

Jarvis Street, Shuter Street to Charles Street: Historic Context Statement

1. Introduction

1. Context Statement Area

The context statement area consists of both sides of Jarvis Street between Shuter Street to the south, and Charles Street to the north. It encompasses all properties fronting onto Jarvis Street, which includes a range of residential, institutional, and commercial buildings. It also includes portions of a municipal park, Allen Gardens, and a number of religious structures.

2. Jarvis Street Historic Context Statement

1. 1790 – 1845: European Settlement & Park Lot 6

Present-day Jarvis Street bisects Park Lot 6, one of the original 32 park lots that were surveyed under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe in 1793, following the establishment of a permanent settlement by the British within the Bay of Toronto. Each of the 32 park lots contained 100 acres, roughly 660 feet wide by 6600 feet deep, and were located between Queen Street (Lot Street) and Bloor Street (the first concession road, later Tollgate Road). The allocation of park lots as land grants was used by Simcoe and the colonial authorities to incentivize settlement within the Town of York, primarily allocated to government and military officials moving to York from Newark (Niagara-on-the-Lake), American colonies, or England.

Park Lot 6 was first granted to David William Smith, however negotiations in the following years led to the property being granted to William Jarvis in 1796, with the land patented by Jarvis on November 1, 1811.

William Jarvis (1756 - 1817) was a government and military official who played an important role in the establishment of Upper Canada, and was one of the early settlers of the Toronto branch of the Jarvis family. Jarvis was born in 1756 in the town of Stamford, Connecticut and was a loyalist during the years leading up to and following the American Revolution (1765 - 1783). Jarvis enlisted in the Queen's Rangers under the leadership of John Graves Simcoe, seeing action during the war. The loss of the American colonies and subsequent hostilities towards loyalists saw the Jarvis family flee their home in Connecticut to England before William Jarvis' appointment as Provincial Secretary and Clerk of the Executive Council under the recommendation of his former commander, Simcoe.

Jarvis moved first to Newark, before relocating to the Town of York. There, Jarvis received both Park Lot 6, as well as town lots. It was within these town lots where he constructed a residence on Caroline Street¹. It is known that Jarvis employed servants

¹ Plan for the enlargement of York, as amended by Order of his Honour the President projected in Lots containing an acre more or less. Signed: D.W. Smith A.S.G. 10 June 1797: In council at York, June 10th, 1797, Peter Russell [Endorsed title on verso]: His Honor the Prest 10th June 1797 approval of the Town plot of York – addition.

and had at least two people enslaved, and potentially six in total - actions at odds with the position and intention of his commander John Graves Simcoe, who sought to establish a province where slavery would be illegal². Court records indicated Jarvis continued to hold enslaved people through 1811 and potentially up until his death in 1817. The Anti-Slavery Act of 1793 prohibited new enslavement within the province and the transportation of enslaved people into the province, but did not free those who were already enslaved, with records indicating enslavement existed within the Town of York through the first two decades of the 19th century.

Following William Jarvis' death in 1817, Park Lot 6 was inherited by his eldest son, Samuel Peters Jarvis (1792-1857), who would continue in his father's footsteps and play a role in the provincial government as Clerk of the Legislative Council of Upper Canada and Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Upper Canada. Samuel began work on improvements within Park Lot 6 soon after his father's death; industrialization was pushing wealthy residents out of the Town of York's original 10 blocks (where his family's town lots were located), and those with the means began to construct homes within the park lots or further afield as transportation and roads improved.

In 1822 Samuel Jarvis and his wife, Mary Boyles Powell, built Hazel Burn within the southern portion of Park Lot 6, roughly near present-day Jarvis and Shuter Streets. The northern portion of the park lot was leased out for farming. The fate of Hazel Burn, a handsome two-storey brick residence, was closely tied to that of its owner, who became a polarizing figure and was emblematic of the excesses and privilege afforded to the Family Compact and many of its members who sought to stymie representational government within Upper Canada³.

Samuel Jarvis' inheritance and modest provincial income were unable to support his aspirations of a genteel lifestyle. Following his appointment in 1837 as Chief Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Jarvis leveraged his position to siphon funds intended for Indigenous communities into his and his companions' coffers, actions that came to light in the 1840s and led to his removal from the post in 1845. Significantly in debt to the government and creditors, Samuel Jarvis was forced to sell his interest in Park Lot 6 and consolidate his assets. Nonetheless, he would continue to accrue debt and live above his and his family's means, and would remain doing so until his death in 1857⁴.

2. 1845 – 1880: Subdivision & Speculation

² Jarvis Archives and Museum, "William Jarvis and Slavery", <https://jarvisarchives.ca/main/history/jarvis-who/william-jarvis-and-slavery/>.

³ The Family Compact were a group of wealthy men and their families who controlled much of the political and economic landscape of Upper Canada (present-day Ontario) from the 1810s to 1840s.

⁴ Austin Seton Thompson. *Jarvis Street: a story of triumph and tragedy*. Personal Library Publishers, Toronto, 1980. p. 124.

Howard (1803 - 1890), the official surveyor and civil engineer for the City of Toronto, around 1846 to draft a plan of subdivision for Park Lot 6. Howard was a native of England who immigrated to Canada in 1832 and would become an influential figure in the burgeoning city and province, responsible not only for establishing lot and road patterns within Toronto, but for the design of numerous buildings of importance, including the Canada Company Office (1834); Colborne Lodge (1837); the Bank of British North America (1856); and Provincial Lunatic Asylum (1860).

While his architectural style was decidedly Regency with the accompanying classical motifs and flair, his surveys were practical, straightforward and driven by economics with an eye towards driving investment and development. Within Park Lot 6, Howard's subdivision plan looked to provide lots catering to a range of users: smaller lots for rows and townhouses intended to appeal to developers were located south of Gerrard Street, making way for larger and undivided lands to the north up to Bloor Street, intended for upper-class families looking to construct larger homes. Jarvis Street bisected Park Lot 6 running south from Bloor Street to Queen Street, where it turned into Nelson Street before terminating south of the St. Lawrence Market at Beard's Wharf.

Samuel Jarvis would not live to see the development of his subdivision as a premier residential district; despite his and Howard's attempts to create an appealing plan on paper, a lack of funds to begin construction stymied their efforts. In 1846 Jarvis appealed to William Cawthra for investment, receiving 4,000 pounds to facilitate subdivision south of Gerrard Street⁵. Cawthra would also purchase land north of Wellesley Street as a signal of the area's prestige; he was aided in this appeal to upper-class investors in large part by the construction of St. Paul's Anglican Church near the top of Jarvis Street on Bloor Street in 1841. While investors began to purchase lots for both redevelopment and personal use following Cawthra's involvement, construction was slow to start, and was primarily concentrated within the southern portions of Jarvis Street below Gerrard Street where smaller lots appealed to small-scale developers. The 1870 city directory shows a concentration of residences below Gerrard Street, many of which were home to merchants, grocers, and blue-collar workers, with few residents north of Carlton - those that did live there including financiers, lawyers and members of prominent families, including the Jarvises, who retained land at Jarvis and Wellesley Streets.

The presence of St. Paul's Church at the northern terminus of Jarvis Street was an important factor in convincing prospective buyers of the security of their investment along Jarvis Street, in addition to the early presence on the street of the Cawthras and other wealthy families. In 1871 the Toronto Collegiate Institute - an extension of the Home District Grammar School and later renamed Jarvis Collegiate - opened on Jarvis Street south of Carlton Street, on lands presently occupied by Allan Gardens. As illustrated in the 1878 Map of Toronto by Willing & Williamson, a number of religious institutions also moved onto Jarvis Street signaling increasing population within the area and incentivizing development, including the First Unitarian Church (demolished), Jarvis Street Baptist Church and St. Andrew's Church. Public recreational facilities including the Mutual Street Skating Rink (demolished), Allen Gardens and the Jarvis Street Lacrosse Grounds (demolished) added to the area's appeal. The paving of Jarvis Street

⁵ *Jarvis Street: a story of triumph and tragedy*, 118.

with asphalt in the late 1870s was so eagerly anticipated by those with investments in the area that four days of celebrations were planned; unfortunately, uncooperative weather hampered much of those celebrations, however this event, alongside institutional investments, marked a new era for the district and the development of Jarvis Street⁶.

3. 1880 – 1910: Residential Development

The paving of Jarvis Street made way for the extension and continuation of the grand public right of way planned by John Howard that was to define Jarvis as the premier residential district in Toronto. While not the exclusive domicile of Toronto's growing elite (Sherbourne Street, St. George Street and Queens Park all occupied similar roles), Jarvis was recognized for its outstanding public realm, specifically for "...the breadth of Jarvis Street, with its sidewalks and ornamental fences, and its great shade trees rising from grassy verges, that imported to it something of the distinction of the Champs Élysées in Paris."⁷

It is important to note that this characterization did not extend the length of the street; already by the 1880s the southern portions of Jarvis below Dundas Street (then Wilton) contained boarding houses and townhouses that were subdivided for lodgers, indicating a stratification along the street that would grow over the decades.

The latter decades of the 19th century saw the wealth of Toronto grow alongside that of its residents, many of whom sought to convey their new or inherited wealth through lavishly designed and expansive homes. This included the Briggs-Storm House (467 Jarvis Street, 1872/1876); Elderslie (471 Jarvis Street, 1874); the A. J. Mason House (441 Jarvis Street, 1881); the Blake House (449 Jarvis Street, 1891) and the row of homes built on the west side of Jarvis Street between Cawthra Square and Gloucester Street on lands subdivided by the Cawthra family (504-514 Jarvis Street). It also included some of the street's most grand residences - the Massey House (515 Jarvis Street, remodelled in 1882); the Chester Massey House (519 Jarvis Street, 1887); and the Johnston House (571 Jarvis Street, 1875).

Collectively, these homes represented a concentration of wealth along Jarvis Street that was notable within Toronto, however they do not represent the sole development that was taking place within the district. These larger properties were often surrounded by and within close proximity to homes of more moderate means, including semi-detached and row houses, a small number of which still exist (336 through 344 Jarvis Street, e.g.). Furthermore, the stratification of wealth was not just along the north-south arterial of Jarvis, but could be found on the east-west streets as well, with larger houses fronting onto Jarvis Street close to smaller homes on the side streets including Mutual, George, Gloucester, and Isabella Streets.

4. 1910-1950: Rooming Houses & Institutions

⁶ *Jarvis Street: a story of triumph and tragedy*, 139.

⁷ *Ibid.* 162.

The turn of the 20th century and the entry of the Edwardian era saw an increase in suburban expansion, with more exclusive neighbourhoods catering to the burgeoning middle- and upper-middle class population being surveyed and marketed; this included Rosedale, another project of the Jarvis family (formerly the Rosedale estate of William Botsford Jarvis, a cousin of William Jarvis, and begun in 1864); The Annex (subdivided by developer Simeon James and annexed by the City of Toronto in 1887); and Parkdale (annexed in 1889).

Notably, this period was marked by changes in domesticity and home economics. Labour was becoming more expensive as was the cost to maintain large homes and, coupled with decreasing family sizes, these changes led to the redundancy of many of the large houses that lined the upper parts of Jarvis Street. The increased homogeneity that planned garden suburbs offered, such as Rosedale, further appealed to Edwardian era Torontonians, while the growing adoption of the automobile both enabled settlement further afield from the financial centre, as did the expansion of Toronto's streetcar and public transit network. The shift out of districts like Jarvis and St. George Streets was generational as well, with one researcher noting that "As the elites who inhabited the street's stately single-family homes died, their children, seeking increasingly homogenous residential spaces, began to abandon the street for outlying districts."⁸

The subdivision of many of the semi-detached and row houses along Jarvis Street south of Gerrard Street was well under-way by the turn of the 20th century, catering to lodgers and boarders employed in blue collar industries and within proximity of the harbour front, rail yards, warehouses and downtown offices. This would spread northwards towards Wellesley Street by the onset of World War I, both in the carving up of houses for multiple residents, and the arrival of institutions catering towards those in need of housing, care and support. In 1922 the former Cawthra family mansion, Northworld, located at 538 Jarvis Street, was sold following the untimely death of Cawthra Mulock at age 36 from the Spanish Influenza. Dr. Bernardo's Receiving Home moved into the house and repurposed it as their Canadian headquarters, through which thousands of orphans passed on their way to new homes or farms outside the city. This change in occupancy on a larger scale is reflected in the 1931 city directories; few single-family occupied homes remain along the street, with many converted to boarding houses or repurposed for commercial use (i.e. Ryan's Art Galleries at 515 Jarvis Street c.1928).

The command Jarvis Street had within upper-class Toronto lasted only a few decades; by 1920 the character and demographics were decidedly different from that in 1900, and "...what had once been a street dominated by elite families was now overwhelmingly the home of young, unattached, white, Anglo-Celtic individuals at the beginnings of their careers and of a lower social status."⁹ Those who owned larger properties on Jarvis converted or re-purposed their properties for income generation in order to offset higher operating costs and increased taxes arising from higher land values. These uses included apartment houses, boarding houses, and office space.

⁸ Nicholas Lombardo, "White-Collar Workers and Neighbourhood Change: Jarvis Street in Toronto, 1880-1920", *Urban History Review*, Fall 2014, v.43 no. 1, p6.

⁹ White-Collar Workers and Neighbourhood Change, 7.

Another significant change along Jarvis Street during this period was the arrival of the purpose-built apartment building. Toronto's growing population, specifically of single young professionals employed within the financial district or in surrounding manufacturing areas, increased the need for affordable bachelor and one-bedroom apartments within a city that had primarily been one of houses. Developers sought to cater to this market through the introduction of purpose-built apartment buildings drawing inspiration from urban centres such as New York, where apartments were ubiquitous, much to the chagrin of Toronto's conservative population and city officials. While apartment construction received significant pushback within residential districts, Jarvis Street was primed for the arrival of this housing typology, offering larger lots along a major arterial road and within walking distance of the urban centre.¹⁰ Unlike other wards in Toronto, Jarvis Street had greater permissions for additions, height and development, with local politicians not targeting rooming and apartment houses along Jarvis Street due to their predominantly Anglo-Celtic residents, who were seen as non-other and non-threatening¹¹. That many of the institutions that established themselves within the district catered towards or were operated by religious groups and women likely deterred the intervention of authorities during the interwar period.

5. 1950 – 1990: Investment & Restoration

The immediate postwar period along Jarvis Street was shaped by the completion of the Clifton Road Extension in 1950, a major transit project that connected Jarvis Street to Mount Pleasant Road bisecting Rosedale and Moore Park in the process. The intention of the extension was to address unsafe driving conditions along stretches of roads cutting across Yellow Creek and navigating the Lake Iroquois escarpment as it worked towards the Don Valley. It would also serve to create an arterial road connecting the central business district to the residential suburbs in North Toronto and East York.

The immediate impacts of the extension felt along Jarvis were within the public realm - the historically large and fenced front yards set back from tree-lined road verges were expropriated and cleared for additional traffic lanes, fundamentally changing the character of the street. Aerial mapping from 1947 shows this change underway; Figure 7 displays Jarvis Street at Gerrard Street East, where the verge has been removed to the south, with preparatory work underway to the north. Changes in land ownership soon followed - the Salvation Army, which had purchased the former Cawthra Mulock estate from Dr. Bernardo, sold the Isabella/Jarvis/Gloucester Street block to a developer in 1956, who demolished the mansion and related buildings and erected the yellow-brick apartment buildings at 100 Gloucester Street and 105 Isabella Street (dubbed the Cawthra and the Mulock when completed in 1958). Other notable apartment projects from this period within the area include the Massey House apartments at 550 Jarvis Street (1958) and Plaza 100 at 100 Wellesley Street East (1970).

The other significant change along Jarvis Street during this period were the investments by different levels of government in the construction of institutional

10 Patricia McHugh, Alex Bozikovic. *Toronto Architecture: a city guide* (revised). McClelland & Stewart, 2017, 145.

11 "White-Collar Workers and Neighbourhood Change," 17.

street, particularly the southern portions of Jarvis Street that had developed a reputation for being the “tenderloin” of Toronto¹², a reference to the infamous San Francisco neighbourhood renowned for crime and poverty. Notable projects intended to drive investment into the area while demolishing many of the rooming houses that were deemed undesirable included the Juvenile and Family Courthouse (311 Jarvis Street, 1955); the Moss Park Armoury (Queen and Jarvis Streets, 1966); the Metropolitan Toronto Police Headquarters (590 Jarvis Street, 1967); and the Toronto Royal Canadian Mounted Police Building (225 Jarvis Street, 1972). Private investment was not left out either, with the construction of the architecturally ambitious head office for Sears Canada at 222 Jarvis Street (1971) marking an important development within what was considered an undesirable neighbourhood.

By the late 1970s, the context of Jarvis Street had changed significantly from that at the turn of the 20th century, having evolved from a primarily residential district comprised of large mansions at the northern extent to subdivided row and townhouses to the south, to a high-density arterial road containing a mix of purpose-built apartment buildings, converted mansions and houses used for apartments, small businesses, and institutions. The much-admired public realm that afforded the street the moniker of Toronto’s Champs Élysées was gone, replaced with traffic lanes and stunted front yards. Glimpses of the former grandeur of Jarvis Street’s heyday remained however, and continue to persist - notably, the block frontage between Cawthra Square and Gloucester Street, and that between Carlton and Maitland Streets.

Collectively, the remaining residential house form buildings along Jarvis Street contribute to an understanding of the layered history of this storied street, reflecting both the period of prosperity during which they were constructed, as well as the subsequent decades where new uses took up home in old buildings. Standing alongside mid-century apartment towers, institutional buildings and contemporary condominium towers, they form an important part of Jarvis Street’s historic and evolving context.

3. Historic Resources within the Study Area

1. Properties Included on the Heritage Register

Address	Heritage Status	Date of Inclusion	Building Name (if applicable)
130 Gerrard Street East	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 05/12/1999	Jarvis Street Baptist Church
207, 209, 211, 213 Jarvis Street	Listed	11/21/1977	
215, 217, 219 Jarvis Street	Listed	11/21/1977	
280 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 07/20/2019	

285, 287, 289, 291 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 05/12/1976	
288, 290 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 07/18/2019	
300 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	08/10/1987, 03/11/1988	Frontenac Arms Hotel, Essex Park Hotel
314 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	05/30/1988, 01/29/1990	Dr. Charles Sheard House
336 Jarvis Street	Listed	06/20/1973	
337 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 05/12/1999	Samuel Platt House
338 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 09/27/2007	
340 Jarvis Street	Listed	06/20/1973	
342, 344 Jarvis Street	Listed	06/20/1973	John N. Lake House
383 Jarvis Street	Listed	03/31/1980	St. Andrew's Church
400 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 09/08/1986	
406 Jarvis Street	Listed	05/06/1991	Ivey House
410 Jarvis Street	Listed	04/15/1991	John N. Lake House
441 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/09/1976, 03/28/1978	A.J. Mason House
449 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/09/1976, 03/28/1978	E.F. Blake House
467 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 11/12/1975	House for S.R. Briggs
471 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/09/1976, 03/28/1978	Thomas Thompson House
487 Jarvis Street	Listed	04/15/1991	Jarvis Street Collegiate Institute
504 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 05/12, 1976, 10/24/1978	G.H. Gooderham House
506 Jarvis Street	Listed	06/20/1973	J.H. McKinnon House

510 Jarvis Street	Listed	06/20/1973	Thomas B. Taylor House
512 Jarvis Street	Listed	06/20/1973	
514 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 11/12/1975	Charles A. Rundle House
515 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	06/20/1973, 11/12/1975, 10/31/2002	A. McMaster House
519 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	09/19/1983, 07/06/2000, 10/31/2002	Chester D. Massey House
571 Jarvis Street	Designated Part IV	03/05/1984, 08/12/2002	William R. Johnston House

4. Figures

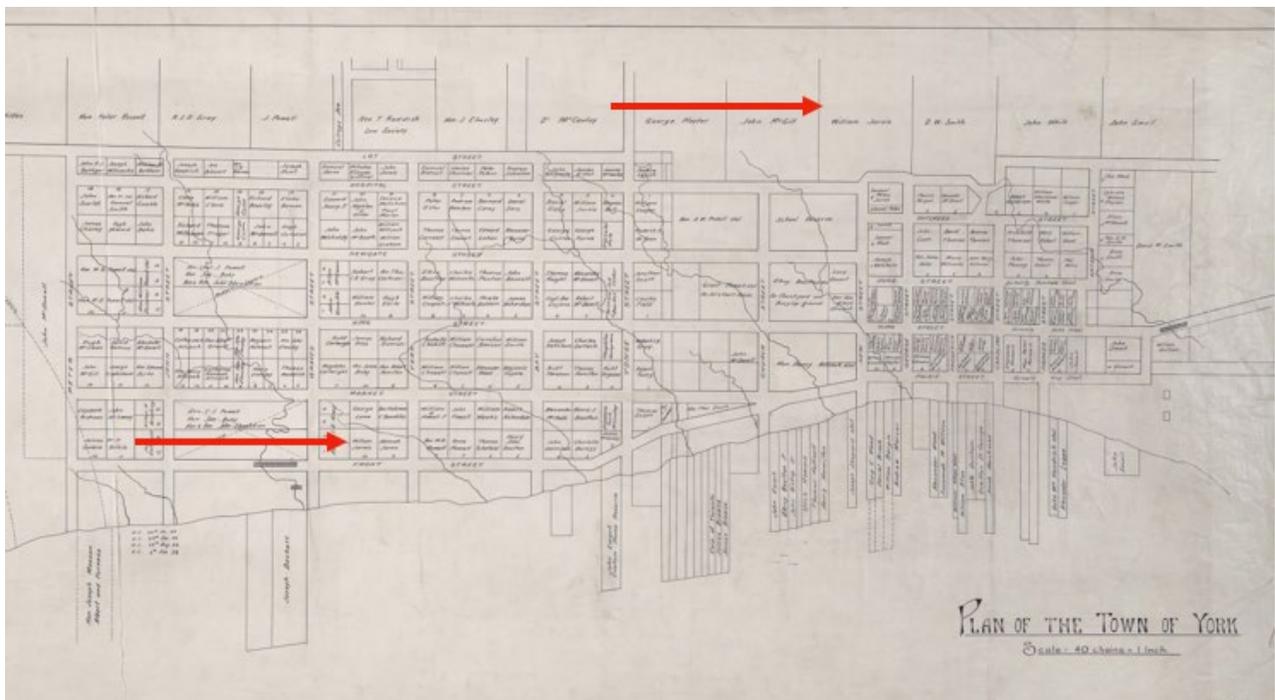


Figure 1. Plan of the Town of York W.C. [9 June 1818]. Toronto Public Library. Properties belonging to William Jarvis shown with Park Lot 6 at the top and town lots below.

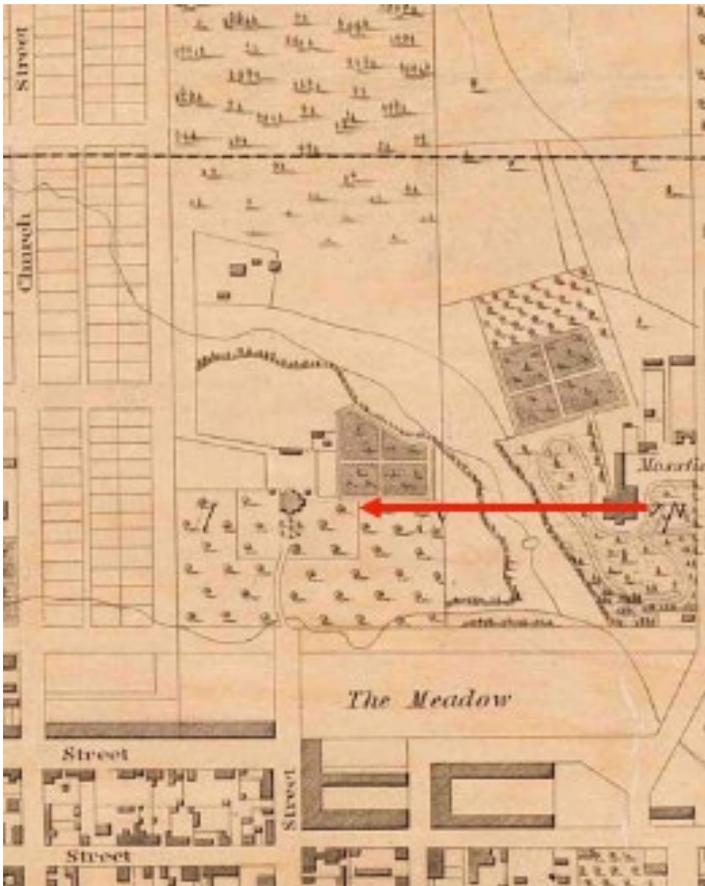


Figure 2. Topographical Plan of the City and Liberties of Toronto by James Cane Toppl Engr, 1842. Hazelwood House is shown set in the middle of Park Lot 6.



Figure 3. Topographical Plan of the City of Toronto by Sandford Flemming, 1851. The subdivision of Park Lot 6 is shown with Jarvis Street at centre. Toronto Public Library.



Figure 4. Jarvis Street Collegiate Institute (1871-1924), Jarvis St., west side, south of Carlton St., Toronto, Ontario. Toronto Public Library.



Figure 5. Jarvis Street, looking north from about Dundas Street East, 1890. Toronto Public Library.



Figure 6. Jarvis Street, looking south from south of Isabella Street, 1956, James V. Salmon. Toronto Public Library.



Figure 7. Aerial photograph of the intersection of Jarvis Street and Gerrard Street East, showing the road widening project underway, 1947. City of Toronto.

“White-Collar Workers and Neighbourhood Change: Jarvis Street in Toronto, 1880-1920”

Nicholas Lombardo, *Urban History Review*, Fall 2014, v.43 no. 1, pp. 5-19.

McHugh, Patricia, Alex Bozikovic. *Toronto Architecture: a city guide*, (revised edition). McClelland & Stewart, 2017.

Thompson, Austin Seton. *Jarvis Street: a story of triumph and tragedy*. Personal Library Publishers, Toronto, 1980.

“The Stately Street of Sin” Grattan Gray, *Maclean’s: Canada’s National Magazine*. February 15, 1950.