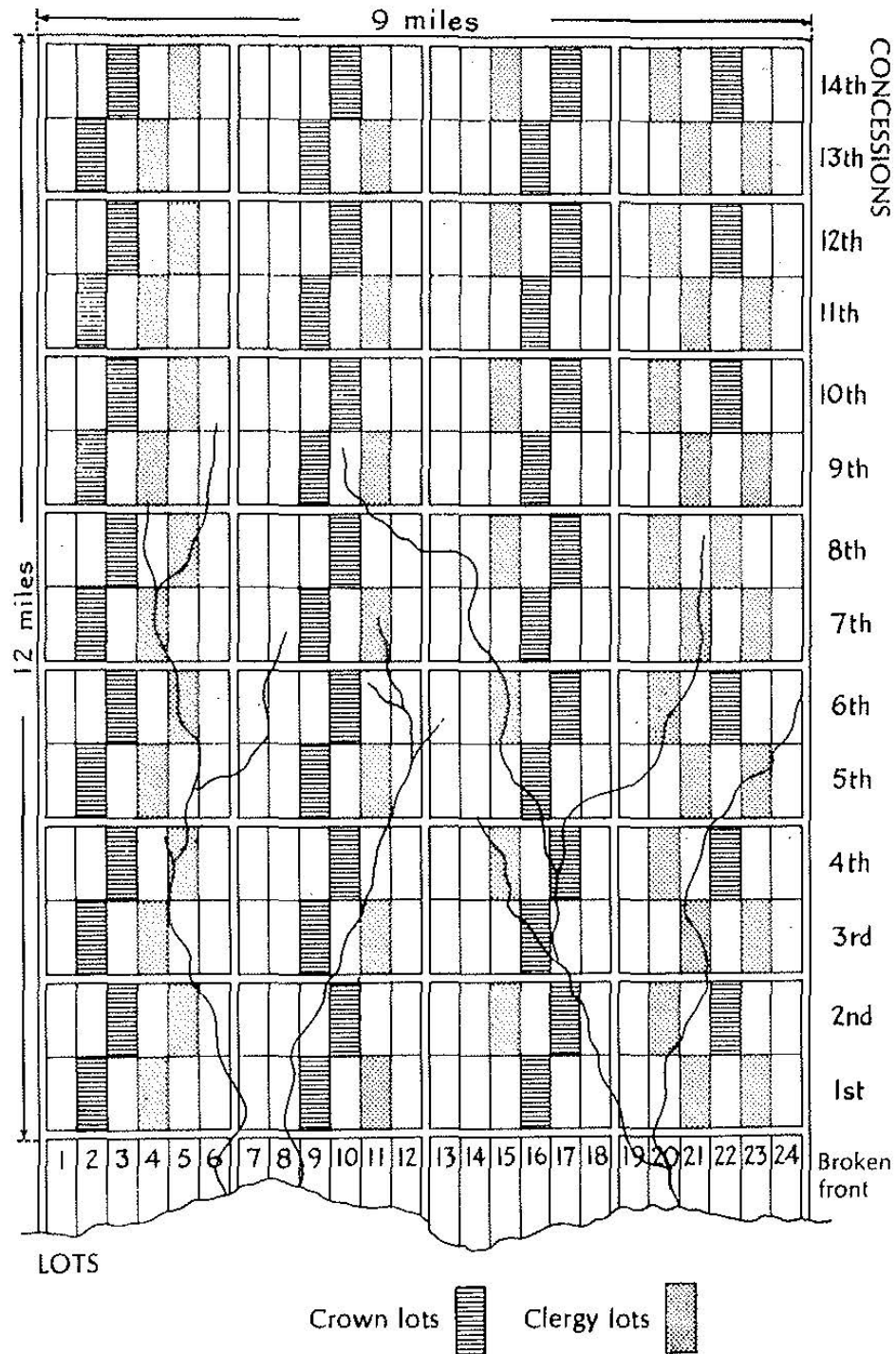


Figure 2: A diagram of the 'chequered plan' which was used across Ontario when surveying townships (Kalman, A *History of Canadian Architecture*, p. 41).

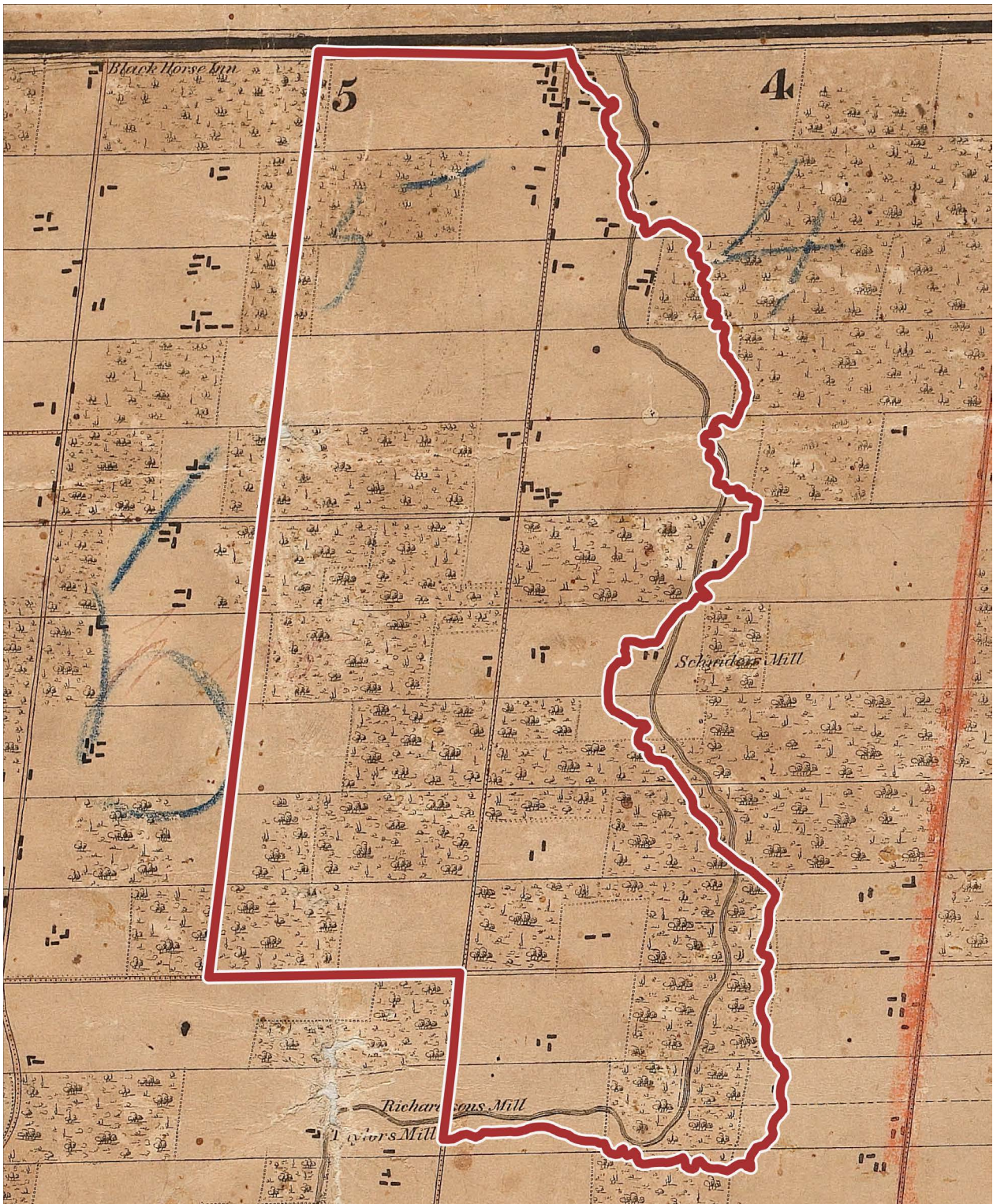


Figure 3: The original 200-acre farm lots and clusters of buildings in the study area are depicted in this 1851 map (City of Toronto Archives; Common Bond Collective 2022).

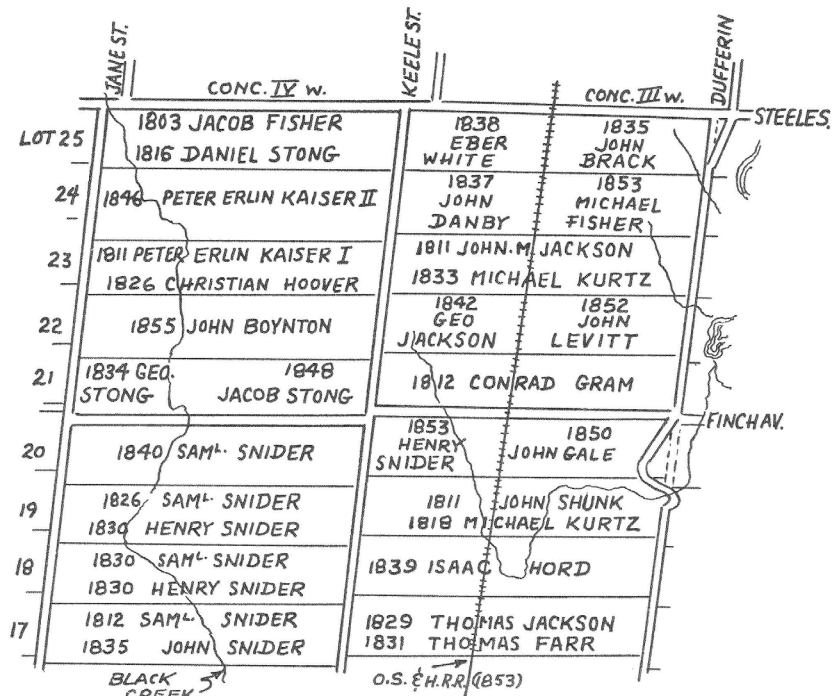


Figure 4: The community of Elia developed around Concession IV, Lots 17-25 on both sides of the Black Creek (Hart, *Pioneering in North York*, p. 214).

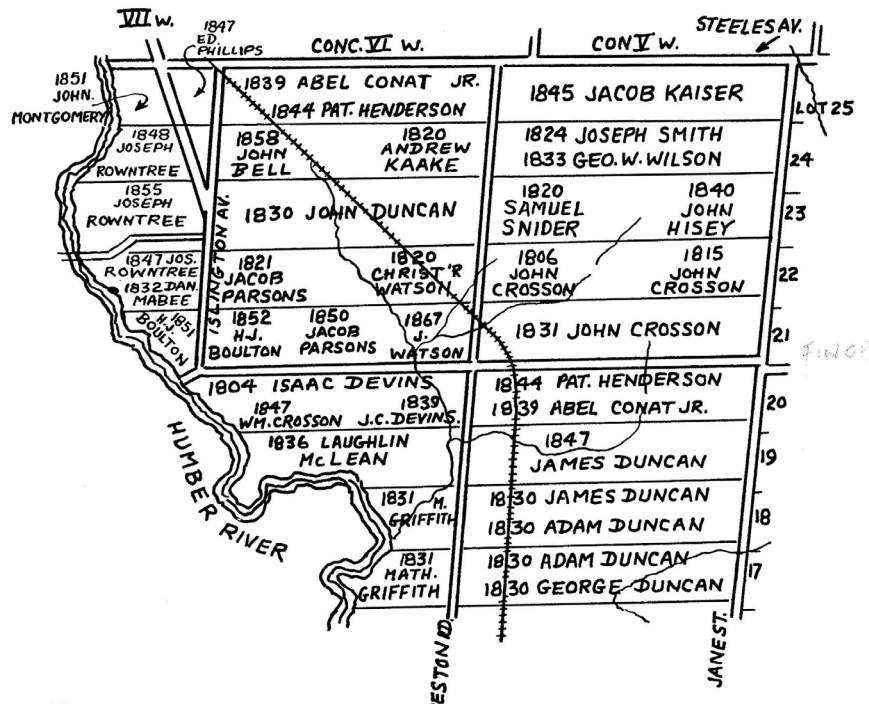


Figure 5: The community of Emery developed around Concession V, Lots 17-25 to the west of Jane Street (Hart, *Pioneering in North York*, p. 220).



Figure 6: The Crosson house at the northwest corner of Jane Street and Finch Avenue, c.1878 (*Toronto Public Library: NYHS00651*).



Figure 7: The Snider Farm, c1930. The study area remained largely agricultural into the 1930s (*Toronto Public Library: R-6548*).

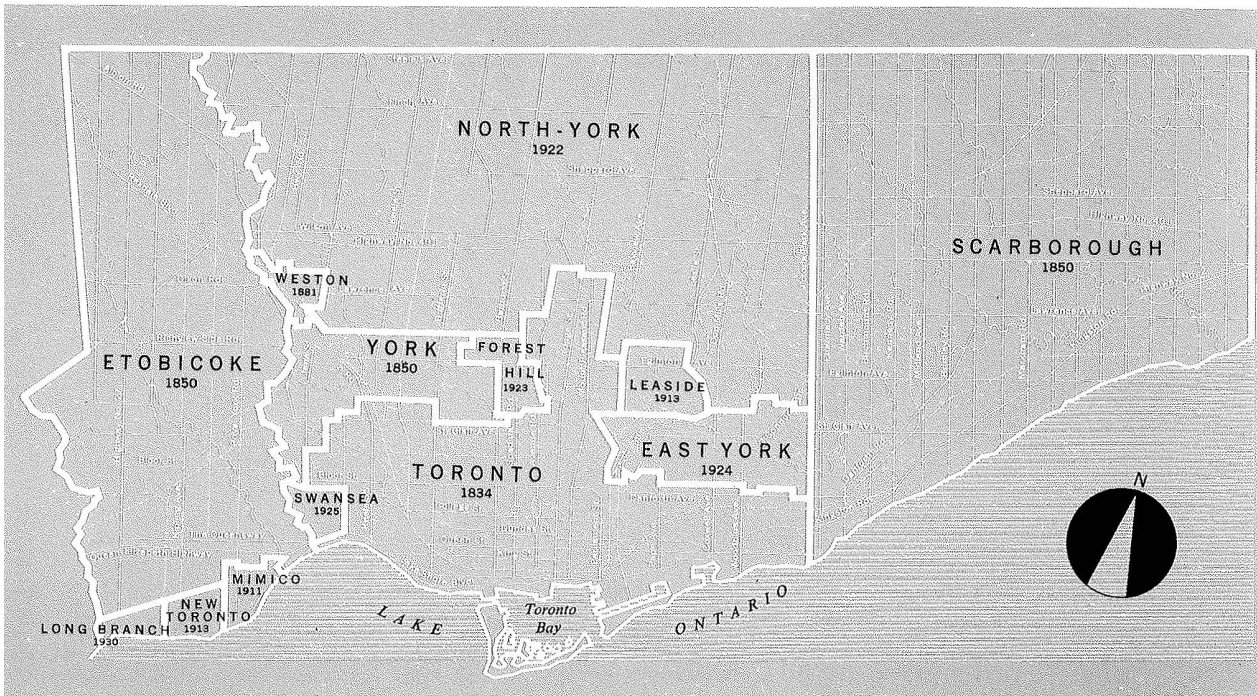


Figure 8: Map showing the boundaries of North York that was created out of York Township in 1922 (*Metropolitan Toronto 1953-1963: Ten Years of Progress*, inside cover).

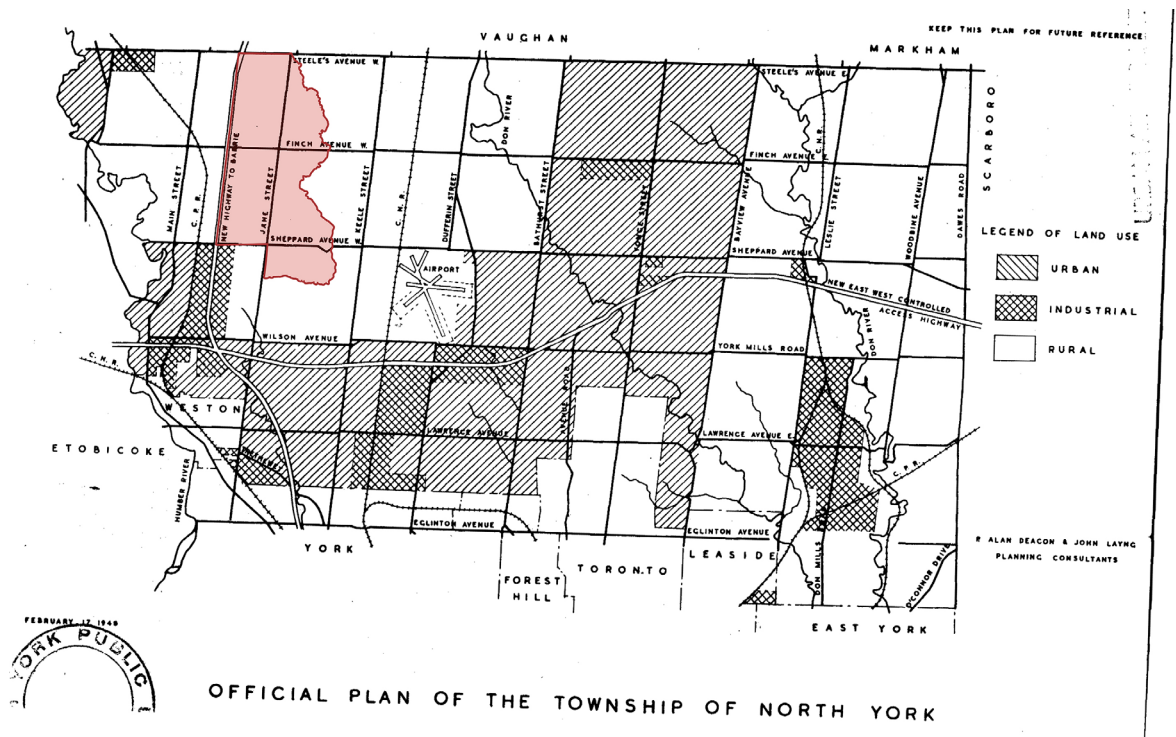


Figure 9: The land use plan from the Township of North York's 1948 Official Plan. The study area is shaded red and identified as maintaining rural land use (*Township of North York Report of the Planning Board, March 1948; Common Bond Collective 2022*).



Figure 10: 1959 aerial photograph centred on Finch Avenue and Highway 400, showing the transmission towers of the Hydro Electric Power Corridor in the top right (*City of Toronto Archives*).



Figure 11: c.1960 archival photograph of Black Creek Pioneer Village, shortly after its official opening (*City of Toronto Archives*).

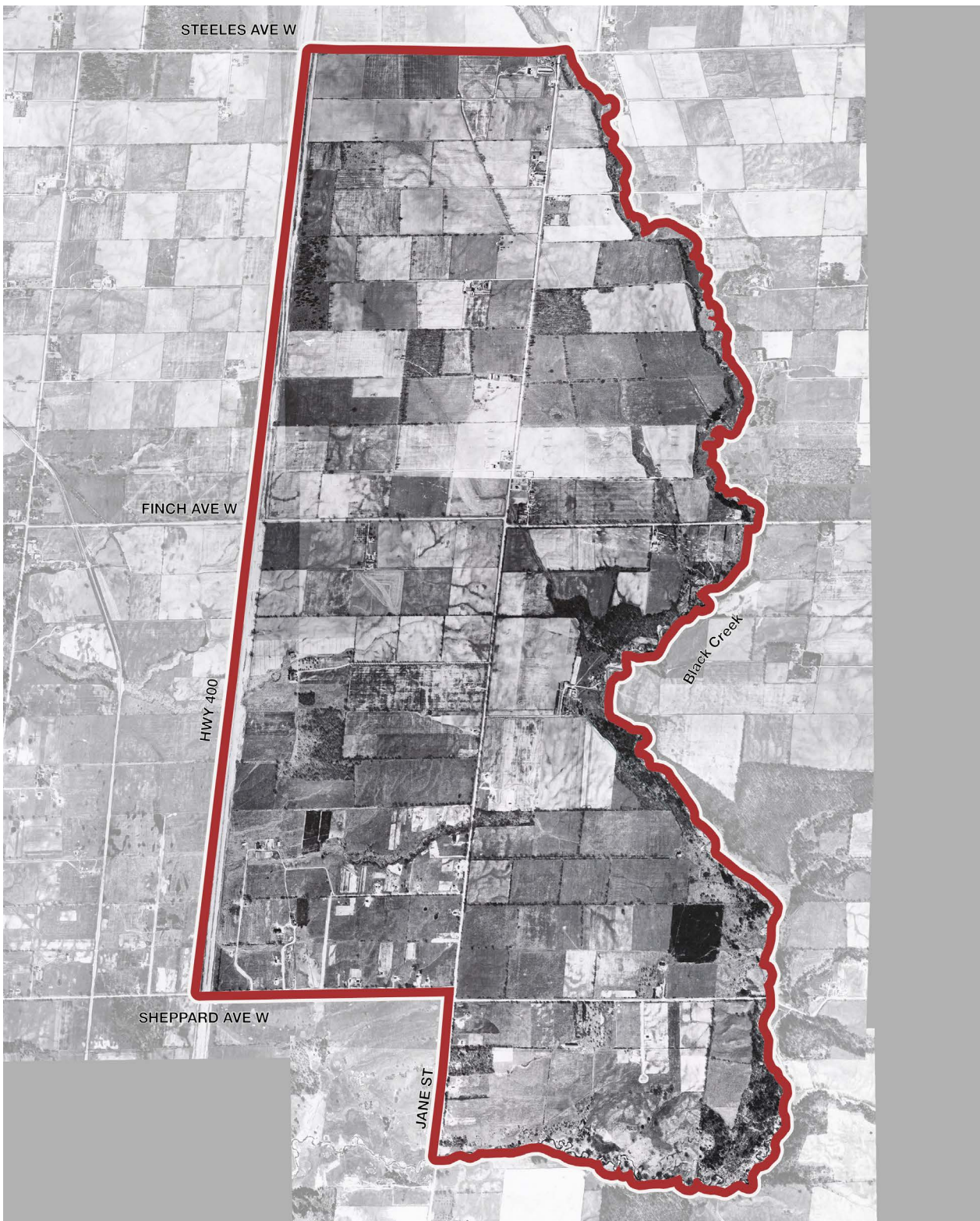


Figure 12: 1950 aerial photograph showing the study area's agricultural makeup (City of Toronto Archives; Common Bond Collective 2022).



Figure 13: 1957 archival photograph showing the study area's rural character looking north up Jane Street from Finch Avenue West (*City of Toronto Archives*).



Figure 14: 1953 aerial photograph showing individual houses northeast of the Jane-Sheppard intersection and their rural character (*City of Toronto Archives*).

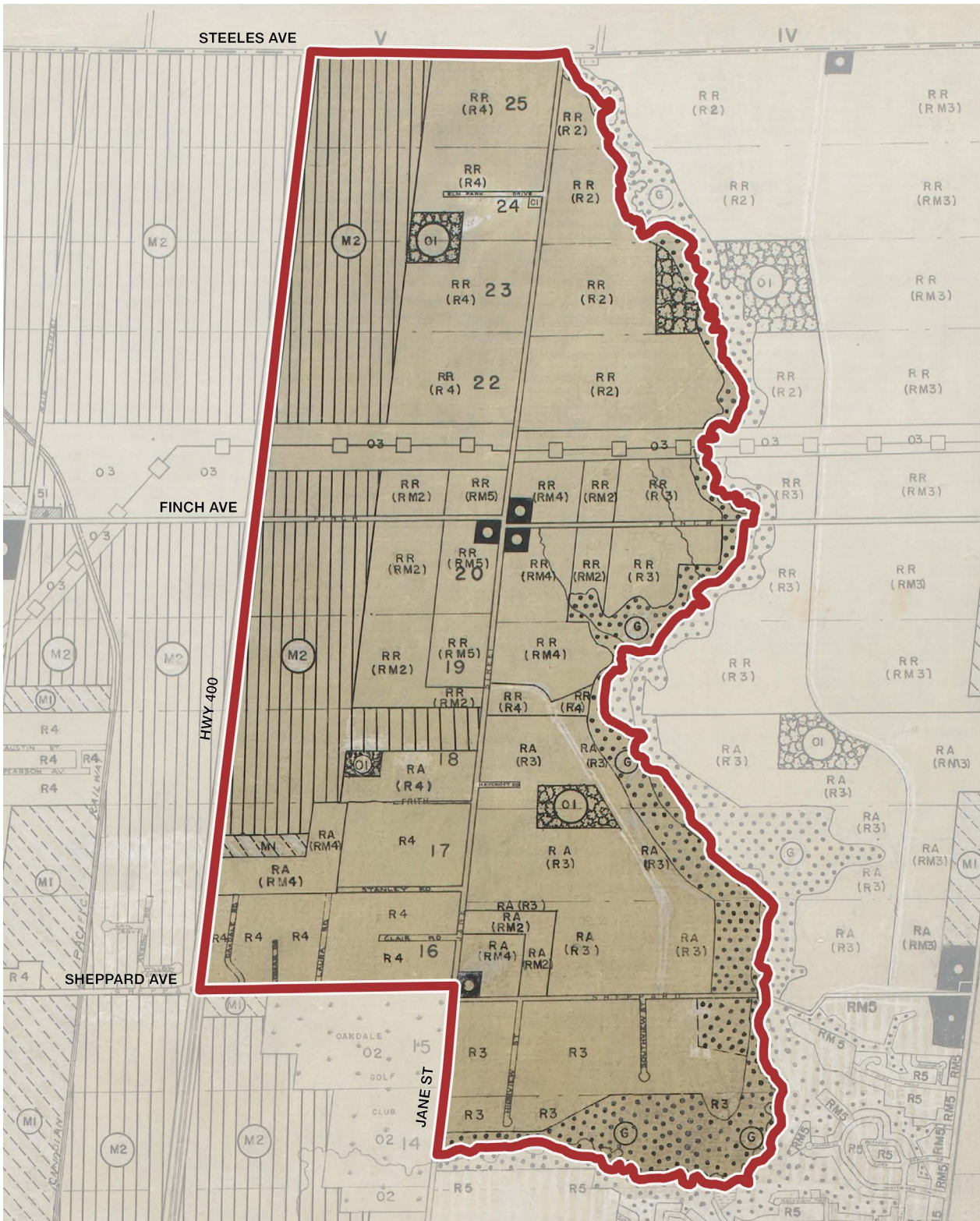


Figure 15: The 1952 North York zoning bylaw within the study area. RM refers to multiple-family residential zoning, with higher numbers equating to higher densities (*City of Toronto Heritage Planning; Common Bond Collective 2022*).

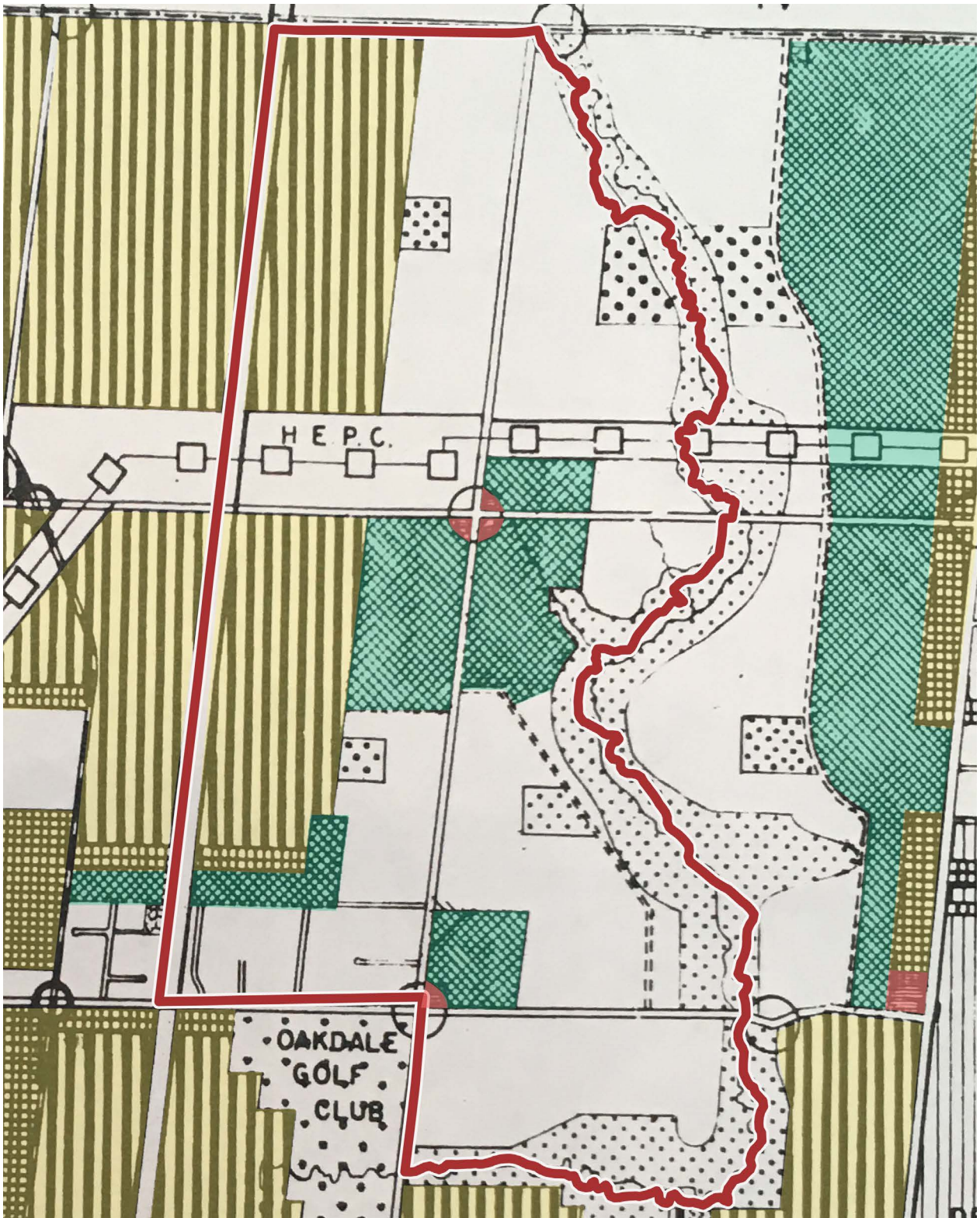


Figure 16: The land use map from the 1952 Official Plan. Colours have been added to help identify different land uses - manufacturing and yard storage are shaded yellow; planned shopping centres are shaded pink; and multiple family dwellings are shaded green. Blank areas are one family dwellings and fine dots indicate greenbelt zones (*City of Toronto Heritage Planning*).

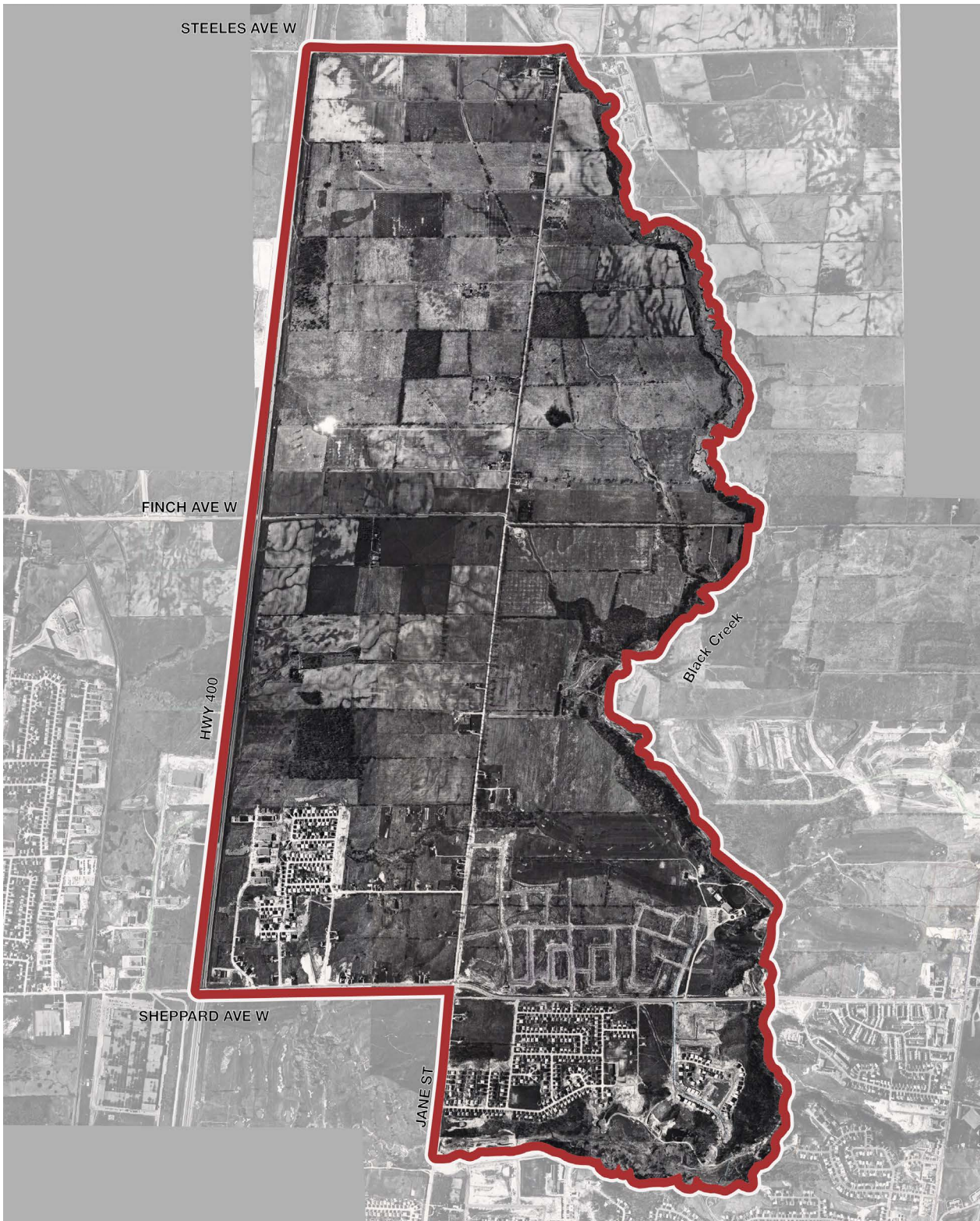


Figure 17: 1961 aerial photograph showing the residential development in study area's south end up to that point (*City of Toronto Archives; Common Bond Collective 2022*).

ORIGINAL
1/30

PLAN OF SUBDIVISION OF
PART OF LOT 17, FIFTH CONCESSION, WEST OF YONGE STREET
TOWNSHIP OF NORTH YORK
COUNTY OF YORK
SCALE 1" = 100'
M.B. WONG O.L.S. 1958

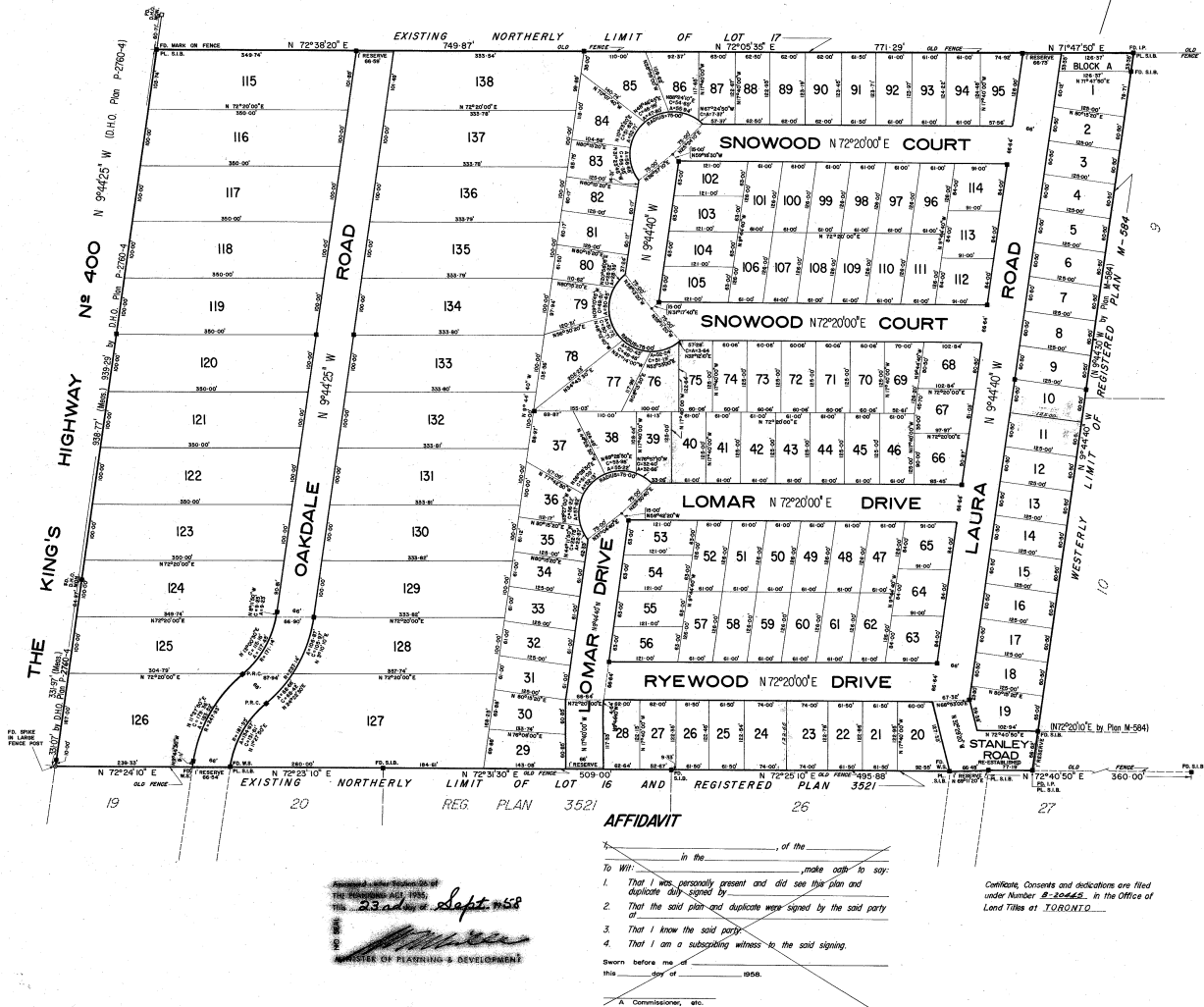


Figure 18: Detail from 1958 plan of subdivision M-770 showing industrial lots along Oakdale Road on the left side, east of residential lots on the right, reflecting the general land use principles (Onland).

COMMON
BOND
COLLECTIVE

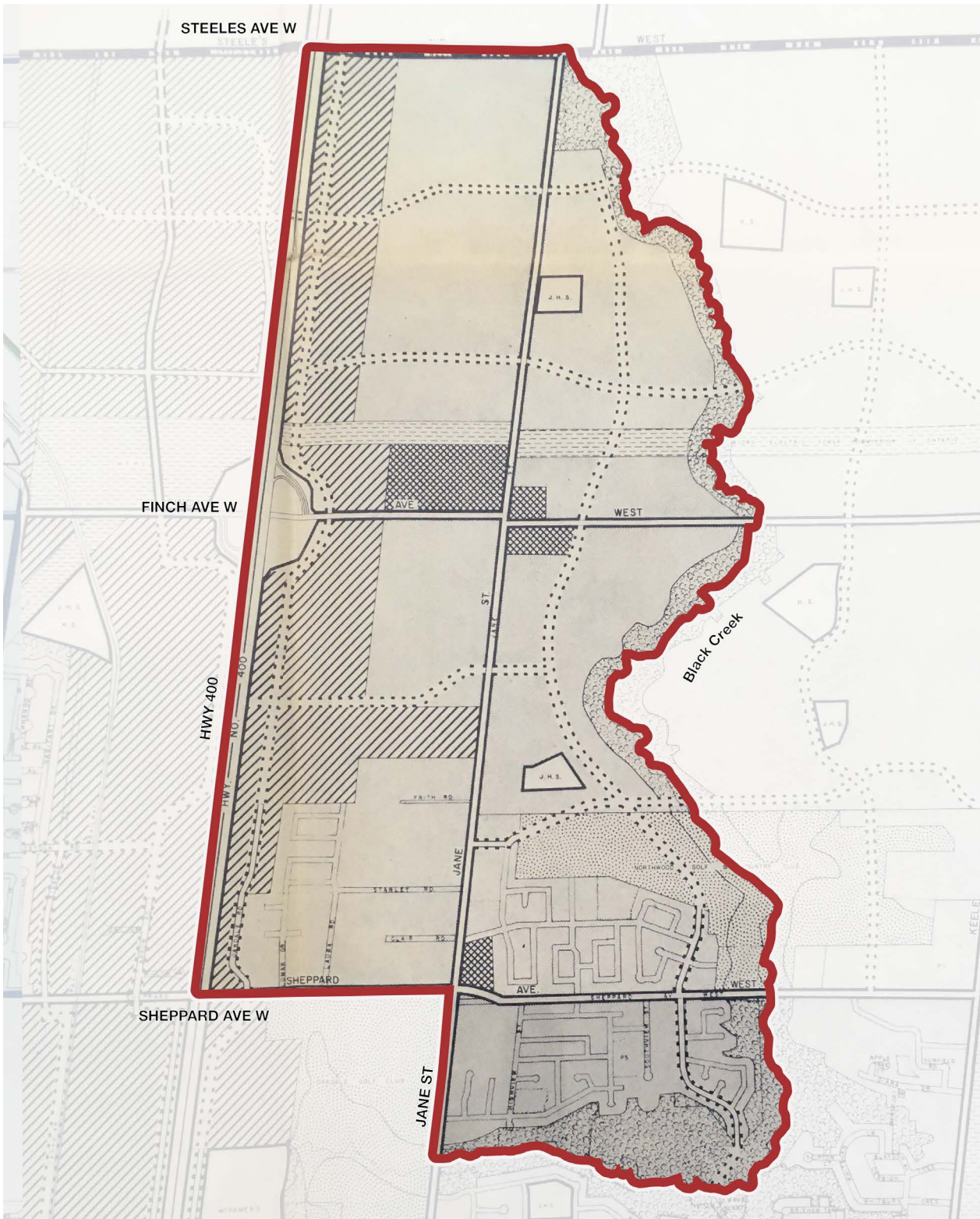


Figure 20: Land Use map from the 1962 District Plan 10. Single hatched areas are industrial, cross hatches are commercial, and blank areas are residential (*Toronto Public Library*).

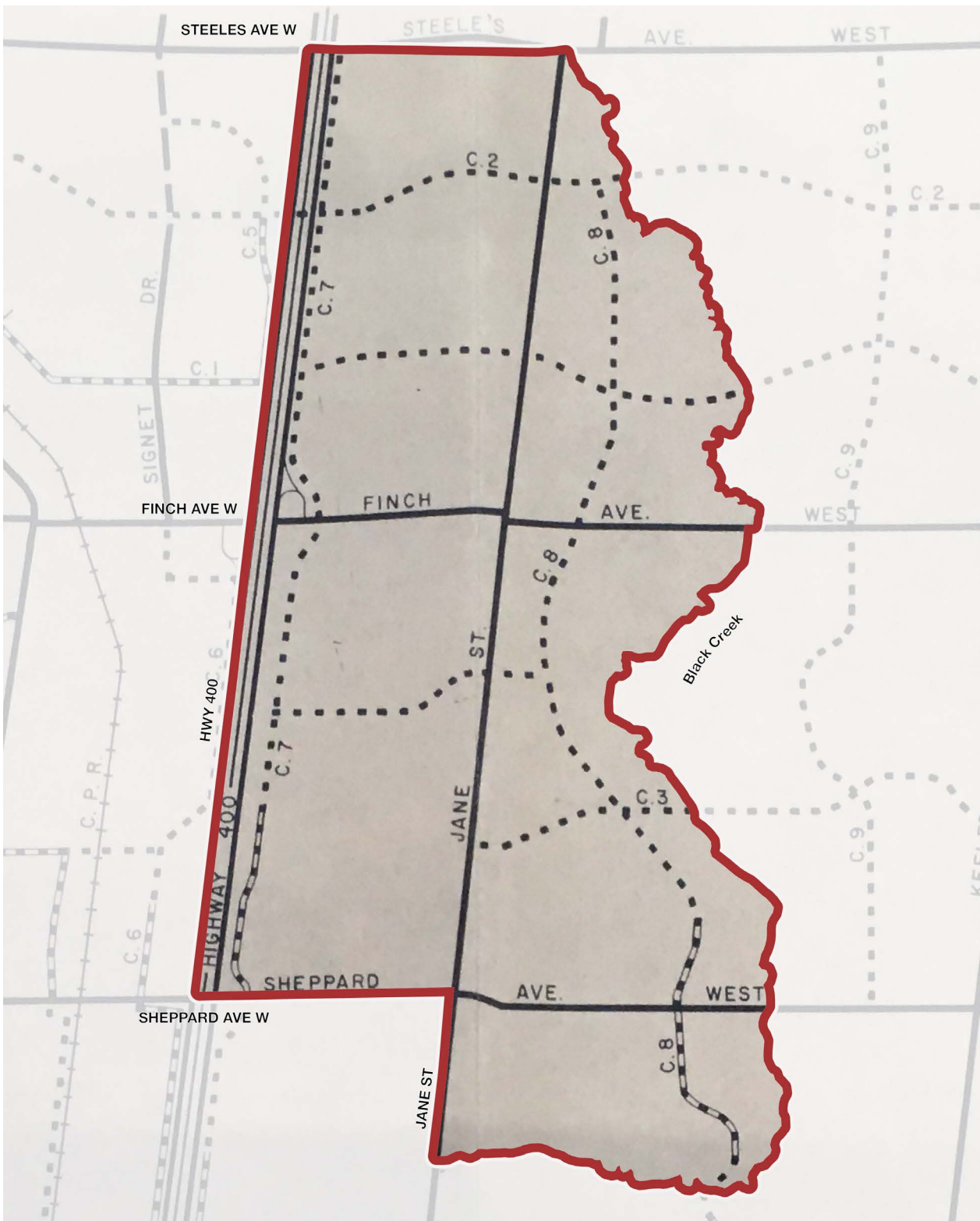


Figure 21: Road Plan map from the 1962 District Plan 10. Arterial streets are solid single lines, whereas the collectors are shown in dashed lines in a schematic fashion (*Toronto Public Library*).

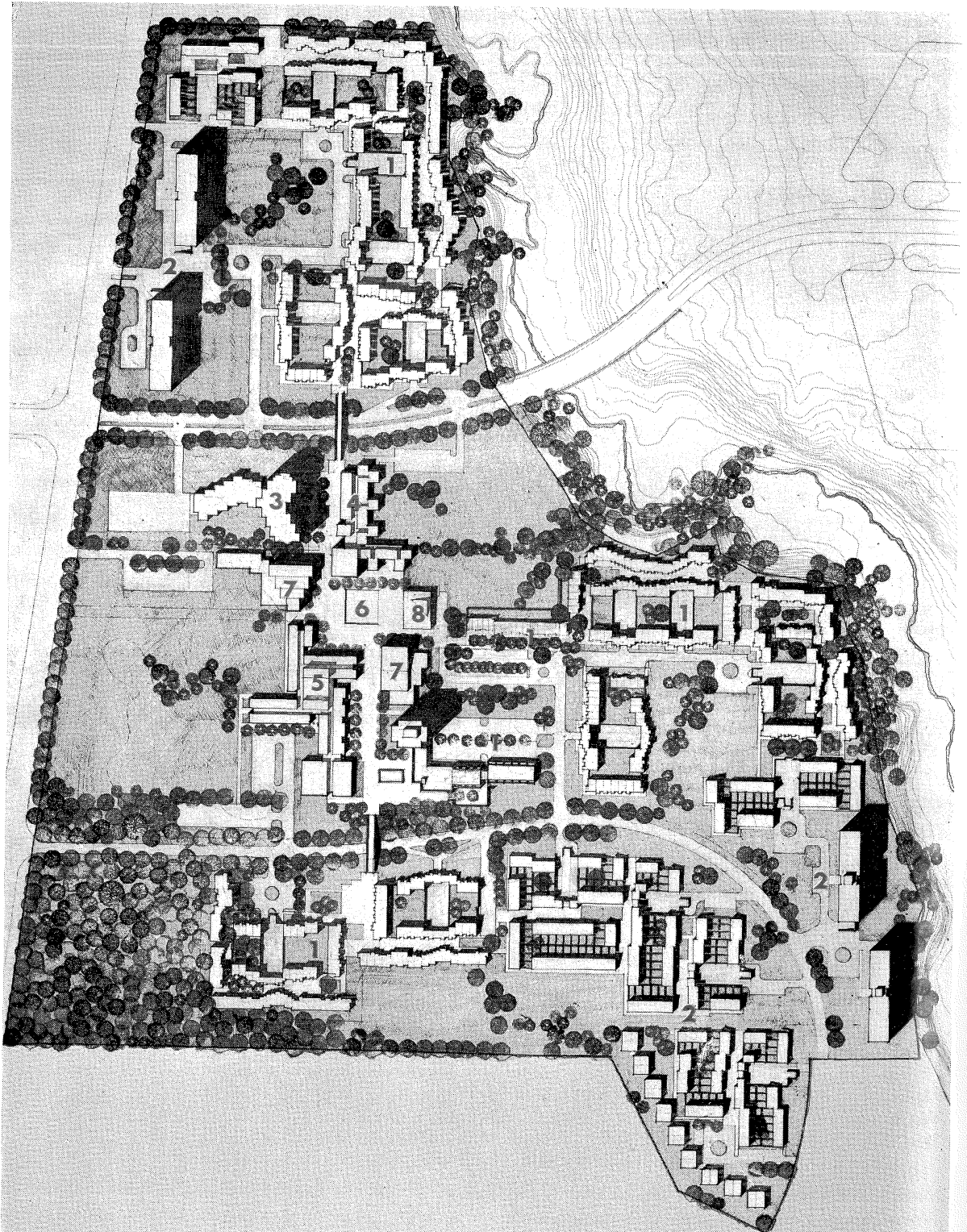


Figure 23: 1967 site plan for the Edgeley site, showing alternating blocks of public and private housing, surrounding the central community area. Number correspond to the following: 1-Public Housing; 2-Private Housing; 3-Elderly Persons Housing; 4-Elementary School; 5-Junior High School; 6-Central Mall; 7-Church; 8- Community Centre (*The Canadian Architect*, November 1967).

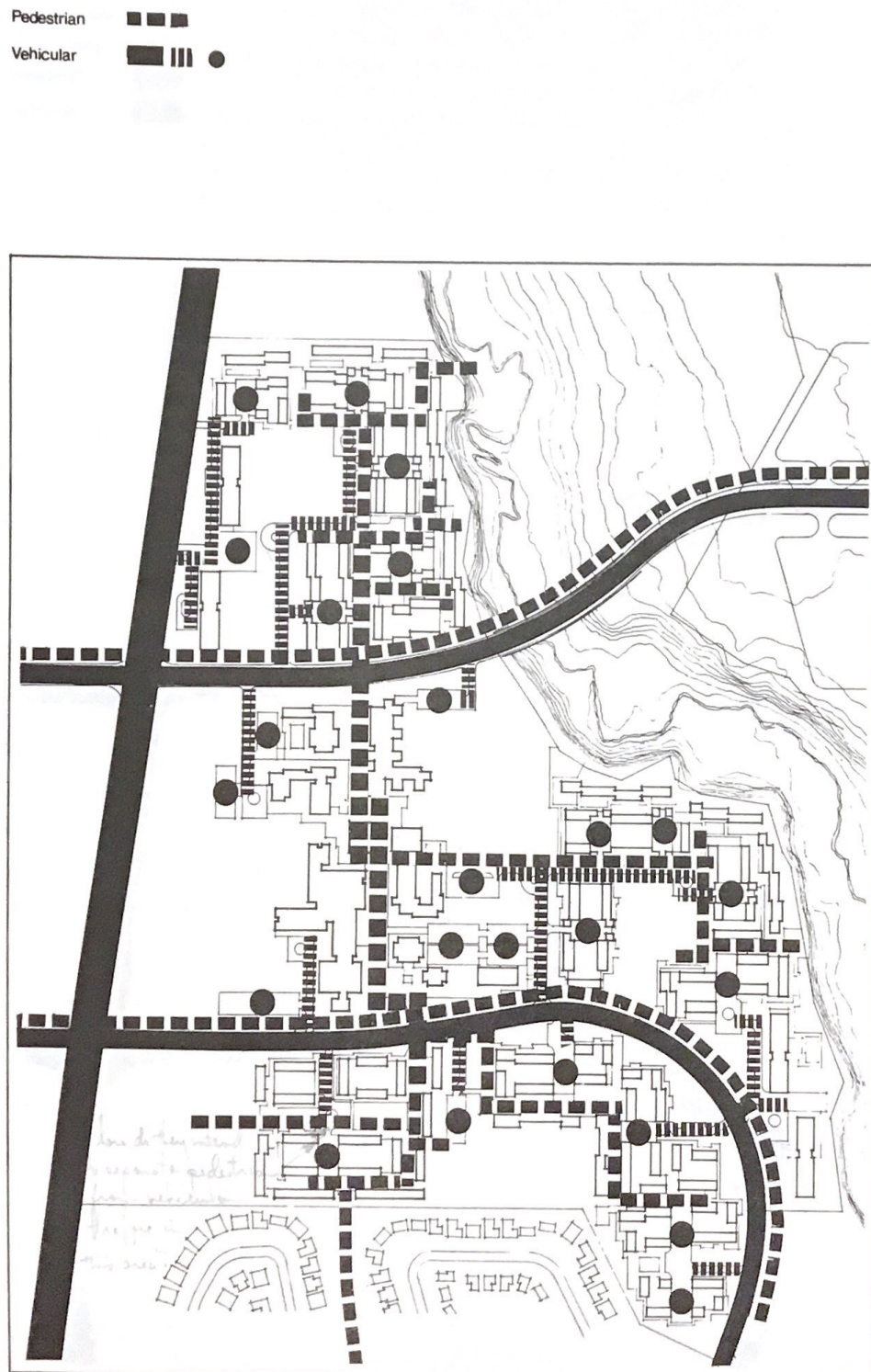


Figure 24: Circulation plan for the Edgeley site, showing the intended separation between pedestrian (dashed lines) and automobile (solid lines) networks (City of Toronto Heritage Planning).

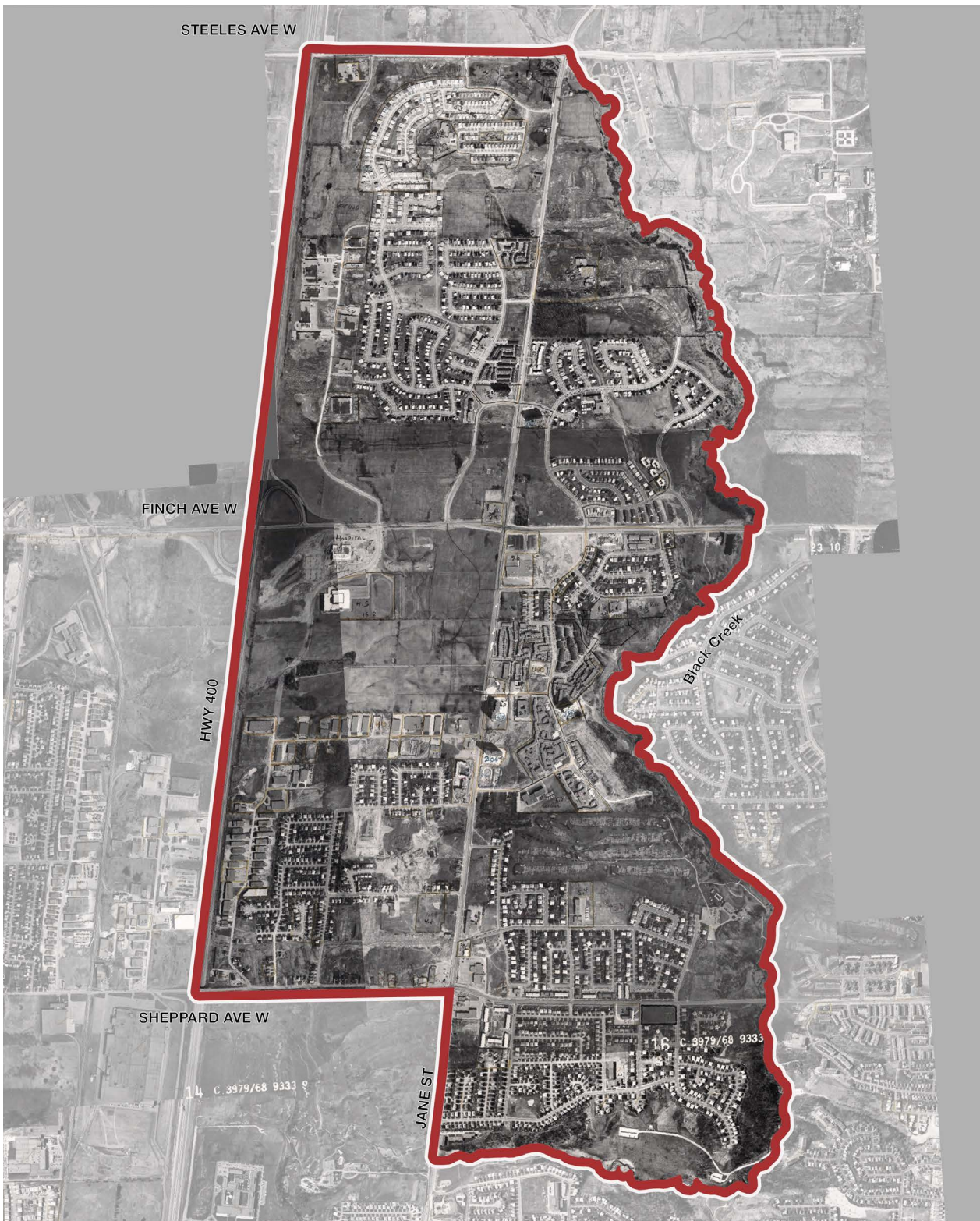


Figure 25: 1968 aerial photograph showing the influence of the 1962 District Plan 10 on the study area. The newer subdivision north of Finch Avenue West show an adherence to the collector system concept that is lacking in those built earlier at the south end (*City of Toronto Archives; Common Bond Collective 2022*).

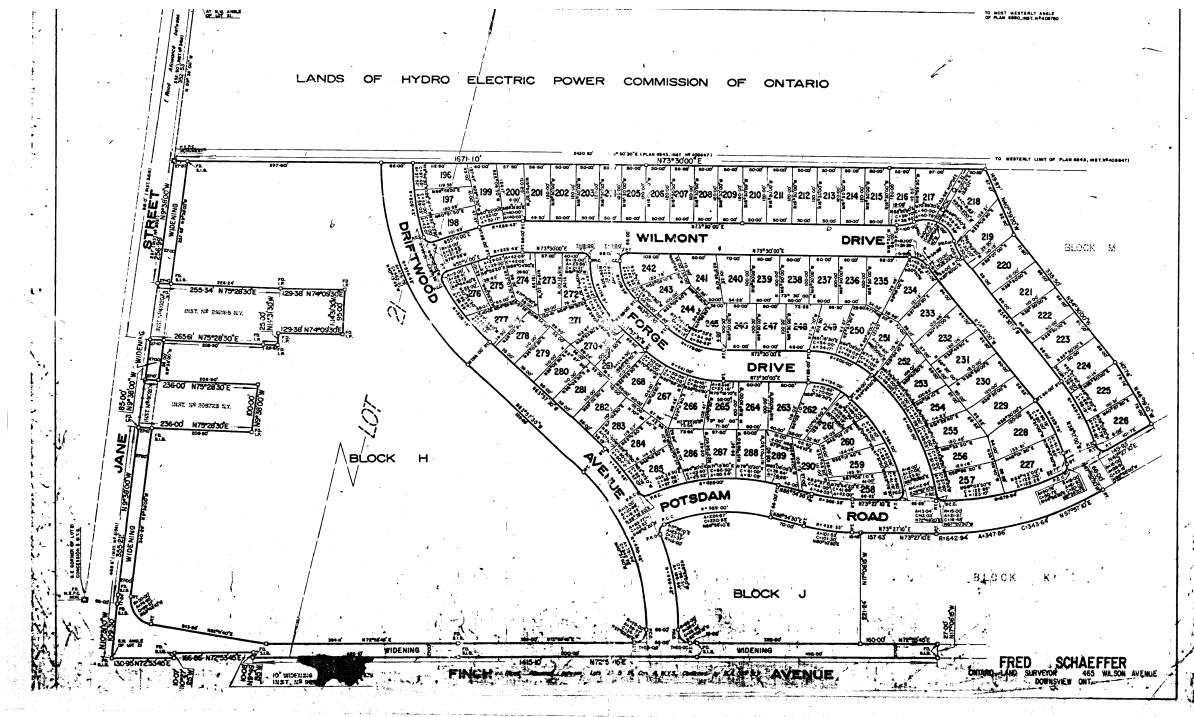


Figure 27: Detail of subdivision plan M1004 from 1963, with Driftwood Avenue demonstrating the collector road concept (Onland).



Figure 26: 1964 archival photograph looking north on Jane Street at Yorkwoods Village. The townhome development was innovative at the time for passing exterior maintenance activities to management (City of Toronto Archives).

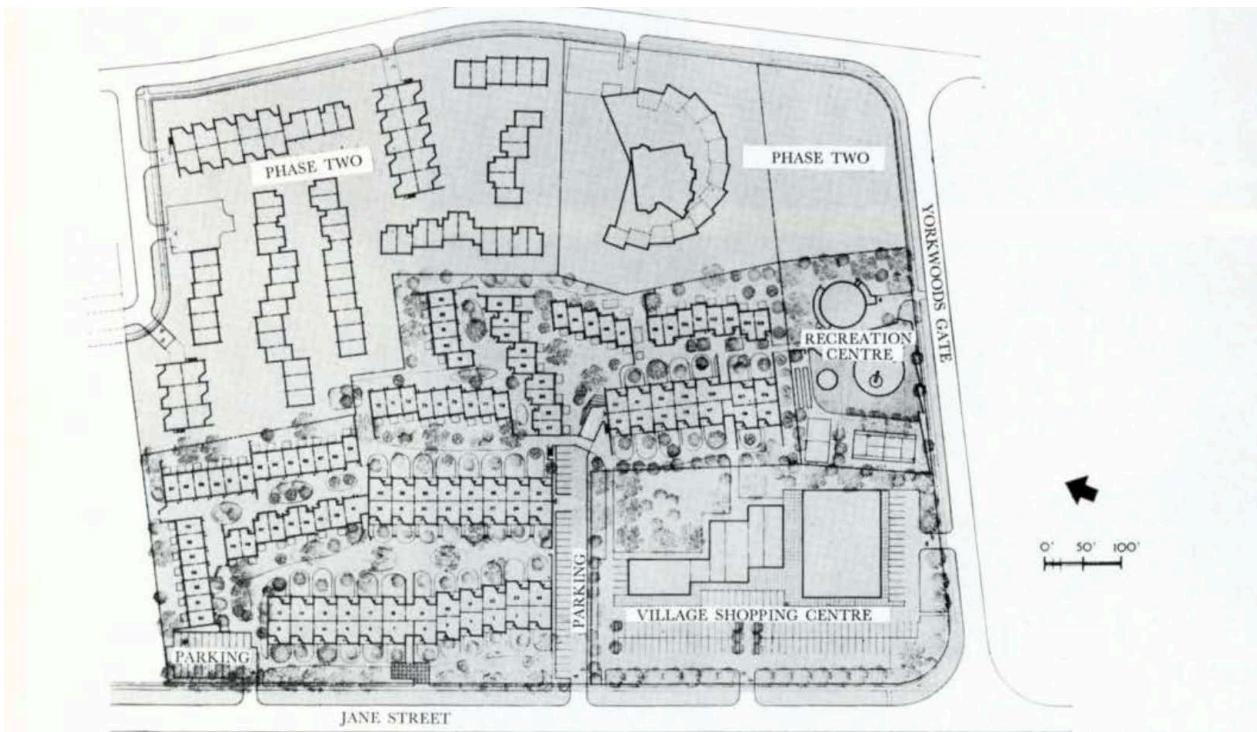


Figure 28: Site plan showing a design for the Yorkwoods Village development, including Phases one and two of housing complexes, along with shopping and recreation centres. Phase one (bottom, unlabeled), the western part of Phase two and the recreation centre were built as shown. Others were not built or modified (*RAIC Journal August 1964*).



Figure 29: Archival photograph of phase one of Yorkwoods Village. The image highlights the considered design resulting from use of underground parking and townhouse siting to frame interior pedestrian landscapes (*RAIC Journal August 1964*).

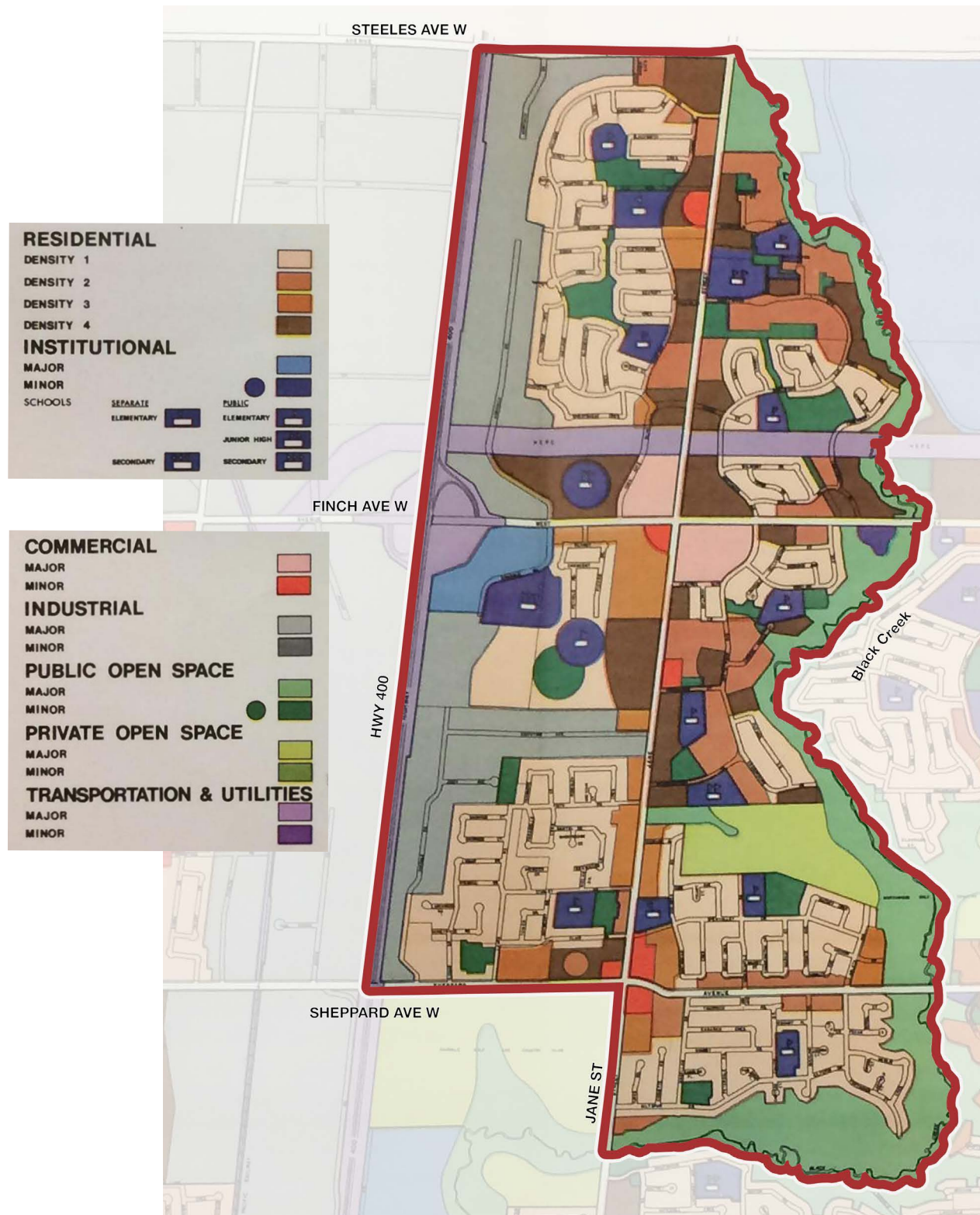


Figure 30: Land Use plan from the 1969 District 10 Plan with legends inset. The plan clearly demonstrates the principles of placing higher density residential uses along arteries, around arterial intersections and adjacent to green or open spaces (*City of Toronto Heritage Planning*).

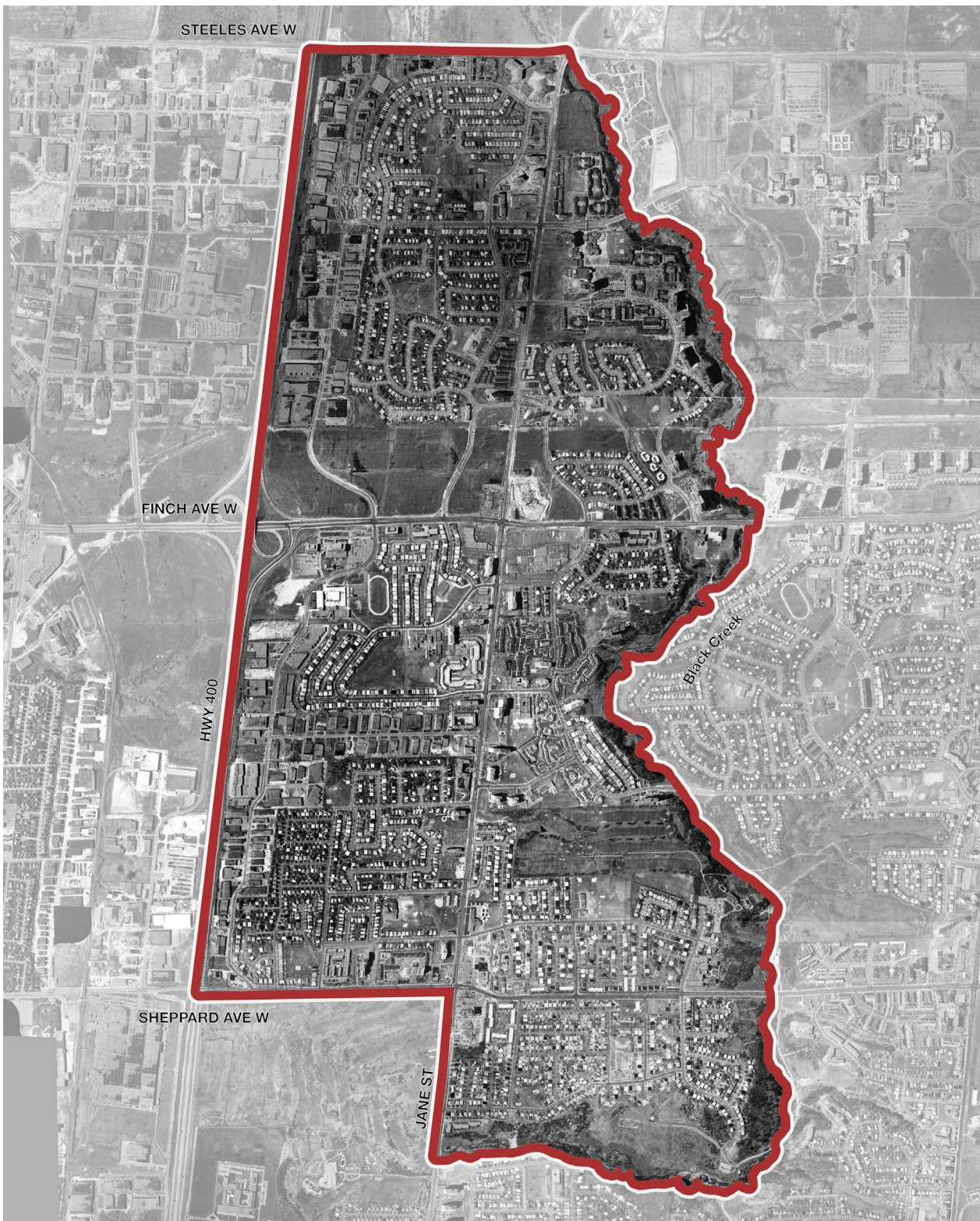


Figure 31: 1975 aerial photograph, showing the study area fundamentally built out (City of Toronto Archives; Common Bond Collective 2022).

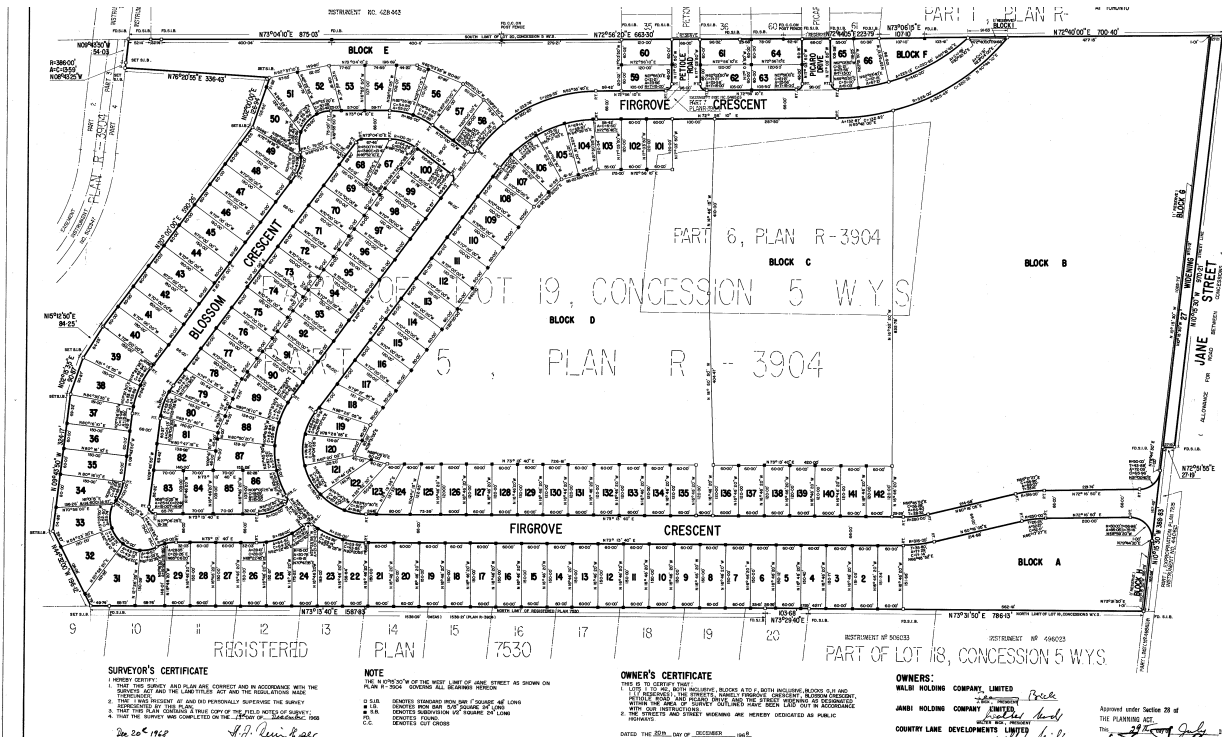


Figure 32: Collector roads remain apparent following the on subdivision plan M-1320 (Onland).



Figure 33: 1970 photograph of children playing in the central community area of the Edgely site (TPL_Toronto Star Archives).

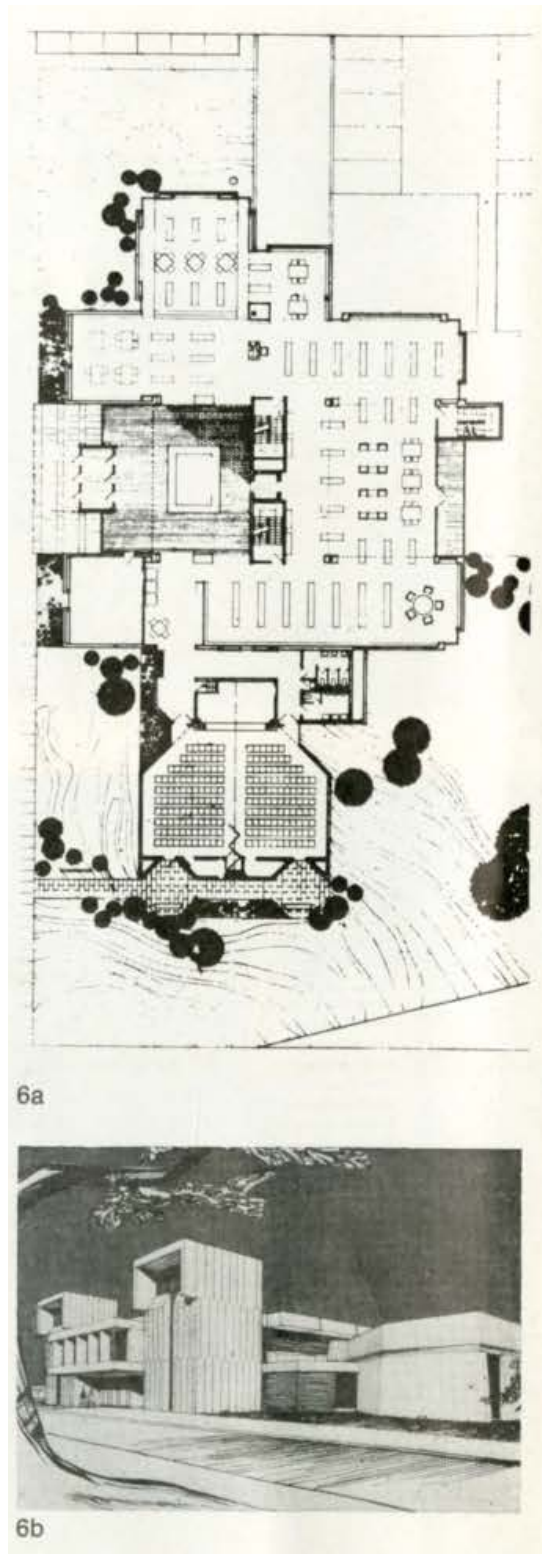


Figure 34: 1969 promotional plan and rendering of the York Woods Public Library Building by Thomas Ibonyi (*Architecture Canada* January 1969).

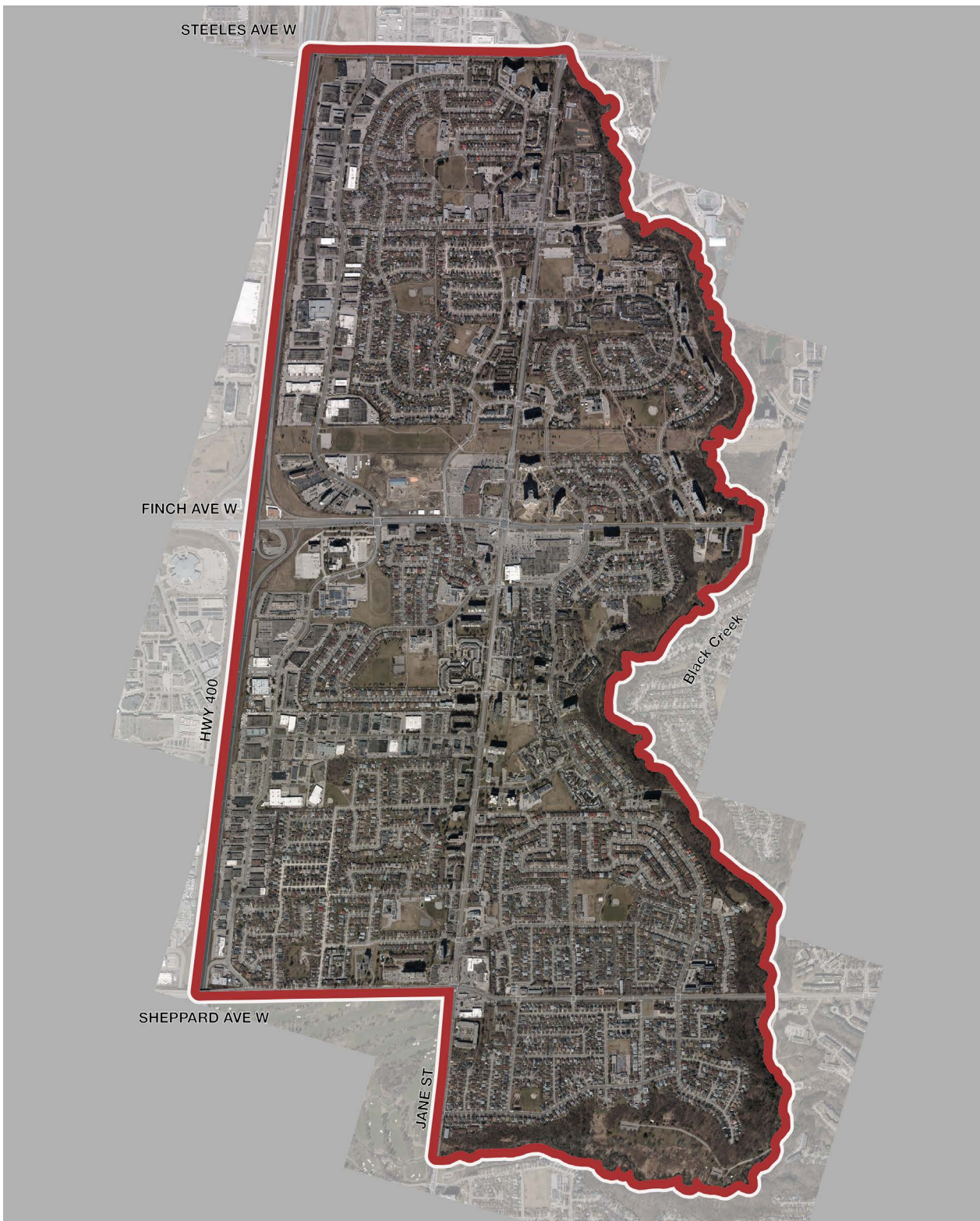


Figure 35: 2021 aerial composite demonstrating the extant patterns of the study area's urban fabric (City of Toronto; Common Bond Collective 2022).

12.0 BIOGRAPHIES

This section provides biographies of architects and institutions associated with the study area. Community organizations associated with the study area are identified in Wanda MacNevin's *It Happened Here: Places of Community Organizing and Activism in Jane-Finch* included in the CHRA as Appendix A.

12.1 ARCHITECTS

12.1.1 IRVING D. BOIGON ASSOCIATES, ARCHITECTS (1963-1966) / BOIGON & HEINONEN, ARCHITECTS (1967-1971)

Architects Irving Boigon and Stanley Heinonen began working together in 1960 under the name Irving D. Boigon Associates, Architects. In 1967, Heinonen became a Junior Partner and the firm changed its name to Boigon & Heinonen, Architects. Heinonen left the firm in 1971 to work for Public Works Canada. During their years of partnership, Boigon and Heinonen produced designs for schools (26), institutional buildings (13), large-scale housing projects (12).

12.1.2 IRVING D. BOIGON (1924-2007)⁶⁰

Born in Toronto in 1924, Irving Boigon attended the Central Technical School before serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) during WWII. After the war he attended The University of Toronto's School of Architecture graduating in 1951.

He first practiced as Irving Boigon, Architect between 1952 and 1963, with the exception of 1956 when he partnered with Michael Clifford to form Boigon & Clifford Architects. In 1960, Stanley F. Heinonen joined Boigon's practice and between 1963 and 1966 operated under the name Irving D. Boigon Associates, Architects. Heinonen became a Junior Partner in 1967 and the firm operated under the name Boigon & Heinonen, Architects with Boigon as Senior Partner.

He continued to operate as Boigon & Armstrong, Architects into the early 1990s when he merged his practice with the Petroff Partnership to form Boigon Petroff Shepherd, Architects Inc. in 1991. Boigon's work is associated with residential and commercial development in Toronto, particularly in North York. His extensive body of work ranges from private homes, public housing, schools, libraries, synagogues, government buildings, offices, special needs and long-term care buildings and complexes. He passed away at the age of 83 in March of 2007.

⁶⁰ City of Toronto Archives, Irving D. Boigon Fonds 243. <https://gencat.eloquent-systems.com/city-of-toronto-archives-m-permalink.html?key=203044>

12.1.3 STANLEY F. HEINONEN (1930 - PRESENT)⁶¹

Born in Toronto in 1930, Stanley Heinonen attended the University of Toronto's School of Architecture graduating with honours in 1954. He began his career at Gordon S. Adamson & Associates, a firm that began employing the International Style in the 1940s. One of Heinonen's early projects was the University Settlement Community Centre in Toronto - a recreation centre with a swimming pool and a distinctive folded-plate roof (built 1959; extant). At Boigon and Heinonen Architects, he worked on the 'ground-breaking' public housing commission in Etobicoke known as the Robler J. Smith Apartments (built 1966; extant). He also worked on the Meteorological Service of Canada headquarters at 4905 Dufferin Street for the federal government (built 1971; extant) as well as the Brutalist Adanac Apartments for Toronto Community Housing (built 1972; extant). Shortly after, Heinonen became the Ontario Regional Architect at Public Works Canada, a role in which he served for 22 years. He is also known to be the first to implement Computer Aided Design (CAD) in Toronto.⁶² Mr. Heinonen still lives in Toronto.

Identified works by Boigon and Heinonen in the study area: [Brookview Middle School](#), 4505 Jane Street, Toronto (built 1969; extant).

Other Works by Boigon and Heinonen in Toronto: [Elia Middle School](#), North York (built 1964; extant); [Robert J. Smith Apartments](#), 121 Kendleton Drive, Toronto (built 1966; extant); [North York Centennial Centre](#) (built 1966; extant; now Herbert H. Carnegie Centennial Centre); [Gateway Boulevard Public School](#), 55 Gateway Boulevard, Toronto (built 1966; extant); [Pleasant View Middle School](#), 175 Brian Drive, Toronto (built 1968-1971; extant); [Environment Canada Building](#), 4905 Dufferin Street, Toronto (built 1971; extant; [Recognized Heritage Building](#)); [Adanac Apartments](#) (built 1972; extant).

Honours and Recognitions:

1976 - Boigon served as President of the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA)

1978 - Boigon served as President of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC)

1978 - Boigon inducted in RAIC College of Fellows

1985 - Heinonen inducted in RAIC College of Fellows

2003 - Boigon made an honorary fellow of the American Institute of Architects

⁶¹ Dave LeBanc, "Crisp, modern and masterful: the oeuvre of architect Stan Heinonen," *The Globe and Mail*, June 20, 2023. Accessed at <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/real-estate/toronto/article-crisp-modern-and-masterful-the-oeuvre-of-architect-stan-heinonen/> on February 6, 2024.

⁶² LeBlanc, June 20, 2023.

12.1.4 IRVING GROSSMAN (1926-1995)

Irving Grossman was born in Toronto in 1926, attended the University of Toronto and graduated cum laude in 1950 with a Pilkington Glass Travelling Fellowship. After Grossman returned from Europe in 1953, he began his private practice in Toronto. The city was slowly turning to modernist design which is exhibited in his early residential work at the [Betel Residence](#) (built 1953; extant) and the Fogel Residence, Toronto (built c1961; not extant) which was a Finalist for the Massey Medals for Architecture in 1961. He also designed [Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am Synagogue](#) (built 1963; extant) which incorporated imprints of Jewish iconography into the concrete walls.

Although Grossman designed a wide range of buildings including private houses, apartment buildings and synagogues, he is especially known for his social housing projects in Toronto. He died in 1995. In 2002, his wife Helena established the Irving Grossman Prize at the University of Toronto, John H. Daniels Faculty. It is awarded to two Master of Architecture students for excellence and innovation in their designs of multiple-unit housing or the adaptive reuse of buildings for housing. Most recently, the university announced the Irving Grossman Fund in Affordable Housing.⁶³

Identified Works in the Study Area: [Shoreham Drive Public School](#), 31 Shoreham Drive, Toronto (built 1969; extant) and [Edgeley In the Village](#), 385 Driftwood Avenue, Toronto (built 1967-1970; extant).

Other Works in Toronto: [Edgeley Apartments](#) (built 1969; extant); [The Crombie Park Apartments](#) (built 1980; extant).

Honours and Recognitions:

1967 - Massey Medal for the Administration Building at Expo '67

1970 - Canadian Architects Award of Excellence for Logements, Habitats Collectifs et Condominiums, Ottawa

1971 - Inducted into the RAIC College of Fellows

1972 - Canadian Architects Award of Excellence for the development and design of social housing, Thunder Bay

1989 - University of Toronto Arbor Award for Volunteerism

1994 - Toronto Society of Architects Fellowship Award

1995 - Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) 25-year Award for the Klammer Residence

2009 - Ontario Association of Architect (OAA) Landmark Award for St. Lawrence Neighbourhood (posthumous)

⁶³ "Expanding the Affordable-Housing Legacy of Architect Irving Grossman," University of Toronto John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design, December 4, 2023. Accessed at <https://www.daniels.utoronto.ca/news/wed-apr-12-2023-all-day/expanding-affordable-housing-legacy-architect-irving-grossman> on February 7, 2024.

12.1.5 THOMAS IBRONYI

No biographical information about Thomas Ibronyi was identified during the course of research for this CHRA.

Identified Works in the Study Area: [York Woods Library](#) (built 1970; extant)

Other Works in Toronto: [Victoria Village Library](#), 184 Sloane Avenue, Toronto (built 1967; extant).

12.1.6 KLEIN AND SEARS (1958 - C.1987)

Based out of Toronto, architects Jack Klein and Henry Sears opened their firm in 1958 and focused on affordable, contemporary residential housing. These buildings included row houses, apartment buildings, and private homes made in their own modernist style. Klein and Sears wanted to reimagine areas of living - like the slum-like row houses and unaffordable suburban living. Along with their active architectural practice, the team also widely published their findings on these topics under such titles as: *Core Area, a housing study* for the City of Toronto, and *Room to Learn: A Study on Housing for the Canadian Student*.

Their multi-unit residential work was characterized by shared common space such as paths and courtyards, the placement of cars outside the major circulation routes and the use of brick.

12.1.7 JACK KLEIN (1927-2005)

Born in Toronto in 1927, Jack Klein co-founded Klein & Sears Architects with Henry Sears in 1958. He passed away in 2005.

12.1.8 HENRY SEARS (1929-2003)

Born in Toronto in 1929, Sears studied architecture at The University of Toronto graduating in 1954. In 1958, he co-founded Klein & Sears Architects with Jack Klein.

In 1987, he founded Sears & Russell Architects Ltd and shifted his focus to the design and planning of cultural institutions. He died in 2003.

Identified Works in the Study Area: Yorkwoods Village, 2901 Jane Street, Toronto (1964; extant).

Other Works in Toronto: Whitburn Apartments, 111-117 Whitburn Crescent, Toronto (built 1961, extant); [Oakdale Manor](#), 2265 Jane Street, Toronto (with Sasaki, Strong & Associates; built 1962; extant); [Alexandra Park Public Housing, Toronto](#) (with Jerome Markson and Webb Zerafa Menke; built 1965; extant); [Don Valley Woods](#), 35 Valley Woods Drive, North York (built 1961-1967; demolished); [Dunfield-Holly Mixed Use Housing](#), 70 Dunfield Avenue, Toronto (built 1976; extant); [St. Lawrence](#)

[Neighbourhood, Toronto](#) (with several other architecture firms; built 1977-1982; extant).

Honours and Recognitions:

1964 - Finalist Massey Medal for Oakdale Manor

1964 - Canadian Housing Design Council Award for Yorkwoods Village Phase 1

1964 - Massey Medal for Phase I of Valley Woods Project (Citadel Village Project)

1967 - Massey Medal for Phase II of Valley Woods Project (Citadel Village Project)

1967 - Canadian Housing Design Council Award for Alexandra Park

1967 - Centennial Award for Valley Woods Project (Citadel Village Project)

1971 - Henry Sears inducted into the RAIC College of Fellows

1976 - Canadian Architect Award of Excellence for Holly-Dunfield Mixed Housing

2009 - OAA Award for Excellence in Residential Design

12.1.9 WALLACE SHERIFF (1931-2015)

Graduate of University of Toronto and Yale University, Wallace Sheriff was credited with the designs for the IBM Headquarters in Markham, the Chrysler Plant in Brampton and the convention center in Winnipeg.

Identified Works in the Study Area: Northminster Baptist Church (built 1967; extant).

12.1.10 HOWARD V. WALKER (1926 - ?)

Beginning his practice in 1957, Howard V. Walker was known for his design of schools in Ontario during the postwar period. His designs are reflected in open concept schools and he designed the first open plan-flexible school in Ontario - the North Bridlewood Junior Public School in Scarborough completed in 1966. In his later career he became associated with Peter Stokes, a renowned restoration architect. In the late 1970s Walker participated in various restoration projects around the City of Toronto.

Identified Works in the Study Area: Yorkwoods Gate Public School (built 1968; extant); [Driftwood Avenue Public School](#) (built 1968; extant).

Other Works in Toronto: [North Bridlewood Junior Public School](#) (1966; extant); [University of Toronto St. George Campus](#); [Koffler Student Services Centre](#) Restoration (c.1980; extant), [Walker House](#), 82 Belmont Street, Toronto (date unknown; extant).

Honours and Recognitions:

1977 - Inducted in the RAIC College of Fellows

12.2 INSTITUTIONS - FEDERAL

12.2.1 CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION (1946-PRESENT)

“Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation is the federal CROWN CORPORATION responsible for administering Canada's National Housing Act. CMHC was created in 1946 as the successor to the Wartime Housing Corporation, and until 1979 was called Central Mortgage and Housing.

Since 1946 one-half of all housing built in Canada has been assisted through the National Housing Act. CMHC has helped Canadians house themselves through grants, loans and by insuring mortgage monies borrowed from private lenders. Good housing and community design are encouraged through CMHC's research and design programs.

Immediately after WWII, CMHC concentrated its activities on providing homes for returning war veterans. During the 1950s housing quality concerns were added to the task of providing for sufficient quantity of housing. Urban renewal programs to redevelop inner cities were funded during the 1960s. In the 1970s neighbourhood improvement programs and a residential rehabilitation assistance program encouraged the maintenance and improvement of existing communities.

The CMHC is concerned with providing housing for low-income people and meeting the special needs of the elderly and disabled. The corporation administers programs to encourage provinces, cities, and nonprofit and co-operative societies to provide housing for Canadians who would otherwise be unable to obtain adequate and affordable shelter. CMHC publishes quarterly housing statistics, reports the results of housing research and produces a number of publications related to housing.”⁶⁴

12.2.2 METROPOLITAN TORONTO HOUSING AUTHORITY (1955-1964)

"The Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority was constituted by Provincial Order-in-Council in 1955, to operate and administer public housing projects constructed in the Metropolitan Toronto area jointly by the Federal-Provincial Governments. In 1959, a further Order-in-Council gave approval for the Authority to carry out development studies for housing purposes at the request of the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. The Authority comprises 7 members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, who serve for a 3-year term without remuneration. These members are selected because they are public spirited citizens, willing to serve and with varied qualifications, which can be utilized to the best advantage in this important field. The Authority presently administers two projects; South Regent Park and Lawrence Heights [Bathurst and Dufferin]. Rents are geared to the incomes of the tenants and the allocation of units and selection of tenants are based on housing need. There are three basic requirements

⁶⁴ Ann McAfee, "Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation," *Canadian Encyclopedia*, December 2013. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/canada-mortgage-and-housing-corporation> Accessed 11 October 2023.

to determine eligibility: a) Family Composition. A family consists of at least 2 persons related by blood, marriage or adoption, b) Residential Requirements. An applicant must have had 12 months continuous residence in Metropolitan Toronto area immediately prior to the date of application. c) Income Requirements. The total family income must fall within certain prescribed limits."⁶⁵

"The Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority was established on December 1, 1955. Despite its name, it was a federal-provincial authority, with the mandate to manage non-profit housing in Metro Toronto created by the provincial and federal governments. It had seven appointed members.

The Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority was disbanded in November 1964 as a result of amendments to the National Housing Act."⁶⁶

12.3 INSTITUTIONS - PROVINCIAL

12.3.1 HYDRO ONE (FORMERLY ONTARIO HYDRO) (1906-PRESENT)

"Ontario Hydro was a Crown corporation owned by the Ontario government until it was privatized in 1999. It was the first provincially owned electric utility in Canada and was the largest public electric utility in North America. Its generation and transmission system included 69 hydroelectric, 8 fossil-fueled and 4 nuclear power stations, along with over 130 000 km of transmission and distribution lines. In 1992, the utility had a \$34 billion debt, largely because of overbuilding costly nuclear plants. Maurice Strong, hired to restructure the company, put an end to construction and cut 7000 employees. By 1996, Ontario Hydro held assets of \$40 billion.

The system provides power to an estimated 3 million customers in Ontario, in all areas of its 650 000 km² jurisdiction. The utility began as a special statutory corporation (like a crown corporation) established by the provincial legislature in 1906. Its founding chairman was Sir Adam Beck. In 1908, just 2 years after Ontario's legislature passed the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario Act, the novice utility entered into agreements with 14 municipalities to provide power at cost. Similar agreements now link Ontario Hydro and 316 co-operating municipalities.

The utility is responsible for the generation and transmission of electric power and for its sale to participating utilities. It also acts as a central supervisory body with authority to approve and control certain features of the utilities' operations."⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Metropolitan Toronto*, 1960, p. 36.

⁶⁶ City of Toronto Archives. Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority Annual Report, Fond 2, Series 1143, Item 3645.

⁶⁷ J.R. Whiteway, "Ontario Hydro". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, March 2015, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ontario-hydro>. Accessed 11 October 2023.

12.3.2 ONTARIO. DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS (1934-1972)

“In 1934, the provincial government established the Department of Municipal Affairs to supervise municipalities whose tax-revenue collapsed during the Great Depression. After WWII, however, the Department became more involved in the provision of administrative and financial advice and support to municipalities.

Activities of the Department included: prescribing and regulating municipal accounting methods and practices regarding taxation and expenditure; supervising the system of municipal auditing; receiving annual municipal returns; reporting and advising on municipal administration and organization; assisting and advising municipalities on community development and land use planning, including zoning by-laws, subdivisions, urban renewal, and maintenance and occupancy by-laws; and providing financial assistance to municipalities through grant, subsidy and loan programs. The Department was also responsible for meeting the housing needs of low and moderate income families in Ontario.

The Department of Municipal Affairs was dissolved on 1 April 1972, with most of the Department's functions being transferred to the new Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Inter-governmental Affairs, but with the Assessment Division being relocated within the Ministry of Revenue. In 1981, the municipal affairs functions of the government were amalgamated with the Ministry of Housing to form the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.”⁶⁸

12.3.3 ONTARIO. DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (1944-1961)

The Department of Planning and Development was established in 1944 to work with agricultural, industrial, labour, mining, trade and other associations and organizations and with public and private sector enterprises in order to create and maintain productive employment and to develop the human and material resources of the Province.

The Department of Planning and Development was established in 1944. One of the largest branches within the new department, and one which was to grow considerably, was the Trade and Industry Branch. Other branches that were created with the establishment of this Department were the Immigration Branch, the Community Planning Branch, and the Conservation Branch. The Department was also responsible for two agencies, Ontario House and the St. Lawrence Parks Commission. In 1955, the Civil Defence Committee of the Department of the Provincial Secretary was transferred to the Department of Planning and Development and renamed the Civil Defence Branch. In 1960, it was again renamed, this time to the Emergency Measures Branch.

⁶⁸ Archives of Ontario

On January 27, 1961, the Department of Planning and Development was renamed the Department of Commerce and Development.”⁶⁹

12.3.4 HOUSING CORPORATION LIMITED (1948-1964)

“Another important development was the creation of the Housing Corporation Limited (OHC) in 1948 under the responsibility of the Department of Municipal Affairs. The OHC managed funds borrowed from commercial lending institutions. The OHC distributed funds to applicants who did not qualify for mortgages from commercial lenders. By the 1960s the OHC was providing mortgages to clients in government programs such as Home Ownership Made Easy (HOME) and through commercial developers financing condominium construction.”

The Housing Corporation functioned as an agency of the Department of Planning and Development until 1950 when it was transferred to the Department of the Treasury.

12.3.5 ONTARIO HOUSING CORPORATION (1964-2006)

“The Ontario Housing Corporation was established in 1964 to take over responsibility for the management of the government's housing policies and programs that had been developed over the previous decade - primarily by the Housing Branch of the Department of Economics and Development. In 1966 a parallel organization, the Ontario Student Housing Corporation, was established to serve the same role in the development of student housing in Ontario. The assets and program responsibilities of this Corporation were absorbed by the Ontario Housing Corporation in 1978. The Ontario Housing Corporation, as landlord, provided subsidized rental housing to families and senior citizens through a network of regional local housing authorities. Ownership and administration of public and social housing was transferred to municipal control with the passage of the Social Reform Act, 2000. In 2002, the Ontario Housing Corporation effected the transfer of social housing administration to forty-seven municipal service managers, thereby eliminating local housing authorities across the province. The Ontario Housing Corporation continued to carry out certain functions associated with the financing of the public housing program and the Dr. Albert Rose Bursary program.

The Ontario Housing Corporation was administered through the Department of Economics and Development between 1964-1968; the Department of Trade and Development (1968-1972); the Ministry of Industry and Tourism (1972); the Ministry of Housing (1973-1981); the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (1981-1985); the Ministry of Housing (1985-1995); and since 1995, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. In December 2006, under the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Corporation Act, the Ontario Mortgage and Housing Corporation superseded the Ontario Housing Corporation, with "responsibilities ... primarily financial in nature, arising from the

⁶⁹ Archives of Ontario

corporation's former role in delivering government programs."⁷⁰

"...The Province has established an autonomous company, the Ontario Housing Corporation, with full powers to acquire, build and operate low-rent housing under a variety of different procedures. The Ontario Housing Corporation has taken over the housing previously under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority and has absorbed the Authority's operations into its own organization."⁷¹

12.4 INSTITUTIONS - REGIONAL

12.4.1 METROPOLITAN TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY (1957-PRESENT)

"...in 1957 the legislation allowing the formation of regional conservation authorities was used to amalgamate 4 existing bodies to form the new Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. This body is responsible for carrying out a comprehensive program to conserve the natural resources of a 1,000square mile area which contains 1/10 of the population of Canada. The Conservation Authority is not an arm of the metropolitan government but a separate and distinct body which covers 22 municipalities in addition to Metropolitan Toronto. Its members are appointed by the Councils of the constituent municipalities. ... In the Black Creek, abutting the new campus of York University, a Pioneer Village has been set up to preserve a record of the historically significant buildings and activities of a past era."⁷²

12.5 INSTITUTIONS - MUNICIPAL

12.5.1 HOUSING AUTHORITY OF TORONTO (1947-1974)

"The Housing Authority of Toronto was established on May 12, 1947 with by-law 16933. It was created as a result of the "Bruce Report" of 1935, which examined housing conditions in Toronto. Its role was to build and maintain affordable rental housing.

The organization was managed by a board consisting of five members appointed by City Council. Its projects were financed by the Toronto Limited Dividend Housing Corporation. The Housing Authority's first project was the Regent Park (North) Housing Project, one of the first social housing projects in Canada.

The provincial government became increasingly involved in public housing during the 1960s. As a result, on March 31, 1971 with the passing of by-law 1971-0094, the Housing Authority was dissolved, and its assets were transferred to the Ontario Housing Corporation."⁷³

⁷⁰ Archives of Ontario

⁷¹ *Metropolitan Toronto 1965*, Municipal Housing Chapter, p. 36.

⁷² *Metropolitan Toronto 1953-1963*, pp. 18-19.

⁷³ City of Toronto Archives, Housing Authority of Toronto Fonds 2028 <https://gencat.eloquent-systems.com/city-of-toronto-archives-m-permalink.html?key=81609>

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Urban Photography of Toronto and Beyond by Vik Pahwa vik@vikpahwa.com

APPENDIX A: IT HAPPENED HERE: PLACES OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND ACTIVISM IN JANE-FINCH

WANDA MacNEVIN, 2023

It Happened Here: Places of Community Organizing and Activism in Jane-Finch

Introduction

When I moved into the Jane-Finch community as a single mother with three children and living on social welfare assistance, I did not know that living in Jane-Finch would change my life. I moved into 15 Tobermory Drive, where I became involved with community action that led to securing a job with the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre.

This report is based on 41 years of experiences working and volunteering in the community and is also based on 40 interviews I conducted, a review of the transcripts from those interviewed for this project, as well as reports and documents I saved over the years. It is not by any means a complete picture of all the activities and accomplishments in the community – there are far more stories to be told. No one person carries all the knowledge of Jane-Finch. Some may not share the perspectives of the stories told here, but I take full responsibility for any mistakes in relating the stories below.

In the beginning

The value of places in the Jane-Finch community starts with a recognition that the Indigenous people lived, and farmed, on the land now called Jane-Finch, and utilized the Black Creek for transportation, food and water. A small part of their story is told by the Huron-Wendat Trail which moves through the hydro-corridor in the community and interprets life in an ancestral Huron-Wendat village whose archaeological remains still exist on the edge of Black Creek.

After millennia of an Indigenous presence here, European settlers developed a farming community in the area in the 19th century. An interpretation of their way of life can be seen at Black Creek Pioneer Village. They too utilized the land and the Black Creek, which they also used as a place of recreation.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Jane-Finch was again transformed into a new community. The Second World War was over, families were growing, and immigrants were moving to Toronto to build new lives. This was also the time of the ‘baby boom’, where there was a significant increase in babies being born. As a result, demand for housing was critical. By the mid-1960s, the federal government de-racialized the immigration policy by introducing a merit-based point system to determine admissibility to the country. This meant that immigrants from previously excluded parts of the world—Africa, the Caribbean, Asia, and Latin America — were able to settle in the Toronto area. “Jane-Finch, newly developed with a lot of affordable housing, came

to house a proportionately large number of new immigrants, many of whom were people of colour.”¹

Metropolitan Toronto created the District 10 Plan for the west end of the city, including Jane-Finch, and its principles and approach to land use was largely adopted by the Borough of North York, of which Jane-Finch was a part. It focused on land use, population, and transportation with no provision for social factors beyond schools and parks. The plan greatly underestimated how quickly North York would grow in population.

1970s

The 1970s for residents in Jane-Finch was all about developing programs and services to meet the critical and growing needs of those living in the community. The three North York Parks and Recreation community centres (Driftwood, Yorkwoods [now Oakdale], Stanley Road [now Domenico Di Luca] and the community rooms in Metro Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA) buildings became critically important meeting places. Public housing was initially run by the Province under the Ontario Housing Corporation until the Metropolitan Toronto regional government was created and MTHA was set up. It was within the community centres and MTHA buildings where programs were established, services developed, and strategic responses were created to fight further development and other negative conditions affecting those who lived in Jane-Finch.

The Jane Finch Mall was also utilized in that way during this decade with the mall becoming a ‘hang-out’ for youth. At the same time, there was a growing incidence of youth-related crime. There were few resources, services, or even safe spaces for youth to gather in the community. Pat O’Neill, a former North York alderman (city councillor), pointed out that there were twenty thousand young people under the age of twenty, but only one pool and one arena.²

The mall management hosted the Youth Action Project in the 1970s with a trailer parked in the back parking lot. Five years later, funding for the YAP ended, and the mall was not interested in supporting the trailer in that location any longer.

Residents were having difficulty finding out about programs and services, so community activists got the mall to host the first information kiosk rent free. It was a hit and after the first month, they fielded 1,444 inquiries. Some time later, the mall decided that they wanted the kiosk for a paying vendor, so the organizers secured space in the Yorkwoods Community Centre (20 Yorkwoods Gate – now owned by the Salvation Army).³

¹ Julie-Anne Boudreau, Roger Keil and Douglas Young, *The In-Between City*, in “Changing Toronto: Governing Urban Neoliberalism” (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009, 127) quoted in MacNevin, *BY US! FOR US!* p49

² Wanda MacNevin, *BY US! FOR US! Activism in Jane-Finch, A Working-Class Community*. Toronto, 2018, p82

³ *BY US! FOR US!* p89

Metro Toronto Housing Corporation was one of best sources for space in the community at that time. 15 Tobermory hosted the first YWCA Life Skills program for women (childcare provided) and it was so successful that the 'Y' expanded this program to 415 Driftwood, 5 Needlefirway, and 2999 Jane Street. When the Life Skills programs ended, the women formed a network with support from Mary Lewis, the Children's Aid Society community worker. There were seven groups throughout the community with the leaders meeting monthly and engaging on broad issues facing the community. Community spaces in the various MTHA buildings was critical for developing resident leadership, as well as supporting families.

The Yorkwoods Community Centre, south of Finch Avenue, was originally built as a private community centre for the condominium townhouses and apartments on Driftwood Avenue and London Green Court. This large white, round building was futuristic and unlike any other building in the community. In the late 1970s, North York purchased it for the whole community to use. While children and youth utilized the centre for recreation, it was also used by community groups for activities. One such group was the Ghanaian Women's Association, which subsequently created the Asante Multi-Cultural Association of Toronto. They were new to Canada, new to the community, and wanted to contribute to their new community. At the same time, they were teaching their children Ghanaian languages and customs. Yorkwoods was also home to the Caribbean Youth Connection drop-in program at the time.

Driftwood Community Centre (4401 Jane Street) opened its doors in 1974, serving neighbourhoods north of Finch Avenue. While the Centre ran its own activities, there was a need for more programs, particularly for youth. The Black Creek Venture Group was started in 1973 by a resident, with a focus on prevention of unhealthy conditions for children and youth. Their afterschool program was run out of Driftwood Public School (265 Driftwood Avenue). In 1977, Driftwood Community Centre gave them a small office adjacent to their kitchen. They hired local staff to work in the after-four and other drop-in programs, complementing the existing Parks and Recreation programs.⁴ The Driftwood Community Centre also opened its space in the 1970s for Probation Officers to see youth in their own community and for Children's Aid Society to connect with families.

Driftwood Community Centre became an important space for local community organizations and groups to meet. The newly formed Downsview Weston Action Community (DWAC) — the first community-wide group to focus on issues such as the rapid development and growing population — began meeting there. Residents were struggling with poverty, discrimination, and social isolation and DWAC was instrumental in assisting in the development of community-based organizations and services. As a result of that early work came many more opportunities for residents to come together to respond to issues that were impacting them, to become engaged in the community, and to organize to fight for change.

⁴ *BY US! FOR US! p80*

One service, supported by DWAC, was Downsview Services to Seniors (DSS) that started as a Meals on Wheels program in 1974. Their home base was located in an office in the recreation rooms at 35 Shoreham Drive, a MTHA building for seniors. DSS operated out of that location for many years, until the service grew. It developed into Lumacare, a service for seniors with 250 staff serving 3500 older adults operating out of other locations, including the Northwood Community Centre, north of Sheppard Avenue West.

DWAC conducted two years of research to create the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre (Jane/Finch Centre), a resource centre that provided three components: the Community Office, the Child/Parent Program, and the Community Development team. The Centre's first six months operated out of a small office in Driftwood Public School, but they needed space to provide programs and services. There were two unused community rooms at 4400 Jane Street, a high-rise social housing building, and with the support of MTHA staff they were able to work out of there on a temporary basis. The service was found to be valuable to the people who lived in the building, and also to people living elsewhere in the community. The Jane/Finch Centre remains there to this day, while also utilizing spaces in other buildings.

The Community Office component of the Centre provided a place where fledgling organizations or individual residents and small grassroots groups could get administrative resources, talk about needs, or get support for self-help initiatives. Through the Jane/Finch Centre's community development work, it was also a space where people could link up with others to create new organizations in the community. The Jane/Finch Centre became the base of support for many organizations in the community.

The Firgrove neighbourhood was the last large public housing development to be built in the community [and the first to be largely demolished]. There were no streets running through it; most of the townhomes faced inwards and were stacked to four levels without an elevator for the families on the fourth floor. But, Firgrove had a recreation centre and a swimming pool in the midst of the townhouses, and meeting space in 5 Needle Firway, a high-rise building that was part of the complex. The Firgrove United Sports and Cultural Club operated out of the Firgrove recreation centre, although with insufficient funding and with volunteers playing an important role. It was also in the Firgrove neighbourhood that the first parent-school association in Jane-Finch was established at Firgrove Public School (270 Firgrove Crescent) by a new resident, originally from Jamaica, who wanted to ensure that her six children were successful in the school system.⁵

Another MTHA recreation space that was well utilized was located in the Yorkwoods/Grandravine community (23 Grandravine Drive). Their large recreation room, located within the townhouse complex, became the site of Mothers on the Move (1978). This was initiated and developed by a resident, Donna Wilson. This organization became a training program for mothers with limited working skills, and Wilson considered herself to be one of

⁵ *BY US! FOR US!* p125

them. With support from DWAC and MTHA, she opened the low-priced grocery / convenience store within the recreation space, where women could work for the minimum wage while developing new employment-related skills. MTHA eventually wanted this space for their own programs, so the group relocated to the Jane Eglinton area.⁶

For residents in Jane-Finch, the 1970s were all about developing programs and services to meet the tremendous needs of those living there. Ward 3 (Jane-Finch) had 2,286 social housing units, compared to Ward 1 to the east, with 142 social housing units, and Ward 5 to the west, with 223 social housing units. Jane-Finch was not a community that was designed or developed with large community-based, multi-service centres such as Dixon Hall, that serves the downtown east end, or the former Central Neighbourhood House. Rather, the community was designed with specific neighbourhoods (Edgeley Village – Shoreham and Driftwood – Gosford, Tobermory, Firgrove, Yorkwoods, Northwoods and Spenvally). As a result, local organizations would have to find their own office space, while services would be delivered within those neighbourhoods, wherever space was available.

It was left up to community residents and their supporters to find and utilize spaces to respond to the implications and impact of poverty, newcomer settlement, racism and discrimination, isolation, large numbers of children and youth, and more.

1980s

Activism in response to the school system issues, policing, negative media coverage, unwanted development, and housing issues dominated the 1980s .

The Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto (now called Social Planning Toronto) released a report entitled, *Suburbs in Transition, Part 1: Evolution and Overview* written by Marvyn Novick In 1979.⁷ (Part Two came out in 1980.) The *Suburbs in Transition* report played an instrumental role in bringing attention to the suburbs. While experiencing similar issues to inner city areas such as Regent Park and Parkdale, the suburbs had been forgotten - especially areas in the northern corners of Metro Toronto like Jane-Finch, Rexdale, and Malvern. This report changed the way in which the City leaders thought about the suburbs and opened the doors to possible funding and increased supports.

The Downsview Weston Action Community members were meeting with residents and supporters in local community spaces and continuing to identify service needs. These meetings led to the formation of the Delta Family Resource Centre, initially located in Stanley Road Public School (75 Stanley Road) and Northwood Neighbourhood Services, originally located on the northwest corner of Jane and Sheppard, within the plaza.

⁶ Ibid p93

⁷ Marvyn Novick, "Metro Suburbs in Transition—Part 1: Evolution and Overview," Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto, 1979, in *BY! US! FOR US!* p128

While there are stories to tell about the development of the above organizations, Northwood had an interesting start. The former Northwood Golf and Country Club, just north of Sheppard Avenue West on Clubhouse Court, closed and the clubhouse facility was given to the city for a nominal fee. The facility also included a second building of which people in Jane-Finch wanted to use to serve people in the south end of the ward, as Jane-Finch services were at capacity. Residents in the new homes did not want services in their community, so it was torn down. After research was conducted by DWAC, it was determined that services were indeed needed, and this led to the formation of Northwood Neighbourhood Services, now located at 1869 Wilson Avenue West, Unit 400.

The Northwood Community Centre (15 Clubhouse Court) sits on a beautiful piece of land overlooking the ravine. The banquet hall is unlike any other community centre so as a result, many organizations have held their annual general meetings there and other social functions and celebrations.

Development of organizations meant meeting in community centres and in residents' homes. Once founded, some had to move multiple times over a period of many years before establishing themselves in their preferred location. For example, Delta Family Resource Centre moved from Stanley Public School to Eddystone, then to the Jane Sheppard Plaza (northwest corner), and finally to 2291 Kipling Avenue in the Humber Summit community. Elspeth Heyworth Centre (formerly the Asian Community Centre) moved to an office building at Keele and Finch and are now located at 2350 Finch Avenue West. The Jane Finch Community Legal Clinic, initially located in Norfinch Plaza (2005 Finch Avenue West) eventually moved to 1315 Finch Avenue West. High rents and suitability were factors in their moves around the community and outside of the community.

At the same time, ethno-cultural groups were establishing their own associations to respond to the needs of their populations, with support from established community organizations. For example, Cambodian newcomers formed the Cambodian Association as they were concerned about their youth and integration in Canadian society and received funding to establish an office in the Yorkwoods Plaza (2845 Jane Street). The Jane Finch Concerned Citizens Organization was also established there by Linda Morowei after her brother was shot and killed by police. Office space on the 2nd floor of Yorkwoods Plaza was utilized for over 10 years while their supportive programs and services were offered in community centres, MTHA spaces, or schools.

Similar to other community-based organizations, the Jane Finch Concerned Citizens moved from the Yorkwoods Plaza and eventually moved into the Yorkgate Mall until the mall could no longer provide them with space.

The York Woods Public Library was built and opened to the community in 1970. A theatre was later built that allowed for larger community events. When Peter McLaren's book, *Cries from the Corridor*, came out in 1980 residents and supporters in the community

organized a meeting there that allowed the author to talk about his book, and for the community to express its objections. The theatre has been utilized over the years as a place for community to make presentations, host large community meetings, sponsor special events and host recitals. It has also been used for plays and events by neighbouring communities.

During this decade, the community mobilized to fight development on the vacant Yorkgate lands and fought with the school system about overcrowding in the schools, securing adequate resources, and racial discrimination within the school system. Black children and youth were more likely to be labelled by the school system, media, government, and the police; they were assumed to be “troubled” children coming from poor families. This racial profiling of children was carried on in different ways throughout the lives of Black people.⁸ Meetings continued to happen in community locations where space was available.

Conversations started in the 1980s about establishing a Women’s Shelter in North York to meet the needs of women and children coming from abusive situations. Peggy Edwards, Community Development Coordinator for the Jane/Finch Centre led that initiative with support from the North York Inter-Agency and Community Council [amalgamated with five other social planning organizations into the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto (Social Planning Toronto)]. When the shelter project received funding, their first staff worked out of the Jane/Finch Centre at 4400 Jane Street for two years while the shelter was being built.

The 1980s saw the Mennonite Church come back to the community. Historically, the Edgeley Mennonite Church was built in 1824 on Jane Street north of Highway 7 to serve the Mennonite farmers who arrived from the United States and settled in the area. The original church building was moved to Black Creek Pioneer Village in 1975. The Mennonite Conference of Ontario hired a community chaplain to work with the social housing residents at 15 Tobermory Drive, providing pastoral care and helping residents develop activities to improve their quality of life. The United Church followed this example with a community minister at 5 Needle Firway, in the Firgrove neighbourhood. Both ministries were involved with community engagement and community development initiatives, standing in solidarity with low-income and oppressed peoples on a daily basis. The United Church ministry continues at this time using office space at the Firgrove Public School.

Some of the local churches have engaged with community by responding to issues impacting their congregations while others opened their doors to programs and meeting spaces to the community at large by hosting after-school programs, day care centres, food banks, and more.

The York Finch Hospital [now Humber River Hospital at 1235 Wilson Avenue] was very important to the community. In 1984, York Finch had the busiest emergency department of any hospital of its size in Ontario.⁹ For many years, there were tensions, complaints, and issues

⁸ *BY US! FOR US!* p177

⁹ Michael Spensieri, “York Finch Updates Equipment” (*Jane Echo*, Feb. 1984)

raised about the hospital by members of the community, and in the 1980s attempts were made to improve communications and build bridges between the hospital and the community residents. Community discussions happened in community spaces and away from the hospital. When it was time to meet with representatives from the hospital, it was sometimes at the hospital and sometimes in a neutral space in the community.

The North York public schools also offered space for community activities, after-school programs, and daycare. For example, a community forum of over 100 people was held at Firgrove Public School in 1982 to identify areas of concern. They included youth employment, social services, education, recreation, housing, and municipal concerns.¹⁰ In many cases, the principals set the tone for how schools were utilized, with some being very open to community activity and some more reserved. Brookview Middle School (formerly Jane Junior High) was utilized more for north of Finch community meetings as the school was located on Jane Street and easy to access (4505 Jane Street) by the community as a whole.

Affordable housing continued to be a dominant issue in Jane-Finch. In the late 1980s, a housing co-operative development organization wanted to build housing on an empty lot at 2750 Jane Street. They recruited residents who wanted to live someplace where they had more control over their living environment and that was more affordable. Rent subsidies were still available in those days. With residents joining, a Board of Directors was established and after an intensive, but successful fight with neighbours and North York politicians over a re-zoning amendment, the construction went ahead. Residents began moving into the new Glen Gardens Housing Co-operative in 1989.

Since its inception, the co-op became another site for community events and organizing. For example, it was the home base for a number of years for the construction of *Serious T'ing* "float", the only reggae float in the annual Caribana parade in the 1990s.

1990s

In the decade of the 1990s, government cuts to services, increasing drug use, education issues, and continuing housing issues became larger. It was also a time of increased organizing of Jane-Finch residents and groups.

The Network of Community Based Organizations was formed in the early 1990s. DWAC had dissolved, and the Network continued some of its work. This network brought community-based organizations together on a monthly basis to discuss issues facing the community and to develop strategies to respond to the issues of the day. The Network did not have staff, nor have their own space, so the members shared the work collectively in their own spaces.

Their meetings were held in various community organizations' locations such as the Jane/Finch Centre, Black Creek CHC, Delta Family Resource Centre, and Northwood

BY US! FOR US! p212

10 Pat O'Neill, "Youth Hiring Headaches" (North York: *Jane Echo*, May 1982).

Neighbourhood Services. The Network was deliberate in moving their meetings to different parts of the community, so that members became familiar with the service provider locations and their programs and services. It was also easier to book a space with a local community organization rather than the school board or the Parks and Recreation department, both requiring a permit that took time, and sometimes cost, to process.

In 1992, the Network learned that Seneca College wanted to consolidate its west-end campuses into one location. The community fought vigorously to have the college locate on the vacant York Gate land, located behind the Yorkgate Mall. Meetings were held in various spaces and, while the community did not win, Seneca College eventually located a small satellite campus in the Yorkgate Mall. This space became another option for community to use for meetings or gatherings.

During this period of time, the community was dealing with increased drugs and alcohol problems. Discussions occurred in the community and by 1993, the Black Creek Anti-Drug Focus Community Group, known as FOCUS, became incorporated with a mandate for anti-poverty, anti-drug, and anti-alcohol initiatives.¹¹ Their work brought them into schools, community centres, and MTHA buildings. Dr. Ruth Morris, a resident, led this organization with innovative outreach and programming. In 1998, the board changed its name to Promoting Economic Action and Community Health and later to Promoting Education and Community Health. They had limited office space in the community, and over time, moved to 127 Eddystone Avenue where their location is known as a safe and positive space for youth.

Media played a role in sensationalizing the challenges facing Jane-Finch. In 1994, the concept of “neighbourhoodism” was introduced between two areas in North York, Jane-Finch and Lawrence Heights, and they established the Coalition Against Neighbourhoodism (CAN). Both neighbourhoods were portrayed negatively in media. Meetings were held between both neighbourhoods in community spaces; and meetings with the media were held downtown with the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail. Training was held for residents on how to deal with print and broadcast media in their respective communities.¹²

Neighbourhoodism drew the attention of academics. A three-year research project out of the University of Toronto called, “Toward Indicators of Community Capacity: A Study in Four Toronto Communities” included Firgrove and 15 Tobermory. After extensive research in the community, Firgrove was referred to as, “the community that flies,” and Tobermory, “the community that cares.” A new definition spoke to the communities’ ability to build on the strengths of the residents in order to achieve its goals.¹³

The newly elected Conservative Government under Premier Mike Harris in 1995 brought cuts to social services and to recipients of social assistance. Welfare was reduced by 21.68%

¹¹ *BY US! FOR US!* p219

¹² *BY US! FOR US!* p222

¹³ *Ibid* p224

and residents in the community were deeply affected by drastic cuts to government programs. Spaces (MTHA and community organizations) were utilized for residents to meet and to develop responses (e.g., letters to government and organizing protests). A local protest was organized at the corner of Jane-Finch, where protesters joined hands and formed a human chain, first across Finch Avenue, then across Jane Street. Traffic was halted for five minutes until police arrived to force the protesters off the street. The Jane/Finch Centre space was often used for the planning and organizing. Other protests followed at York University and one on Arrow Road.¹⁴

Also by this time, the Jane/Finch Centre had expanded its space to include four social housing units on the main floor of 4400 Jane Street, leaving their initial two rooms open for meetings and small events.

The concept of the Caring Village emerged in Jane-Finch in the early 1990s. The Caring Village was not a program, rather a “forum to do and promote advocacy for systemic change. Lasting change can only happen when you organize and inspire people to imagine a positive change that we all want and deserve.” Their focus was on the areas of Shoreham Drive and Driftwood Avenue.¹⁵ Most of their meetings were held at Shoreham Public School (31 Shoreham Drive) as many of the participating parents had children attending Shoreham School.

In 1998, the Jane-Finch community won the Caring Community Award. The Ontario Trillium Foundation invited communities across the province to submit a proposal identifying why their area should receive this award. The Network of Community Based Organizations highlighted five accomplishments, including when the Firgrove neighbourhood increased voter turn-out for the 1995 provincial election from five percent to fifty percent through the hard work of two residents. Another accomplishment was when residents at 15 Tobermory established welcome tables in the lobby of the building, run by volunteers, to discourage people from selling drugs in front of their building. A sign was posted along Jane Street to celebrate this win, but it was eventually taken down. The Ontario Trillium Foundation prepared a news release that said, “Perhaps one of the most significant accomplishments of this community is the tenacity of the residents to transcend adverse circumstances and to create a community that continues time and time again to inspire hope in its members.”¹⁶ This was indeed an amazing compliment to the residents and workers who continued the work in community spaces across the area.

When the Province downloaded social housing to the newly amalgamated City of Toronto in 1998, the Metro Toronto Housing Authority became the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCH).

¹⁴ *Ibid* p240

¹⁵ *Ibid* p254

¹⁶ *Ontario Trillium Foundation* (1998) *BY US! FOR US!* p247

The end of this decade brought the shooting of young Brianna Davy in 1999 at the Yorkwoods Toronto Community Housing Corporation (23 Grandravine Drive). She was hit by one of the four bullets intended for her father. Prior to the shooting, a steering committee of residents and service providers had been meeting at Yorkwoods Community Centre for the purpose of developing programs and services for that area as there were safety concerns with a high number of youth hanging around with nothing to do along with some drug trafficking. After many meetings it was agreed to do a feasibility analysis to improve the physical infrastructure on City and TCH lands through a pilot capital project, an assessment of community needs, and a community-based art project. The art project went ahead first with the intent for a design that would honour the death of Brianna. Space could not be found at Yorkwoods, rather the design can be found on the north side of Driftwood Community Centre. An artist from Montreal worked with residents to design and install *The Garden of Thought*, a design that includes boulders with inscriptions of one or several words and a circular bench backed by birch trees.¹⁷

The shooting of Brianna Davy galvanized community organizations to come together to create a reference group to address some of the concerns within the community at available community spaces. Their focus was to build on the area's strengths by placing emphasis on building on assets and capacities, prevention, community involvement, diversity, and community well-being. Funding was secured, and space was shared. Doorsteps Neighbourhood Services was the trustee for the grant, Delta Family Resource Centre provided the office space and Black Creek Community Health Centre provided the supervision of the staff.¹⁸ The reference group became the Black Creek Community Capacity Building Project that began its work in the early 2000s.

2000s

The Black Creek Community Capacity Building Project (BCCCBP) started with five priority objectives for the community: economic independence and stability; development of services; healthy, safe, and aesthetic spaces and facilities; enhancement of information and services; and showcasing the Black Creek (Jane-Finch) community. There was also a coordinating committee and a resident advisory committee set up for this project. For each objective there was a working group that met in various spaces within the community – community centres, TCH spaces, and within the offices of local community organizations.¹⁹ The BCCCBP continues to meet today under the name Black Creek Collaborative.

The largest private development in the community was on the northeast corner of Jane-Finch, then called the Palisades, which was built in the 1970s despite resistance from the

¹⁷ *BY US! FOR US!* p262

¹⁸ *BY US! FOR US!* p264

¹⁹ *BY US! FOR US!* p265

community. It included two high-rise condominium towers and a thirty-three-storey rental building, where twenty-five percent of the units were subsidized. It became known as San Romanoway, after the name of the street that runs through the development. A recreation centre with a day care centre was built for the residents.

Over time, there was an increase in violence on this corner – 128 per cent above the national average in 2000. The San Romanoway Revitalization Association was established in 2000, with Stephnie Payne, a former North York school board trustee and Black activist who lived in the community, at the helm. Space for the association was made available at 10 San Romanoway and in the recreation centre. Through a variety of programs and support services for children, youth, adults, and seniors, they were able to bring down the crime rate in this neighbourhood.²⁰

The Building Hope Coalition, a coalition that started in the community and was supported by Councillor Maria Augimeri, began to respond to violence impacting members of the Black community. After countless meetings and advocacy efforts, this group played a significant role in getting the City to create a \$4.45 million dollar strategy to promote a safer Toronto for youth. Three grants came to Jane-Finch. One was for the Jane-Finch Khmer-Cambodian Youth Drug Prevention Project, another for Project YOU (Youth of Unity) to do glue sniffing awareness utilizing ten peer youth workers to provide eight skill-building sessions and a conference for youth, and a Jane Finch Gang Prevention Project. Each of these projects utilized various spaces throughout the community while attempting to deal with long-term youth issues with a combined total of \$53,062.²¹

The Jamaican Canadian Association (995 Arrow Road) is located west of Highway 400. There were various meetings and occasional public events in their space. For example, a Youth Forum was organized in 2001 in hopes of improving communication between the police and youth in the community. Youth spoke about their negative experiences including officers being transferred from one station to another, so relationships could not be built.²² Places like the Jamaican Canadian Association allowed for a freer discussion on the issue of discriminatory police practices at the time.

This was also the time when the Humber River Regional Hospital (2111 Finch Avenue West) was considering a move from its Jane-Finch location to another one further away in Downsview, along with a merger of the two other local hospitals. This would mean building a new and bigger hospital. The community mobilized and organized a protest at the Finch Avenue site dubbed, “Save Our Hospital”. A group of concerned residents utilized various spaces to meet and established the Coalition to Save Our Hospital. One of the spaces used for these meetings was the Community Room at the 31 Police Division building at 40 Norfinch Drive.

²⁰ *BY US! FOR US!* p293

²¹ *BY US! FOR US!* p271

²² *BY US! FOR US!* p278

They also held a town hall meeting with a public forum at that location. The police division did provide space for community meetings over the years, but due to tensions between police and many community members, it did not get used as frequently as other spaces in Jane-Finch.

The Jane/Finch Centre utilized Toronto Community Housing spaces for programs and services: 4400 Jane Street for its offices; 415 Driftwood recreation room for its Getting-In-Touch Mental Health Program; 15 Tobermory Drive, 2999 Jane Street, and 5 Needlefirway for its children's programs. The Jane/Finch Centre's newest initiative was developing The Spot: A Place Where Youth Wanna Be and they secured storefront space in the Yorkgate Mall, across from the Black Creek Community Health Centre, and down the hall from Seneca College. Yorkgate was considered a neutral safe space for youth to come together, receive support, participate in programs, and build their skills and capacities.

With long-standing systemic issues facing the Jane-Finch community, activities by social justice action groups of residents continued during this decade. For example, Jane Finch is Getting On organized a conference at Oakdale Community Centre (350 Grandravine Drive) focusing on access and equity. Jane Finch On The Move (JFOTM) emerged from the conference to focus on issues impacting residents. That group organized another community conference that had over 300 people attending. It was held in a community centre, with prestigious guest speakers: noted educator, George Martell and U of T professor, J. David Hulchanski. JFOTM continued to meet in various spaces while focusing on poverty and social justice work.²³

Jane Finch Action Against Poverty later emerged from these initiatives to fight poverty and to act on issues impacting the community. Some of their early actions included the Jane-Finch Save our Schools Campaign, Jane-Finch Community Forum on Immigration, Right Food/Food Right campaign, May Day rallies, advocacy for expanding the Ontario Special Diet program, all-candidates election meetings, and Raising the Rates for social assistance. While they were supported by the Jane/Finch Centre, Black Creek Community Health Centre, and Community Legal Aid Support Program (CLASP) at York University, the residents led and actively participated in all the initiatives, utilizing various community spaces to meet, plan, and mobilize.

Space for community-based services and programs continued to be a serious problem in the 2000s for non-profit organizations and grassroots groups in Jane-Finch, not unlike the difficulties faced in other former suburban communities in North York, Etobicoke, and Scarborough.

York University got funding from the TD Bank and opened the YU-TD Community Engagement Centre (CEC) in Yorkgate Mall. They invited the community to work with them and to utilize their space. The CEC is also connected to the Seneca College facility at Yorkgate, whose classroom spaces were occasionally used for larger meetings or events. The CEC became a hub of activity for the community.

²³ *BY Us! FOR US!* p308

Action for Neighbourhood Change was a new initiative of the United Way of Greater Toronto in 2007. The Jane/Finch Centre was successful in securing ANC funding, but again space had to be found for an office and activities. They initially had space on the 2nd floor in Norfinch Plaza, but without an elevator some residents could not access the office, so they moved into 415 Driftwood's recreation room, where they stayed until the funding ended. Affordable space is challenging to find in the community so, once again, space within TCH enabled the ANC initiative to carry out its activities and achieve its goals.

New services for youth continued to be developed by residents with locations within local schools and outside of school facilities. Friends in Trouble was started by a young man who attended Westview Centennial Collegiate (755 Oakdale Road) with the intention of providing programs that would engage youth and assist them with the court system. Success Beyond Limits was started by parents and community agency staff meeting at Westview to deal with high school drop-out rates. This program led to a relationship with York University that ensured a better transition from high school to university for youth who may not have considered post-secondary education as an option. Belka Enrichment Centre (120 Norfinch Drive) was started by two teachers outside of school hours to help youth move beyond anger and despair by providing positive alternatives.

Lastly, the Jane Finch Mall has provided some much-needed space for community organizations. Many years after hosting the Downsview-Weston Information Post, the Jane/Finch Centre was able to obtain storefront space in the mall for the Early Years' Centre (now referred to as Early ON Child and Family Centre). This program started out as the Child/Parent Centre at the 4400 Jane Street site, then utilized various spaces, including Gosford Public School (30 Gosford Blvd.) to provide early childhood programs. The Jane Finch Mall is also a site for the JVS Toronto employment support services.

2010s

Residents continued to access community spaces to meet and organize in the 2010s. York University-TD Community Engagement Centre at the Yorkgate Mall was utilized frequently by networks and grassroots groups, as were spaces next door in Seneca College's classrooms. Meetings also took place in spaces within local community organizations (e.g., the Jane/Finch Centre [various locations] and the Black Creek CHC at Yorkgate Mall, across from YU-TD CEC).

Late 2009 and into 2010, the Toronto District School Board, suffering from continuing funding cuts by the provincial government, did a review of school populations. They determined that several Jane-Finch schools, among others in the system, were under-enrolled and therefore targeted for possible closure and sale of the property. Led by community activists, residents in Jane-Finch formed a coalition to stop the closures and held meetings of up to 300 people in spaces such as Brookview Middle School. As a result, none of the schools in the area were closed.

The Centre for Green Change, a new component of the Jane/Finch Centre, was developed in late 2009 into 2010. Space was secured at the rear of 2999 Jane Street, a high-rise Toronto Community Housing building, but the space needed renovation to create offices and a community meeting space. A Green Gala fundraising event was organized and held at the Oakdale Golf and Country Club; a private club not accessible to Jane-Finch organizations in the past [Oakdale was the site of the 2023 PGA Canadian Open golf tournament]. As well as proceeds from the gala, a proposal was submitted to Volunteer Canada for renovations for the Green Change centre. The proposal was successful, and with sponsorship from Starbucks, approximately 750 volunteers came to help with the make-over. Further funds were also obtained from the City of Toronto and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

For many years, events and festivals and protests utilized the northwest section of the Jane Finch Mall's parking lot. More recently, the newest initiative that has significant value for the community is the Corner Commons, a program of the Centre for Green Change. It is located on the southeast corner of Jane Street and Finch Avenue West and operates from spring to the fall. It was created to bring residents and workers together in a very visible, public space for a wide range of programs and activities including community events, educational workshops, artist residencies, live music, and much more.

In the early 2010s, work was begun to establish the Black Creek Community Farm (BCCF) at 4929 Jane Street by residents and staff in the area. This eight-acre property on Jane Street just south of Steeles Avenue West and next to the Black Creek Pioneer Village, was held by the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority (TRCA) and included a heritage farmhouse, a barn, and enough acreage to grow food for the community. Meetings and negotiations resulted in the establishment of this newest community-based organization in 2012.²⁴

The Black Creek Community Farm set up its office in the original farmhouse on the land and production began. Their purpose is to improve food security, reduce social isolation, and improve employment and education outcomes. This also became a space community organizations could utilize for relevant meetings.

Once the farm was established and functioning, they grew sustainable and organic food and led a fight for food justice by establishing the Black Creek Food Justice Network. Meetings were held at the farm to organize action for food security and food equity with their partners: the Jane/Finch Centre and the Black Creek CHC.²⁵ Several initiatives were organized that mobilized more residents to act on their own behalf and for the needs of the community.

Another source of resident-led community activism was the York-West Community Action Planning Group (CAPG). CAPG was established to address the issue of poor planning in the community and to ensure community voices were heard in any future planning by governments or private developers. Consisting of long-time community activists, they held their

²⁴ *BY US! FOR US!* p341

²⁵ *BY US! FOR US!* p341

initial meetings in their homes. As they grew in number and wanted to be more visible to residents, they negotiated regular meeting space at the York Woods Public Library. They held their first public forum on the transit crisis and solutions for the community in the library. CAPG later held their meetings at the Green Change offices at 2999 Jane Street.

While working on building support for a Light Rail Train to run from Keele and Finch to Humber College, and beyond in Etobicoke, CAPG learned that the Province was actually going to build the LRT. When they found out that Metrolinx intended to build a maintenance and storage facility (MSF) on the empty lands across from the Yorkgate Mall, they took it upon themselves to ensure some of that land was given to the community for social purposes. Some members remembered the fights with developers who wanted to build condos on that land and felt the community deserved something better that would benefit the community.

CAPG was invited by their partners, the Toronto Community Benefits Network, to speak at a meeting of Metrolinx and the developer consortia bidding to build the LRT and the MSF. After compelling presentations from three CAPG activists, Metrolinx and the developers agreed to a minimum of a 32-metre setback.²⁶ Many meetings were held at 2999 Jane Street to discuss this process and to plan the presentation. Some years later, when Metrolinx reneged on its offer for the 32-metre frontage along Finch – thus taking this land from the community to sell on the private market – community residents and supporters organized and mobilized a sizable demonstration at the Yorkgate Mall parking lot across the street from the site. The media picked up on the protest and numerous columnists criticized the provincial government for this reversal, making the Ford government look bad. Metrolinx reversed course and relinquished the land to the City for use by the community.

When the City announced the Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy (TSNS) in 2013, the City planned to hold consultations across Toronto, but the Jane-Finch community was not included. Jane Finch Action Against Poverty wrote a letter to the City reminding them that Jane-Finch was the priority community with the worst livability scores and insisted that the community be part of the consultations. The City agreed to this, so residents and community staff worked hard going door-to-door—visiting youth, seniors, and parent groups – and as a result of this local outreach well over two hundred residents attended the consultation. It was the largest consultation meeting the City held, larger than all the other consultations on this issue combined.²⁷ This meeting with the City happened at the Driftwood Community Centre.

Some social action work in Jane-Finch was done on the street, some at a desk, and some in a community space. For example, when Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP) tackled the issue of precarious jobs, they spent time talking to temporary and precarious workers on their way to work in order to learn more about this issue. More than one hundred exploitative temporary employment agencies operated in the community at that time. JFAAP held

²⁶ *BY US! FOR US!* p371

²⁷ *BY US! FOR US!* p351

workshops, advocated by telephone, and handed out flyers at the four corners of Jane Street and Finch Avenue (or wherever people congregated) to inform workers about their rights.²⁸

Jane Finch Action Against Poverty prepared a report for an all-candidates meeting for the municipal election of 2019. They found that residents continued to feel the impact from the lack of affordable housing, increasing rents, and insufficient income to pay their bills. They also found that the Humber River-Black Creek riding (including neighbourhoods from Keele to Hwy. 400) had the highest number of families on the waiting list for subsidized housing. The households in the area had the highest number of children waiting for a child-care subsidy and the highest rate of poverty among racialized and Indigenous people than the rest of Canada. JFAAP also found an increasing number of seniors living in poverty. Their document concluded that there was substantial demographic information documenting Jane-Finch as having enormous challenges, scarce resources, and insufficient social supports to address the systemic issues that have impacted the community since its beginning.²⁹

Mural and graffiti artistic design

Over the years, community staff and residents have invited artists, local and from outside, to paint murals and graffiti art in the community. Those artistic designs can be found on the walls of community centres (Driftwood), apartment buildings (4400 Jane Street, San Romanoway), Black Creek Community Farm and in the Yorkgate Mall (beside The Spot). [*Note: there are additional murals in the community.*] Each has a story to tell and brings character to the community. One specific mural, painted by people in the Firgrove community, depicts 12 youth who lost their lives due to violence over a fifteen-year period called *Towards a Higher Journey*. The mural hung outside the former Firgrove recreation centre until the centre was demolished.

Community Minister, Barry Reider, read an article in the Toronto Star around that time that compared the youth who died in Toronto to the Canadian soldiers killed in Afghanistan. In a ten-year period, approximately 53 youth in Toronto Housing had lost their lives to violence. During that same period of time, 55 Canadian soldiers lost their lives in Afghanistan. Rieder saw the violence against youth in the community as another war “. . . that we don’t talk about, and that’s called poverty.”³⁰ Most recently, the mural was displayed at York University’s Art Gallery show and is being kept by a professor at York University who has been working with youth in Firgrove and PEACH over the past six years.

Summary

²⁸ *BY US! FOR US!* p365

²⁹ *BY US! FOR US!* p377

³⁰ *BY US! FOR US!* p350

For those who call Jane-Finch home, or work with the residents, there continue to be major challenges facing the community, challenges that have been exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the construction of the LRT. Despite this situation, the people of Jane-Finch and their supporters have managed to mobilize and fight against negative conditions imposed on them, creating community-based services in whatever spaces they could find. This is a very diverse community with people from around the world, with their cultures, skills and experiences that add to creating a better community. What Jane-Finch has in abundance is social capital.

People volunteered a great deal of their time and knowledge, working with others to build the community they wanted and deserved. In Jane-Finch, there is a very deep and valuable legacy of community-led organizing, advocacy, and action. While that legacy is primarily about people acting collectively, it is important to acknowledge that the work would not have happened without the community spaces that were provided, where meetings were held, where events took place, and where memorials were constructed.

Spaces in both Toronto Community Housing Corporation buildings and in city community centres were instrumental in community development. For example, the work of residents in developing community services could not have been done without utilizing space within the following TCHC locations:

- *415 Driftwood Avenue*: YWCA Life Skills Group, Action for Neighbourhood Change, Getting in Touch, community meetings
- *4400 Jane Street*: Jane/Finch Centre (office and program space), programs for youth groups, community meetings
- *15 Tobermory Drive*: Life Skills Group, moms and tots programs, Mennonite Community Ministry (had a thrift shop, food bank), meeting spaces
- *2999 Jane Street*: Life Skills Group, Centre for Green Change, meeting space
- *5 Needlefirway*: Life Skills Group, Women's Group, United Church's Community Ministry utilized 5 Needle Firway and then they had one of the townhouses – now demolished
- *San Romanoway*: programs and services, community meetings

Meetings, celebrations and events were mostly conducted in the following community centres:

- *Driftwood Community Centre*
- *Oakdale Community Centre*
- *Northwood Community Centre*

The following malls had, or continue to have, community services in their spaces:

- *Jane-Finch Mall* – formerly had the Downsview Weston Information Post and continues to have Jane/Finch Centre’s Early ON, JVS Employment Services and Corner Commons
- *Jane-Sheppard Mall* – (northeast corner) Black Creek Community Health Centre was there for about 6 years when they were established
- *Jane-Sheppard Plaza* – (northwest corner) Northwood Neighbourhood Services was there for several years as was Delta Family Resource Centre
- *Sheridan Mall* – Black Creek CHC has a site there
- *Yorkgate Mall* – formerly had the Jane Finch Concerned Citizens Organization and continues to have the Black Creek CHC as second site; York University-TD Community Engagement Centre, Jane/Finch Centre’s The Spot, and Seneca College

Submitted by Wanda MacNevin
October 2023

Biographic information about Wanda MacNevin:

Wanda MacNevin grew up in Downsview on the former Canadian military base. While living in Jane-Finch, she started work in 1976 at the Jane/Finch Centre and then in 1991, she worked at the Black Creek Community Health Centre. She went back to the Jane/Finch Centre in 2003 until she retired in 2016 as the Director of Community Programs. MacNevin dedicated time volunteering on boards, committees, and in political action.

In 2017, York University awarded her with a Doctor of Laws degree for her lifework. MacNevin has authored three books, *From the Edge - A Woman’s Evolution from Abuse to Activism* (1999), *Teen Moms: If I Only Knew* (2008) and *By Us! For Us! Activism in Jane-Finch, A Working-Class Community* (2022).

[All documents saved by Wanda MacNevin can be found in the archives at York University.]

APPENDIX B: HERITAGE FOCUS GROUP MEETING SUMMARY REPORTS

HFG MEETING #1: NOVEMBER 3, 2021

HFG MEETING #2: NOVEMBER 23, 2021

HFG MEETING #3: OCTOBER 4, 2023

HFG MEETING #4: NOVEMBER 2, 2023

**Jane Finch Initiative:
Heritage Focus Group
November 3rd, 2021
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.**



Summary Report by the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre

BACKGROUND

The [Jane Finch Initiative](#) (JFI) is a community-informed project to plan for the future of the Jane and Finch area. Together, we are developing a community development plan and a land use plan so that residents and businesses are supported as the area changes over time with the opening of the Finch West LRT. It is a collaborative community planning exercise in 'Neighbourhood 24 - Black Creek' and 'Neighbourhood 25 - Glenfield-Jane Heights' (see [Neighbourhood Profiles](#)), centred on the intersection of Jane Street and Finch Avenue West.

The initiative involves three integrated streams of work:

- 1) **Comprehensive engagement** (ongoing)
- 2) A **community development plan** including a local economic opportunity plan.
- 3) An update to the **land use planning framework**.

Community engagement is at the heart of the Jane Finch Initiative. The City is working in collaboration with the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre which is supporting community engagement and facilitating different community conversations to collect ideas and feedback. This includes facilitating monthly meetings of a Community Advisory Committee.

MEETING OVERVIEW

On Wednesday November 3rd, 2021, from 6:00 pm to 8:00 p.m., City of Toronto staff, Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre staff, Common Bond Collective (CBC) staff and a Community Researcher hosted the first of two Heritage focus groups. These focus groups are part of the Jane Finch Initiative's comprehensive engagement stream, and it was held online over Webex. The presentation deck, which includes an agenda, can be viewed in Appendix 1 on page 10.

The purpose of the event was to:

- Introduce the Jane Finch Initiative (JFI) to focus group participants.
- Provide a presentation from City's Heritage Planning staff, Common Bond Collective and a Community Researcher to focus group participants about the Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment and the scope of work.
- Answer questions following the presentation.
- Hold a discussion with focus group participants about the heritage of Jane Finch.

ATTENDEES:

- **1 JFCF centre staff;** Maymun Abukar (Jane Finch Initiative Coordinator).
- **3 City Planning staff:** Gary Miedema (Project Manager, Heritage Planning), Tatum Taylor (Heritage Planner, City Planning), Zahra Joseph-Wilson (Assistant Planner).
- **2 Common Bond Collective staff:** Ellen Kowalchuk (Partner), David Deo (Partner).
- **1 Community Researcher:** Sam Tecle
- **9 Focus Group participants:** Winston LaRose, Paul Nguyen, Jerome Johnson, Shannon Holness, Fatima Begum, Sayem Khan, Unblind, Talisha Ramsaroop, Leticia Ama Amponsah.

MEETING SUMMARY

- Maymun welcomes everyone, reads the Land Acknowledgement, and goes over the evening agenda.
- City staff, Common Bond Collective staff, Community Researcher and Focus Group participants briefly introduce themselves.
- Zahra briefly presents the Jane Finch Initiative to focus group participants.
- Tatum presents the Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment (CHRA) to focus group participants.
- Sam presents “Making Meaning in Place”, including the scope, census data and social realities of Jane Finch to focus group participants.
- Ellen presents the CHRA scope of work to the participants. David presents the work to date with the CHRA and next steps to the focus group participants.
- After the presentation, City staff and Common Bond Collective staff answer any follow-up questions pertaining to the heritage presentation and the heritage assessment of Jane Finch.
- Following this Q&A period, Maymun facilitates the discussion, asking a research question for focus group participants to engage.
- At the end of discussion, the meeting is adjourned. The next focus group will take place on November 23, 2021.

WHAT WE HEARD

This section includes the summaries of the feedback collected from the discussions during the Webex meeting. There will be continued discussion with the Heritage Focus Group on November 23, 2021.

Presentation Questions/ Answers Discussed:

- **Q:** What types of things could be suggested for the heritage designation?
 - **Response:** (Tatum) [Common Bond Collective] will be doing a scan of every property within the study area of the CHRA and will be looking at every building and landscape within those boundaries. All the properties have potential to be identified as heritage and to be conserved through different means. If a property gets recommended for conservation under the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA), there is a set of criteria that Heritage planners must use under this provincial act. This helps municipalities to identify which properties have heritage significance, and under those criteria there are a few different ways that a property can qualify;
 - Architectural significance,
 - Important design,
 - Associated with a person, group, event that took place in the community,
 - Associated with a famous architect,
 - Contextual value: how a property relates to its surroundings.
 - There are a few different ways that a property can qualify, it must meet one of the criteria in the OHA to be officially identified by the City of Toronto as a heritage property. There are also other tools that we (heritage planners) might consider using to acknowledge the heritage value of properties that came to the surface during this process.
 - (Ellen) In the category of historical and associative value that a property may have, it is significant to hear from you to know what is important to a community and taking the intangible values and make a strong case, making a recommendation and include it in the heritage registers.
- **Q:** Can you speak to urban forestry and is it a part of the CHRA? Would you consider it?
 - **Response:** (Ellen) Things like views and vistas can be considered, it cannot be on its own identified because it is not a piece of actual property. If there are parks that are not within the study area boundary, we can make a recommendation for the city to investigate the park- either through a Cultural Heritage Evaluation or a Cultural Landscape Study. Something that we are starting to recommend as part of the CHRA is Cultural

Landscape Studies to understand the intangible values and to understand the things like use, views, and vistas.

- (Gary) The beauty about the CHRA being a part of a planning study is that the OHA is only 1 tool that heritage planners use, but Zahra (city planner) have a different set of tools they can use. So how can we capture views and other aspects you might value are not restricted here. In this case, the JFI has a Community Development Plan. We need to hear from you anything that you value and we're going to find which tools we can use to make use of that.
- **Q:** What mechanisms are in place to protect heritage- designated sites?
 - **Response:** (Gary) When a property is designated under the OHA, staff will do a lengthy report to explain 'why'. When staff explain, that will include the list of attributes. Change can be allowed on the property to adapt. The resources required for these changes- you can get access to;
 - Heritage Grant Program (if a property is designated). This covers up to 50% for owners to make repairs.
 - A Tax Rebate Program for commercial properties access 50% of costs.
 - 2 incentive programs to help owners to conserve a property. The other way where resources can be found is often through development itself. Local Councillors are aware of needs that can direct funds related to development and support projects.
- **Comment:** More engagement needs to happen for the JFI, we need engagement and involvement from those who have contributed to the community.
 - **Response:** (Gary) We will have further conversations to make sure engagement is thorough and that we hear from everyone.
- **Q/Comment:** Can we get the presentation slides after this focus group? Local Mosques in the area are engaged and if you want additional information, pictures, data, they [the Mosques] will assist you [Common Bond Collective/ Community Researcher].
 - **Response:** (David) Will follow- up with participant regarding information.

Research Discussion Responses:

The question asked of the participants was, *“We understand that places are shaped by their histories. What part of Jane & Finch’s past have made it what it is today?”*.

- **Participant:** The Vietnamese community is relatively young, arriving in 1979 to 1980. Jane Finch has the largest population of Vietnamese people in Ontario, we (the Vietnamese community) might not have any buildings or places, but is there somehow a way we can mark that as intangible heritage? Maybe a plaque, monument down the road?
 - **Response:** (Ellen) In terms of this scope, we can make a recommendation to the City.
- **Participant:** It is a shame that we are looking at the end of a life for a lot of public housing in Jane Finch, just because the state of repair, conditions, and quality of the buildings. I know many people are not fans of the architecture, but I believe it is significant to a time where there was a lot of investments of housing in Canada. I wonder if there is opportunity to look further into the forms and structures of public housing- there is a lot of rich history in these communities that need to be preserved, ex. Firgrove, Shoreham, Driftwood, Towers on Finch.
 - **Response:** (David) We are finding a few resources about public housing projects in the area.
 - (Sam) Acknowledging this point, how do we mark meaning and heritage to publicly- funded infrastructure that is allowed to decline?
- **Participant:** Activism is important in the community and a part of the history. Activism in spaces of housing complexes is significant.
- **Participant:** Ways to preserve community murals- each have their own development backstory/ history. San Romanoway, the Farm, Driftwood, Grandravine, are all TCH locations where these murals exist.
- **Participant:** International foods and supporting these restaurants by making them historical sites.
- **Participant:** Community centres and schools are important spaces. Driftwood Community and Recreation Centre, Oakdale Community Centre, Westview C.I. (there needs to be TDSB involvement).
- **Participant:** Jane Finch Mall is an early memory for many residents, central meeting space in mall parking lot.
- **Participant:** Yorkwoods Library was an important space growing up, specifically living in Eddystone.
- **Participants:** Dwight Drummond, Jolly Black, Dream Warriors and Keenan are all from the Jane Finch community. Cultural icon, Beanie Man, was once spotted in the Mall.
- **Participant:** Ravines, pathways and creeks should be preserved, specifically the Black Creek and a pathway behind Yorkwoods Library.
- **Participant:** The tennis court and the theatre has been underused but an excellent venue to use for engagement, they should be sustained.

- **Participant:** Another community a part of the cultural heritage of Jane Finch is the Cambodians living in the Eddystone neighbourhood (suggest reaching out to them).
- **Participant:** Restaurants in Yorkgate Mall and Yorkwoods Plaza provide different foods and authentic experiences.
- **Participant:** Question regarding transportation – How would you discuss this theme in the report?
 - **Response:** (David) Developing a document called a Historic Context Statement. Transportation is a fundamental theme of area evolution. For example, Highway 400 affected the land uses on either side and why the neighbourhood has been shaped this way.
- **Participant:** Jane Finch Mall is undergoing future and redevelopment consultations, have we (the JFI) been aware?
 - **Response:** (Zahra) Through that process, it's mostly been connecting with Troy Budhu. No official application has been submitted yet but there is an intention from the mall to engage to the larger community. Speaking with the (planning) team with the master plan and use what we collect with the JFI in their planning into consideration.
- **Participant:** The Huron- Wendat trail along the hydro corridor used to be a settlement of long houses, what considerations for Indigenous heritage are in this conversation?
 - **Response:** (David) We came across this trail in our study area. Looking into the importance of creeks and ravines to the Huron Wendat people.
 - (Gary) Separate Indigenous engagement programs are currently happening in the JFI, reaching out to the Nations to join the conversation about the historical and contemporary Indigenous communities of Jane Finch.
- **Participant:** Marches, murals, and vigils – can those places be marked as historical sites? 4400 Jane Street Basketball Court is a space where a community member was murdered. It is systemic neglect that should be addressed.
 - **Response:** (Zahra) Connected with Barry Reeder (Minister) through economic development, Inclusive Economic Table.
- **Participant:** Jane's walk led by the JFC with different organizations including Black Creek Community Farms and the Green Change Project.
- **Participant:** A digital repository/ digitized space where events can live. There is a strong, significant Hip Hop and Rap subculture in Jane Finch – community events are documented in these songs and are a part of Jane Finch's identity.
 - **Response:** (Zahra) Capture digital and non-physical heritage.
 - (Gary) Mapping music and murals to places across the community.
- **Participant:** Corner of Jane Finch used to be a political gathering site in the Mike Harris days. Space for folks to connect. The (Jane Finch) Mall also should be considered. Organizations apart of this heritage are the Jane Finch Concerned Citizens Organization (JFCCO) and the Jane Finch Action Against Poverty (JFAAP).

Next Steps

- Explore the influences and themes of the discussion for the second heritage focus group on November 23, 2021.

Appendix: Meeting Agenda

Heritage Focus Group Meeting Agenda

6:00 – 6:45

- Land acknowledgement
- Introductions – Facilitators, City Staff, Consultants
- Introductions – Heritage Focus Group Members – What is your Jane & Finch story?

6:45 – 7:15

- Presentation – City Staff, Consultants – What is the Jane & Finch Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment?

7:15 – 8:00

- Discussion – Heritage Focus Group Members – We understand that places are shaped by their histories. What parts of Jane & Finch's past have made it what it is today?

Jane Finch Initiative:
Heritage Focus Group
November 23rd, 2021
6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.



Summary Report by the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre

BACKGROUND

The [Jane Finch Initiative](#) (JFI) is a City of Toronto and resident-led project to plan for the future of the Jane and Finch area. Together, we are developing a community development plan and a land use plan so that residents and businesses are supported as the area changes over time with the opening of the Finch West LRT. It is a collaborative community planning exercise in 'Neighbourhood 24 - Black Creek' and 'Neighbourhood 25 - Glenfield-Jane Heights' (see [Neighbourhood Profiles](#)), centred on the intersection of Jane Street and Finch Avenue West.

The initiative involves three integrated streams of work:

- 1) **Comprehensive engagement** (ongoing)
- 2) A **community development plan** including a local economic opportunity plan.
- 3) An update to the **land use planning framework**.

Community engagement is at the heart of the Jane Finch Initiative. The city is working in collaboration with the Jane Finch Community and Family Centre which is supporting community engagement and facilitating different community conversations to collect ideas and feedback. This includes facilitating monthly meetings of a Community Advisory Committee.

MEETING OVERVIEW

On Wednesday November 23rd, 2021, from 6:00 pm to 7:00 p.m., City of Toronto staff, Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre staff, Common Bond Collective (CBC) staff and the project's Community Researcher hosted the second of two Phase 1 meetings of the Heritage Focus Group. These meetings are part of the Jane Finch Initiative's comprehensive engagement stream, and were held online over Webex. The agenda and discussion questions are appended to this document on pages 7 and 8.

The purpose of the event was to:

- Provide a presentation recap from the first Heritage Focus Group meeting by the City's Heritage Planning staff, CBC staff and the Community Researcher to focus group participants
- Answer questions following the presentation
- Hold a discussion with focus group participants about what's missing from the heritage discussion of Jane Finch

ATTENDEES

- **1 JFCF centre staff:** Maymun Abukar (Jane Finch Initiative Coordinator)
- **3 City Planning staff:** Gary Miedema (Project Manager, Heritage Planning), Tatum Taylor (Heritage Planner), Zahra Joseph-Wilson (Assistant Planner)
- **2 Common Bond Collective staff:** Ellen Kowalchuk (Partner), David Deo (Partner)
- **1 Community Researcher:** Sam Tecle
- **3 Focus Group participants:** Jerome Johnson, Sayem Khan, Leticia Ama Amponsah

MEETING SUMMARY

- Maymun welcomes everyone, reads the Land Acknowledgement, and goes over the evening agenda.
- Tatum presents a recap on the discussion themes from focus group #1 to the participants.
- Sam presents on research findings that have stemmed from the previous focus group discussion, indicating the scope of research done thus far.
- David presents the research framework, indicating themes from the previous focus group discussion.
- After the presentation, Maymun facilitates the discussion.
- At the end of discussion, the meeting is adjourned.

WHAT WE HEARD

This section includes the summaries of the feedback collected from the discussions during the Webex meeting. The discussion questions can be found in Appendix 2 on page 8.

Discussion Feedback

Question 1: What topics related to Jane and Finch's history and identity were not captured at the last meeting?

- **Participant:** How Jane-Finch relates to the broader community. How areas adjacent are immediately impacted. Prayer Palace Church at Weston Road and

Finch Avenue West, by the 400; they used to have a food festival with diverse foods. York University is also impactful, many residents from Jane-Finch also go to this institution. Pioneer Village needs more promotion as a community attraction. Things that are cancelled like the Jane LRT, something should be done for transit connections on Jane Street, hopefully it can be reinstated as a project.

- **Response:** (David) How much does the Jane-Finch area have a singular identity compared to the surrounding area? The area we are studying is the boundaries (natural/major road) – is it a self-contained area or does it have functional/ cultural connections to the areas beyond it?
- **Participant:** It is very much connected to Weston Road and Finch Avenue West. It expands west, almost to Rexdale. A broad community of Caribbean, newcomers, immigrants etc. You don't want the character of the community to be lost through development, an example is Regent Park. No drastic change, we want to sustain some places like the Yorkgate and Jane Finch Mall. In terms of housing, Jane-Finch ranks lower to buy or rent housing, this is due to the stigma of the area; more needs to be addressed about this issue. Postal code discrimination is also an issue.
- **Participant:** In our community, many different languages and dialects are spoken, so maybe something to support people who speak English as a second language ex. Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples at Jane and Wilson.

Question 2: *Is there anything further you want to add about any of the topics? (follow up from team about food, etc.)?*

- **Participant:** The conversation from last time was comprehensive, there isn't much to add.

Question 3: *What key moments, milestones, movements, etc, in Jane and Finch's past do you think are important?*

- **Participant:** The Pan-Am games was a big deal for the area in 2015. The Rogers Cup. Different activities in High Schools (multi-cultural events at Driftwood Community Centre/ CW Jeffreys C.I.), concerts.
- **Participant:** How the area is changing politically, from Liberal to NDP, and electing officials who are addressing the needs of the community, ex. Abolishing carding.
- **Participant:** I saw a picture from 20 years ago, a rally from the Spanish Community on the Jane-Finch intersection.
- **Participant:** More construction in the area. I noticed a new maintenance and service yard for the LRT; I hope that this will create job opportunities for people in the neighbourhood. Beautify the yard with some green space.

Question: Do people tend to leave the Jane-Finch community for services?

- **Participant:** People had to leave the community for some services like Highschool prom, church, events, food festivals etc.

Question: How in the built environment does music happen in Jane-Finch?

- **Participant:** Not too sure, I went to a studio downtown.
- **Participant:** We has a summer camp help students with music, we had Drake come to perform one year at CW Jeffreys C.I.

Appendix 1: Meeting Agenda

6:00 – 6:20

- Welcome and land acknowledgement
- Recap of what we heard at Meeting #1

6:20 – 7:45

- Discussion
 - What topics related to Jane and Finch's history and identity were not captured at the last meeting?
 - Is there anything further you want to add about any of the topics?
 - What key moments, milestones, movements, etc, in Jane and Finch's past do you think are important?

7:45 – 8:00

- Next Steps

Appendix 2: Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions for focus group participants:

1. What topics related to Jane and Finch's history and identity were not captured at the last meeting?
2. Is there anything further you want to add about any of the topics? (follow up from team about food, etc.)
3. What key moments, milestones, movements, etc, in Jane and Finch's past do you think are important? As a backup, the question could be got at through another angle: "How has Jane and Finch changed since you've known it? When? Why?"

Jane Finch Initiative: Heritage Focus Group Meetings



6:00-8:00 pm, October 4th, 2023

6:00-8:00 pm November 2nd, 2023

OVERVIEW

On October 4th and November 2nd, 2023, Jane Finch Initiative Heritage Focus Groups were hosted by the Jane Finch Community and Family (JFCF) Centre with support from the City of Toronto. This consultation is part of the [Jane Finch Initiative](#)'s comprehensive engagement process and they were held online over Zoom. The agenda and project background can be viewed in the appendices.

The purpose of the event was to:

- Receive feedback on the Cultural Heritage findings and draft Urban Design guidelines related to Heritage

WHAT WE HEARD

This section includes the summaries of the feedback collected from the group discussions during the Zoom meeting. Meeting agendas including discussion prompts are available in Appendix A.

Key Themes

- Attendees expressed concerns about gentrification and displacement, and emphasized that the maintenance and protection of stable, affordable housing is a priority.
- Residents specified some buildings and housing complexes which have cultural significance, or that have interesting and unique design to be preserved
- Community engagement in heritage planning should be ongoing, particularly in determining the specific ways that people and events are commemorated
- Residents suggested commemorating local heroes and influential individuals through murals, statues, honorary plaques in community centres, and more.
- Some discussed preserving outdoor views and vistas, iconic corners of the area, and the potential impact of construction on visual elements

Recorded Feedback

October 4th, 2023

Comments relating to specific places

- Firgrove-Grassways had a unique history as one of the area's first social housing projects with brutalist architecture, but unfortunately it had to be demolished because it wasn't maintained. When I see Palisades here, I am concerned about the same thing. If we suggest that buildings are heritage sites, does that have other implications for the maintenance and the upkeep of these buildings? We should always be prioritizing the current living conditions for residents, and not cementing patterns of bad maintenance and upkeep.
 - Response from City of Toronto representative: Firstly, we stress that we're not currently saying that these places merit inclusion on the register either through listing or through designation. I appreciate that these may be places that had high design value when they were created, but between then and now there's a lot of history that is lost if we just talk about design value.
- Winston LaRose has always spoken about establishing a mural wall at the corner of Steeles and Jane to highlight the historical legacy of the community and individuals' contributions. A major mural that would be big and wide and colourful.
- The York Woods library has been very significant in hosting a lot of major events in the community. And I understand that the music school will shortly be built.
- There is always a need for more meeting and gathering spaces in the community. The Jane Finch Hub and Centre for the Arts will be a transformational building, because we're always struggling to find and secure meeting places. Often you have to pay out of pocket, which no local community organizations should be doing because they are dedicating their time to community benefit. Sometimes people want to host Christmas or Thanksgiving events, but it's not possible to find appropriate spaces for it.
- Concerning Corner Commons at the intersection, when the construction is complete, that corner could be a place to add a mural and display cultural historical significance.
- There is a beautiful sunset that you can see as you're coming down Sentinel and Finch into Tobermory. That view is nice and should be considered as a view that could be preserved. Like the New York Henge, it would be cool to have a Jane Finch Henge.
- Trees are heritage. Three trees were chopped down in front of 4400. They may be replanted, but young trees are not equivalent to mature trees.
- Brookview Middle School is significant because lots of things have happened in it. It was the first high school in the neighbourhood, and many community organizations started in the school. The grounds are also a migration stage for the Canada geese.
- 15 Tobermory Drive was built as a private building. The province bought it as a social housing building, and later on the Mennonite Church came into the building and implemented programming and services which created community; a thrift shop, a food

bank, community meetings and events, and a family exchange program. When all of that programming ended, it was never replaced. We need to consider how to best use common areas in residential social housing buildings, otherwise it is a lost opportunity

- The boys and girls clubs in Driftwood have been productive programs that have supported many youth. These spaces create fun memories, build character, and develop skills.

General comments

- How can heritage recognition be encouraged in properties that are currently undergoing the development application process, and may complete the process before the land use and community development plan are approved? How will current conversations impact decisions on zoning or official plan amendments?
 - Response from City of Toronto representative: it is true that without properties listed on the heritage register, heritage planning won't directly review development applications through that lens. However, through the Jane Finch Initiative, Heritage Planning is collaborating closely with our colleagues in community planning and across the City. Because of the inter-divisional nature of the Jane Finch Initiative, potential heritage designations are considered by staff reviewing development applications
- It is important to recognize the unique architectural styles in Jane and Finch. Parts of Jane and Finch were among the early walkable communities, with schools, buildings, and shopping centers all integrated in it.
- The schools and community centres are important, but we need additional meeting spaces.
- Can any of the commemorative pieces (such as murals) be effectively done through this process? What are the outcomes of this research?
 - Response from City of Toronto representative: We're working towards recommendations of what types of commemorative pieces could be implemented in Jane and Finch in the future
- It is beautiful at night, I think. With Jane and Finch going up the way it is, you will be able to see it from Jane and Sheppard, Jane and Wilson, Jane and Lawrence. But will the local people actually benefit from and be a part of the new Jane and Finch. Will they be pushed out because of gentrification? Changes are good, as long as we can keep up with it socially and economically.
- A lot of the time, places come and go while residents are displaced. It's important that people's stable housing is always the priority.

- Something like a plaque is less valuable than having a physical gathering space as commemoration.
- Has there been any consideration to preserving views and vistas in Jane and Finch? For example, preserving sunrises and sunsets. There are particular views and focal points which have become iconic to Jane and Finch, and create a magnetism to specific corners of the neighbourhood.
 - Response from City Staff: Yes, we have draft policies and guidelines to recognize and consider views and vistas. These [policies and guidelines are currently online and available for public input](#).
- A Jane and Finch walk of fame to highlight icons from the area. For example, Anthony Bennett and Winston LaRose. Suggestion to add Winson LaRose's name to the Jane Finch Hub and Centre for the Arts.
- July Black and other people could be commemorated in a mural or collage.
- As development intensifies and population intensifies, an effort needs to be made to ensure that community spaces are preserved.
- Ways to beautify the area, such as statues of historical figures or a water fountain.
- There is a need for more training and employment opportunities for youth, including opportunities in the vocational trades, construction, technology, digital fields, and creative fields. Consider building local educational hubs for the vocational trades and technology within the community. This would also encourage the use of public transportation and active transportation because students would not need to travel as far.
- It's important to preserve the community building function of common areas in residential buildings, rather than just preserving spaces that have historically been significant to the community.
- Need to honour local heroes, inspirational individuals. This could be done at the malls or at the community centres.
- The schools need to do a better job at civic education so that young people can understand and participate in politics and government. Relevant books should be distributed in the Toronto school system and in local libraries.

November 2nd, 2023

Comments relating to specific places

- Northwood holds significant history, serving as a golf club and a community banquet hall. When the City proposed selling York Woods, the residents opposed the sale

because they valued how unique the building was. The City sold it anyway, and the community lost interest in the Oakdale Community Centre's development.

- Oakdale Community Centre has a lot of value to the people in the nearby social housing development.
- Even with the renovations and additions, the York Woods library still feels the same as it did when I was young. It feels nostalgic to go there.
- The York Woods theatre is architecturally unique because it was built to be round.
- Interest in preserving and protecting Marian Shrine of Gratitude
 - Response from City of Toronto representative: this is outside the Jane Finch Initiative study area but staff have registered the desire for its preservation.
- The church at Finch and Driftwood is built in an unusual way.
- The Christian Centre has messed up the outside, so I don't think it needs to be preserved for design reasons.
- We should pay attention to the sites of the Community Music School and the Boys and Girls Club.
- Will some of the businesses in the plaza in the southwest corner of the Jane and Finch intersection be displaced?
 - Response from City of Toronto representative: Commercial displacement is a significant concern. We are requiring a certain amount of shops and services, so developers can't only do housing, they need to also build an appropriate amount of shops and services
- 15 Tobermory and 2999 Jane should be sites of community interest.
- York Woods village is a well-designed and visually interesting area.
- As a former Firgrove resident, I've always appreciated the community there as well as how it was designed. It had elements that allowed for communal gathering, and felt like there were enclosed areas with parks, benches, and seating. It felt safe to me.

General comments

- Is there any imperative or way to acknowledge community uses of the outdoor mall and plaza spaces and to create a guideline for retaining these community uses?
 - Response from City of Toronto representative: Our intent is to collect stories and information about sites of community interest, then direct landowners to respond to the fact that their development application includes a site of community interest in a planning rationale.
- If a property is classified as a heritage site, how does that protect it from development? Will there be restrictions on what can be built?

- Response from City of Toronto representative: We have a few policies that would protect the existing buildings, even if they're not on the heritage register. We expect infill developments, to build on the green space between buildings

APPENDIX A: MEETING AGENDAS

October 4th, 2023

6:00 Participants Join
6:05 Welcome
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions, land acknowledgement, agenda • Opening remarks and introductions
6:10 Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation 1: Jane Finch Initiative Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment, and what we've already heard [Heritage Planning and Jane/Finch Centre] • Group Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Prompt 1: What excites or concerns you about the Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment?</i> ○ <i>Prompt 2: What do you agree or not agree with in the feedback we have received? What are we missing?</i> • Presentation 2: What are the important places in Jane and Finch? [Common Bond Collective] • Group Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prompt: What do you think about the types of buildings and landscapes that have been identified? What are we missing? • Presentation 3: Histories of community organizations and activism in Jane and Finch [Wanda MacNevin] • Group Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prompt: Based on your knowledge and experience of these histories, how has the history of community organizations and activism in Jane and Finch contributed to special places?
7:55 Closing Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next steps & things to look out for

Attendees:

- 1 Jane Finch Community and Family Centre representatives: Denelle Carvalho
- 2 City of Toronto representatives: Gary Midema, Tatum Taylor Chaubel
- 2 Common Bond Collective representatives: David Deo, Ellen Kowalchuk
- 1 Resident Historian: Wanda MacNevin
- 7 Heritage Focus Group attendees: Maize Blanchard, Shannon Holness, Abishak Jeyaseelan, Jerome Johnson, Helen Tecle, Winston LaRose, Peter Blake

November 2nd, 2023

6:00 Participants Join**6:05 Welcome**

- Introductions, land acknowledgement, agenda
- Opening remarks and introductions

6:20 Review from October 4th meeting

- Summary of the Jane Finch Initiative Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment and What We've Heard [Heritage Planning and Jane/Finch Centre]

7:25 Presentation and discussion

- Presentation 1: Important places in Jane and Finch [Common Bond Collective]
- Group discussion
- Presentation 2: How has the history of community organizations and activism in Jane and Finch contributed to special places? [Common Bond Collective]
- Group discussion

7:55 Closing Notes

- Next steps & things to look out for

Attendees:

- 1 Jane Finch Community and Family Centre representatives: Denelle Carvalho
- 4 City of Toronto representatives: Gary Midema, Tatum Taylor Chaubel, Dan Rosen, Leah Birnbaum
- 2 Common Bond Collective representatives: David Deo, Ellen Kowalchuk
- 8 Heritage Focus Group attendees: Maize Blanchard, Wanda MacNevin, Shannon Holness, Abishak Jeyaseelan, Jerome Johnson, Helen Tecle, Winston W LaRose, Peter Blake

APPENDIX B: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The City of Toronto's Jane Finch Initiative is a resident-informed project to plan for the future of the Jane and Finch area. Together, we are developing a community development plan and a land use plan so that residents and businesses are supported as the area changes over time with the opening of the Finch West LRT.

The [Jane Finch Initiative](#) is a resident-informed project to plan for the future of the Jane and Finch area and to determine how best to leverage the investment in light rail transit (LRT) for the benefit of local communities. It is a collaborative community planning exercise in 'Neighbourhood 24 - Black Creek' and 'Neighbourhood 25 - Glenfield-Jane Heights' (see [Neighbourhood Profiles](#)), centered on the intersection of Jane Street and Finch Avenue West.

The Jane Finch Community and Family Centre are supporting the City's community engagement process by facilitating community consultations.

The initiative involves three integrated streams of work:

- 1) **Comprehensive engagement**
- 2) A **community development plan** including a local economic opportunities plan;
- 3) An update to the **land use planning framework**.