

## 2.1 Historical Development of The East Annex

*Raised on the crest of a hill overlooking the bay, Yorkville is a healthy as well as an economical location; its quiet streets and well-shaded avenues afford a pleasant relief after the heat and dust of the city streets in summer.*

C. Pelham Mulvany, 1884<sup>6</sup>

### Introduction

In the study area there are six parallel east-west streets: Prince Arthur, Lowther, Elgin, Boswell, Tranby, and Bernard. Four of these are just one block long, but three—Prince Arthur, Lowther, and Bernard—continue westward across Bedford. These streets were laid out on the westernmost fringes of the Village of Yorkville, and were sufficiently separated from the village proper by Avenue Road to be considered 'West Yorkville.' West Yorkville extended further to the north than the present study area. The area later became associated by proximity with a real estate promotion project of lands from Bedford to Huron that was annexed to Toronto in 1883, and has been known as The Annex ever since. An official planning district called the Annex emerged in 1956.<sup>7</sup> The study area therefore comprises a section of the area called West Yorkville, and Bedford Road, which is the most easterly street in the Annex subdivision. The area is now frequently called the East Annex.

### The Initial York Surveys

The survey of the Toronto area, begun in 1793 by surveyors Alexander Aitkin and Augustus Jones, centred on Yonge Street as the east-west divider, and measured concessions 'from the bay.' The town proper was laid out along the waterfront in five blocks two blocks deep near the mouth of the Don River, with City boundaries extending to Queen Street. From Queen, or Lot as it was called, to the line that is now Bloor Street, 32 narrow 'Park Lots' of 100 acres, 20 chains wide by 100 chains deep, were laid out running north-south, providing the 'city liberties' for future expansion. Referring to these park lots, it was quipped

<sup>6</sup> C. Pelham Mulvany, Toronto: Past and Present until 1882 Ontario Reprint Press. (1884, reprint 1970).

<sup>7</sup> Stuart Schoenfeld, "Formation of a Neighbourhood: The Definition of the Annex and its Boundaries," I.4, pp. 5, 10 in Lydia Burton and David Morley, The Annex Book (Toronto, 1978, unpublished MS at Municipal Reference Library.) The boundaries of the Annex had been determined by the Annex Resident's Association in 1928 as Bloor, Howland, Dupont and Avenue Road.

that Simcoe chose the site for Toronto because of the abundance of land all around that he could give out to his friends as 'douceurs' in compensation for being posted here.<sup>8</sup> The occupation and subdivision of these blocks critically affected the development of downtown Toronto, and how transportation routes and neighbourhoods would emerge. The dominant pattern was one of independent, uncoordinated development.

North of Bloor began the rural concessions of York township. Farm lots of 200 acres were laid out in a north-south pattern west of Yonge, and running east-west east of Yonge. In all cases, land subdivision tended to ignore the natural features of the land and to follow the orientation of the earliest lot survey, which is generally discernible beneath the present-day street patterns of the city. Significant topographical features, such as the Davenport Hill, are outside of the study area, and only at the south-west corner of the area was there a minor incursion of Taddle Creek. Taddle Creek did not affect the extension of the grid in the study area, but its being put underground has affected structures on Prince Arthur and has caused concern during the construction and placement of foundations for larger buildings in the surrounding area, including the Park Plaza Hotel when it was begun in the 1920s.

The prevalence of the grid is particularly apparent in the study area although occasional variations occur, such as streets like Bernard or Bedford which bend to connect separate plans of subdivision. Exceptions to the grid are exceedingly rare. A prominent exception to the grid is the wandering diagonal of Davenport, which originated as an aboriginal trail along the base of the escarpment. This trail has been identified as the most important east-west one known in the City of Toronto. It was a prehistoric route for many of the Iroquoian inhabitants from the villages in the Black Creek area to the resources of the harbour. It extended from the Don River and at its western terminus near Old Weston Road, it split south, by present-day Indian Road, and north to Black Creek. Numerous north-south trails led off Davenport. A number of associated archaeological sites have been identified including the Sandhill burial site (west end of the Rosedale Valley, now developed), the St. Clair-Dufferin - Bull Estate (now developed) and prehistoric ossuary burials north of Poplar Plains and at Jackes-Eglinton<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup>Eric Arthur, *Toronto: No Mean City* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), p. 14.

<sup>9</sup>Mima Kapches, *Back to the Beaten Paths* (Archaeological Newsletter - ROM Series II No. 47, January 1992) p. 3.

### *The Village of Yorkville*

Settlement in Yorkville began as a crossroads community around the Red Lion Inn, a tavern constructed ca. 1808 on the east side of Yonge Street above Bloor (demolished 1888). The establishment of a toll booth at Yonge and Bloor in the 1830s further enhanced the strategic location of the inn just outside its jurisdiction.<sup>10</sup> The availability of water power, clay deposits, and fertile ground close to the City attracted brick yards, Joseph Bloor's brewery, farmers and market gardeners, but the community moved toward attaining an identity when Bloor and Sheriff William B. Jarvis commenced speculative land sales in 1836. The settlement did not have the obvious prominence it now would appear to have, however, because Yonge Street was not used between Queen and Bloor until mid-century; the main street into the city was Parliament.

Another obstruction to growth was the York General Burial Ground, or Potter's Field, which was laid out at citizen instigation in 1825, and incorporated January 1826. Stretching north of Bloor from Yonge nearly to Avenue Road, it inhibited development of the land around it until it was closed after 1854.<sup>11</sup>

Early Yorkville first concentrated east of Yonge, then centred around Yonge Street between Bloor and Davenport. Two very long streets, Sydenham (the present Cumberland) and William (now Yorkville), stretched without significant interruption from Yonge to the Anglican Glebe lot which occupied the present study area. The creation of Bay Street directly demolished a good part of central Yorkville and resulted in major changes to the area. Today only some streets like Hazelton, and those in the study area, retain some of the original scale and texture of the streets which once existed in the Village of Yorkville.

Yorkville incorporated as a village in 1853. A map of survey drawn up that year by G. P. Liddy shows that the study area was not built upon, but was cleared and under cultivation. It was on the fringes of Yorkville.

### *Subdivision of West Yorkville*

The portion of the study area which was formerly part of Yorkville was originally owned as an Anglican Glebe lot, and formed the western part of lot 22. This lot included most of the study area but stopped approximately 157 feet east of the Bedford Road right-of-way.

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<sup>10</sup> Stephanie Hutcheson, *Yorkville in Pictures 1853 to 1883* (Toronto: Metropolitan Toronto Library, 1978), p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Hutcheson, *Yorkville*, p. 2. Citizens petitioned for closure 1854, but it took about 25 years for all the bodies to be removed; other reports indicate that perhaps only a sixth of the 6,000 interments were actually moved.

It was first subdivided in 1868 by Registered Plan 289, which laid Avenue Road through from Bloor to St. Clair with ten ten-acre lots on each side. Those lots were rented from the Rector of St. James by a variety of tradesmen, including seven gardeners, a seedsman, a botanist, three butchers, labourers, a glue factory, a brickmaker, and so on.<sup>12</sup> It was in effect a suburb of Yorkville. The subdivision corresponded to the beginning of a boom coincident with population increases and economic activity that peaked in 1874.<sup>13</sup>

In 1870 James Metcalfe filed the plan that put in Prince Arthur Avenue with smaller lots fronting Avenue Road and three frontages on Bloor (Registered Plan 301), beginning the phase of suburban village subdivision.

Metcalfe's lead was quickly followed by local tradesmen who acquired part of a Glebe farm lot and registered plans with standard lot widths adjusted to maximize profit and regularity. No street was built exactly as it was drawn in plan; on Elgin, for example, not one lot corresponded to the registered plan. Although lots were usually laid out at 50', the size of holding quickly diminished to a half or a third of that. Original lot frontages survive at 55 Boswell, which is an interesting house from about 1876, much altered by the builder Charles Teagle, whose family lived here for over seventy years; at 16, 26 and 36 Lowther, the latter an exceptional 61' wide; at 14, 16, and 19 Bernard; on Elgin at 14, 16, 20, 21 and 25; and on Prince Arthur at 10, 15, 17, and 23 (the last two both double lots).

Following Metcalfe's example, Elgin, Lowther, Boswell (originally Victoria), and Bernard (originally Dufferin) were all registered in 1874, but construction starts were sporadic as the economy declined.

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<sup>12</sup> Yorkville Assessment Role, 1862.

<sup>13</sup> Ganton, "Land Subdivision in Toronto," p. 213. In her landmark article, Karen Buckley cautioned that there was no direct relation between population growth and building cycles. K. A. H. Buckley, "Urban Building and Real Estate Fluctuations in Canada," The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science vol.. XVIII no. 1 (February 1952), p. 48.

Tranby was the last street to be developed, but also one of the fastest to be filled-in. Registered Plan 742 of 1887 squeezed twenty-eight lots onto less than 200' of fenced farmland remaining between Bernard and Boswell, resulting in an avenue width of just 48' (the norm on Prince Arthur is 66'). Originally the backyards on the north side of Boswell measured 93' deep, and were separated from the Tranby yards by a swath of land about 40' across that ran the length of the block. The lot sizes of 8-20 Boswell more closely approximate the original dimensions. Over the years the back land was reached by lanes from both ends of the streets, and in the mid-1880s a pair of Second Empire cottages were occupied as residences. These residences, at 38a and 38b Boswell Avenue, are the only nineteenth-century examples in the study area of dwellings being built within the interior of the block. Lot boundaries throughout the area have been adjusted for various purposes over the past century, but nowhere else are the idiosyncrasies of nineteenth-century development quite so eloquently visible as in the middle of this block.

Subdivisions were registered by individuals acting singly or in partnership, and speculative building was confined to relatively small projects. The largest single building project noted in the area prior to 1900 was the construction of five pairs of semidetached houses at 33-53 Tranby by local resident builder James Crang in 1889; a further subdivision developing four semidetached houses occurred on Elgin in 1902.<sup>14</sup> In addition, many of the developers and builders lived in Yorkville or in the study area. Charles Parker and William Booth were two busy builders who moved around the area; David McMurrin, James Crang, and William Stollery all lived and built in the district.<sup>15</sup>

These patterns characterized most of the subdivision activity in Toronto in the period.<sup>16</sup> The subdivision of a park or farm lot by its owner usually provided the street pattern, and the additional intervention of individuals speculating with smaller parcels was omitted, but in the East Annex, the development of the lot pattern required three stages: the corporate land owner, the private speculator, and the individual. In the Annex, where a development company worked on a relatively large scale, it needed only two stages for the lot pattern to fully appear.

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<sup>14</sup> Building permit 59, 12 March 1889 to James Crang. Total cost of buildings, \$18,000. The Elgin properties were filed on Plan 627 by the Bacon Estate on permit 588 of 4 June, 1902. Chadwick and Beckett were architects, with Davidge and Turner builders; permit estimate, \$24,000.

<sup>15</sup> Parker lived at 17 and 37 Boswell; Booth lived at 115 and 122 Bedford.

<sup>16</sup> Ganton, "Land Subdivision in Toronto," p. 227.

In many instances, the first buildings were replaced around 1900 by more substantial structures, reflecting changes in architectural fashion and in the tenor of the area. On Boswell, for example, 32-32A-34 (1908) and 40-42-44 (1907) replaced a pair of roughcast cottages on each lot that dated from the 1870s; and the houses at 9 and 11 Prince Arthur replaced one substantial roughcast house, also of the mid-1870s.

Those changes can be related to the transition from West Yorkville origins, to the later assumption of the East Annex identity. With the exception of Prince Arthur Avenue, the study area was first occupied mainly by tradesmen and labourers. Boswell in particular was largely occupied by workers in the building trades in 1884: plumber, builder, contractor, carpenter, and several stonemasons. Its modest socio-economic profile in the early years is attributable to its inconvenient situation midway between Bloor, Davenport, or the Yorkville connector cross-streets. By the early 1890s, trade and craftsmen were being displaced by white-collar workers: agents, clerks, travellers, accountants, a number of lawyers, and many men working in family companies. By 1890, the trip to work for the majority of residents involved commuting downtown to Toronto Street, Wellington, King, or lower Yonge, at the heart of the commercial and financial districts.

*Subdivision of Bedford and the Annex*

The western limit of the Village of Yorkville was approximately 157 feet east of the Bedford Road right-of-way. The land upon which Bedford Road is built was part of a 100 acre estate owned by Robert Baldwin, who built a house there prior to 1884 (presently 50 Lowther, much altered). The contrast between the edge of the village, and the rural estate land of the Baldwins, was striking.

In 1883 Simeon Henan Janes, who called himself a land and loan broker, acquired several parcels of Baldwin property for redevelopment, and led the successful petition for the annexation of the district to Toronto. Yorkville joined Toronto in 1884, with the rest of the Annex following in 1887. His 'Toronto Annexed' was heavily promoted in 1886 as a desirable subdivision, conveniently located near cultural amenities and important churches.

The lots on Bedford measured 157' 6" deep and they were originally shown running right through what are now road allowances for the east-west streets. No doubt Janes initially hoped to wring out a return from every foot of salable land, but eventually the Yorkville streets were continued right through to Bedford. Instead of readjusting the lot sizes, the affected lots were offered as slivers of whatever land remained after the road went through. The land south of Lowther was not part of Janes' development, and the junction of the two subdivisions explains the bend in Bedford at that intersection.

Janes' subdivision substantially altered the nature and appearance of the earlier streets. Tranby was created by subdivision shortly after the annexation. Most importantly, prior to the construction of Bedford the east-west streets dead-ended against the Village of Yorkville boundary. Shortly after the introduction of the subdivision, the east-west streets were connected to Bedford and the back yards of the lots on the east side of Bedford were cut down to sizes ranging from 106' to 127' in order to gain two to four additional frontages on the cross streets. On Tranby, for example, an additional pair of semidetached houses was built on each side of the street near Bedford, while on Prince Arthur, four buildings were built at the expense of the Bedford frontage. Even better, Bedford represented a new neighbourhood that aspired to elegance. With St. George as its principal avenue and the attractions of Queen's Park nearby, the Annex attracted an 'upper class' that was beginning a slow northwestern migration across the city.

Accordingly, the whole of Tranby Avenue and the west ends of the other east-west streets of the study area developed under the influence of the newly created Annex. Vacant lots, market gardens, and rough shacks were replaced by substantial, ambitious houses. One of the earliest to bridge the divide was strategically located near the areas of greatest prestige and earliest development, at 36 Prince Arthur, of 1891. On Boswell, the divide was literally spanned by 54-62, partly in West Yorkville and partly on Lot 23. This set of five semidetached houses commenced construction in 1889 but they were not occupied until 1892.

Development on Bedford occurred through the slow years of the 1890s, when construction starts in the city declined from the highs of the late 1880s, and built in the early 1900s towards the high of 1905. Building permit records are sporadic for most of the early development of the study area, but they indicate considerable activity in this period on Prince Arthur, Lowther, and Bernard west of Bedford, with many houses by Chadwick and Beckett, F. H. Herbert, and builder C. R. Dinnick.

The types of development that occurred in the first two thirds of the century were a direct consequence of the socio-economic composition of the area. The study area was not representative of the central Annex, and its northern streets were quite anomalous.

Streets of the study area sifted out in a social hierarchy after 1900 that made Bernard respectable, dipped somewhat through Tranby and Boswell, and peaked in terms of cachet along Prince Arthur. Status was partly reflected in the tax assessments, which in 1910 were highest on Prince Arthur, Lowther, and the west side of Bedford, of streets in the study area. Families who considered themselves aristocratic or otherwise notable ensured their listing in the Toronto Blue Books.

It has been calculated that as 3% of the population, Annex residents represented between 19 -25% of the Blue Book addresses between 1900 and 1924.<sup>17</sup> Among their number over half were professional and managerial workers; but in the study area this held true only on Prince Arthur. Manual occupations predominated on Boswell and the south side of Lowther in 1923. Clerical occupations employed most householders on the north side of Bernard, the south side of Elgin, and the entire west side of Bedford. By comparison, in 1923 St. George was inhabited wholly by managerial, proprietorial, or professional classes. The short streets of the East Annex were comparable to Brunswick, Howland, and Albany in terms of occupational structure and assessed values, but had a higher tenancy rate.<sup>18</sup>

Social status was jealously guarded and relied on the respective hostilities and resentments of different groups. The old-money 'Establishment' society apparently "accepted" Jewish neighbours (who constituted less than 1% of the local populace) but not Catholics (in the range of 5%); the newly affluent who had earned their money, the 'Industrial Elite,' are said to have had different intolerances.<sup>19</sup> These prejudices would percolate through in development decisions that were affected by Annex residents, and underlie some of the hidden factors involving change in the area.

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<sup>17</sup> Jim Lemon and Stephen Speisman, "Annegonians, 1910 and 1923," The Annex Book 1.6, p. 4, and figure 1.6.6.

<sup>18</sup> Lemon and Speisman, "Annegonians," figure 1.6.3.

<sup>19</sup> C. A. Russell, "The Establishment and the Industrial Elite," The Annex Book 1.5, p. 5; and Lemon and Speisman, "Annegonians," p. 3.



The role of transportation between Yorkville and Toronto in determining growth has not been fully assessed, but elsewhere in Toronto a neutral relationship has been observed.<sup>20</sup> Generally transportation in Toronto followed the development of subdivisions, rather than preceded it. After the establishment of a transit authority in 1892, new residential areas emerged just beyond existing transit lines; areas without service languished.<sup>21</sup> The opening in 1849 of a horse-drawn omnibus line from the Red Lion to the market enabled junior professionals, clerks, and so on, to commute to the City while enjoying the lower taxes of Yorkville.<sup>22</sup> In 1861 the horse-drawn street railway was laid down Yonge Street, first between Yorkville and King Street, then extended the following year to the Yorkville toll gate at Davenport, but other northerly routes—the fashionable districts of Jarvis and Sherbourne—were not served until the late 1870s. The Spadina street railway only ran north of College after 1883; a Bloor line was added in 1889, and the street railway was laid on Avenue Road in 1895.<sup>23</sup> Although it did not lead development, transit accessibility coincided with the commercialization of the perimeter streets in the area.

Street quality was another factor in development although not necessarily a determinant. Downtown streets were macadamized in the 1840s, and Yonge Street was improved by paving with cedar blocks as far as Bloor in 1881. Creosoted cedar paving was usually the first technique used to ameliorate muddy conditions, and it was carried out on the streets in the study area after their annexation to Toronto. Avenue Road, Prince Arthur and Lowther were paved in 1885; Elgin and Boswell in 1887; Bloor, Tranby, and Bernard in 1889; and Bedford in 1890. By 1900 red brick pavements began to replace

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<sup>20</sup> Isobel K. Ganton, "Land Subdivision in Toronto, 1851-1883," Gilbert Stelter and Alan F. J. Artibise, Shaping the Urban Landscape: Aspects of the Canadian City-Building Process (Ottawa, 1982), p. 215.

<sup>21</sup> Michael J. Doucet, "Politics, Space, and Trolleys: Mass Transit in Early Twentieth-Century Toronto," Shaping the Urban Landscape, p. 366; Toronto Transit Commission, Wheels of Progress (Toronto 1953), p. 15.

<sup>22</sup> Wheels of Progress, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Ganton, "Land Subdivision in Toronto," p. 219; Peter W. Moore, "Public Services and Residential Development in a Toronto Neighbourhood, 1880-1915," Journal of Urban History, vol. 9 no. 4 (August 1983), p. 459.

the cedar, as on Prince Arthur, for example, and a broad programme of improvements between 1899 and 1911 introduced macadam or early asphalt.<sup>24</sup> Sidewalks were still plank in 1900; concrete sidewalks were introduced at the same time as asphalt, so that by 1930 91% of roads were asphalt, and about as many sidewalks were concrete. Another modernisation was the replacement of gas by electric lamps, which was completed by 1911.<sup>25</sup>

Nor was municipal servicing particularly important to inducing settlement. On Elgin, for example, up to 40% of houses preceded servicing, and negligible increases in construction are noted in the area after the provision of water and sewer mains, with the exception of Tranby Avenue: and even there, servicing is not the only factor to be considered.<sup>26</sup>

The Ontario & Quebec Railway line ran across the northern edge of the district in 1882, but a strong direct impact on settlement or development in the area cannot be detected. An attempt was made to limit the functions attracted by railway sidings in 1907, when residents at the north end of Admiral Avenue petitioned to protect their investments by prohibiting factories, lumber yards, and warehouses from being built nearby.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, the car arrived in Toronto in 1902, changing everyone's experience of the street. Speeding was a hazard that necessitated the formation of a control squad in 1912. The chief police constable complained in 1919 that downtown streets were becoming 'an open air garage,'<sup>28</sup> and permits to construct automobile garages in the Annex had been issued as early as 1904.<sup>29</sup> Efforts to accommodate the automobile have caused some of the more dramatic changes in the study area, with street widenings, the introduction of garage buildings, meters, front parking pads, and the removal of trees and boulevards.

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<sup>24</sup> Moore, "Public Services and Residential Development," p. 461; reminiscences of Prince Arthur by Norman A. Keys, QC in The Annex Book, 3.1.b; and Peter W. Moore, "Local Improvements, Developments, and Annexation 1884-1912," The Annex Book 1.3, p. 49.

<sup>25</sup> Roger E. Riendeau, "Servicing the Modern City 1900-30," Victor Russell, ed., Forging a Consensus: Historical Essays on Toronto (Toronto: U of T Press 1984), pp. 159-60.

<sup>26</sup> Peter W. Moore, "Public Services and Residential Development," p. 459.

<sup>27</sup> Peter W. Moore, "Zoning and Neighbourhood Change in the Annex 1900-1970," Ph.D. diss. Geography, University of Toronto, 1979, p. 464.

<sup>28</sup> Riendeau, "Servicing the Modern City," p. 163.

<sup>29</sup> Building Permit 269 of 19 April 1904 was issued to H. McGee to build a \$300. one-storey automobile shed of sheeting and galvanized corrugated iron at 108 Lowther near Huron, which is outside the study district. The next recorded auto shed was for the Gooderham house at 8 Bedford, a house by David Roberts which has been demolished (permit 3624, 28 April 1906). Not surprisingly, the first in the study district, and one that

The Yorkville settlement was the first in the line of northwesterly growth that characterized expansion around Toronto,<sup>30</sup> although other villages were occurring concurrently west of the City along Queen, Dundas, and Bloor streets. Yorkville incorporated as a village in 1853, with a population of 5400; the development of the study area peaked around 1888; and the Annex developed principally after 1900. Geographically and temporally, the study area falls between larger areas of Yorkville and the Annex. Although the area shares qualities with Yorkville and the Annex, it is somewhat closer in its historical impetus and architectural character to the developments of other areas of Toronto such as Beverley Street or Parkdale.

Like Prince Arthur, Beverley evolved in the 1870s as an outlying street for the suburban villas of an affluent clientele, drawn partly by the prestige of the Grange and its park. The dominant buildings were merchant George Beardmore's splendid Second Empire mansion Chudleigh; John Cawthra's house in the same style; and Globe publisher George Brown's highly personal Lambton Lodge, all of the 1872-75 period. As on Prince Arthur, the early villa pattern was augmented by semi-detached houses and later changes.

Parkdale was a streetcar suburb west of Toronto that developed first as a commutable summer resort. It was annexed to the city in 1889 and flourished as a suburb attracting middle- and upper-class professionals through the 1890s and early twentieth century, exhibiting a pattern of socio-economic migration similar to the Annex.

*Historical Planning Issues*

Early Annex residents were anxious to protect the quality of their area, and exploited whatever means were available to do so. Planning controls developed relatively slowly in Canada, with the first official zoning by-law in Toronto being adopted in 1952. As a conservative force, zoning only benefited the early residents as long as the founding interest dominated and controlled change. As those owner-occupants representing the founding interests declined in numbers, they were replaced by more commercial interests, and zoning responded to those changes.<sup>31</sup>

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survives, was at 2 Elgin, which cost an extraordinary \$1200: 1 1/2 storey brick by architect E. MacDougal, builder T. Lewis, for A. J. Jackson (permit 7981, 3 June 1907).

<sup>30</sup> Donald Kerr and Jacob Spelt, The Changing Face of Toronto—a study in urban geography (Ottawa: Energy, Mines & Resources, 1966), p. 97.

<sup>31</sup> Peter W. Moore, "Zoning and Neighbourhood Change: The Annex in Toronto, 1900-1970," Canadian Geographer XXVI no. 1 (1982), *passim*.

Ontario municipalities were granted the power by the Legislature to engage in 'districting,' a rudimentary form of land use control, in 1904.<sup>32</sup> Toronto exercised these new powers that same year, and Annex residents were quick to solicit protection of the residential character. Commercial uses had scarcely infiltrated the area, emerging gradually and tentatively as corner groceries and drug stores on corner lots along Avenue Road in the 1890s, where the changes over time were striking. The first non-residential uses had been on Avenue Road: a grocery store at 146 near Davenport in 1890; a drug store in 94 Avenue Road at the corner of Boswell in 1894 (which became a laundry in 1905); and a grocery store at 92<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in 1910. The ordinance prohibited such uses from streets inside the area. Dental and medical offices increased north of Boswell after 1910 at 100, 102, 108, 110, and 112; and a funeral parlour (the Bates Burial Company) eventually took over two houses at 122 and 124 between 1915 and 1925. As well, the Rotherwood Apartments were built at 72-76 north of Lowther before 1915 (demolished for 66). The uses on Avenue Road provided amenities without altering the residential character of the inner streets, and were more compatible with residential than were the more noisome activities in the industrial parts of Dupont, for example, but the trend was clear. The construction of the British American Oil Company station at Lowther in 1928 caused rather more opposition, but stronger municipal interests prevailed over resident protests. By 1914, fewer than half the sites on the perimeter roads were occupied by the owners.<sup>33</sup>

In 1912 municipal control extended to regulate the 'location and erection of apartment houses and garages,' the latter for hire or gain. At that time, apartments were still regarded as slightly scandalous, or at least improper places to live; for the ordinance, they were defined as comprising three or more units. The Annex was part of a large area from which apartments were excluded.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, multiple occupancy began around 1910, and was quite prevalent by 1915. Several houses on Tranby were 'duplexed' before 1910; the house at 68 Tranby was home to five women in 1915, and continued in multiple use through

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<sup>32</sup> Peter W. Moore, "Zoning and planning: the Toronto experience, 1904-1970", A. Artibise and G. Stelter, eds., The Usable Urban Past: Planning and Politics in the Modern Canadian City (Toronto: MacMillan and Co., 1979), p. 317.

<sup>33</sup> Moore, "Zoning and Neighbourhood Change," Canadian Geographer, n. 19.

<sup>34</sup> Peter W. Moore, "Zoning and Neighbourhood Change: the Annex in Toronto, 1900-1970," Canadian Geographer XXVI I, 1982, n. p.; and Moore, "Zoning and planning: the Toronto experience, 1904-1970," The Usable Urban Past, p. 322.

after 1940. In 1921, bylaws permitting only single-family residential use were applied on a street-by-street basis. The conversion of seven buildings to multi-family use on Bernard around 1920 had resulted in the extension of restrictions from Prince Arthur, Bedford and Lowther, and their eventual application by 1929 to most of the Annex, but the distinction of West Yorkville continued: the original survey sections of Tranby, Boswell, and Elgin were excluded from the area of restrictions, as were the peripheral frontages on Bloor Street, Avenue Road, and Davenport.<sup>35</sup>

The exclusivity of residential use was challenged by the attempt of the Separate School Board to build a new school for St. Basil's at 14-18 Prince Arthur, which had been purchased for that use in 1921. Street residents convinced City Council to reject the project, and after their action was overturned by the Supreme Court of Canada, the City finally secured the approval of the Privy Council in England to uphold their by-law. The School Board found a site on Hazelton and built without objection. The battle was fought on the basis of building type rather than use; the Women's Art Association had been ensconced at 21 Prince Arthur since around 1920, and were later joined by the Lyceum Club. The residents opposed an orthopaedic hospital on the same site just as vehemently, finally organizing the Annex Residents' Association in 1928 to prepare themselves to protect their neighbourhood. The ARA was not interested in defending the whole of the Annex, however; the influential directors were concerned with the Prince Arthur axis and the central area between Bedford and Walmer.<sup>36</sup>

Neighbourly opposition escalated as the established residents resisted the widespread social changes following the war. Housing shortages, urban employment, female emancipation, and altered economic circumstances made the conversions of large houses or operating boarding houses feasible and respectable, especially after the federal government ordered a temporary lifting of municipal by-laws as one response to the housing crisis. Not in the Annex, though, where the ARA even hired a Pinkerton detective in 1931 to report on the status of a house at 97 Bedford, reported by neighbours to be a boarding house that sold meals to outsiders. In that case, however, the City refused to prosecute.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Moore, "Zoning and Neighbourhood Change," *Canadian Geographer*, Figure 1.

<sup>36</sup> James Lemon, "The Annex: A Brief Historical Geography," (Toronto: September, 1986, typescript; courtesy CHP), p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Bev Stager, "The Founding of an Association: The Early Annex Ratepayers 1928-1940," *The Annex Book*, 2.1, p. 9.

The interests of the founding group of resident owners predominated until 1930, although owner occupancy had been declining since 1924. Commercial interests acquired buildings in a general shift from prestige residential to rooming district during the 1930s; in the 1940s many houses were converted to multiple-family occupancy, and many of those households were headed by women.

Despite widespread multiplexing and the appearance of apartment houses, the accommodation situation in the city did not improve enough. In 1942, the Annex was specifically singled out by the Rental Administrator and Property Committee of Toronto for rooming house use. If the Medical Officer of Health agreed, houses could be converted to two, three, or more self-contained apartments; and any house in Toronto was permitted to shelter two or three roomers. The only provision in the Annex was that external signs and front yard parking be prohibited. To ameliorate conditions after the war, the city even leased 'emergency' houses; one of them was 108 Lowther.<sup>38</sup>

The conflict between old residents and new uses continued, but waned as a wider spectrum of owners, with diverse interests, moved in. Through the 1930s and 1940s, the ARA redefined its area of concern to accept multiplexing in order to deter institutional and large scale apartment uses, and no longer opposed amendment applications for house conversions, but the stronger demands of the commercial interests forced increasingly wider acceptance of change. Institutional and, after 1949, even office uses were not opposed by the ARA.

Following the adoption of Toronto's first Official City Plan in 1950, comprehensive zoning to consolidate the hundreds of residential restrictions was implemented in 1954. A district plan for the area was developed by the city in 1958, accompanied in 1960 by new zoning regulations which recognized the non-residential character of the southern end of the Annex, and incorporated provisions for high rise apartment zones. In that year, 1960, for the first time the Annex Residents' Association accepted tenants in their membership, and the independent East and West Annex associations amalgamated.<sup>39</sup> Between 1954 and 1969, twenty-nine apartment buildings supplying 2558 units were built in the Annex, all but two in the approved areas of St. George, Spadina, and south of Lowther.<sup>40</sup>

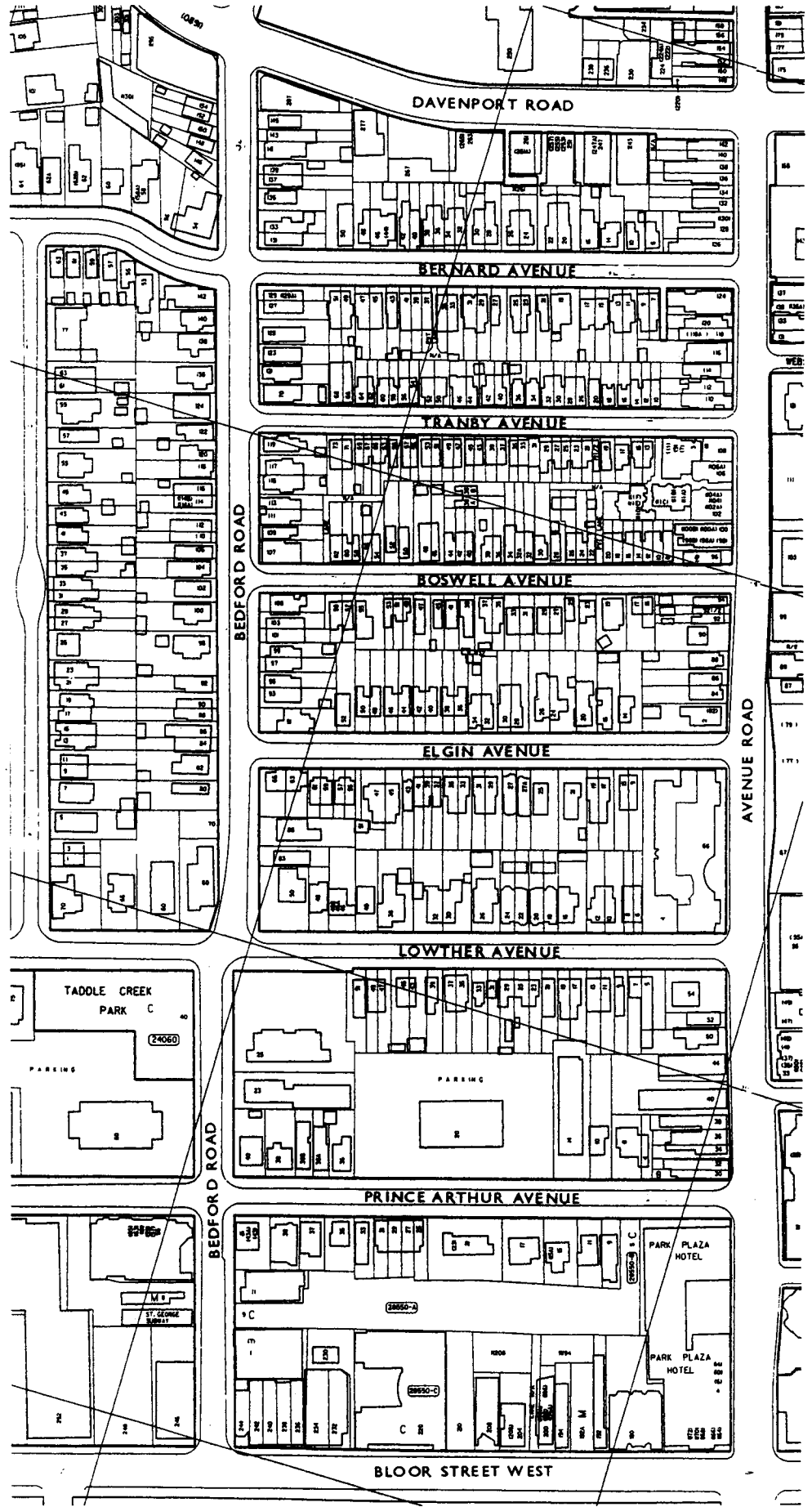
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<sup>38</sup> R. I. K. Davidson, "The War Years," The Annex Book 2.3, pp. 3-4.

<sup>39</sup> C. A. Russell, "Annex Resident Associations in the 1960s," The Annex Book 2.8, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Moore, "Zoning and Neighbourhood Change," Canadian Geographer, n.p.

# PROPERTY DATA



*This property data map illustrates the street patterns, property lot lines and location of buildings in the study area.*

60 METRES

## 2.2 Defining the East Annex Conservation District Boundary

*The lesson we can learn from the Victorians as we could from the Georgians is the success with which they created an atmosphere of urban amenity through repetition, a sense of space through enclosure, and a human scale.*

*Eric Arthur, 1974*<sup>41</sup>

### 2.2.1 The Pattern of Blocks and Streets of the Study Area

*It is recommended that the sub-areas, or precincts, within the study area with the most intact nineteenth-century urban form and with the most significant groupings of heritage buildings be included in the proposed East Annex Heritage Conservation District.*

They are the following:

the properties facing onto Bernard, Tranby, Boswell, Elgin, Lowther and Prince Arthur between Avenue Road and Bedford, (with the exclusion of the apartment tower at 20 Prince Arthur),

the properties facing onto Bedford Road between Davenport and Lowther and 15 Bedford at Prince Arthur; and the properties on the west side of Avenue Road from Davenport to Elgin.

*It is recommended that the precincts in the study area in which little of heritage value remains be excluded from the proposed East Annex Heritage Conservation District.*

They are the following:

the properties on Avenue Road south of Elgin,

on Bedford south of Lowther, with the exception of 15 Bedford (43 Prince Arthur),

on Prince Arthur west of Bedford, and

the properties facing onto Davenport.

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<sup>41</sup> Eric Arthur, Toronto: No Mean City (Toronto, U of T Press, ed. 1974).



The East Annex study area constitutes a unique portion of the City's history, demonstrating the final development of the Village of Yorkville and the commencement of the Annex. This development of the area has led to a configuration of short east-west streets separating blocks of varying depth. While these streets are somewhat comparable in origin to east-west streets like Scollard or Berryman they now form a distinct community detached from the earlier section of Yorkville. The East Annex developed as an area showing transition, and the transitional nature can be partly interpreted from the slight skewing of the streets such as Bedford and Bernard, where different plans of subdivision intersected.

The piecemeal speculative nature of these subdivided blocks can be seen in the lack of an integrated lane system and in the lack of provision for planned communal open space. The lack of lane space could also be attributed historically to the use of livery stables within Yorkville rather than individual stables or coachhouses planned for each property.

The two largest blocks at the south end of the study area are a remnant of Metcalfe's generous subdivision of the land, which had been intended for villa lots. The northern blocks are tighter and have varying but much smaller lot divisions, indicating the slightly later, market-sensitive period of speculative development.

With the exception of Davenport Road, which existed as an early road prior to the subdivision of the area, all of the designations of 'road' and 'avenue' are intended to connote a prestigious residential suburb, with gracious homes on treed streets.

At the present time the definition of blocks within the northern portion of the study area remains clear and intact. At the southern end of the study area this definition is less clear, partly because of larger assemblies of land with towers and open green space (20 and 50 Prince Arthur). The same lack of definition is created by Taddle Creek Park, which replaced a group of significant early 20th century Annex houses.

The perimeter of the study area has somewhat larger lots with a denser concentration of building footprints, primarily commercial. Some of these properties, such as those on Avenue Road north of Elgin, still conform to the dimensions of the earlier residential lot divisions. These earlier lot divisions and the buildings related to them have been assembled into large parcels on southern sections of Avenue Road and have disappeared entirely for the properties on Davenport Road.

