Liberty Village Historic Context Statement

THEME: Indigenous Communities

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.[1] 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 resource across the land.

After maize and squash were introduced to Southern Ontario, by approximately 500 CE, horticulture began to supplement food sources. By 1300 CE, villages focused on growing food 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 seashells from the eastern seaboard were found at the Alexandra site in North York, which was a community of 800-1000 people in approximately 1350.

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 factors,[2] 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 Haudenosaunee Confederacy then occupied villages on the Carrying Place trails on the Humber and Rouge Rivers from approximately the 1660s to the 1680s.

In the late 1680s, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy chose to leave their villages in the Toronto area and returned to their homelands in upstate New York. As evidenced by the 1701 Great Peace of Montreal, the 1701 Nanfan treaty, and the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, the Haudenosaunee continued to have an interest in the resources of the area. Anishinaabe people from the Lake Superior region then moved in 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

[1] With thanks to Philip Cote for the references to Benton-Banai, Edward, *The Mishomis book: The voice of the Ojibway* (Indian Country Press, 1985), p. 26.
[2] https://histindigenouspeoples.pressbooks.tru.ca/chapter/chapter-5-colonial-wars-looking-east/, Gary Warrick, "The Aboriginal Population of Ontario in Late Pre-history," in Munson and Jamieson, eds. *Before Ontario: The Archaeology of a Province* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), p. 72.

Rama and the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island.

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 an area including portions of eastern Toronto, with seven First Nations of the Chippewa of Lake Simcoe (Beausoleil, Georgina Island and Rama) and the Mississaugas of the north shore of Lake Ontario (Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha and Scugog Island).

The Mississaugas, Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, or the Wendat did not traditionally regard land as a commodity to be sold or owned. Following the Toronto Purchase, the British government quickly set out to survey the land into lots which were either sold or granted into private ownership of settlers.

The City of Toronto remains the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabeg, 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.

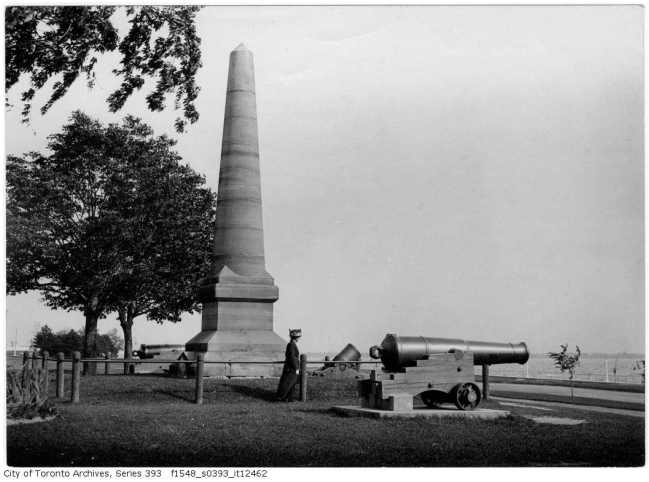

Figure 1: Fort Rouillé Monument, Oct. 11, 1915 (City of Toronto Archives).

Several sites just outside of the study area have archaeological potential, or are Archaeological Sensitive Areas, connected to Indigenous peoples in the early colonial period. From 1750 to 1759, a French trading post known as Fort Rouillé operated on the modern-day Exhibition lands. Indigenous people traded with the French on this site, before the French lost control of their North American colonies to the British.

Fort York, established by the British in 1793, became the next colonial site that significantly impacted First Nations in the region as a centre of diplomacy and military engagement. Colonial records note that the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation camped on the Garrison Common, on lands now occupied by CAMH, when they came to meet and trade. During the War of 1812, Anishinabeg warriors fought with the British to try to repel American invaders and lost. The former battlefield stretches west of the fort across the CNE grounds.

Theme: Indigenous Communities

Character Defining/Associative Features

There are no buildings or landscapes currently identified in the study area related to this theme.

THEME: Ordnance Reserve

The study area is situated in lands that were reserved by the British colonial government for military use. In 1793, when the Town of York was established as the new capital of the Province of Upper Canada, a vast area north, east, and west of Fort York was set aside for the military as the "Ordnance Reserve," also known as "Garrison Common."

Over the next 60 years, as military technology changed and the Ordnance Reserve both lost its military value and stood in the way of the growth of the City, nearly all of the Ordnance Reserve was transferred to other public uses, and then to private residential, commercial, or industrial uses.

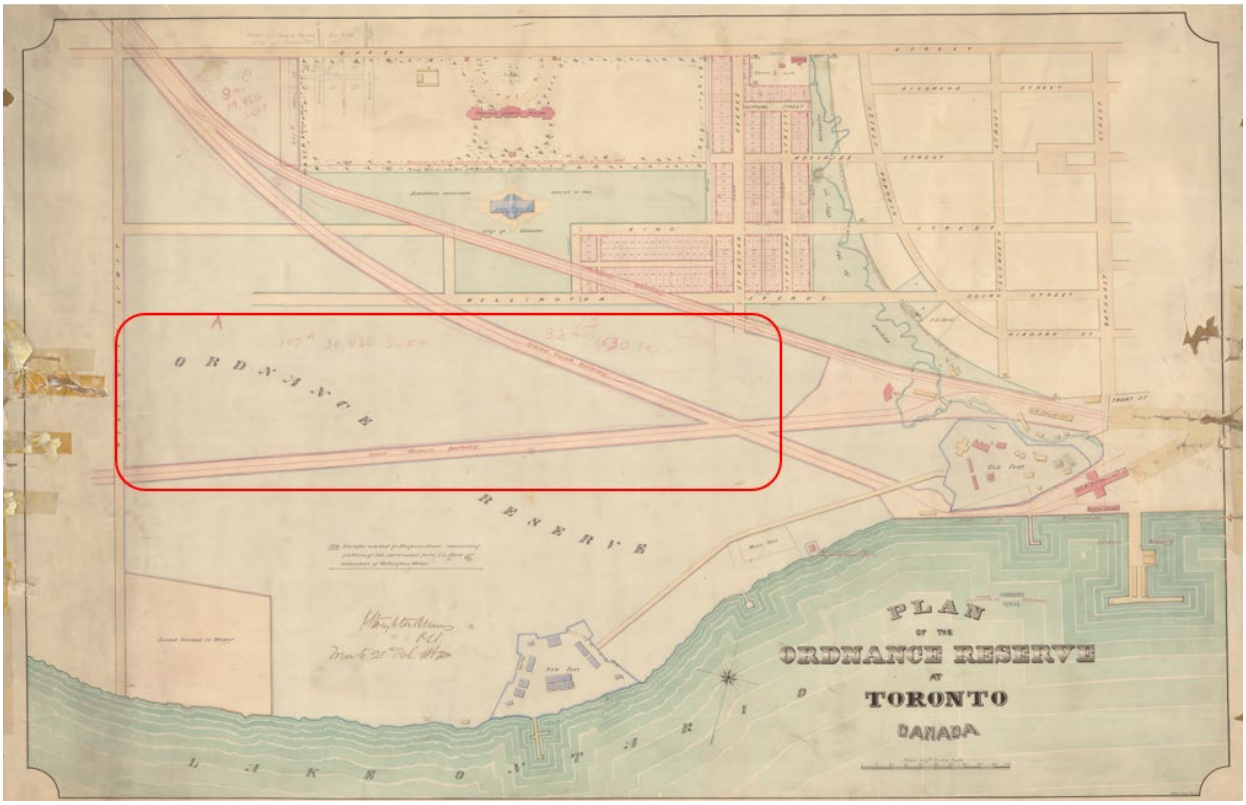

Figure 2: 1862 Plan of the Ordnance Reserve (J.S. Dennis, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources). Approximate boundary of the study area outlined in red.

Theme: Ordnance Reserve
Character Defining/Associative Features
There are no remaining buildings or landscapes related to this theme in the study area.

THEME: Transportation

The existing character of the study area was fundamentally shaped by the extension of railways across it, beginning in the 1850s. The Ontario Simcoe & Huron Railway was the first to complete construction in 1853, with its line curving north through the Ordnance Reserve to the corners of Dufferin and Queen Streets. A few years later, the Great Western Railway opened its line straight across the reserve to Hamilton, and the Grand Trunk Railway opened its line beginning below Fort York and curving up to meet the Ontario Simcoe & Huron Railway.

The addition of the railways also led to the construction of buildings and infrastructure to support them. Significantly, all three railways ended in yards at Bathurst Street – creating an important cluster of railway infrastructure which would prove an attraction to industry. To the north, the Parkdale railway station at Queen Street West and Gladstone Avenue was constructed in 1856 for the Ontario Simcoe & Huron line. In 1879, the Credit Valley Railway constructed a station at Queen Street West and Dufferin Street, and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) underpass at King Street West near Atlantic Avenue was completed in 1888.[3]

Figure 3: 1860 Tremaine Map of the County of York showing the developing street network around the study area with Garrison Creek to the east (Tremaine, University of Toronto Map and Data Library).

[3] Wieditz, T. Liberty Village: The Makeover of Toronto's King and Dufferin Area, 2007.

Road networks through the area prior to the railway lines were almost entirely limited to Queen Street on the northern boundary of the Garrison Common. The Garrison Creek Ravine contributed to the relative isolation of the Garrison Common, acting as a barrier for streets and residential development into the 1850s. Only Queen Street crossed the ravine until c. 1850, when a plan of the Ordnance Reserve (1851) showed a stone bridge bringing King Street over the ravine as well. By the late 1850s, residential streets, including Wellington and Adelaide Streets, had also crossed the ravine to the newly created Strachan Avenue.

By the late 1880s, the study area was circumscribed by Dufferin Street on its western edge, the GTR on the south, and the CPR and King Street West on the north and east. New plans for subdivision then created a series of north-south streets including Mowat, Fraser, Pardee, Jefferson, Exhibition (now Atlantic Avenue) and Pacific (now Hanna Avenue). None of these streets extended north of King Street, or over the railway to the south. Liberty Street was the primary east-west street connecting the neighbourhood. It initially ended at Fraser Avenue before it was extended west to Dufferin Street by 1913.

The area east of Hanna Avenue was sparsely developed and defined by the John Inglis and Sons factory, the Central Prison, and the railways. This portion of the area was never subdivided into orderly lots or a street pattern and instead had large, irregularly shaped lots and a small series of private roads. The east end of Liberty Street ended at Hanna Avenue and an unnamed private road for the John Inglis and Sons Company continued east of Hanna Avenue. The Central Prison was accessed through a long, landscaped driveway from Strachan Avenue.

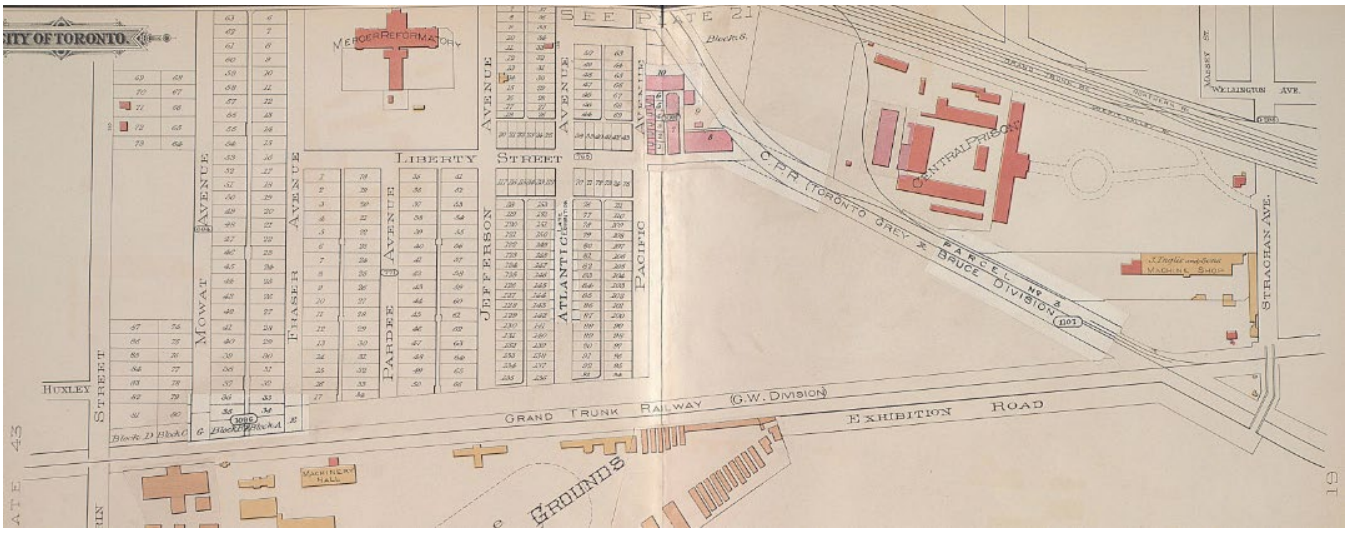

Figure 4: 1899 Fire Insurance Plan showing the street grid of the study area (University of Toronto Map and Data Library).

Access to the study area was further improved by the King Streetcar. This was particularly important in bringing workers to the many factories along King Street and within the subject area. The King Streetcar began operations in 1874 and was the third streetcar route in the city. It ran between the Don Valley and Bathurst Street, but the line was soon extended to Niagara Street (1876) and then Strachan Avenue (1879). Shortly after the completion of the King Street underpass, the streetcar route was extended to Dufferin Street in 1891, running along the northern edge of the study area.[4]

As the area developed into a hub of industry closely tied to access to the railways, the roads became intermingled with rail spurs that came off the main rail lines and curved through the area to connect directly with industries. By 1924, rail spurs ran along Liberty Street to Mowat Avenue, and curved up from the GTR along Jefferson, Fraser, Pardee, Mowat, and Hanna avenues. The streets in the subject area generally evolved to support both cars and rail spurs, often running on the edge of the public right-of-way in place of sidewalks. As the rail spurs began to be removed through the 1980s and 1990s, the portions of right-of-way where the spurs once ran were often converted to parking spaces for cars or sidewalks.

The rail spurs through the area also resulted in buildings designed with chamfered corners or with curved exterior walls, such as the powerhouse building for the E.W. Gillett factory. Though the rail spurs have all since been closed, their lines can still be identified by the buildings originally designed around them.

City of Toronto Archives, Series 1465, File 51, Item 13

Figure 5: North side of Liberty Street looking east towards Hanna Avenue. Note the rail spurs running parallel to Liberty Street and cutting across the street, c. 1980s (City of Toronto Archives).

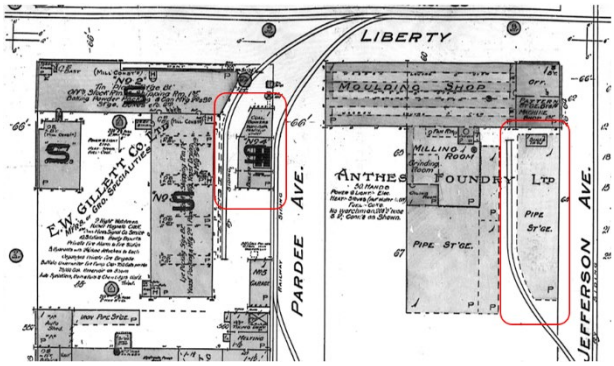

Figure 6: 1914 Fire Insurance Plan depicting the curved E.W. Gillette Co. Powerhouse Building (extant) and the curved Anthes Foundry storage building (no longer extant). The buildings are outlined in red (City of Toronto Archives).

[4] Bow, J. 2020. Route 504 – The King Streetcar. https://transittoronto.ca/streetcar/4103.shtml

Theme: Transportation

Character Defining/Associative Features

- Remaining rail lines and spurs
- The unique street conditions, which both facilitated and were shaped by the construction of rail spurs running within the road allowance
- Buildings whose design was influenced by rail spurs
- Buildings on the east side of the Study Area that were sited in relation to the former CPR rail line or private road network rather than an orthogonal street grid

Example properties

(L-R): 159 Dufferin Street and 20 Mowat Avenue, and Liberty Market Building, 171 East Liberty Street

THEME: Public Institutions

The first development of the Garrison Common lands was for public institutions. Governments first found the lands just to the west of the growing city well-suited for the siting of the Provincial Lunatic Asylum (1850) south of Queen Street, west of Shaw Street, north of today's Liberty Village. In 1858, lands south of the Lunatic Asylum became the site of the Crystal Palace in the Agricultural Show Grounds. The Agricultural Show Grounds would later be relocated south of the GTR line along the lakeshore to the Dominion Exhibition Grounds (1878), later the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE). In 1873, the Central Prison for Men was opened on the west side of Strachan Avenue and the north side of what is now East Liberty Street. The Mercer Reformatory for Women was opened in 1880 on the north side of East Liberty Street between Jefferson and Fraser Avenues.

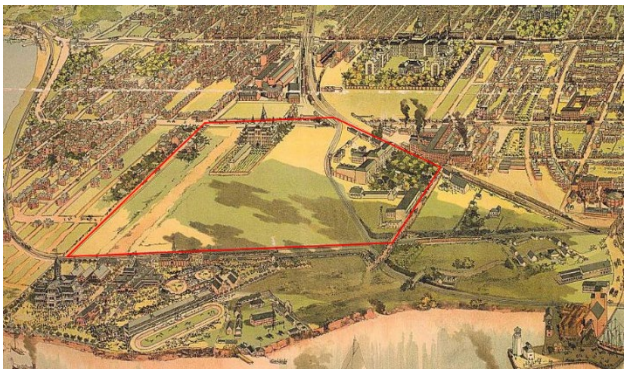

Figure 7: A portion of the 1893 Bird's Eye View by Barclay, Clark, & Co which depicts the institutional uses in and around the study area (Toronto Public Library). Approximate boundary of the study area outlined in red.

Sub-theme: Prison History

In 1870, the Province of Ontario purchased 150 acres of the former Ordnance Reserve lands to serve as farmland to provide work and food to patients of the Asylum on Queen Street. When the Province failed to secure additional lands intended for an industrial prison, they reallocated 20 acres of the Asylum Farm for the prison's development, which began in 1871 and would take two years to construct. Situated west of Strachan Avenue, the prison lands would enable the confinement of male inmates to the city's outskirts.[5] The location also allowed the prison to make use of the Asylum's water and sewage systems, and proximity to railway infrastructure facilitated the transport of materials for prison labour.

Figure 8: The Central Prison from Strachan Avenue, 1884 (Toronto Public Library).

Built in part to prevent overcrowding of the Don Jail (1864), the Central Prison was designed as a self-sustaining industrial prison where prisoners would earn their keep while learning useful trades that could assist them in gaining employment and keeping out of crime once released from prison. The Province developed an early agreement with the Canada Car Company in 1872 in which they would sell land south of the prison to the Company for a factory and offices, and in return, the Canada Car Company would employ 260 men from the prison.[6] Given this agreement, the Canada Car Company had some say in the early development of workshop buildings that would be included in the prison complex. This relationship between the Prison and Canada Car Company only lasted a few years as the Canada Car Company fell into decline. The Prison, however, continued its labour program and adapted the numerous workshop buildings

[5] Ashdown, D. W., Iron and Steam: A history of locomotive and railway car builders of Toronto, 1999.
[6] Ashdown, D. W., Iron and Steam, 1999.

by contracting with several companies to manufacture their goods, which included brooms, woodenwares, and rope and twine. In the early 1880s the Prison was operating the largest brick yard within city boundaries, employing 60 prisoners.[7] Prison labour was also used to construct additional buildings within the prison grounds and the surrounding area. For instance, the Central Prison's Roman Catholic Chapel was designed by Provincial architect Kivas Tully and built with prison labour in 1877. Shortly after, in 1880, inmates would also construct the Mercer Reformatory for Women and Industrial Refuge for Girls, which fronted King Street West slightly west of the Central Prison.

The Central Prison had the capacity to house 350 inmates and quickly became known for its brutality and poor conditions which were perpetuated by the Prison's first warden, William Stratton Prince.[8] Successive wardens tried to ease the level of violence experienced by inmates in the Prison but were unsuccessful and officials began to limit the admittance of new inmates. When a new prison opened in Guelph in 1914, the remaining inmates from the Central Prison were moved there and the Central Prison closed its doors.[9]

The prison complex was taken over by the Canadian Military during the First World War from 1915 to 1919. Shortly after, John Inglis and Sons Company took over many of the prison buildings and adapted them for the company's use. The prison's main building was demolished in 1930. Today, the Roman Catholic Chapel is the only remaining structure from the prison. It stands in Liberty Village Park.

Figure 9: The extant Central Prison Chapel in Liberty Village Park, c. 1980 – 1998 (City of Toronto Archives).

The Mercer Reformatory for Women opened on King Street in 1880. Its treatment of women was based on contemporary ideas about gender roles and intended to teach the imprisoned women discipline and "feminine" qualities. In 1897, the Female Refuges Act was passed in Ontario and was used to commit "incorrigible" women, or women who could not be "improved or fixed."[10] Many of the women imprisoned at the Reformatory were being punished for moral offences, such as being pregnant out of wedlock. The inmates faced harsh conditions in the Reformatory with isolation and abuse from guards being common practice.

In 1948, a large riot broke out amongst inmates at the Mercer Reformatory, drawing attention to the abysmal conditions in the institution and prompting scrutiny from the Government and the public.[11] In 1964, a Grand Jury was assigned to investigate conditions at the Mercer Reformatory. Following the investigation, the Reformatory was closed in 1969 and demolished later that year.

The name of Liberty Street, which was laid out in the late 1880s and located on the southern

[7] Ashdown, Iron and Steam, 1999.
[8] Beals, A. Bad Girls: Central Prison. Heritage Toronto, 2022. https://www.heritagetoronto.org/explore/bad-girls-map/central-prison-history/
[9] Toronto Historical Association, n.d. Central Prison | Toronto Historical Association
[10] Beals, A. Bad Girls, 2022.
[11] Panneton, D. Incorrigible Women. *Maisonneuve*, 2018. https://maisonneuve.org/article/2018/04/18/incorrigible-women/

edge of the Mercer Reformatory and the Central Prison, may be associated with the release of prisoners at this location[12]. The only remaining structure from the Mercer Reformatory is the Warden's house at 1177 King Street West. The site of the Mercer Reformatory became Lamport Stadium in 1976.

Figure 10: The Mercer Reformatory for Women, 1895 (Library and Archives Canada).

Theme: Public Institutions

Character Defining/Associative Features

- Property is associated with either the Central Prison or the Mercer Reformatory
- Building may have been constructed using prison labour

Example Properties

(L-R): Prison Chapel, Liberty Village Park and Warden's House, 1177 King Street West

[12] Wieditz, T. Liberty Village, 2007.

THEME: Industrial Development

The first recorded industrial use in the subject area was directly associated with the railway lines through the area. The Toronto Steel, Iron and Railway Works Company was established in 1865 on the west side of Strachan Avenue, between the CPR and GTR lines, to fabricate rails, axels, wheels, switches, and points for railways.[13] In 1872, the company's premises were taken over by the Canada Car Company, which negotiated using prison labour in workshops constructed within the walls of the Central Prison.

The value of easy access to rail infrastructure for expanding large scale industries led to the acceleration of industrial growth in the 1870s and 1880s. When the Massey Manufacturing Company moved to Toronto from Newcastle in the late 1870s, it opened its new factory on the north side of the rail corridor, at the southeast corner of today's King Street and Strachan Avenue. The Massey-Harris complex was expanded in 1885 with administrative offices designed by prolific Toronto architect E.J. Lennox and expanded again in 1891.[14] In 1881, the John Inglis and Sons Company, producers of boilers, heavy machinery and electrical appliances, purchased the Canada Car Company site and began operations. By 1899, the Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Company had moved from its original factory at Jarvis Street and The Esplanade to a new factory on the corner of King Street West and Fraser Avenue.[15] These major industries would continue to anchor industry in the area for nearly the next century.

While the east side of the study area would continue to be defined by the Central Prison and John Inglis and Sons Company, the area west of Hanna Avenue would develop into a more diversified industrial area. Early factories in the subject area included the Ontario Wind Engine and Pump Company (1898) at Liberty Street and Atlantic Avenue, St. David's Wine Growers Company (1899) also at Liberty Street and Atlantic Avenue, the Ideal Bedding Company (1903) at the foot of Jefferson Avenue near the rail line, and the Anthes Foundry (c.1904) at Liberty Street and Jefferson Avenue.

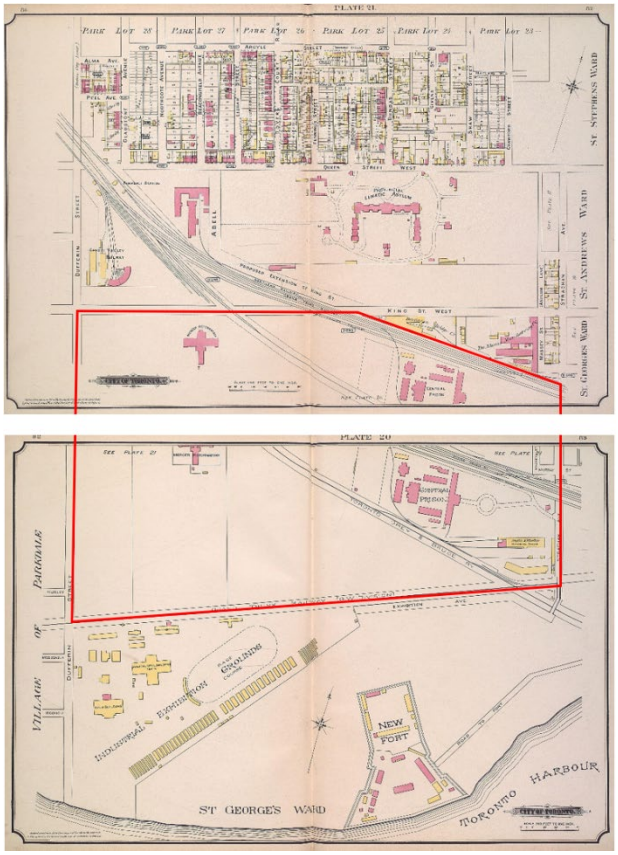

Figure 11: Fire Insurance Plan depicting the earliest industries in the area, which was still dominated by public institutions, 1884 (University of Toronto Map and Data Library).

[13] Ashdown, Iron and Steam, 1999.
[14] Toronto Historical Association. The Massey Company. http://www.torontohistory.net/the-massey-company/
[15] Beals, A. Bad Girls: Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Factory, 2022. https://www.heritagetoronto.org/explore/bad-girls-map/women-in-the-workforce/

Growth of industries in the area continued to rapidly increase in the early twentieth century, due in part to the Great Fire of 1904 which destroyed much of the industrial district at Bay and Front Streets.[16] Following the fire, a number of industries moved outside of the industrial core of the city, to both established industrial hubs like King-Parliament and King-Spadina, as well as to the growing subject area which provided ample space for factory complexes.[17] For instance, the E.W. Gillett Company Ltd., makers of baking and food products and soap ingredients, opened their Toronto branch in 1886 on Front Street which was destroyed in the Great Fire in 1904. The company then purchased a manufacturing premise at 276 King Street West before purchasing the baseball ground lands at Liberty Street and Fraser Avenue in 1911 to construct a new factory complex. While industry also extended to the area directly north of the study area between Queen Street West, King Street West, Dufferin Street, and on either side of the rail lines, nearly all industrial buildings in the area north of King Street have been demolished, except for the remaining Dominion Radiator factory complex on Dufferin Street near Queen Street West.

The buildings constructed in the subject area shared a common typology and materiality that continues to define the character of the area today. The factories reflected the economic prosperity of the industrial boom occurring in Toronto in the early twentieth century. Companies hired well-known architects to design their new factory buildings that could showcase the company's success. Some of these buildings include the Henry Disston and Sons factory" on Fraser Avenue (designed by G.W. Gouinlock 1906), the Sunbeam Incandescent Lamp factory at Dufferin and Liberty Streets (F.H. Herbert, 1908), the Expanded Metal and Fireproofing Company factory on Fraser Avenue (F.H. Herbert, 1909), Toronto Furniture Company Ltd on Dufferin Street (Chadwick and Beckett, 1911), and the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Factory on Hanna Avenue (Henry Simpson, 1913).

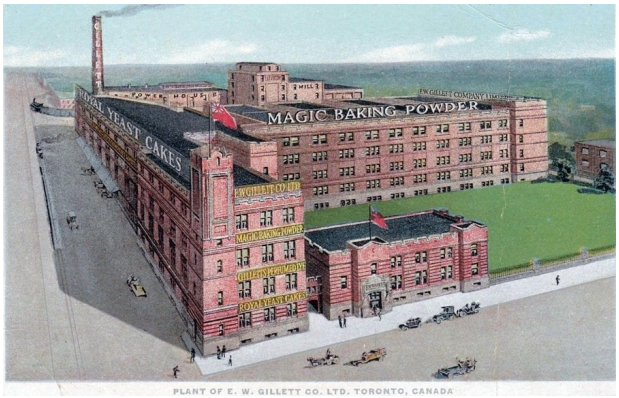

Figure 12: E.W. Gillett Factory in the subject area c. 1910s (Vintage Toronto).

Companies were also using new construction techniques to design state-of-the-art factories in the subject area. In 1909, Construction Magazine published an article highlighting the Fenestra Steel Sash, which was produced by the Expanded Metal and Fireproofing Company on Fraser Avenue. The article noted the Sunbeam Incandescent Lamp factory at Liberty and Dufferin streets and the newly constructed Expanded Metal and Fireproofing Company factory both featured this new product, which allowed for thinner window frames in larger openings than earlier fabrication methods, thus allowing for more daylight to reach the interior. The article notes that "the Expanded Metal and Fireproofing Company's new factory on Fraser Ave., Toronto is one of the most perfectly appointed manufacturing institutions in the Dominion. Both in design and construction it demonstrates the possibilities in factory construction with the use of materials the company manufactures"[18]. The Carpet Manufacturing Company's factory complex was also considered state-of-the-art and was completely self reliant, with its own steam generated heat and electricity. The complex

[16] Bradburn, J. Great Fire of Toronto (1904), 2020. The Canadian Encyclopedia. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/great-fire-of-toronto-1904
[17] City of Toronto. King-Spadina Heritage Conservation District Plan, 2017.
[18] Construction Magazine. February 1909, Vol 2, No. 4. Construction : [Vol. 2, no. 4 (Feb. 1909)] - illustration (p. 88) - Canadiana

also had a fire pump and an underground cistern storing tens of thousands of gallons of water for emergency use.[19]

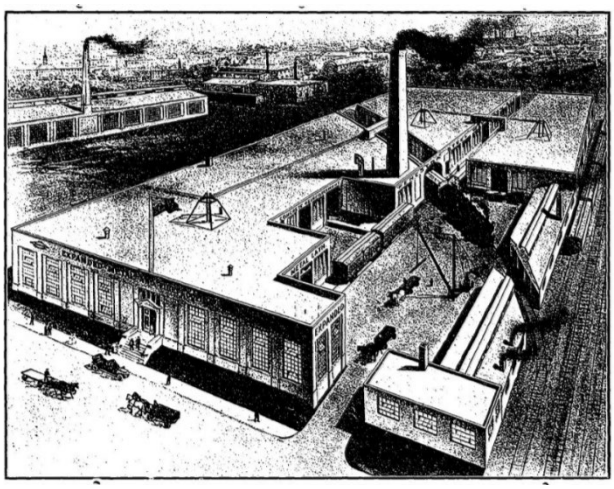

Figure 13: A rendering of the Expanded Metal and Fireproofing Company factory on Fraser Avenue, c. 1909, showcasing the Fenestra Steel Sash windows (Construction Magazine, Feb 1909, Vol 2, No. 4).

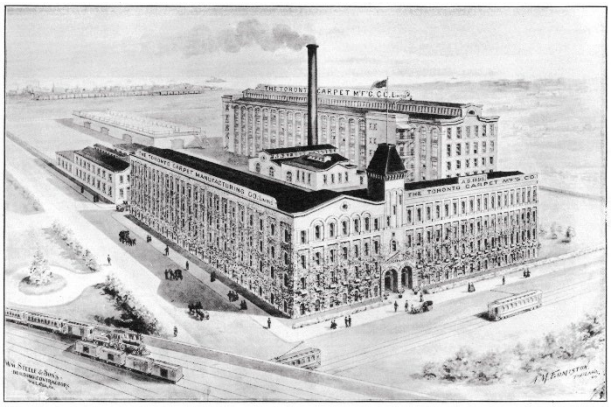

Figure14: The Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Company, n.d. (Courtesy of York Heritage Properties).

The subject area continued to develop between 1913 and 1924 with growth fuelled partially by World War I as companies operating in the subject area were awarded war-time government contracts.[20] For instance, the Russel Motorcar Company at Dufferin and Liberty Street switched from manufacturing cars to fuses for bomb shells; the Barrymore Cloth Company, an extension of the Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Company, switched their looms from weaving carpets to coats and blankets for soldiers; and John Inglis and Sons Company began manufacturing shells and shell forgings and were able to expand their factories due to the demand. Given the vast number of men enlisted to the war effort, many of these companies turned to women to fill labour roles to support their new manufacturing activities during the war.[21]

Figure 15: Bomb shells on Liberty Street looking east to Dufferin Street, c. 1915 (City of Toronto Archives).

As companies thrived, many expanded their operations with additions and outbuildings to meet growing demand. For instance, between 1913 and 1924, the S.F. Bowser Company factory at Fraser Avenue and Liberty Street, Canada Metal Company on Fraser Avenue, and E.W. Gillet Company at Fraser Avenue and Liberty Street all constructed additions to their original factory buildings. Such expansions continued through the 1950s, and though later additions were largely constructed to modest designs, they further shaped the industrial character of the area.

Industry began to decline in Liberty Village beginning in the 1970s as businesses moved their factories to the inner and outer suburbs or offshore. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the remaining industries in the area operated alongside a growing creative

[19] York Heritage Properties. Toronto Carpet Factory: History. About | Toronto Carpet Factory
[20] Sobel and Meurer, Working at Inglis, 1994.
[21] Ibid.

population, such as artists and musicians, who were adapting the vacant industrial buildings for new uses. The area lost two of its largest industries when the Carpet Factory closed its doors in 1976 and Inglis and Sons Company closed their factories in 1991. One of the last remaining industries in the subject area was Canada Bread (and then Dempsters) which operated out of 2 Fraser Avenue. It moved its operations to Hamilton in 2013.

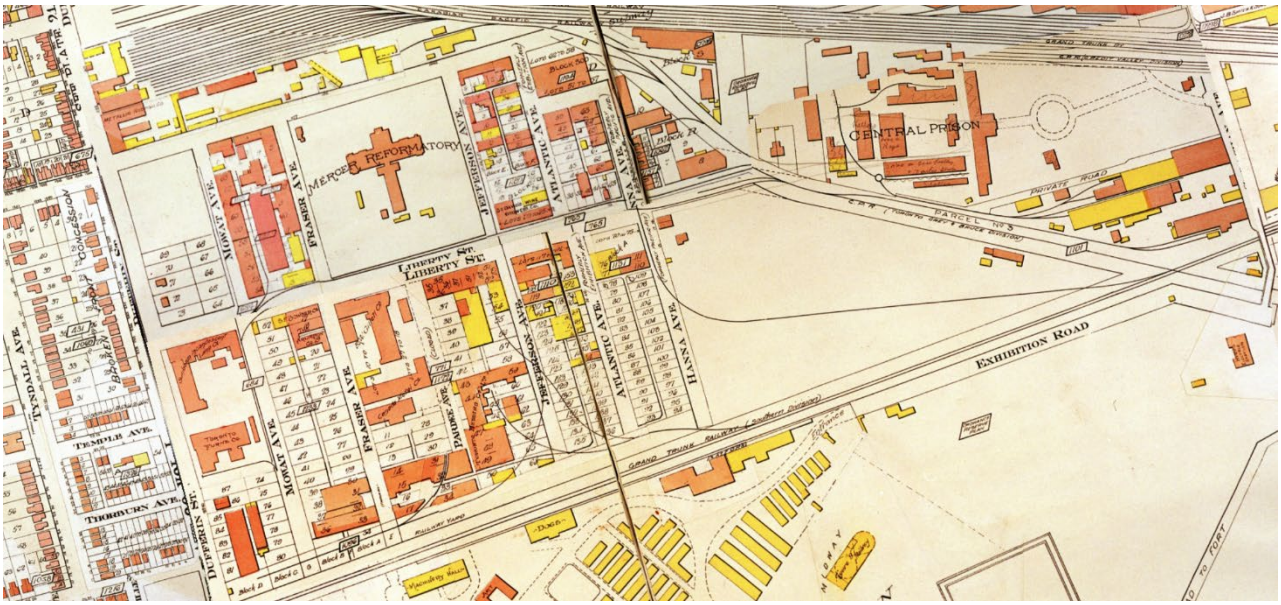

Figure 16: Fire Insurance Plan depicting the industrial development of the study area, 1913 (University of Toronto Map and Data Library)

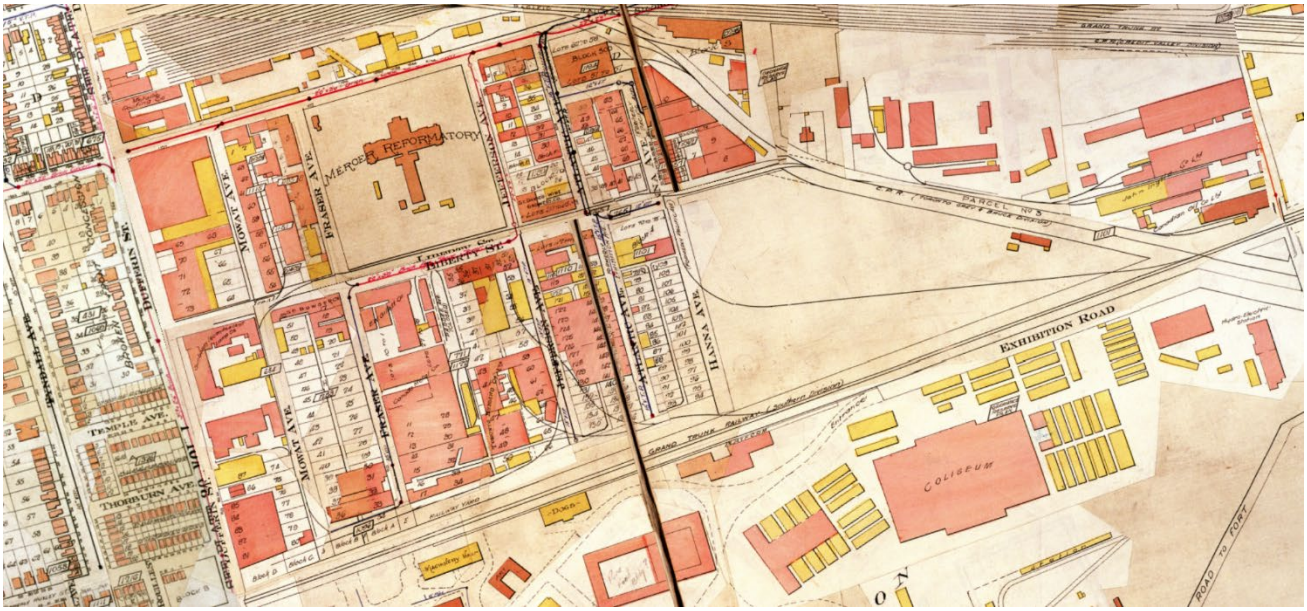

Figure 17: Fire Insurance Plan depicting industrial development of the study area, 1924 (University of Toronto Map and Data Library)

Figure 18: The study area, looking east from Dufferin Street, c. 1930s (City of Toronto Archives)

Sub-theme: Workers Housing & Residential Development

The lot patterns in the west portion of the subject area were laid out by the late 1880s and were initially intended to support residential development of the area. Small lots were laid out between Hanna Avenue to Jefferson Avenue, with slightly larger lots west of Jefferson Avenue to Dufferin Street. By the early 1890s, some detached houses had been constructed on Dufferin Street, Jefferson Avenue, and Atlantic Avenue, and a row of homes was built on Hanna Avenue.

However. residential development in the subject area was short-lived and never expanded beyond these few scattered dwellings. The original subdivision plan of small residential lots quickly disappeared as industries merged them into larger parcels that generally stretched across entire blocks (i.e., from Atlantic Avenue to Jefferson Avenue). Residential properties would be demolished and fully replaced by factories by the end of the 1920s.

It was also not uncommon in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century for larger companies to build housing on factory grounds for their workforce. For a period, the John Inglis and Sons Company provided some housing for their workforce on company grounds. None of these houses remain.[22]

The draw of workers to the subject area for factory jobs impacted the surrounding areas by creating demand for workers housing. Those that worked in the subject area often found housing in nearby working-class neighbourhoods such as South Niagara directly to the east of the subject area. The South Niagara area, had developed quickly between the 1850s and 1880s as industry moved to the area driven by access to the

[22] Sobel and Meurer, Working at Inglis, 1994.

new railways. The King Streetcar, which was extended from Niagara Street to Dufferin Street between 1879 and 1891, provided easy access to the study area and surrounding factories.

To the west of the study area was the affluent former Village of Parkdale, amalgamated into the City in 1889 and known for its grand homes and access to Lake Ontario. By the early 1890s, John Inglis, founder of John Inglis & Sons, had constructed a large home on the northwest corner of King Street West and Elm Grove Avenue in Parkdale. In the early 20th century, many of the large homes in Parkdale, were converted to multi-unit homes and the neighbourhood became a hub for apartment buildings, many of which lined King Street West.

Sub-theme: Labour History

In the second half of the nineteenth-century, Toronto, like many other emerging cities, experienced an industrial boom that changed the nature of manufacturing work for many people. By the 1880s, much of the work formerly being done in small workshops was now being done in large factories, creating a new industrial system with labourers and managers.[23] Where labour was skilled, labour unions emerged. In periods of strong economic growth, when labour was in high demand, unions were able to experience significant success. The Knights of Labour Union arrived in Toronto in 1882 and organized with unprecedented success, growing to over 5000 members by 1886.[24] Between 1896 and 1902, Metal workers' union locals in southern Ontario increased from 16 to 75 in 1902.[25] In Liberty Village and the surrounding area, the Knights of Labour represented a significant portion of the workers at the Massey-Fergus factories, and the Iron Moulders International Union, represented workers for John Inglis and Sons Company.

At the heart of the strength of unions was the capacity to organize and maintain a strike. The subject area was an important site of labour action, some of which would have a national impact. High demand for labour between 1898 and 1903 fueled a wave of strikes as unions fought for better working conditions, such as a nine-hour workday. Metal workers were at the heart of many of these strikes. Unlike other professions which were able to replace people with machines through industrialization, metal work still required a higher degree of skill that was difficult to replace.[26] This gave metal workers significant bargaining power. The subject area and King Street West became a hub for the metal industry in Toronto, through the concentration of factories such as Massey-Harris, John Inglis & Sons Company, and the Metallic Roofing Company. As labourers organized into unions, factory owners organized to try to limit the power of unions and workers rights. For instance, in 1886 John Inglis, Hart Massey, and Frederick Nicholls, a prominent industrialist, met with the Premier Oliver Mowat to voice their concern over Canada's first health and safety factory legislation, which they felt interfered with their private affairs.[27]

In 1902, labour action in the subject area sparked a dispute that would reach Canada's highest court and become one of the most famous litigations of the time. The Metallic Roofing Company, located at the northeast corner of King and Dufferin streets, refused to sign a contract negotiated between the Amalgamated Sheet Metal Workers International Association, Local Union 30, and a committee of employers. In solidarity, workers at other factories agreed to not handle Metallic Roofing Company's goods until an agreement was reached. The Metallic Roofing Company quickly obtained an injunction to prevent the

[23] DuWors, R. The decline of the artisans on Toronto City Council during the nineteenth century: 1834-1901. The Ontario Historical Society, 98, 2. 2006.
[24] Sobel and Meurer, Working at Inglis, 1994.
[25] Tucker, E., and Fudge, J. Forging Responsible Unions: Metal Workers and the Rise of the Labour Injunction in Canada. Labour 37. 1996.
[26] Roberts, W. Toronto Metal Workers and the Second Industrial Revolution: 1889 – 1914. Labour 6(49). 1980.
[27] Sobel and Meurer, Working at Inglis, 1994.

union from pursuing its boycott and sued the union for damages. This case would move up through the Ontario Court of Appeal and the Judicial Committee of Privy Council and would not be resolved until 1908.[28]

In 1903, metal workers again went on strike across the city, including many of those working in the subject area. The strike was resolved with workers receiving some concessions, but the divide between the workers and management grew larger. A year after the strike, management at Inglis moved the company's head offices out of the production building into a new architect-designed building, physically separating the workers from management and influencing the built form of the Inglis factory complex.[29]

Women were also critical to the labour movement in the subject area and the city in general. In the late nineteenth century, women were typically limited to jobs that were seen as extensions of women's work in the home, such as teachers, domestic workers, or low paying jobs in the textile and garment industry. By 1871, women and children held 75 percent of garment industry jobs in Toronto, often working in terrible conditions.[30] One of the first recorded strikes for a 55-hour work week in Toronto took place in 1902 at the Carpet Manufacturing Company factory in the subject area – nearly 300 weavers, spinners and carders walked out, half of which were women.[31]

With the start of World War I, industries in the subject area and beyond experienced increased demand, often being awarded government war-time contracts, and requiring an expanded work force. Women were brought into factories in large numbers to support war-time effort roles. The number of women working in other industries quickly grew during World War I. At Inglis, war-time effort roles were created for women although roles requiring extensive training and experience were still reserved for men.

The First World War also brought with it large profits for industries and increasingly inhumane work conditions with lower pay for war-related work efforts which sparked unrest across the Canada and lead to another wave of strikes. In Toronto, metalworkers went on strike for five days straight in 1919. In the following years, some companies worked to improve worker conditions likely in an effort to avoid further strikes. For example, the E.W. Gillett factory in the subject area constructed the Welfare Building on Fraser Avenue in 1922. The building received praise in Construction Magazine for being "among the first if not the first entire and separated building planned and erected in Canda in which to carry on industrial welfare work".[32] The building had a basement recreation club for male employees, a first-floor dining room and kitchen where lunch was prepared, a second floor with lockers and a restroom for female employees, and a third floor with the same for males. The article concluded that the company "are very proud of their new department and feel that is has been of distinct advantage, first in making the workers more contented and thereby reducing labor turn-over; second in improving their health and increasing efficiency; and third in making them more loyal to the company and thus deriving the advantage of more faithful and devoted service".[33]

The Great Depression of the 1930s hit the subject area hard, even shuttering the long-operating Inglis Company factory until the Second World War reinvigorated industries. Again, Inglis contributed to the war-time effort; this time, the company began producing Bren

[28] Tucker, E., and J. Fudge. Forging Responsible Unions: Metal Workers and the Rise of the Labour Injunction in Canada. Labour 37. 1996.
[29] Sobel and Meurer, Working at Inglis, 1994.
[30] Ontario Federation of Labour. 2007. A Century of Women and Work, 1900 – 2000. 25862 OFL-womenWork.indd
[31] Heritage Toronto. 2022. Bad Girls: Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Factory. Bad Girls: Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Factory – Heritage Toronto
[32] Construction Magazine, 1924, p. 89.
[33] Ibid, p. 91.

machine guns. By 1943, they were producing 60 percent of the Bren machine guns destined for the British Commonwealth forces.

The increased demand on industries from the war-time effort required women to come back to factories in large numbers. The Canadian government actively recruited women workers during the Second World War to help manage labour shortages. The National Film Board (NFB) was assigned the task of highlighting women working in factories for recruitment posters.[34] The NFB chose Veronica Foster, an employee at Inglis making Bren guns, as their poster girl. The NFB gave her the name "Ronnie the Bren Gun Girl" and took photographs of her working in the Inglis factories on Strachan Avenue.

Figure 19: Veronica Foster working in the Inglis factory, 1941 (Library and Archives Canada).

Women participation in the workforce reached an all-time high in 1944 but would begin to fall after the war as women were expected to return to more traditional roles such as keeping the house, retail, or service work, while men returned to factories.[35]

In the following decades, labour unions played an important role in social and cultural activities in and around the subject area. Unions sponsored interplant sports leagues that would connect workers from factories across the study area. Stanley Park in the neighbouring South Niagara neighbourhood became a popular place for factory workers to spend time together and became an important meeting place for strikes. It also was likely close to many of their homes. With so many workers tied to the area, the unions could schedule clubs and social events outside of work hours and have a strong turnout.[36] The Palace Arms hotel and pub at the corner of King Street West and Strachan Avenue also played an important role in working-class life in the area as a place to socialize and have political discussions.[37]

Figure 20: Workers on strike in Stanley Park, 1949 (Toronto Public Library)

Sub-theme: Canadian National Exhibition

In 1878, the City of Toronto leased an additional 50 acres from the Ordnance lands which were located directly south of the rail line below the subject area, from Strachan Avenue to Dufferin Street, and extended to the lakeshore. The land was leased for a permanent fair ground.[38] The following year in 1879 the first Toronto Industrial Exhibition was held and ran for three weeks. The fair was officially renamed the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) in 1912.

[34] Government of Canada. Veronica Foster, 2021. https://parks.canada.ca/lhn-nhs/on/haida/culture/femmes-women/foster
[35] Sobel and Meurer, Working at Inglis, 1994.
[36] Sobel and Meurer, Working at Inglis, 1994.
[37] Sobel and Meurer, Working at Inglis, 1994.
[38] Marsh, J. H. Canadian National Exhibition, 2015. The Canadian Encyclopedia.

The fair focused on technological advancements and showcased industrial products to the public, reflecting the industrial expansion happening in Toronto at the time. It would soon be able to point to the prominent factories in the subject area sitting just across the rail lines as an example of this industrial growth. A 1920s souvenir postcard for the CNE showcases both the grounds of the CNE and the smokestacks of the subject area rising behind it.

Figure 21: Aerial view of the CNE grounds looking north. The subject area is visible in the background (CNE Archives, 1920).

The companies operating in the subject area also used the CNE to highlight their goods and industrial advancements. The Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Company, which was located in the subject area, placed advertisements in the official catalogue for the CNE in 1920. In 1925, William Inglis, the owner of John Inglis and Sons Company and a prominent industrialist in the city, was the President of the CNE and used the platform to market the company's goods [39]

The same year of the first Toronto Industrial Exhibition, the Grand Trunk Railway which divided the fairgrounds to the south from the subject area to the north, constructed a platform and ticket office to the east of Dufferin Street on the south side of the tracks. The station was only opened during the Exhibition to make it more accessible to those who wished to visit. By 1912, a larger station was constructed on the west side of Dufferin Street with concrete stairs leading up to the Dufferin Bridge, which are extant. This station continued to operate as a seasonal station only during the CNE. The station was closed in 1968 when GO Transit constructed a new station to the east which continues to operate.[40]

[39] Sobel and Meurer, Working at Inglis, 1994.
[40] Toronto Railway Historical Association. Exhibition Station. https://www.trha.ca/trha/history/stations/exhibition-station/

Theme: Industrial Development

Character Defining/Associative Features

Late 19th and early-20th twentieth century warehouse / factory building type:

- One to six stories
- Architectural features associated with manufacturing and industrial processes, including brick chimneys or smokestacks
- May comprise part of a larger complex of detached or interconnected structures forming interior courtyards or mid-block connections
- Buildings predominantly feature a flat or monitor roofline
- Regular rhythm of bays on all elevations with uniformly sized window openings
- Principal elevation(s) typically feature more elaborate detailing, including at the ground floor level, windows, and cornice/parapet
- May feature elements influenced by Classical architectural styles, such as:
    - Stone entrance surrounds
    - Cornice along the roofline
    - Pilasters capped with stone
- Mid-twentieth century additions, where present, may feature more modest designs

Associations:

- May be designed by a well-known or significant architect
- May be associated with a prominent company
- May be associated with important moments in labour history, including the roles of women
- May be associated with war-time production

Example properties

(L-R): 102 Atlantic Avenue and 29 Fraser Avenue

THEME: Redevelopment & Adaptive Reuse

Beginning in the 1970s, the City of Toronto experienced a loss of industry to the outer suburbs or offshore opportunities. As industry moved from a reliance on rail to road, companies looked for larger sites that had lower costs than those located in the city. Other industries shuttered entirely. As a result of the deindustrialization occurring in the subject area and the demolition of the Mercer Reformatory in 1969, the area became available for new uses.

Perhaps the earliest example of reuse occurred in July 1971, when a temporary encampment for transient youth was erected on the former Mercer grounds by Grass Roots, a group representing a coalition of youth agencies in Toronto. They called the tent city “Wacheea” an interpretation of a Cree term meaning “a place where all are welcome”. Partially funded by a grant from the federal government through a funding program for youth, the tent city remained at the site until it was disbanded at the end of the summer. Following eviction from that location, some members of the group reportedly moved to a vacant industrial factory near King and Dufferin Streets to continue their communal living experiment.[41]

The thinly populated subject area on the outskirts of downtown was also of interest to creative communities who were attracted to the large vacant spaces. Without capital or government supports and not through a planned process, the subject area became a space for artists to freely express themselves and to learn from one another.

Figure 22: Wacheea, a temporary tent city on the former site of the Mercer Reformatory, 1971 (Toronto Star)

By the early 1990s, the City of Toronto and developers began to take interest in the subject area and the surrounding primarily underused industrial spaces. As land use patterns were changing in the city, having an industrial neighbourhood in the core of the city no longer made sense.[42] With the dotcom boom of the 1980s and early 1990s came a rise of creative industries and technology-driven work. Attracted to the subject area for the low rent costs and large, flexible open spaces, companies began adapting the former industrial buildings to meet their needs. An early creative economy resident of the subject area was Artscape, which partnered with the City’s Economic Development division to adapt the building at 60 Atlantic Avenue to become affordable artist studios and residences. The project was one of the first undertaken by Artscape.[43]

In the early 1990s, the city undertook several studies of the Garrison Common lands, including the subject area. A 1993 report from the Waterfront Regeneration Trust titled Garrison Common Implementation Plan noted the influx of creative industries into the subject

[41] Masters, John, ”Wacheea tents fold; youths plan to set up home in warehouse”, 10 September 1971, p.33.
[42] Waterfront Regeneration Trust. Garrison Common Implementation Plan, 1993.
[43] Artscape. Our Evolution. https://www.artscape.ca/about-us/evolution/#1522165784702-dbb9992c-f73a

area and that "given this adaptation of uses, many of the old industrial buildings, particularly in Liberty Village, can be preserved and renovated." The Plan proposed regeneration of the neighbourhood in a manner that respected the industrial heritage of the area.[44]

In the midst of this period of change, it became clear that the restrictive industrial zoning in the subject area was outdated and no longer relevant to the neighbourhood.[45] In 1995, then Mayor Barbara Hall undertook one of the largest rezoning programs in Toronto's history and announced her new economic policies aimed at adapting abandoned warehouses for new uses through the removal of inflexible municipal zoning by-laws.[46] While these changes are most commonly associated today with the former industrial areas of King-Spadina and King-Parliament, known as the Two Kings, it is notable that Mayor Hall announced these new policies in a press conference held in the King-Dufferin area.

The rezoning of the subject area removed exclusive industrial zoning, and allowed for a wide mix of uses, acknowledging that the new creative industries in the neighbourhood could exist side-by-side with residential development This relaxed zoning attracted the interest of private developers to the area. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, the subject area and nearby King-Spadina accommodated the City's most extensive concentration of new media businesses.[47]

Capitalizing on the regeneration efforts first triggered by the informal artists' community and then municipal policy changes, new property owners began to reinvest in many of the former industrial buildings and warehouses. In 1995 York Heritage Properties purchased the Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Company factory buildings, which closed its manufacturing operations in 1976 and had since been used by artists. The Carpet Factory was then adaptively reused as office spaces while maintaining many of the industrial features of the interior and exterior of the buildings on site. This trend of adaptive reuse of the former industrial buildings continued throughout the neighbourhood and attracted additional creative industries to the area.

Figure 23 – Toronto Carpet Manufacturing Company building, date unknown (Library and Archives Canada).

Since the 1990s, redevelopment of the subject area has taken place very differently in the eastern and western parts of Liberty Village. East of Hanna Avenue, the major landowner, John Inglis and Sons Company moved its headquarters to Hamilton in 1991. In August 2000, City Council adopted site-specific Official Plan (By-law 565-2000) and Zoning By-law (By-law 566-2000) Amendments, which formally allowed the conversion of the Inglis lands from employment uses to mixed-use residential uses. The developer CanAlfa released plans in 2001 for a "45-acre village" with 2,000 proposed homes in the eastern portion of the neighbourhood.[48] To accommodate the

[44] Waterfront Regeneration Trust. Garrison Common Implementation Plan, 1993.
[45] Waterfront Regeneration Trust. Garrison Common Implementation Plan, 1993.
[46] Wieditz, T. Liberty Village, 2007.
[47] Reid, H. The Emergence of a Creative Enterprise District – Toronto's Liberty Village. Plan Canada, 2010.
[48] Hilburt, J. Publicly-led Proactive and Privately-led Reactive Planning: A Comparison of Comprehensive Planning and Development Approaches between East Bayfront and King-Liberty Village. Toronto Metropolitan University, 2010.

conversion to residential use, a new extension to Liberty Street, named East Liberty Street, was constructed between Hanna Avenue and Strachan Avenue. Lynn Williams Street was also created as part of the new master plan. The developer promoted their new project by stating that "a combination of old, industrial architecture with new, Georgian-style residences, will give Liberty Village its funky look."[49] The same year CanAlfa began construction of its townhome complex, a Business Improvement Area (BIA) was established for the subject area and was the first non-retail BIA in North America.[50] To help brand the emerging neighbourhood as a desirable place to live, developers marketed the area as "Liberty Village", solidifying the name of the subject area that it is known by today.

The subject area and the surrounding lands experienced significant change in the built environment in the early 2000s. To the north of the neighbourhood, portions of the Massey-Harris industrial complex were converted to lofts while other buildings were demolished and replaced with contemporary townhomes and condominiums. By 2005, much of the land in the east portion of the study area (east of Hanna) had been cleared for redevelopment leaving only a few remaining industrial structures. The same year, the Liberty Village Market was unveiled on the site of the former Bren Gun Factory at the southeast corner of Hanna Avenue and East Liberty Street, offering significant commercial space for the growing community. The Toy Factory Lofts conversions were also completed in 2005. Urban Design Guidelines for the area generally bounded by King Street West to the north, Strachan Avenue to the east, Hanna Avenue to the west, and the CN rail line to the south were adopted by City Council in June 2005 and provided the principles and overall vision for the emerging King-Liberty neighbourhood.[51]

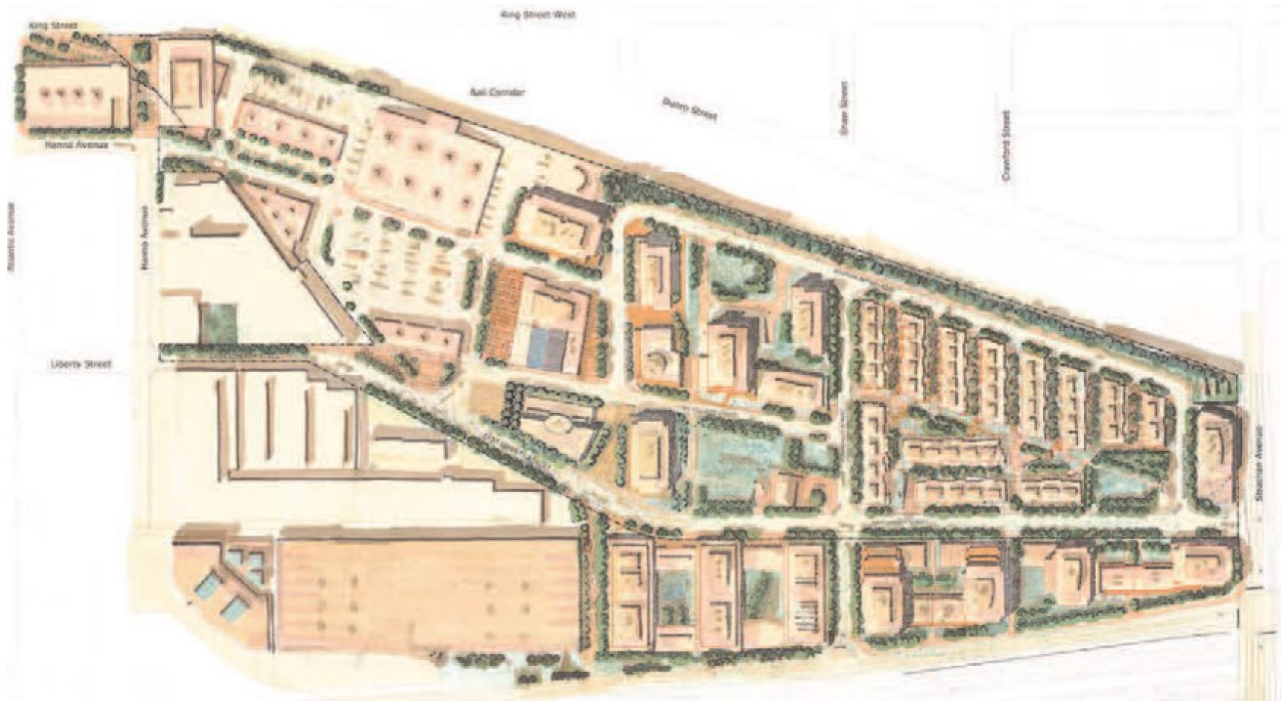

Figure 24: Site plan for the east portion of the study area as proposed in the King-Liberty Urban Design Guidelines (IBI Group, 2005).

[49] Van der Voort, J. Liberty Village is right on track. The Globe and Mail, October 18, 2002.
[50] Catungal, J. P., Leslie, D., and Hii, Y. Geographies of Displacement in the Creative City: The Case of Liberty Village, Toronto. Urban Studies, 45(5&6), 2009.
[51] IBI Group. King Liberty Village Urban Design Guidelines, 2005.

Figure 25: Former Inglis lands following demolition, looking east towards Strachan Avenue, 2002 (Peter MacCallum, courtesy of Toronto Public Library).

While the east portion of the study area was experiencing intense development in the early 2000s, the City was also turning its attention to the portion west of Hanna Avenue, which remained zoned as employment lands. In October 2001, Council designated the Niagara and Massey Ferguson Neighbourhood as a Community Improvement Plan area. A report to Council noted that the Garrison Common North Area was the fastest-growing neighbourhood in the City of Toronto, and that the Community Improvement Plan would assist in identifying community needs and improvements.[52] As part of the Community Improvement Plan, Heritage staff were requested to identify heritage resources in the Garrison Common North Area. In 2005, Heritage Preservation Services (now Heritage Planning) brought forward several staff reports resulting in the inclusion of 38 properties on the City's Heritage Register, 9 of which were located in Liberty Village (bounded by King Street West, the CN rail corridors, Strachan Avenue, and Dufferin Street). The reports note that with the recent building activity in the Garrison Common North Area, it was important to add identified heritage resources to the City's Heritage Register in order to monitor applications affecting them and encourage the retention of their character defining features.[53]

Also in 2005, Council approved a motion to carry out an Area Study for the area bound by Atlantic Avenue, Dufferin Street, King Street West, and the rail corridor. In 2006, a staff report was brought to Council recommending that the area be maintained for employment uses, as the area was one of Toronto's fastest growing employment districts. The report also emphasized the cultural heritage value of the area, noting the concentration of extant historic warehouses and that "new development should respect the character and scale of the existing buildings without mimicking them to compliment the heritage of the area"[54]. In recognizing the value of the unique collection of industrial buildings, Council directed Heritage Preservation Services staff to initiate a Heritage Conservation District Study.

Figure 26: Central Prison Chapel (and former Inglis factory) advertising Liberty Village, 2002 (Peter MacCallum, courtesy of Toronto Public Library).

While the study did not occur, City policies maintained and supported the existing built form of the study area by encouraging the retention of the industrial buildings and continued use as employment lands. The Garrison Common North Secondary Plan was adopted by Council in 2006 and covered the lands between Bathurst Street to the east, Dufferin Street to the west, Queen Street West to the north, and the rail corridor to the south.

[52] City of Toronto. Community Improvement Plan for the Niagara and Massey Ferguson Neighbourhood. 2001.
[53] City of Toronto. Garrison Common North Area Study – Inclusion of 38 Properties on the City of Toronto Inventory of Heritage Properties. 2005.
[54] City of Toronto. Liberty Village Area Study. 2006.

The major objectives of the Secondary Plan were to ensure new development would "be integrated into the established city fabric in terms of streets, blocks, uses and density patterns", while being sensitive to and protecting the "industrial, communications and media operations, solidifying the area as one of the leading locations for new industry".[55] As the east portion of the subject area was undergoing drastic changes to its built environment, the west side remained generally intact. As buildings were adaptively reused, changes were made to their exteriors that reflected their new uses. These changes included new window openings, cladding or stucco, and additions.

By the mid-2010s, the east portion of the study area was nearly completely transformed through new development with some adaptively re-used structures containing a mix of residential and commercial uses. The west side of the study area continued to be a stable employment area for the City. The west side of the study area now faces a new era of redevelopment with its 2022 designation as a Major Transit Station Area, which expectations of increased density, and Council's adoption of Official Plan Amendment 231 (OPA 231) in 2023.[56] OPA 231 resulted in the re-designation lands west of Hanna Avenue from Employment Areas to Regeneration Areas. Lands that are designated Regeneration Areas are intended to attract investment, re-use buildings, and encourage new construction.

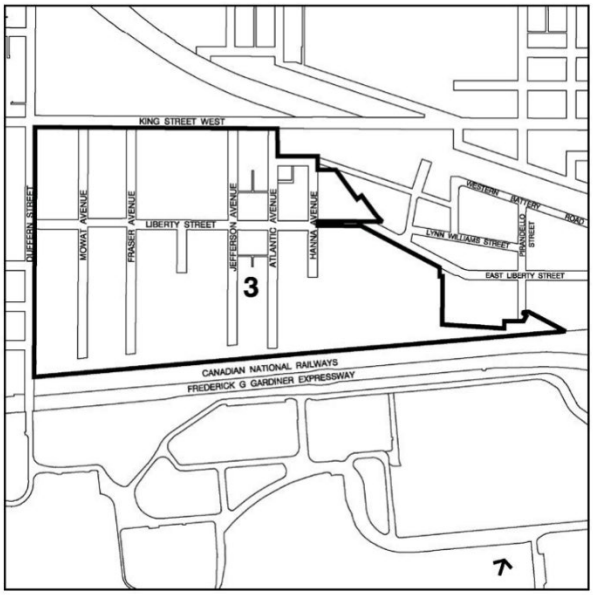

Figure 27: Map 14-1 of the Garrison Common North Secondary Plan showing Area 3 which covers much of the study area (City of Toronto, 2006).

Sub-theme: Creative Communities and Live/Work Spaces

The adaptive reuse of former industrial buildings for creative communities as live/work spaces had an important impact on the subject area. Decades prior to inhabiting the study area, artists, musicians and writers in search of affordable spaces had found homes in Toronto's Gerrard Village and Yorkville. By the 1970s and 1980s, these areas were beginning to face gentrification, which resulted in the displacement of many people living in these neighbourhoods.

Attracted by the low rents, size, and aesthetics of the empty factories, and the proximity to downtown, displaced artists and creatives began moving into the Queen Street West neighbourhood and the subject area. Buildings such as 53 Fraser Avenue, 9 Hanna Avenue (no longer extant), and 67 Mowat Street (the Carpet Factory), would become hubs for artists

[55] City of Toronto. Garrison Common North Secondary Plan. 2006. https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/97df-cp-official-plan-SP-14-Garrison.pdf
[56] City of Toronto. CC13.20 – Ontario Land Tribunal Appeal of Official Plan Amendment 231 – Lands Bound by King Street West, Dufferin Street, Lakeshore Rail Corridor and Hanna Avenue – Request for Directions. 2023.

informally occupying these buildings as live/work spaces.[57]

Figure 28: Liberty Street looking east from Mowat Avenue, c. 1980s (City of Toronto Archives

The high concentration of people with connections to creative industries in the subject area resulted in artist exhibitions, studio tours, and bars in the area, such as Liberty Street Café (25 Liberty Street), which supported local musicians, and an underground rave culture. Third Rail Visual Arts Festival, for example, was launched in 1992[58], emerging from the Round Up open studio event which supported artists showcasing their work in studios and alternative spaces across the city.[59] The Third Rail Visual Arts Festival focused on artists within the subject area, activating multiple buildings in the area including 72 Fraser Avenue, 25 Liberty Street, and 2 Atlantic Avenue, as venues for exhibitions, performances, and public programs. [60]

The importance of the affordable live/work spaces in the subject area was underlined in the 1990s when, as creative communities began to face displacement, the City of Toronto searched for ways to support them. The City's Economic Development division partnered with the newly formed Artscape to develop permanent affordable live/work spaces in the area. An initiative of the Toronto Arts Council, Artscape started in 1986 to support artist communities by formalizing affordable live/work spaces. In 1991, Artscape readapted the building at 60 Atlantic Avenue to become affordable artist studios and residences, and to house Artscape's first office. The project was one of the first undertaken by Artscape. Shortly after, Artscape opened another live/work space for artists in another former industrial building at Queen Street West and Crawford Street, which continues to operate today.[61]

Despite these efforts, many of the live/work spaces in the subject area were lost to new development and tenants.

[57] Wieditz, T. Liberty Village, 2007.
[58]Hume, Christopher. Open doors at Bohemia Inc. Sep 26 1996, p.89.
[59] Hume, Christopher. The Next Queen St West. Jan 16 1997, p.89.
[60] Hume, Christopher. Railproof. Sep 26 1997, p.104.
[61] Wieditz, T. Liberty Village, 2007.

Theme: Redevelopment and Adaptive Reuse

Character Defining/Associative Features

- Industrial buildings that have been modified to accommodate other uses, resulting in a visibly layered built form where the original industrial building remains legible
- Industrial buildings with strong associations to the sub-theme of creative communities and live/work spaces
- Retains most of the essential character defining features of an industrial building but has modern additions, materials, or window openings

Example properties

(L-R): 64 Jefferson Avenue and 60 Atlantic Avenue

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