

bloor west village



heritage conservation district NOMINATION FORM



30 December 2013



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Bloor West Village is one of Toronto's most popular, walkable, and complete neighbourhoods. Incremental small-scale retail / mixed use activity along Bloor Street West from High Park to the Humber is responsible for the draw of both visitors and residents alike. They experience the whole ecology of an animated village set in its historic cultural landscape. This public commercial promenade continues to connect the unique storied instances of 'main street' and 'village green' it offered historic villages of Swansea and West Toronto. In the fully amalgamated Toronto, the "Village" has taken on an enhanced role as a City-wide destination by capitalizing on its own unique geographic, cultural and built character.

The recent prosperity and vitality of the Bloor West Village retail street can be attributed to the convergence of many favourable circumstances, a number of which will be discussed in this nomination submission. However, success in our market-driven economy can also bring new challenges, as more Torontonians are attracted to settle in the area. The resulting demand for housing, along with unbridled speculation, is beginning to bring physical change to the "Village" that may not be consistent with the narrow, low rise morphology and historical character that has helped the area to be successful.

This Nomination Form was completed by four associations representing adjacent communities who share the desire to maintain the characteristic built form and cultural heritage of Bloor West Village. It is essential to preserve the local context: of an open, pedestrian-friendly "village" commercial and residential streetscape, contrasted and anchored at each end by historically, environmentally significant, and well-defined parklands. It is the combination of the ancient topography and history, natural and built form, and community memory that creates the spirit of this unique series of streetscapes and supports this nomination.

In order to gain insight into the history of Bloor West Village, data was collected from a range of sources. Historical maps, books, City Directories, and interviews were used to create a general overview of the area's history. We wish to specially thank Esther Imm, a talented student at Ryerson University, who came to us through the offices of the Toronto Public Space Initiative, and whose work on this Nomination Form was invaluable. Thanks also to Alex Ling (creator of the BIA), Paula McInerney (BWVIA chairperson), Madeleine McDowell (heritage advocate), the West Junction Historical Society and the Swansea Historical Society for their participation in interviews, and to the City's Heritage Preservation Services staff for assisting in the community's understanding of the HCD value and process.

2.0 NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Organization

A Collaboration of
Bloor West Village Residents Association (BWVRA)
High Park Residents Association inc. (HPRA)
Old Mill Community Association (OMCA)
Swansea Area Residents Association (SARA)

Contact

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A working group, including all surrounding residents' associations, was formed and has met regularly since November, 2012. The members of the Working Group are:

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Date of Submission

30 December 2013

3.0 ABOUT THE NOMINATED DISTRICT

Proposed District Name: Bloor West Village

Current Neighbourhood Name: Bloor West Village

Has the City identified this as a Potential HCD? Yes

Have you raised funds to study the area? If so, how much?

The group has been working diligently with the local Councillor and anticipates Section 37 monies from one or more developments, already approved in the area, will be made available to fund the HCD Study. The group's respective Associations have also raised and spent significant amounts of money to participate in public action, OMB hearings, and negotiations regarding recent individual development applications.

4.0 REASON FOR NOMINATION

4.1 Why do you think the Area should be a Heritage Conservation District?

The policy framework for the protection of our cultural, built, and natural heritage in Toronto is set out in the City's Official Plan, Chapter 3.1.5. "Heritage Resources" which begins with the statement: **"Our heritage buildings, districts, and landscapes create a unique sense of place and a rooted sense of local identity and continuity for Torontonians."**

The City of Toronto's HCD Policy Manual: *Heritage Conservation Districts in Toronto: Procedures, Policies and Terms of Reference*, identifies the criteria for the determination of cultural heritage value within an HCD. It states: **"the district has historical value or associative value because it has direct associations with a theme, event, person, activity, organization or institution that is significant to a community."**

The following discussion will elaborate on how those illusive qualities of "sense of place", "rooted identity" and "historical or associative value" have come to define the Bloor West Village neighbourhoods for those who live both inside and outside their borders. The easy subway access and lively, open and pedestrian-friendly-scale streetscape attract visitors from all over the City. Although located along Bloor Street, which is a major arterial road in Toronto, the corridor manages to retain a charming, family oriented and pedestrian friendly environment. Despite the recent imposition of built form that is inconsistent with the traditional character, Bloor West Village has continued, to date, to foster the atmosphere of a distinct community within the City. This identity is created by numerous important physical and cultural assets that are summarized and then described in detail as follows:

- **A visually well defined and recognizable section of Bloor Street situated on the high ground between two ravines and book-ended East and West by two prominent open space landmarks, namely High Park and the Humber Valley that are the natural and cultural landscape anchors of the Village;**
- **An historic retail "main street" dating from the 1920's - 30's characterized by an eclectic blend of small street level stores with apartments or offices above in a predominantly 2 - 3 storey skyline;**
- **An advantageous East-West street orientation that together with the low building skyline, provides nearly optimum sun exposure and wind protection at most times of the year;**
- **An unusual street geometry featuring extra-wide sidewalks, that achieves a rare balance between space dedicated to pedestrians and vehicles, manageable pedestrian crossings from one side to the other and the aforementioned benefits of a low street wall, to create a highly attractive pedestrian "main street" environment;**
- **A continuing regional destination for retail and cultural events linked to the post-war European settlement of the area;**
- **A strong historic "walk-to" association of the retail strip with the surrounding residential neighbourhoods of the same 1920-1930s era; and**
- **A simple brick-clad "main street" architecture representative of the 1920's - 30's enhanced by a significant stock of period vernacular buildings, many of which have stylistic references to and reinforce the residential architecture in the surrounding neighbourhoods.**



Fig. 1 Bloor and Durie Streets , December 2013

4.1.1 Physical Assets

Topography

A strong sense of place and identity is often linked to how recognizable a neighbourhood is as one arrives at or passes through it. In this respect, Bloor West Village is fortunate to occupy a well defined relatively short stretch of high ground or tableland, with distinct and recognizable edges that are created by prominent ravines both east and west. These circumstances are unique along the entire Bloor Street corridor across Toronto and help to clearly differentiate the Village as a distinct entity.

Street Orientation

The East-West orientation of this section of Bloor Street is one of the key attributes that has contributed to the Village's pedestrian-friendly character and accordingly, its success as a commercial "main street". As is the case with other successful retail strips such as Yorkville and Queen Street in the Beach, Pedestrians along Bloor Street though the Village enjoy a more favourable sun and wind exposure than is typical along most of the North-South commercial streets in the old City of Toronto. This is particularly noticeable at colder times of the year when the sidewalks along Bloor Street can be a welcome refuge from bitter north winds on the North-South residential streets.

Street Geometry and Walkability

More importantly, the Bloor West Village strip benefits from an unusual street geometry that urban design professionals consider to be close to optimum for an urban retail street. In fact, Bloor West Village is often referenced by advocates for the new urbanism as a good example to follow when designing new communities that include “main streets” around the GTA. The key elements are a 27 m. road allowance, extra-wide sidewalks averaging in excess of 4 m. and a typical 6 – 9 m. street wall. These proportions provide an effective balance between the space on and off the roadway. Three traffic lanes and two parking lanes allow adequate space for vehicles to move through or stop along the strip.

Store fronts with a consistent set-back from the street edge have produced a walkable public realm that is well used and respected. Pedestrians feel safe and can move freely in both directions past sidewalk cafes and green grocer’s stands. There is also good visual connectivity and walkability from one side of the street to other due to its relatively narrow width. This encourages a great deal of pedestrian crossovers which also help to enliven the street and balance retail business traffic on both sides. The importance of the 2 -3 storey street wall in this arrangement cannot be over-emphasized. Building facades typically top out at 6 – 9 m., allowing for ample sun penetration most of the year and also minimizing ‘wind tunneling’ that is prevalent with much higher street walls elsewhere.

Land Use and Built Form Pattern

Bloor West Village is defined by its village-like character of low density land use of mixed residential, commercial and public space along the Bloor Street West corridor from Glendonwynne Road in the East to the Humber River in the west. This predominantly commercial core has evolved from the turn of the 20th century. It was mostly in the 1920s and 1930s that the Bloor Street commercial area formed as the transit system developed and the commercial area began to service the related residential community to the north and south of Bloor Street. Bloor West Village is comprised of mostly low density commercial buildings of a two to three storey range mixed in with some modest residential apartments from the first half of the 20th century at five to six storeys.

The main street morphology of this streetscape consists of small lots yielding low rise mixed use properties with retail on the ground level with residential and office units above. The typical shop fronts are narrow glazed masonry openings with separate entrances to ground floor and upper level uses, as well as setbacks and cornice lines creating a uniform streetwall. The predominant building material is brick cladding with stone accents. There is a rhythm and pattern of commercial properties, usually with residential on one floor above that repeats along both the north and south sides of Bloor Street. There are no large block style buildings. This significant character of varied small shops creates a consistent pattern and homogeneous edge to both sides of Bloor Street from one end of the Village to the other. The style, and massing is at a pedestrian scale which is very evident in the number of people that stroll the avenue from one day to the next.

Architecture

A number of important period vernacular buildings are interspersed along Bloor Street, that provide highly recognizable landmarks and in several cases, historical stylistic references to the surrounding residential neighbourhoods (please refer to Appendix D). From the 1920’s and 30’s there are influences from the “Arts and Crafts” period along with the Tudor revival themes that are more closely associated with the “Old Mill” neighbourhood. Several more recent buildings include elements that are associated with the Art Deco and Art Moderne styles.

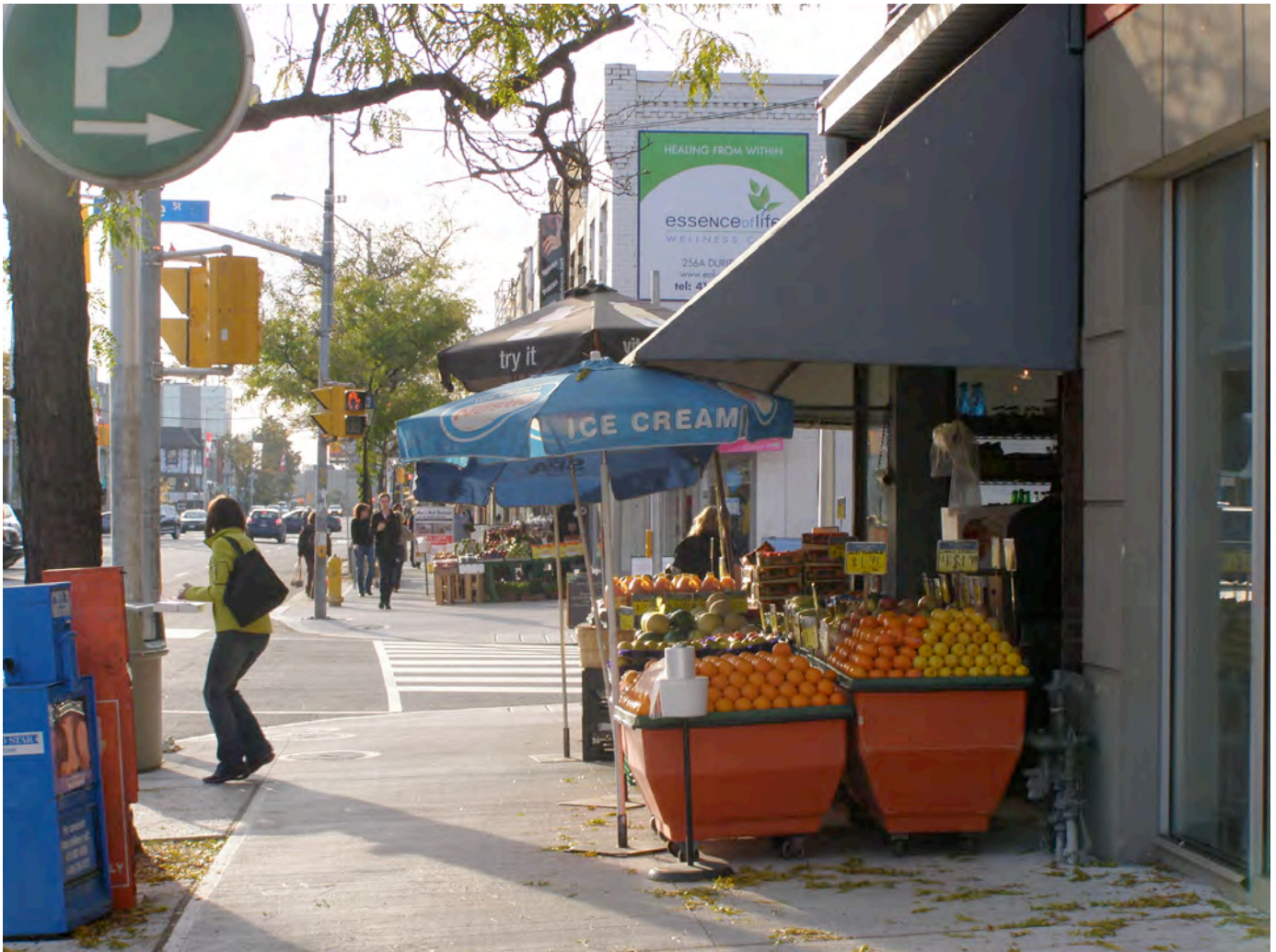


Fig. 2 Autumn in the Village

4.1.2 Cultural Assets

The Bloor West Village BIA

A cohesive and creative business community is also crucial to the continuing vitality of traditional “main streets” everywhere, and Bloor West Village has been no exception. During the 1960’s, a number of merchants in the village collectively decided that a new business model was needed if their “main street” were to compete with strip malls and regional shopping centres such as Yorkdale. Their groundbreaking efforts resulted in landmark legislation enacted in 1970 that created the world’s first BIA (Business Improvement Area in the Bloor West Village). The BWVBIA continues to be celebrated as the birthplace of the BIA concept that has subsequently been repeated in 77 other neighbourhoods in Toronto, elsewhere in Ontario and around the world.

The designated area was along Bloor Street between South Kingsway and Glendonwyne Road. Bloor West Village at the time had 275 merchants within its borders. The financing provided through the special business levy has enabled this BIA to undertake extensive streetscape enhancements, festive lighting and seasonal marketing events that continue to contribute the Village’s distinct sense of place. Prior to the enactment of the B.I.A., there were numerous vacant lots, used car lots, 6 gas stations and

an abandoned streetcar terminal among the retail mix. The success of the BIA has transformed those underdeveloped lots into one of the most vibrant and prosperous retail strips in Toronto.

The Eastern European Influence

In 1948, post WWII, the first wave of Eastern Europeans settled in the area. These were largely displaced peoples from the war, who arrived in the neighbourhood without many possessions. They did however, arrive with employable skills and were drawn into the area because of the employment opportunities in the surrounding neighbourhoods. The northern portion of the West Junction was home to many industries including Ontario's meat packing industry. The area also had many opportunities for building trades such as roofing, plumbing, painting and bricklaying.

The Eastern European influence is still present in many of the bakeries, delis and other businesses in Bloor West Village. In the 1960's there was another wave of immigration of Ukrainians that settled in the area and contributed to the creation of a vibrant commercial strip along Bloor Street. Since 1995, Bloor West Village has hosted the annual Ukrainian Festival in order to showcase Ukrainian culture. It is the largest Ukrainian festival in North America.

Current Demographic trends

Although second and third generation residents of Eastern European descent continue influence the culture of the Village, its residential neighbourhoods have been in transition for a number of years to a more multi-cultural and younger demographic. The area particularly attracts young families that are looking for the walkable "small village within the city" where school buses are largely unnecessary and a car is an option rather than a necessity. Judging from the frequently crowded sidewalks at many times of the year, the Bloor Street retail strip continues to be the principal shopping destination, community focal point, meeting place and all-round catalyst that gives the village its unique identity.

4.1.3 Development Pressures

The current pattern of built form along Bloor Street helps to shape its identity. The relatively consistent combination of building height, massing and setbacks have remained largely intact over the years. However Bloor West Village and its surrounding neighbourhoods are recently experiencing new development pressures. Bloor Street is designated as an Avenue under City Policies, and intensification is encouraged in "growth areas" along these Avenues under the Official Plan, which is consistent with Provincial Policies.

Below is a chart of recent and proposed condominium developments along Bloor Street West. Taking into consideration that almost all of the developments listed were built or proposed in the last 5 years, there has been a significant increase of new development pressures in the area.

DEVELOPER	ADDRESS	PROJECT STAGE	NEW/PRIOR HEIGHT in Storeys	NUMBER OF UNITS
North Drive Developments	2114 Bloor at Kennedy Park Rd.	Proposal	10 / 2	110 units
North Drive Developments	1990 Bloor at Parkview Gdns	City is reviewing application	11 / 3	104 units
Tridel -One Old Mill Sept 2013	2490 Bloor West at Old Mill	Construction	12 / 6 and 2	274 units
Tridel-Two Old Mill September 2014	2500 Bloor West at Old Mill	Construction	10 / 3	216 units
Humber Odeon Cinema	2442 Bloor St. West at Jane St.	Approved , but the owner has not proceeded	10 / 4	n/a
Daniels 2015	1844 Bloor at Oakmount	Construction	8 along Bloor St. and 14 behind / 2.5	407 units
High Park Bayview Grenadier Square	51-77 Quebec Avenue and 42-66 High Park Avenue.	City is reviewing the application.	31 / 3	633 units.
Context Complete 2004	1947-1997 Bloor St. West	Completed	10 / 3	50 units

Fig. 3 Chart showing Development scale inconsistent with Official Plan



Fig. 4 Condominium currently under construction: Bloor Street and Riverview Gardens

There is a concern about the rapid increase of development proposals along the Bloor Street commercial strip. Recently, developers have been seeking to assemble properties along Bloor Street, and develop those properties with little or no regard for the local context. The current proposals and developments under construction are located on the edges of Bloor West Village; however, as development progresses along the corridor, it is expected that the current trend to much higher buildings at the street edge and architecture that is largely at the discretion of the individual developer, will permanently alter and degrade the pedestrian scale and character of the Village.

While it is understood that intensification should occur along Bloor Street, and that the purpose of this nomination is not intended to stop development, it is important to put in place a framework that ensures that all new development will respect the history, physical form and current streetscape of the community. It is clear to the community and the regulators that this mix of tangible and intangible character-defining attributes are highly valued but there remains insufficient regulatory or other support to maintain these attributes in the short or long term. This nomination focuses on certain key built and natural character-defining elements along Bloor Street, while acknowledging that there are many less tangible but important cultural realities that also contribute to the Villages special sense of place and rooted identity.

Appendix A: Proposed Study Area

It is the intention of this Nomination Form to propose the boundary for the Bloor West Village HCD Study Area to be along both sides of Bloor Street between the Bloor Street West bridge over the Humber River, and Keele Street. Bloor Street is the most identifiable area of the neighbourhood and the proposed boundary designates the Humber River and High Park as bookends for the community, as they are two of the City's important natural and cultural heritage features. The proposed East and West boundaries intentionally encompass the full public space as defined by adjacent private properties east of Parkside Drive and west of the Humber River. Within these boundaries exists the original border of the first BIA, as well as the current BIA borders. The borders chosen accentuate the existing pattern of built form and geographically define the Bloor West Village cultural landscape.

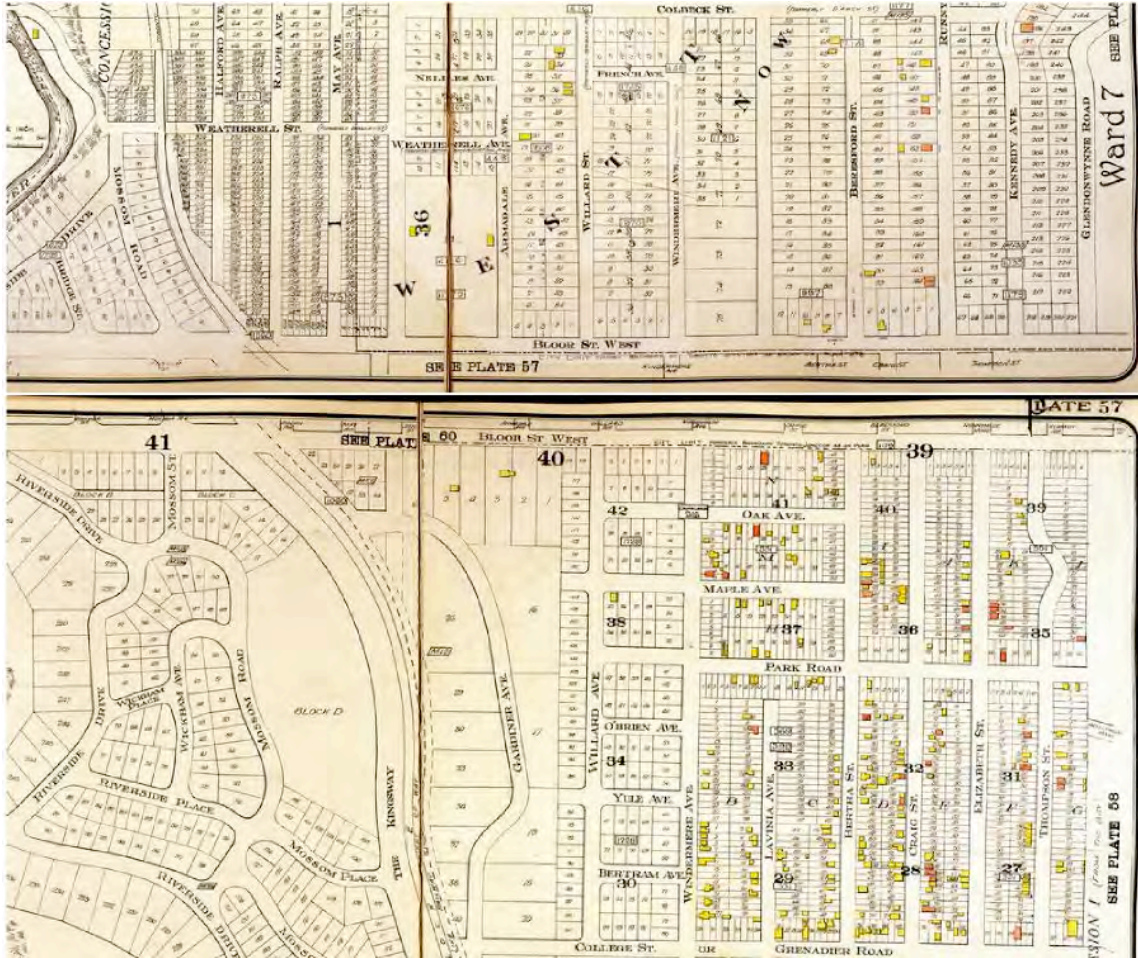


Fig. 5: Map of proposed study area

Appendix B: Historic Maps

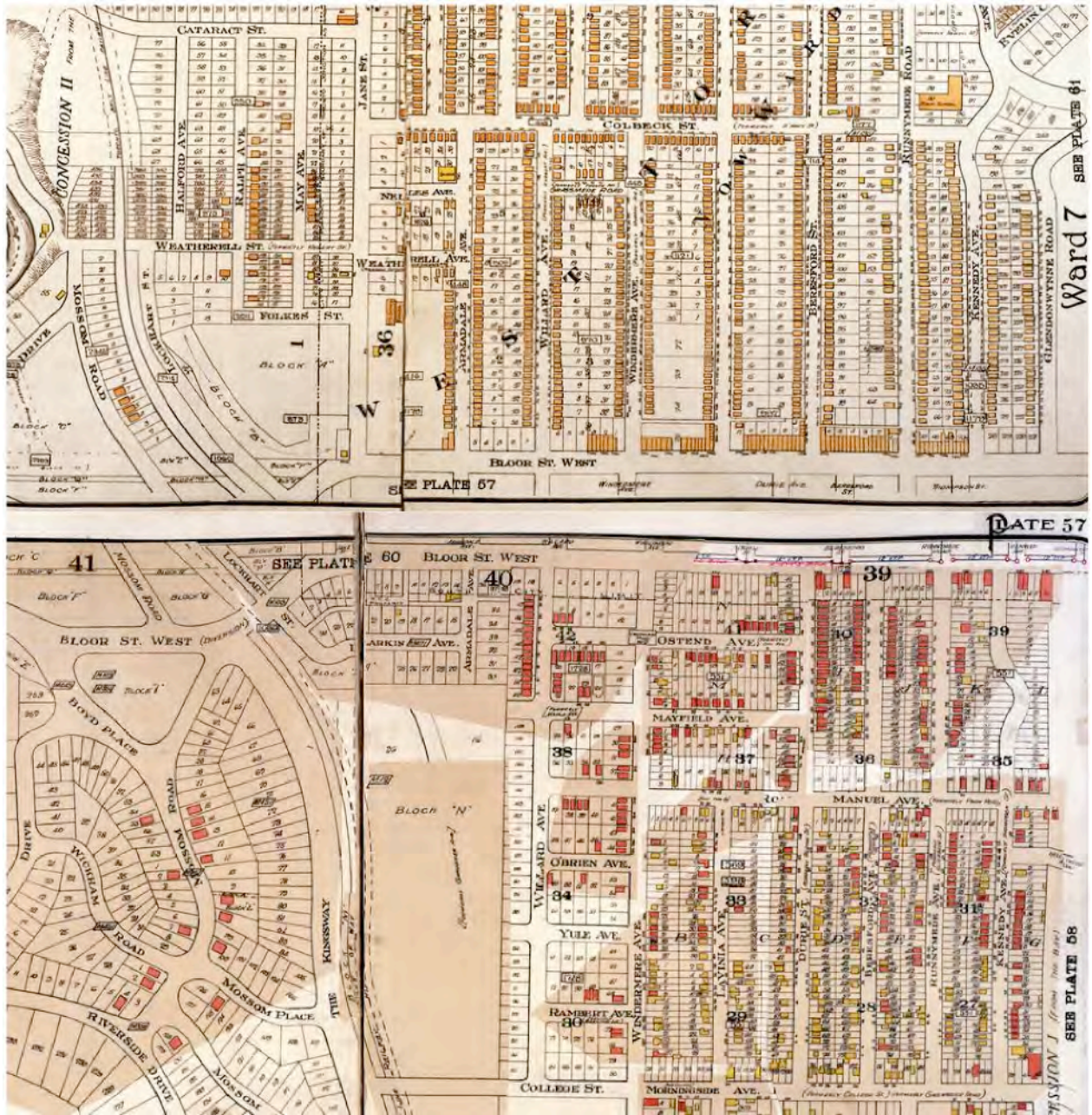
1913 Map from the Kingsway to Glendonwyne Road

Goad's Fire Insurance Plans Plate 6 O and 57 -1913



1924 Map from the Kingsway to Glendonwyne Road

Goad's Fire Insurance Plans Plate A O and 57 -1924



1913 Map from Clendenan Avenue to Indian Road

Goad's Fire Insurance Plans Plate 6 1 and 5 8 -1913



1924 Map from Clendenan Avenue to Indian Road

Goad's Fire Insurance Plans Plate 6 1 and 5 R -1924



Appendix C: Background Information

Introduction:

This appendix is provided as background information in support of the nomination and with the expectation that it will be useful in the completion of the HCD study, should the nomination be accepted.

C.1 General History of the Area

Much of Bloor West Village north of Bloor Street is comprised of the Toronto Estate of Lieutenant Colonel William Smith Durie, who owned the property in the 1850's. Durie was an officer from Gibraltar, who had a successful career in the military including securing the title of 2nd battalion, Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto in 1863. Durie Street was initially a path running through his estate that was named after him.

The area went through an immense change when the Toronto Suburban Railway (TSR) built a railway in the north end of the West Junction in the late 1800's. The residents at the time were mainly of Irish and Anglo-Saxon origin and a large part of the community worked for the railroad. When the railway began operating, landowners began to subdivide their properties for sale. John Scarlett was one of the first to develop his land and he named his estate "Runnymede Estate".

Scarlett was a businessman who ran a number of mills along the Humber River and owned a vast amount of property in the surrounding areas. In 1817 he purchased much of the land that is now the Junction and he was also the first employer there. Runnymede Road was built by him and was originally a road that led to his estate.

In 1909, the City of West Toronto became annexed to the City of Toronto. The City of West Toronto contained parts of what is currently known as Bloor West Village and the Junction. This resulted in the implementation of new city services and fast growth in the area. Most of the buildings that are currently along the commercial strip were built between 1920-1930. The types of businesses that were located in these buildings included, among others, grocery stores, farmers' markets, jewelers, radio stores, candy stores and theatres. The businesses in the area supported the increasing residential development in the area. The residents in the area consisted of skilled trades such as millers, blacksmiths and belt makers.

C.2 Bloor Street

The creation of Bloor Street and the changes it has undergone have had a significant influence on the area. As transportation methods and technologies have changed, Bloor West Village has impressively adapted. Originally Bloor Street was Highway 5, an important road that went from Kingston Road in Toronto's east end to Paris, Ontario. It was named after Joseph Bloor, a brewer in the 19th century, who founded Yorkville in 1830.

The TSR had serviced the north end of the West Junction since the late 1800's, but the southern area along Bloor Street was without service until 1917. In 1912, the City of Toronto wanted to stimulate growth there and passed a series of bylaws instructing companies to build streetcar lines along Bloor Street, but both the Toronto Railway Company (TRC) and TSR were reluctant. In 1914, an arrangement was made with the TRC that the City of Toronto would use its Civic Railways to build the network and the TRC would be responsible for its operation.

At the time Bloor Street West was a narrow dirt road and there were 2 deep ravines, one at Keele Street and one between Quebec Avenue and Runnymede Road. It took three years for the ravines to

be filled in and in 1917 the streetcar line opened. In 1921, under the newly formed Toronto Transit Commission, the route was renamed "Bloor West" and service was extended to Jane Street. The end of the line suburban terminal was located on the south side of the intersection at Jane Street and Bloor Street. The addition of the streetcar route encouraged residential and commercial development that can be seen in the Goad's Fire Insurance Plans in Appendix A: 1913 and Appendix B: 1924. From 1931, connecting TTC bus routes used the Jane Street Loop until the completion of the subway extension in 1968. The Jane Loop terminal also served as an important stop and transfer point by Gray Coach bus lines for bus service into and out of the city to destinations to the west and northwest. Gray Coach Lines was a suburban bus operator founded in 1927 by the Toronto Transportation Commission. From 1927 to the 1930s, Gray Coach acquired numerous and smaller competitors in the Greater Toronto Area. The operator eventually dominated inter-urban bus service by the end of the 1930s. Gray Coach used inter-urban coaches to link Toronto to outlying areas throughout Southern Ontario, such as Owen Sound, London, Kitchener, Guelph, Niagara Falls, Sudbury, North Bay, Barrie and Hamilton.

In 1966 the subway was built adjacent to Bloor Street. The original plan was to build the line below Queen Street, but as the suburbs were rapidly developing, most of the commuting took place along Bloor Street instead of Queen. The TTC pushed to change the plan to have the subway line built along Bloor Street. In 1968, subway service was extended from Keele Street to Islington Avenue along Bloor.

C.3 Business Improvement Area

The shift from streetcars to subways in the 1960's became a cause of concern for the businesses along these streets because it sent customers underground. Exacerbating the issue was the competition of shopping malls that were being developed in the suburbs, such as Cloverdale Mall. Some of the business owners within Bloor West Village tried to solicit donations in order to fund improvements to the area, but only select businesses were willing to contribute. The business owners then went to the City and the Province in order to enact legislation that would require all businesses in the designated area to contribute a levy. The levy was to be collected by the City of Toronto and an elected Board of Management would decide on how the money was to be budgeted.

In 1970, the legislation was enacted and the Bloor West Village Business Improvement Area (BIA) became the world's first BIA. The designated area was along Bloor Street between South Kingsway and Glendonwynne Road. Bloor West Village at the time had 275 merchants within its borders. There were numerous vacant lots, used car lots, 6 gas stations and an abandoned streetcar terminal among the retail mix. The success of the BIA has transformed those underdeveloped lots into a vibrant retail strip in Toronto.

The mandate of a BIA is to "promote and stimulate local business". Some of the levies collected go to streetscape improvement elements such as benches, signs, planters and landscaping elements. The concept of a BIA has grown tremendously since its creation. There are currently 77 BIA's in Toronto and the idea is now used globally. In 2005, a fountain was dedicated to Alex Ling, a leader among the business owners in Bloor West Village to form the BIA. He continues to own the small business, Ling's Importers, in the neighbourhood today.

C.4 Eastern European Influence

In 1948, post WWII, the first wave of Eastern Europeans settled in the area. These were largely displaced peoples from the war, who arrived in the neighbourhood without many possessions. They did however, arrive with employable skills and were drawn into the area because of the employment opportunities in the surrounding neighbourhoods. The northern portion of the West Junction was home to many industries including Ontario's meat packing industry. The area also had many opportunities for building trades such as roofing, plumbing, painting and bricklaying.

The Eastern European influence is still present in many of the bakeries, delis and other businesses in Bloor West Village. In the 1960's there was another wave of immigration of Ukrainians that settled in the area and contributed to the creation of a vibrant commercial strip along Bloor Street. Since 1995, Bloor West Village has hosted the annual Ukrainian Festival in order to showcase Ukrainian culture. It is the largest Ukrainian festival in North America

C.5 The Wet, Dry and Damp Periods

West Toronto, including Bloor West Village was dry between the years of 1904-1997. A majority vote in 1904 required restaurants to stop serving alcohol. The ban was imposed because of drunken rowdiness and violence that were common on the streets in the Junction, prior to the ban. The sale of liquor from provincially run LCBO and Brewers Retail stores was also prohibited. The Christian Temperance Union that was a large force in the area held mass meetings to oppose the sale of alcohol.

The ban held up until the early 1990's when it was discovered that the former border, between West Toronto and the Village of Swansea to the south, was down the middle of Bloor Street. This meant that the ban only applied on the north side of the street. Suddenly licensed restaurants were opening up on the economically underdeveloped south side. The sudden rash of liquor licenses upset the residents and resulted in a control by-law study and as of December 31, 1993, a by-law limiting the size of new restaurants to 200 square meters was in effect. When a restaurateur proposed a 5,900 sq. ft. emporium called the Savannah to be built in the old post office with a building permit that preceded the '93 bylaw, the community jumped to its feet in protest. Political pressure was so high causing City Council to pass a motion asking the Liquor Licensing Board of Ontario not to issue a license. In the face of the public outcry the restaurateur withdrew his proposal and the building permit was eventually rescinded. The success of the by-law in limiting restaurant size is evident in the vibrancy, the variety and the number of thriving restaurants and bars along Bloor Street. It was this success that convinced many in the Junction that lifting the ban on alcohol was a necessary part of that area's revitalization. Multiple referendums in the area failed before the ban was finally lifted in 1997.

C.6 Timeline

- 1670 Jean Baptiste Rousseau became first permanent settler in Swansea
- 1817 John Scarlet purchased land that is now the Junction. Runnymede Road leads to his Estate
- 1838-1855 William Smith Durie owned his Toronto Estate that is the north side of Bloor West Village
- 1838 John Ellis Sr. purchased a lot in Swansea, which is the south side of Bloor Street
- 1873 High Park was established
- 1880s King's Mill reserves are subdivided into lots that would become Swansea
- 1892 The Toronto Suburban Railway (TSR) was built in the Junction north of Bloor stimulating development
- 1904 West Toronto votes to become dry and stop serving alcohol
- 1909 City of West Toronto is annexed to the City of Toronto.
- 1910-1930 most of the residential streets created
- 1920-1930 many of the buildings along the commercial strip were built
- 1929 Swansea Area Ratepayer's Association created
- 1917 The streetcar extended to Runnymede Road on "temporary track" on the north side of the road.
- 1921 The streetcar route was named "Bloor West" and service was extended to Jane Street
- 1927 Runnymede Theatre opened
- 1929 John Lyle designed the Runnymede public library
- 1948 First wave of Eastern Europeans settled in the area post WWII

- 1960's Second wave of Ukrainian Immigration into Bloor West Village
- 1968 The subway was extended from Keele Street to Islington Avenue
- **1970 World's first BIA created**
- 1995 BWV Ukrainian festival established
- 1997 The ban on serving alcohol is lifted
- 2005 A fountain was dedicated to Alex Ling, the founder of the BIA
- 2003 High Park Resident's Association established
- 2004 Bloor West Village Resident's Association created
- 2009 Old Mill Community Association formed.

C.7 Surrounding Context

The commercial strip along Bloor Street in Bloor West Village has always catered to the surrounding community, creating an inter-relationship between the two. The borders of adjacent communities have evolved whereas today the commercial strip has fallen within the borders of various neighbourhoods. Historically, the north side of Bloor Street was within the West Junction and the south side was within Swansea. Currently, the Bloor West Village Business Improvement Area (BIA) falls within the following Toronto neighbourhoods; Lambton Baby Point, High Park-Swansea, Runnymede-Bloor West Village and High Park North. The surrounding neighbourhoods are historically significant on their own and have contributed to the character development of the commercial strip, while continuing to support it.

C.8 The Junction

The neighbourhood today, known as the Junction, has had a variety of different borders and many names. In 1884, it was known as the Village, followed by the Town of West Toronto Junction, then the Town of Toronto Junction, and latterly the City of West Toronto until amalgamated with the City of Toronto in 1909. Originally the north side of Bloor Street fell within the Junction's boundaries.

The area was rural until the 1870's. The railways, which were built in the 1880's, transformed the area into an industrial town by 1889. There were many incentives to do business in the area because land, labour and taxes were cheaper than Toronto. The presence of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) and the Port were additional incentives for industry. This, in turn, attracted immigrants from England, Poland, Italy, Macedonia and Croatia into the area, as well as second generation Irish Catholics from Toronto.

An economic recession between 1893 and 1900 closed factories and industry in the area. However, by the 1920's the West Toronto Junction was once again a manufacturing centre because of the presence of the Grand Trunk Railway and the CPR. During the first half of the 20th century, Dundas Street was a popular regional shopping centre, more so than Bloor West Village. In the 1950's the combination of the CPR closing local repair shops and the extension of the subway along Bloor Street in 1968 led to the Junction to go through a decline. It began to lose commercial business to Bloor Street West.

Much of the current residential development was built between 1910-1930, when the Junction was thriving. Many of the homes were built in the American Craftsman style, featuring wood trim and oak accents. Other architectural styles include Edwardian, Tudor and a homogenous vernacular. Most of these properties are 2 storey buildings surrounded by mature oak and maple trees.

C.9 Swansea

The Village of Swansea is bounded on the west by the Humber River, on the north by Bloor Street, on the east by High Park and on the south by Lake Ontario.

Swansea has a long and rich native history. Jean Baptiste Rousseau became the first permanent settler in 1670, settling on the western half of what is now Swansea. In 1793, Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe ordered that mills be built along the Humber and the forests in the area were to be a mill reserve for the King's sawmills. By the 1880's the mill reserve remained unused and the area was subdivided into park lots and sold.

The lots were laid out on the south side of Bloor Street; the west part of Swansea became lot 41, with the numbers decreasing going east. In 1838, John Ellis Sr. bought lot 38, which is the eastern half of Swansea. He was an early Toronto artist and philanthropist. Adjacent to his lot was the lot of architect John G. Howard, who later donated his estate to the City to create High Park in 1873. By the 1880s, Windermere, the area located south of Bloor Street was the only urbanized area of Swansea. Further south there was a new railway line, which fostered the development of industry in the area. Ontario Bolt Works became a major employer there and operated until 1989.

By 1890, the area became known as Swansea. In 1926, Swansea became incorporated as a village and many upper-middle class homes began to develop in what was originally a "forested village". As such, by 1936 it was the second largest village in Ontario. In 1967 it amalgamated into the City of Toronto.

C.10 High Park

The Ellis Estate in Swansea was adjacent to John G. Howard's Estate that is currently High Park. Howard was Toronto's first surveyor, an architect and an engineer. He built the heritage resource known as Colborne Lodge in 1837. The property was conveyed to the City of Toronto in 1873 under a few conditions. The Howards were allowed to continue to live at Colborne Lodge, no alcohol could ever be served in the park, and the park was to remain free for the use of the citizens of Toronto. In exchange, Howard received a lifetime pension. This natural and cultural heritage significant property has been a green oasis to the City of Toronto for a hundred and forty years.

Lying north of High Park are residential properties. Many of the homes were built in the late 1800s and early 1900's and are similar to the residential homes in the adjacent neighbourhoods. They are mostly 2-3 storey-detached brick homes built in the Edwardian, Tudor-like style and a local vernacular, clad mostly in brick. Unlike the surrounding neighbourhoods, the residential area of High Park also contains high-rise developments built when the subway line was extended in the 1960s. It does not have the same commercial and industrial history as its neighbours; instead the development in the area has been mainly residential.

C.11 Old Mill

The Old Mill was historically a fishing and hunting spot for First Nations Tribes before European pioneers settled in the 1790's. Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe built the King's Mill in 1793 in order to process lumber for the City of Toronto. The King's Mill was Toronto's first industrial building. Unfortunately, after many years as a local ruin of significant heritage importance, it was demolished in the development of a hotel complex.

Robert Home Smith was influential in the planning and development of the area. By 1911, he made a detailed development plan to transform the wilderness of the Humber River Valley into a residential community. He opened the Old Mill Tea Room, on the day World War 1 was declared, in order to promote his subdivisions; however sales were slow because of the war. He continued to be a developer in the neighbourhood throughout the 1920's and 30's creating a distinct community that,

for the most part, remains today.

The proposed boundaries are restricted to the commercial properties directly north and south of Bloor Street. Although the surrounding residential neighborhoods are influential to the development of the retail strip, the neighbourhoods bordering to the north, south, east and west each have historical relevance of their own. It is the unique mix of these residential areas and the residents that have merged to form the history of Bloor West Village and its development. On the north side of Bloor Street lays a sequence of linear parks and parking lots that were built above the subway line and run parallel to Bloor Street. These linear parks and parking lots are also included in the study area because they provide valuable shared, public realm and greenspace for the community and also may be at risk to future development pressures.

C.12 Built Form

The majority of the buildings that are currently along the Bloor Street commercial strip were built near to the 1920's. The Goads Fire Insurance Maps are available for the years 1913 and 1924. It can be seen when comparing Appendix A: 1913 and Appendix B: 1924 that the area was quickly developing between these years. The properties are largely 2-storey structures with narrow building frontages and retail at grade. The types of businesses located in these buildings were ones that served the surrounding community, and have been retained by many of the businesses that exist today.

Appendix C: 1913 and Appendix D: 1924 are of the section of Bloor Street east of Glendonwynne Road. It can be seen that there is significantly less development of properties that have frontage on Bloor Street West. High Park covers much of the area along the south side of Bloor Street, which has influenced a different development pattern than the rest of Bloor West Village. These differences are also evident today as the properties across from the park are higher residential apartments, not built to the property line. The residential units directly north of the park do not have retail use at grade and interrupt the continuous street-wall pattern exhibited along the rest of Bloor Street West. There is a slight retail presence east of Glendonwynne Road, however the character of Bloor Street immediately becomes more residential. These attributes should be taken into consideration when selecting the final HCD boundaries.

C.13 Natural Landscape

Bloor West Village is embedded into the surrounding natural landscape, which contributes to the "small village" atmosphere. The neighbourhood lies between the Humber River and High Park, two of the City's important natural features. Incorporating them within the HCD study will also allow the inclusion of the unique curvature at the western end of Bloor Street that strays from the City's usual grid pattern and follows the original typography of the area.

High Park is Toronto's largest public park and is already listed on the City's Heritage Register. As such, the park is adjacent to the proposed study area. The Humber River is a natural ravine that lies just outside the border of the proposed study area. It is designated as an "Important Natural Feature" in the Official Plan under "prominent and heritage buildings, structures and landscapes" that are subject to view protection policies in Section 3.1.5. It is also recognized as a Canadian Heritage River. View corridors must be protected from both sides of the Bloor Street West Bridge (looking north and south), the Old Mill Bridge (looking north-west and south) and the Dundas Street West Bridge (looking north-west and south-east).

Appendix D: Designated and Listed Properties

D.1 Designated Properties

Runnymede Theatre

2223, 2223A, 2225, 2229, 2231 Bloor Street West

Status: Designated Part IV Jan 29, 1990

The Runnymede Theatre was built in 1927 by Capitol (later Famous Players) and was Canada's first Atmospheric style theatre. It was designed by architect Alfred Chapman, who also designed the ROM and Palais Royale. The theatre ceiling was painted blue and imitated the night sky with flickering lights. The walls were adorned with murals. The theatre originally held 1400 seats and was often referred to as Canada's Beautiful Theatre. The opening night poster can be seen below.



Originally a grand vaudeville theatre, in the 1930's the Runnymede theatre was renovated into a movie theatre that had 1500 seats. In the 70's, it was used as a BINGO hall and in the 80's it was converted back into a 2-screen theatre. On February 28, 1999 the theatre closed for good. Soon after, Chapters bookstore bought the building and restored it to its original 1920's interior. There are a few original seats that line the walls as decoration and an original projector on the balcony that is still aimed at the stage. The original cashier's booth remains intact at the street level entrance. It is recommended that this property retain a Part IV status should the area become an HCD.



D.2 Listed Properties

Runnymede Public Library

2178 Bloor Street West

Status: Listed Dec, 10, 1975

In 1930, architect John Lyle designed the Runnymede Public Library. Lyle is also the architect behind Union Station and the Royal Alexandra Theatre. The library is known for its distinctly Canadian Style, combining Georgian, French and early Quebec styles with Canadian motifs. Canadian themes such as totem poles, arrow heads, native plants and animals adorned the building. The library is constructed of red and yellow Credit Valley stone. In 2005, an extension to the building was designed by Toronto architect Bruce Stratton.



The Chess House

1873 Bloor Street West

The Chess House is located within High Park, near the Bloor Street entrance. Its current use is one of three year round public washrooms in High Park. The building has a Regency style to it, a one storey structure with symmetrical shed dormers and extended roofline which protects the front verandah and centre entrance.

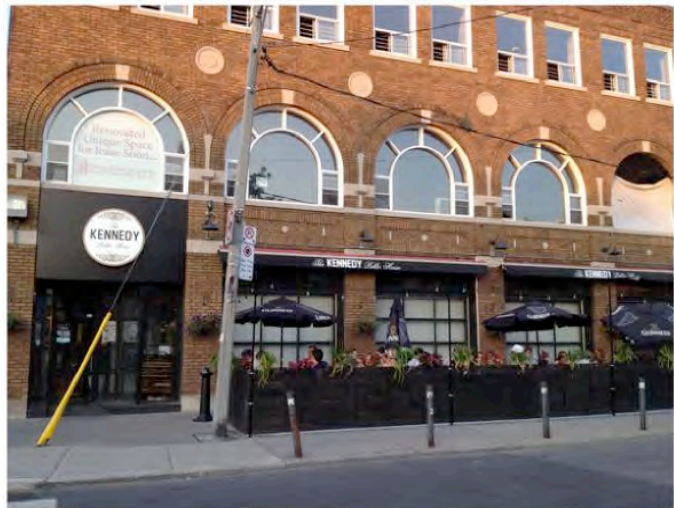


D.3 Proposed Properties to be added to the City's Heritage Register (prior to the HCD status)

The following properties are recommended for listing on the City's Heritage Register. They exhibit and retain the built heritage characteristics and greatly contribute to its overall character, scale and sense of place.

The Kennedy Public House 2199 Bloor Street West

The building that now houses the Kennedy Public House was built in 1930. John McMurren was the original owner who opened C & F Motor Ltd., a motor sales room. In 1933 it was also a farmers market. This three storey structure is distinct within the Village with its second storey arched windows and fenestration pattern.



Rental Apartment Building 2010 Bloor Street West

This three storey apartment complex in the Neo-Gothic style has a symmetry and context that provides a strong sense of place. The front entrance within a strong sandstone arch clearly marks the point of entry and arrival on the front façade. The brick detailing and clay tile accents are added architectural features of the era.



Dr. Generosity
2197 Bloor Street West

The property was built in 1923. In the Tudor Revival style It was owned by the Yorke Brothers, William and Grant Yorke. They were undertakers that ran the funeral home. Its reference to the Tudor Revival style is distinct within the commercial core.



Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce
2219 Bloor Street West

Owned by the National Trust, the bank was built in 1923. The bank, like most of its era, is prominently located on the corner providing equal attention to the south and west facades.



Bloor West Terrace Apartments
2373 Bloor Street West

Built in 1927 in the typical late Arts and Crafts style found along many of the area's residential streets of the same period, and originally named the Earlesville Apartments. The first owners were Realty Enterprises Ltd. and the building manager was Fanny Shankman.



Armada Apartments

254 Armadale and 2190 Bloor Street West

Owned by Carrie and James Westlake and built in 1923. This three storey brick structure anchors the commercial block at the intersection of Bloor West and Armadale. The coining and window headers are distinct features.



Village Gate Apartments

2001 Bloor Street West

Large 4 storey residential building built in 1925. The property is a classic example of a post war apartment. The “U” shape structure provides for a central courtyard and grand entrance to the building, also providing windows and natural light to the many apartments in each wing of the structure. The window treatment and balconies provide interest and relief to the brick façade.



Runnymede Arms

117 Runnymede Road

The Runnymede Arms is a four storey residential apartment with entrances on both Runnymede Road and Kennedy Avenue.



A Dark Horse
2401 Bloor Street West

Built in 1930, one of the original uses was a fireworks company called JW Hands Fireworks Co. Ltd.

The president was Thomas W Hand.

The one storey red brick structure, with Prominent Stone window headers and sills contribute to curb appeal.



Turner and Porter
2333 Bloor Street West

The residential house was built in 1930 and the original owners were Willmart and Marjory Sparks. This residential form incorporating Georgian and Arts and Crafts influences is the only remaining single family style residential building along Bloor Street.



Toronto Dominion Bank
2440 Bloor Street West

The Bank of Toronto owned the property and built this branch in 1939.

The Bank of Toronto building is typical of its era and is very representative of bank architecture of the period, highly visible on a prominent corner. The building is of a light coloured brick reminiscent of stone, providing a solid and stately form. One's money was sure to be safe in such a building. The fenestration provides a systematic rhythm and charm while the numerous windows provided the sunlight into the office space within



St. Olave's Anglican Church 360
Windermere Avenue

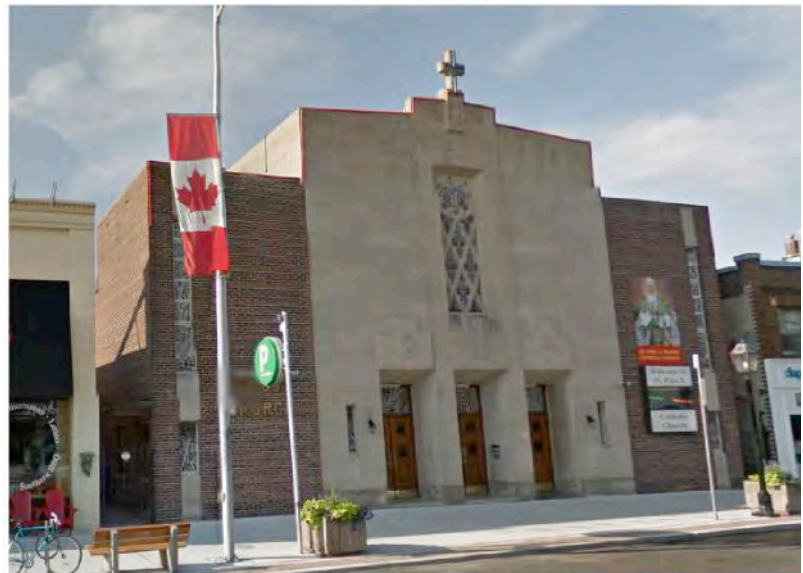
In 1886, the neighbourhood's Anglican community first met for worship in the boardroom at Bolt Works (eventually the Swansea Works, of the Steel Company of Canada). In 1927 the construction of the current church began and the congregation held services in the basement. In 1937, the church that presently stands was completed and opened for worship. St. Olave's is located outside the proposed HCD boundaries but lies immediately adjacent to those boundaries.



St. Pius X Church
2305 Bloor Street West

The parish was established in 1951, and was the first to be named after Pope Pius X. The parish did not have a building of its own so the congregation used the Canadian Legion Hall at 72 Durie Street for Sunday Masses. The church was eventually built in 1954 on the large lot of a farm house belonging to the O'Brien family. It was the last house left on this stretch of Bloor Street.

St. Pius X Church is a landmark on the Bloor West commercial core. The building is distinct in its presence with a reference to the Modernist style, set apart from the commercial buildings on either side and across the street.



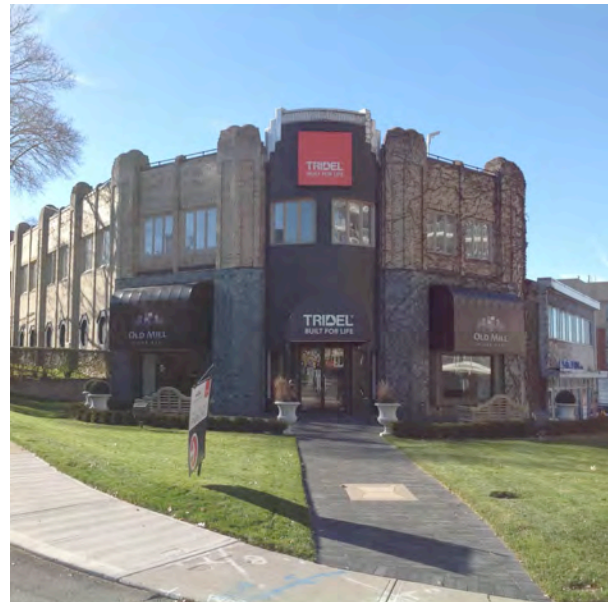
The Campbell Apartments
2407 Bloor Street W.

The Campbell Apartments are a classic influence from the 1920 period. There are Edwardian and Neo-Gothic elements in the building with the projected bays, symmetry, stone accents and architectural details in the quoining and centre windows. This is one of the finer apartment structures along the Bloor West commercial core.



2487 Bloor Street W.

This building, a corner landmark, has such strong facades on all three sides giving it a presence at this particular intersection. The Art Deco influence provides detailed work in the rhythm of columns that provide a strong horizontal element. The building speaks to an era of architectural detail which is no longer seen in more modern expressions in the area.



2326 Bloor Street W.

The building addresses the corner with its rounded edge and main entrance at street level. The overhanging eave and decorative supports give definition to the roofline and reinforce the rounded feature.



2454 Bloor Street W.

This building is one of the better Art Moderne influenced structures along the Bloor West Village strip. The rounded curve brings the striated second storey around the corner and continues down the side elevation, giving presence to both the front and side facades.



308 South Kingsway

This multi residential structure, in a Tudor Revival style, has been designed to bring a unity and strong residential context just on the edge of a commercial corridor. It is a transition area where the multi-family residential leads toward single family closer to the Humber River and immediate neighbourhood.



Appendix E: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

(additional letters to follow under separate cover)

- E.1 Swansea Historical Society**
- E.2 Bloor West Village Residents' Association**
- E.3 Swansea Area Ratepayers Association**
- E.4 Old Mill Community Association (OMCA)**
- E.5 High Park Residents Association Inc. (HPRA)**



SWANSEA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

95 Lavinia Avenue Box 102, Toronto, Ontario, M6S 3H9

May 14, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Bloor West Village Heritage Conservation District

I am writing on behalf of the Swansea Historical Society, located in the former Village of Swansea, now part of the City of Toronto. Since 1985, our organization has worked to preserve, document, and communicate the heritage of Swansea and the surrounding neighbourhoods.

We believe that the Bloor West Village neighbourhood is a unique area within the city, with an impressive history and many features that are worthy of preservation. We fully support the current initiative to designate the Bloor West Village area as a Heritage Conservation District.

We would be happy to provide any additional information that may be

required. Yours sincerely,

Dr. Robert Roden

President,

Swansea Historical Society

December 23, 2013
Heritage Preservation Services
City Hall, 17th Floor, East Tower
100 Queen St. West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: Nomination of Bloor West Village Commercial Core for consideration as a heritage conservation district in accordance with Part V, Ontario Heritage Act

The Bloor West Village Residents Association (BWVRA) fully supports the nomination of the Bloor West Village Commercial Core for consideration as a heritage conservation district, a defined geographic area recognized for its distinct character.

The BWVRA has been working for several years in a dialogue with its members to identify and eventually officially recognize the area's heritage resources. We have met with the local Preservation Panel and discussed individual properties we felt worthy of listing on the City's Heritage Register with a second, but not less important goal, to seek a heritage conservation district status for the commercial corridor.

The BWVRA, in addition to working with its membership and supporters, has also been working closely with three local resident associations; Swansea Area Ratepayers Association, Old Mill Community Association and the High Park Residents' Association. In full collaboration we have put forth a nomination for the HCD status which will serve all four resident associations' interests and those of the many residents we represent.

We believe the Bloor West Village commercial corridor to be worthy of a heritage conservation district status for the following reasons:

- The commercial core has a main street history that spans about 100 years
- There is a consistency and distinct character to the built form that is reminiscent of the early to mid-twentieth century
- The historical association with the Bloor West Village BIA which has been recognized as the first of its kind in the world and therefore has served as a model for about the last 40 years
- The commercial corridor has a distinct context, anchored at each end by significant natural heritage features, High Park to the east and the Humber River to the west
- There is a distinct character to the commercial core expressed in its;
 - average building height of two to three storeys
 - continuity of built form and style of the early to mid-twentieth century
 - uniform set-back to the street
 - mixed uses of commercial, retail, multi-unit residential, as well as cultural and natural heritage resources
 - Building services to the rear accessed lanes
 - Articulation of narrow building frontages with identifiable front entrances oriented to the street
 - Consistent rhythm of building width and height, which in relation to the street provides for an ideal public realm
- Pedestrian friendly public realm with a vibrant street level activity found year round

The commercial core of Bloor West Village has served as the model for new development in the

creation of main streets. This area has the exemplary streetscape with its building storey height, distance from curb to building front, rhythm, frequency and articulation, all of which are now being copied in suburban development. All of these aforementioned elements define the cultural landscape known as the Bloor West Village of Bloor Street West. It is the village character of a main street which the residents are looking to protect and preserve.

We ask that you please review the HCD nomination that has been prepared and if you have any questions or require clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely

Dianne Bradley, President

Bloor West Village Residents Association

**SWANSEA AREA RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION
SWANSEA AREA RATEPAYERS' GROUP**

Swansea Town Hall
95 Lavinia Avenue, Box 103
Toronto, M6S 3H9
Telephone: 416-769-1891

Nick Singh, President

June 5, 2013

To the Bloor West Village HCD Nomination Committee,

The Swansea Area Ratepayers wish to express their strong support for the Heritage Conservation District application for the Bloor West Village.

We believe that development should occur in Swansea and the Bloor West area in a way that supports the many interests that have a stake in seeing the area remain a vital and viable partner in our community. The area has, over time, developed a character that blends its history with change so that it provides both a home for local residents to enjoy and a platform for businesses to prosper. We believe that it is important that development must continue but without spoiling the unique features that have come to be the underpinning of the success of the area. That is why we encourage the development of criteria that will help to maintain some of the features of the area as it moves through the various phases of development that lie ahead. The area currently features low height and density buildings which provide that "Village" feel for a pedestrian friendly streetscape that is accessible to all.

We believe that the establishment of an HCD for the area will provide all stakeholders with an opportunity to preserve the features that they feel are important and create a framework for the continued success of the Bloor West Village.

Sincerely,

Nick Singh
President, SARA

**Old Mill Community Association (OMCA)
% 23 Old Mill Drive
Toronto, On M6S 4J8**

December 26, 2013

This correspondence is directed to City of Toronto Heritage Preservation Services, and the Working Group of the Bloor West Village Residents Associations.

The Old Mill Community Association expresses its commitment to conserving the heritage and local character of the Old Mill, Swansea, Bloor West Village and High Park areas, from the Humber River to Keele Street, and its strong support for the Heritage Conservation District application for that area.

We at the OMCA believe that changes to this successful community need to be made in a way that respects the unique local context - its history, geography and current design. As other Residents' Associations have commented: this area has, over more than 100 years, developed a character that blends history with change so that it provides a highly desirable residential community as well as a platform for successful businesses. It has accomplished this - and has become a destination for urban planners seeking to duplicate its success - by maintaining an open streetscape featuring low rise, low density developments. The OMCA looks for the development of appropriate criteria during the HCD process that will maintain the desirable features of our community as it meets the increasing challenge of for-profit development.

The establishment of an HCD for the area will provide all local stakeholders with an opportunity to take part in the development of appropriate criteria for its preservation and to provide a framework for appropriate development.

Sincerely,

Timothy M. Lowman
President, OMCA

High Park Residents Association inc.

December 27, 2013

Heritage Preservation Services
City of Toronto, City Hall, 17th Floor, East Tower
100 Queen St. West, Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE: Nomination of Bloor West Village main street for consideration as a heritage conservation district in accordance with Part V, Ontario Heritage Act

On behalf of the members of High Park Residents Association Inc. I wish to express our strong support of for the attached Heritage Conservation District (HCD) nomination. Bloor West Village and adjacent parks form a cherished part of our home and life. It's wealth of cultural value and urban design lessons are well documented and heralded by the 2005 Urban Design Study, a recent speech by Toronto's Chief Planner, and the Transects of the Congress for the New Urbanism.

In meetings and other communications, particularly over the last two years, members of HPRA and our sister associations expressed frustration and deep concern regarding inappropriate development and other destructive effects of speculation in our neighbourhood. One such effect reported by HPRA members is unprecedented increase in rents following recent local construction of new developments that exceed the width, height, or density intended by the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law.

Besides height and width of buildings permitted, the resulting business attracted or retained in our village main street, along with their size, type, diversity, quality, and related rental costs are all influenced by Planning, City Council, and Ontario Municipal Board. The actions of regulators in approving, acquiescing to, or encouraging non-contributing forms of development have significant impact on the factors affecting the character, quality, and sustainability of our neighbourhoods and their valued cultural landscapes.

We believe the Heritage Conservation District Plan is the best way for local citizens, businesses, and government to work together to identify, maintain, and extend the valued character and on-going success of our village. The current expensive, reactive, adversarial response to individual applications is unsustainable and ineffective. Immediate proactive planning is necessary to protect this significant cultural asset of the City of Toronto and it's internationally recognized brand.

Sincerely,

Marcel Killin
Acting Chair marcel@highparkra.org

executive@highparkra.org

<http://highparkra.org>

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Goads Fire Insurance Plan. Plate 57 . Toronto: Charles Goad, 1 9 1 3 . Goads Fire

Insurance Plan. Plate 57 . Toronto: Charles Goad, 1 9 2 4 . Goads Fire Insurance

Plan. Plate 60 . Toronto: Charles Goad, 1 9 1 3 . Goads Fire Insurance Plan. Plate 60

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