

3.4. Boswell Avenue

3.4.1 The Historical Development of Boswell Avenue

Boswell: Boswell was named for Arthur Radcliffe Boswell, K.C., Mayor of Toronto 1883-1884. It had formerly been named Victoria, a name changed with the annexation to Toronto.

Sitting midway between Davenport and Bloor Street, Boswell Avenue has a character unlike other streets within the study area. It was developed by a separate registered plan in 1874⁵⁹ with lots subdivided to approximately 50' by 93' both north and south of the street. The northern lot boundaries are irregular because of the pre-existing fenceline for the farm lot which was later to become Tranby Avenue. This irregularity led to the creation of two small residences (#36 and #38 Boswell) being built within the interior of the block in approximately 1887. These are the only two inner block residences in the study area.

The houses on Boswell were originally of simpler construction than those found in the rest of the study area. On the 1884 Goad's atlas a number of small frame buildings can be seen, and the city directories confirm that many households were in the trades, particularly in the building trade. It was primarily a working class street. The buildings were frequently renumbered, indicating the temporary nature of some of the earlier structures.

One of the area's most prolific builders, Charles Parker, lived in a two storey rough cast cottage on Boswell until 1880. It has subsequently been replaced, but Parker was responsible for the construction of well over a dozen buildings throughout the study area including the properties at 22, 24 and 26 Boswell.

A longer term resident, Charles Teagle and family, also builders, lived at #55 Boswell from 1905 to the 1970s. He added a substantial addition to the 1870s house, but retained the original 50' frontage of the lot.

Other residents of long standing include Phillippe Grandjean, an engraver who lived at 41 Boswell from the 1870s until 1915, and the Duff family who lived at #19 from 1884 to the 1940s. Howard Dunington Grubb, one of Canada's foremost early landscape architects, lived briefly at 22 Boswell in 1915.

⁵⁹ RP 349 "Plan of Building Lots in the Village of Yorkville", Peter Gibson, surveyor, 18 April 1874 for John Lawrence and Arthur Crumpton.

3.4.2 Boswell Precinct Boundaries

Boswell is the most enclosed of the streets within the study area. This defined character of the street, which is only one block long, is created by the east end closure of the street at Avenue Road. This closure occurred after a car accident and a personal injury which raised community concern about safety on the street with the increase of traffic on Avenue Road.

The buildings at Bedford Road create an added strong termination of the street at the west end. The buildings which are recommended for inclusion in the Boswell precinct are those buildings facing onto Boswell, excluding the buildings which face primarily onto Avenue Road or onto Bedford. Two additional properties are the inner block properties #38a and 38b. On the north side the properties are 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60, and 62. On the south side the properties are 15, 17, 19, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, and 59. It is recommended that all of these properties be included in the Boswell precinct for the proposed District.

3.4.3 The Buildings on Boswell

Overview

Of the buildings on Boswell, excluding those which face predominantly onto Bedford or Avenue Road, eighteen properties are already listed as heritage properties by the Toronto Historical Board, and over thirty of the buildings predate the turn of the century. The early buildings reflect a range of architectural types, from the early roughcast cottage (a very fine example being Nos. 49 -51) to the red brick developer row buildings which were more characteristic of Tranby. Because of the ad hoc nature of development on Boswell, anomalies occur such as the two inner block residences at Nos. 38a and 38b, and 53 Boswell, a narrow building which was built on the location of a former, partial lane access.

The south side of Boswell has had several more recent buildings starting with a small apartment in 1954-55 at 19 Boswell, followed by the construction of four dwellings in 1968 at 29 - 31 Boswell. The impact of the more recent construction on Boswell is obvious. The historic character of the street is more eroded on Boswell than on any of the other residential streets in the study area. Boswell has had the most recent demolitions within the area which indicates a continuing trend towards replacement of existing buildings.

Issue of Density

Substantial development has already occurred on Boswell, partly because the early buildings on the street tended to be small frame buildings which could be replaced by larger ones. There remains ten smaller, older buildings with existing densities which are 0.6 x coverage or less, and an additional ten buildings which have between 0.6 x and 0.8 x coverage. With recent redevelopments and with the terrace row of historic buildings at 8 to 20 Boswell, the average density on Boswell is higher than that found on Elgin or Lowther. To encourage the retention of the remaining historic buildings on Boswell it is recommended that the Department of Planning and Development report on changes to the zoning by-law which would bring the permitted density into closer conformity with existing developed densities on individual properties.

*Interpreting the Guidelines for
Buildings on Boswell*

The general guidelines for the District (page 8) are appropriate for Boswell with the following comments:

New buildings or additions should recognize the small scale of neighbouring buildings and not over-power them in height, scale or other design feature.

The small scale of some of the buildings on Boswell is what gives character to this street. The original details of the buildings are simple, yet based on a sense of proportion and ratio of window size to building face which should not be altered. On even the smallest lot there is room for a front garden.

*23 Boswell
constructed in 1877
first resident:
Joseph Nichols, carpenter.*



Owners of the earlier frame dwellings on Boswell which have been resided should be encouraged to investigate the original cladding material and to consider its restoration.

Retaining the heritage quality of a semi-detached house means that both neighbours must work together, maintaining and looking after shared elements. An example of a shared element is the front porch at 46-48 Boswell.

*46-48 Boswell
constructed in 1884
first residents:
William and James Isaac,
stonecutters.
(they also occupied an
earlier building on the
property).*



3.4.4 Streetscape Character

Description

Boswell Avenue is the only dead end street in the East Annex district. The street was closed off from Avenue Road and the Avenue Road end was landscaped with trees and shrubs, contained within a raised planter. With the creation of a dead end street all street parking was eliminated. While this may have had a beneficial impact on the amount of noise and traffic on the street, it had a major detrimental impact on the character of the front yard landscape. Many of the properties have front yard parking and two-thirds have paving that is the dominant landscape material in the front yard. In addition, Boswell has the fewest street trees in the residential portion of the district. There are sixteen trees and only six of these are of a mature size. No one species of tree predominates. In appearance, cars tend to overwhelm the streetscape, even though there is no on-street parking and only about 20% of lots have front yard parking. All these factors create a rather harsh street environment.

The building line is more varied on this street with the width between buildings ranging from 18 to 24 metres. However the width of the street allowance is only 1 metre greater than Tranby Avenue. The roof line is also varied with heights and character of outline showing much diversity along the street length. Overhead wiring and street lights line the North sidewalk. The concrete sidewalk is at the curb edge. The curb is mostly depressed to accommodate the driveways and is very discontinuous.

Street Guidelines

All the general guidelines for streetscape (page 12) apply here with the following additional comments:

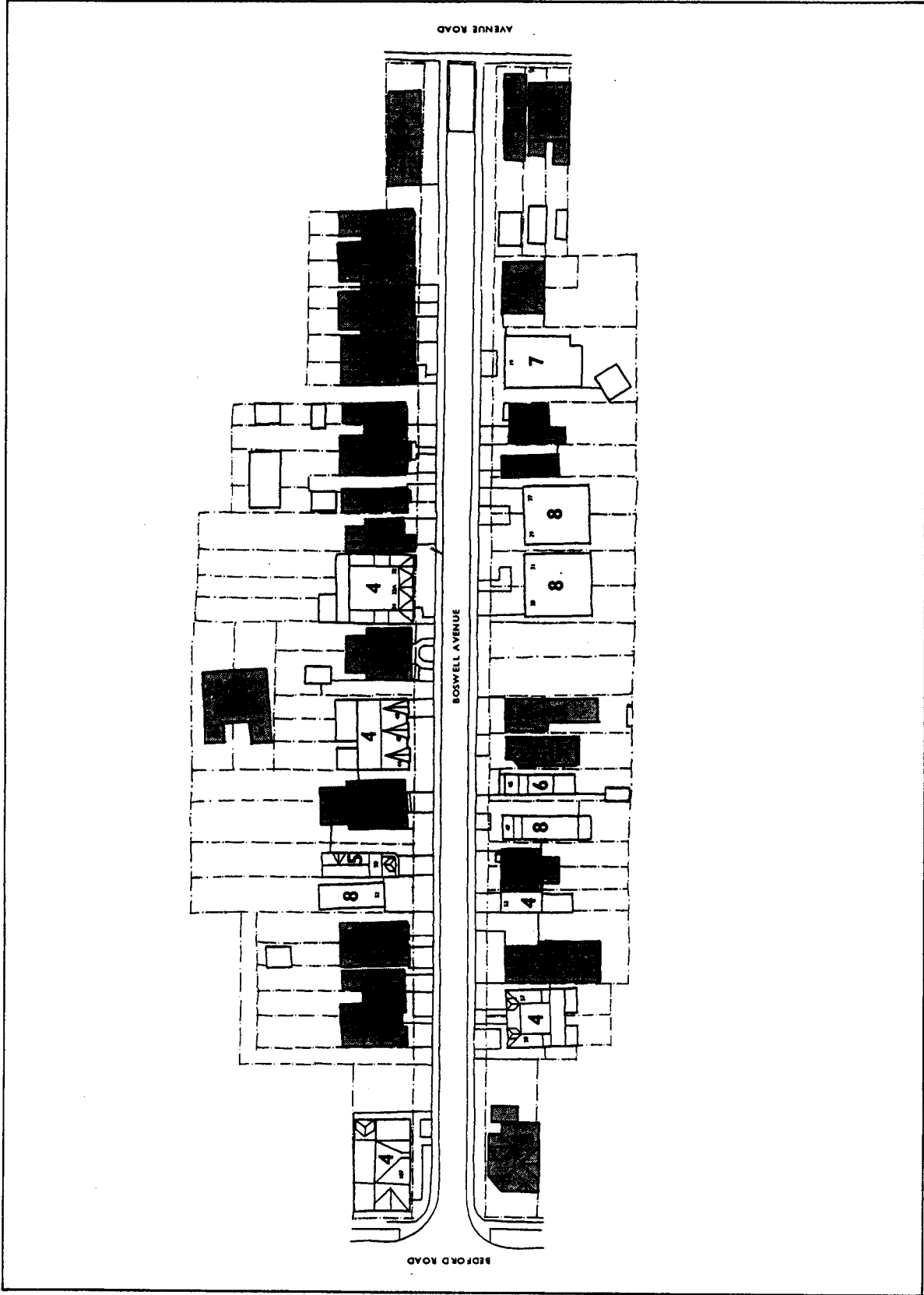
An aggressive tree planting program will be required on Boswell in order to make an impact. It is difficult to find suitable planting locations for the street trees due to the number of driveways and paved yards. Many locations will require some removal of paving for a tree well in order to install a street tree. There are 28 potential locations identified on the following plan. It is recommended that the species planted be a full size, shade or canopy tree. Since no one species of tree dominates the street currently, one single species should be used to achieve consistency. Crimean Linden is recommended.

On Boswell, the tree planting initiative should also be extended to the private front yard garden, by the homeowners, as well. Since there may not be enough suitable locations for tree planting within the street allowance, homeowners are encouraged to plant additional trees, where space permits, in their front garden. In addition, hedge planting is recommended in order to visually screen the front yard parking, as illustrated in the following section.

BOSWELL AVENUE

AGE OF BUILDINGS

NO.	PERIOD OF CONSTRUCTION
	PRE 1883
	1884 TO 1889
	1890 TO 1899
4	1900 TO 1909
5	1910 TO 1919
6	1920 TO 1939
7	1940 TO 1959
8	1960 -



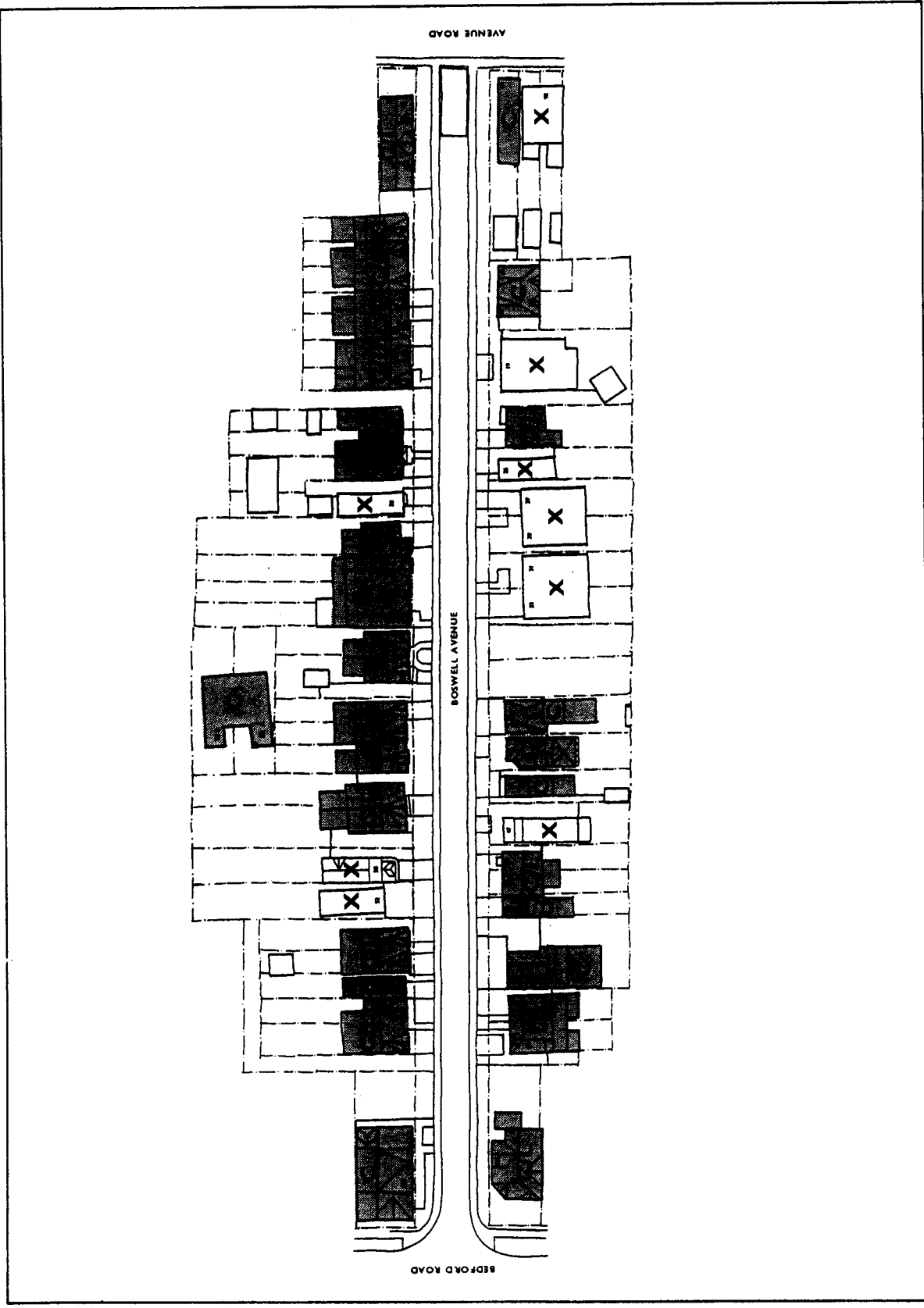
BOSWELL AVENUE

EVALUATION OF HERITAGE BUILDINGS

KEY	DESCRIPTION
	PROPERTIES WHICH ARE INDIVIDUALLY OUTSTANDING AND HAVE NATIONAL OR PROVINCIAL SIGNIFICANCE
B	PROPERTIES WHICH ARE NOTWORTHY FOR THEIR OVERALL QUALITY AND HAVE CITY-WIDE IMPORTANCE
	PROPERTIES WHICH RETAIN MUCH OF THEIR ORIGINAL CHARACTER AND ARE VITAL REMINDERS OF A COMMUNITY'S PAST.
X	PROPERTIES WHICH ARE NOT IN THE ORIGINAL CHARACTER.
/L	PROPERTIES WHICH ARE LISTED BY THE TORONTO HISTORICAL BOARD ON THE INVENTORY OF HERITAGE PROPERTIES.



15 16 10M



BOSWELL AVENUE

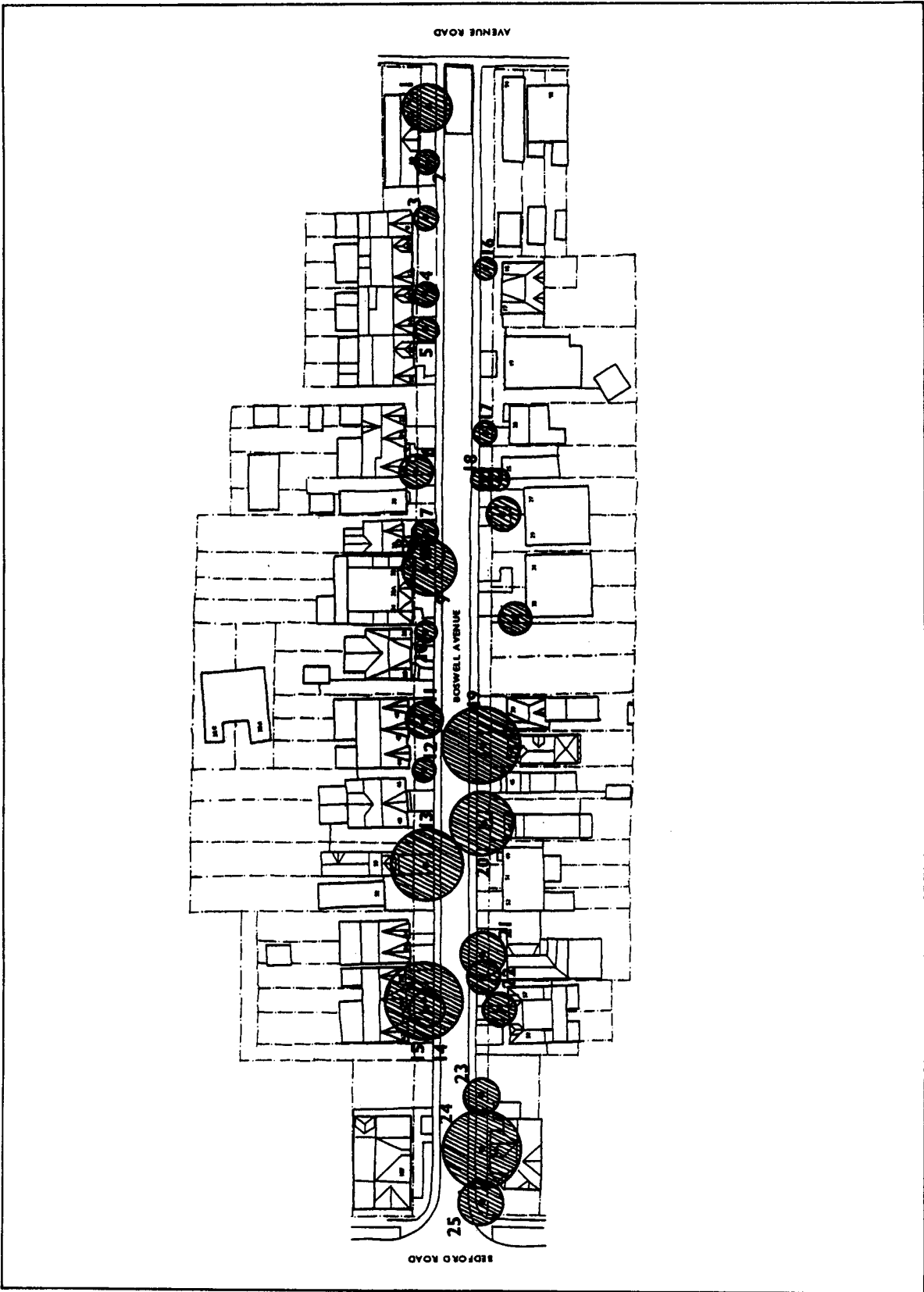
EXISTING STREET TREES

#	TREE NAME	dbh
1		
2	MULBERRY	25
3	RED ASH	10
4	NORWAY MAPLE	5
5	WHITE BIRCH	15
6	BIRCH	15
7	BIRCH	15
8	BIRCH	15
9	LINDEN	31
10	TREE LILAC	4
11	LINDEN	20
12	SCOTS PINE	5
13	HORSECHESNUT	61
14	LINDEN	17
15	SILVER MAPLE	86
16	TREE OF HEAVEN	10
17	NORWAY MAPLE	46
18	3 MOUNTAINASH	7
19	NORWAY MAPLE	76
20	HONEYLOCUST	31
21	HORSECHESNUT	72
22	HORSECHESNUT	54
23	MOUNTAINASH	20
24	SILVER MAPLE	66
25	CHERRY	25

dbh refers to the diameter of the tree trunk at breast height in centimetres.



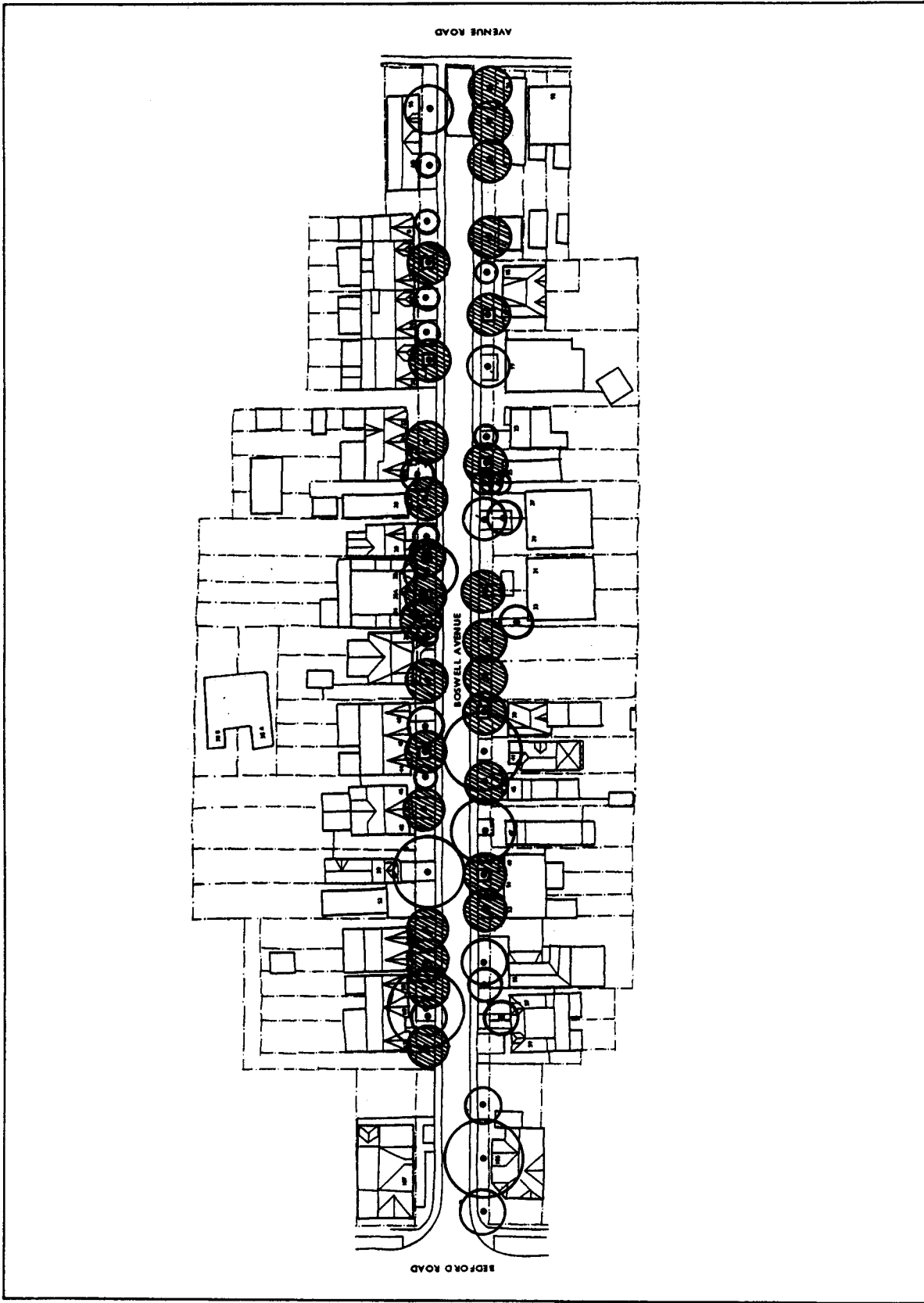
10 15 30M



BOSWELL AVENUE

PROPOSED STREET TREES

FOR BOSWELL AVENUE,
PROPOSED STREET TREES
ARE CRIMEAN LINDEN.



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