

Phase III: Clemow Estate Preliminary Heritage Study



Clemow Estate (Phase III) Heritage Conservation District Study

Preliminary Analysis and Recommendations

1.0 Introduction

The area around Central Park in the Glebe was initially highlighted for its potential heritage value in 2004. Since then, the Clemow Estate East Heritage Conservation District was designated in 2011 and the Clemow Estate Heritage Conservation District Study Phase II is currently underway. The last remaining area for consideration is the area around Central Park, west of Bank Street.

City Council approved the initial study of this area on October 27, 2004 through the following motion:

Approve that this process be followed by Phase II, which would include Linden Terrace and Patterson Creek to the Canal, and by Phase III including Central Park and buildings adjacent to it west of Bank Street.

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the study area, its historic and architectural context and to provide recommendations for next steps.

2.0 Description of Study Area

Central Park West is bounded by Lyon Street and Bank Street as well as Powell Avenue, Renfrew Avenue, Chamberlain Avenue and Rosebery Avenue. There are 26 properties adjacent to the park.

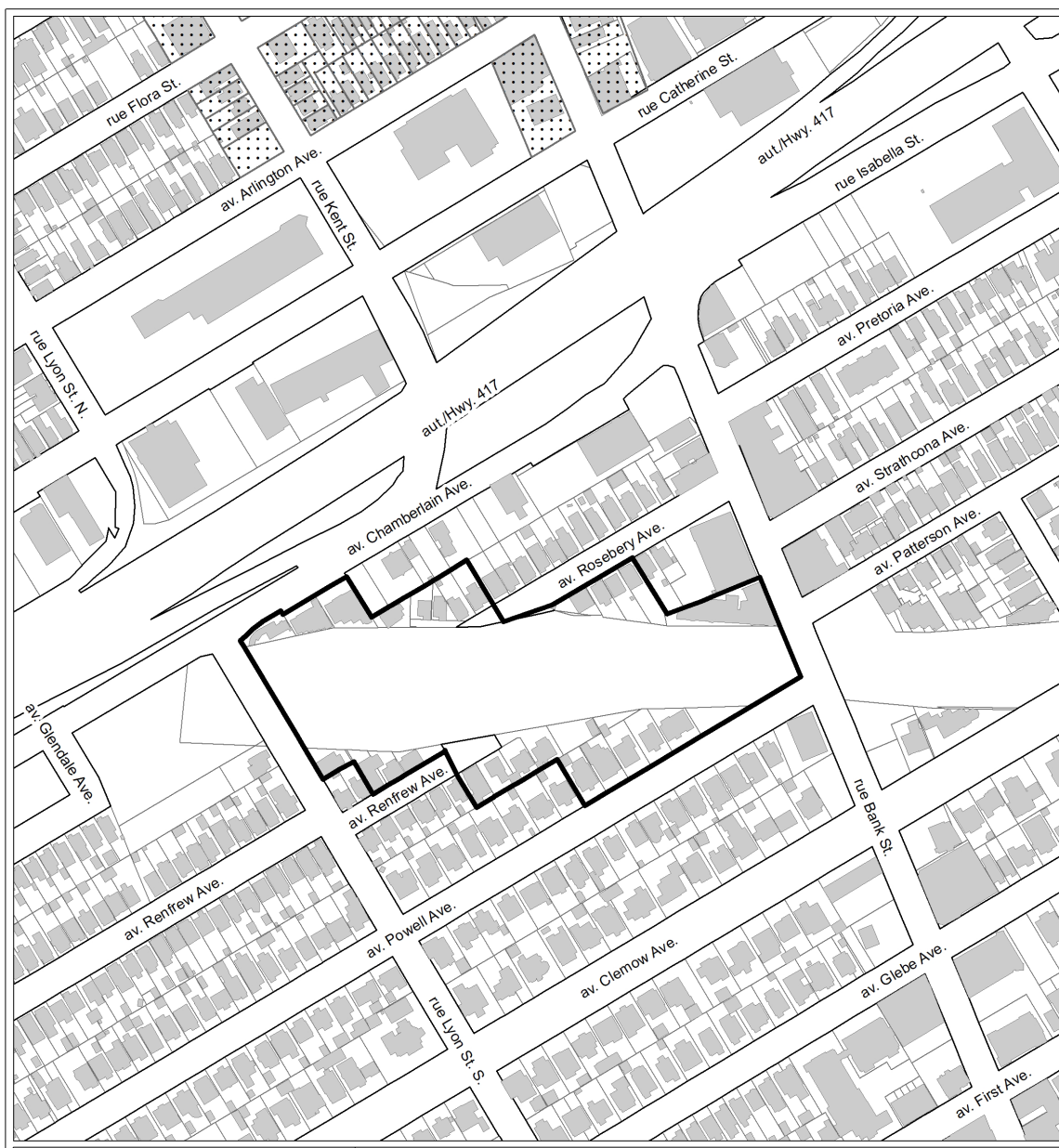


FIGURE 1: MAP OF THE STUDY AREA

3.0 Historic Background

(Extract from the Clemow Estate East HCD Study and Plan)

Following the glebe land grant in 1836 to the Church of Scotland, the land was subdivided and leased until 1875.¹ By 1878, the glebe land east of the canal was sold and the rest of the land to the west of the canal became known as The Glebe. Subsequently, the church subdivided the glebe land into fourteen lots of ten acres each in anticipation of rising land rents with the influx of civil servants following Ottawa's capital designation in 1857. Unfortunately, land prices didn't rise until almost thirty years later following the arrival of the streetcar and the automobile. During the mid-to-late 1800s, the glebe was not valuable land and there was little farming. Instead, the land was mostly used for market gardens to supply produce to the urban dwellers.²

The first permanent road built through the Glebe was Bank Street in 1865. Up until 1865, Bank Street only reached as far as McLeod Street. However, demand for real estate and interest moved Bank Street south into rural Nepean Township and therefore into the Glebe. Construction began in 1865 by William Powell's Ottawa and Gloucester Macadamized Road Company as a toll road from McLeod Street to Farmers' Bridge, now Billings Bridge and the Billings Estate. At the time, William Powell was a member of the provincial parliament and by the 1870s, owned the south half of Lot G, from Patterson to Glebe Avenue. Mutchmor, who owned the southern portion of the Glebe, donated part of his land for the Bank Street construction. By 1866, Bank Street crossed Patterson Creek and the canal on wooden bridges, which remained in use until 1912.³ Bank Street was completed in 1868 with a horse-drawn bus service to the Ottawa Agricultural Society's fairground, today Lansdowne Park. Despite being the only road in the Glebe, the extension of Bank Street was the primary force behind the urban development and growth of the neighbourhood.

With the expansion of Bank Street, commercial buildings began to appear in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Important commercial buildings of this period included the Grove Hotel, built by William Powell in 1873 in the present day Clemow Estate East area. The stone hotel became a residence in 1891 but was demolished in 1907. By the late 1870s, a depression hit and commercial and residential development in the Glebe slowed until the 1890s, when it was stimulated by three key events.

By the end of the 19th century the Glebe was still a rural community. In 1888, there were only 43 dwellings in the area.⁴ An open field stretched between Patterson

¹ Leaning, John. *The Story of the Glebe*. M.O.M. Printing; October 1999.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

Avenue, the creek, Bank and Elgin Streets, and most of the area west of Bronson was second-growth forest. However, the arrival of electric streetcars in 1891, the subdivision of the lands east of Bank Street and the construction of the Parkways and park system had a great impact on the pace of urbanization in the Glebe at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

Subdivision of Land

During an economic boom around the turn of the century, one of the first developments of the glebe lands occurred when the land was subdivided into residential lots. Houses were first built on the east side of Bank Street between Glebe and Fifth Avenues, and then continued south of Fifth Avenue on Mutchmor's land.

Streetcars in Ottawa

In the late 19th century, the development of the electric streetcar had a significant impact on the shape of Ottawa and was one of the catalysts for the development of the Glebe.

In 1889, the idea of expanding the street car lines to service a larger portion of the city as well as harnessing the new technology of electricity led to the development of the Ottawa Electric Street Railway(OESR). In 1890 the City of Ottawa received a proposal from W.H. Howland, former Mayor of Toronto and president of the Imperial Bank, to build five electric rail lines and have them in operation by 1892. City Council agreed with Howland's proposal but after months of Howland not being able to fulfill his obligations to provide a guarantee, City Council narrowly (12-10 vote) awarded the contract to local businessmen, Thomas Ahearn and Warren Soper.⁵ Soper and Ahearn were well known in Ottawa for providing electricity for streetlights from the Ottawa Electric Company power station on Victoria Island, near Chaudière Falls.⁶

The agreed-upon route extended from the intersection of Rideau Street and Wurtemburg Street west along Rideau Street onto Wellington to O'Connor; south on O'Connor to Albert; west on Albert to Broad and north to the CPR station. The other main lines were to go south on Elgin from Wellington to Catherine; south on Bank from Albert to 100 feet beyond the gate of Lansdowne Park and north from Rideau on either Dalhousie or Cumberland.⁷

The arrival of the electric streetcar along Bank Street to Lansdowne Park contributed significantly to the development of the Glebe in the early 20th century. The streetcar line

⁵ Ibid

⁶ OC Transpo. "History of Public Transit in Ottawa." http://www.octranspo.com/about_main_696.htm

⁷ McKeown, Bill. Ottawa's Streetcars. Railfare Books: Pickering. 2004

provided easy access to downtown and allowed the middle class to live in larger homes on bigger lots.

Development of Central Park

Central Park was one of the first district parks created by the Ottawa Improvement Commission (OIC) in the early 20th Century. A large component of Frederick Todd's 1903 report to the OIC was a proposed regional parks system comprised of regional parks, suburban parks and district parks. Todd's plan echoed the City Beautiful planning theory popular in the early 20th century. The plan called for the development of parks and open spaces for their "mental, physical and moral" benefits⁸. Consistent with the theory of the time, Todd felt that access to a variety of open spaces (from large natural parks or reserves to city parks and squares) would be beneficial not only to the citizens of Ottawa but it would be befitting of a capital city.⁹ These late Victorian ideas about parks were echoed in Todd's report,

*"...large areas of untamed forest which can be set aside forever for the enjoyment of people who wish to get away for a day from the crowded city, who wish to wander in the woods where the wildest birds are at home, and where nature's mossy carpet is still luxuriant and unworn?"*¹⁰

Development of "Patterson Creek Park" was part of Todd's 1903 plan. While Todd was not employed to implement his plan in the years following his report, the Patterson Creek area was acquired by the OIC and Central Park was ultimately completed in 1912 becoming one of the first completed parks in Todd's plan. Instead of following Todd's concept of maintaining the natural beauty of Patterson Creek, however, the OIC walled in the creek, filled it in west of O'Connor Street and planted Central Park with formal flowerbeds and pathways. The OIC faced serious criticism for its implementation of Todd's 1903 Plan. In comments regarding Central Park, Ottawa architect and OIC Commissioner Colbourne Meredith noted that "everything had been done as it should not be done."¹¹

End of excerpt.

⁸ Todd, Frederick.. "Preliminary Report to the Ottawa Improvement Commission." August 1903.

⁹ Gordon, David L.A. "Frederick G. Todd and the Origins of the Park System in Canada's Capital. Journal of Planning History. 2002;1;29-57

¹⁰ Todd, Frederick.. "Preliminary Report to the Ottawa Improvement Commission." August 1903.

¹¹ Meredith, Colbourne. Annotated Version of Frederick Todd's "Preliminary Report to the Ottawa Improvement Commission." 1913



FIGURE 3: PATTERSON'S CREEK, SOURCE: WILLIAM JAMES TOPLEY FONDS, LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, PA-013015



FIGURE 2: CENTRAL PARK LOOKING EAST FROM BANK STREET, SOURCE: WILLIAM JAMES TOPLEY FONDS, LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, PA-010130

3.1 Development of the lands west of Bank Street

In the 19th century there were three main property owners in the Glebe: the Presbyterian church, William Powell/Adelaide Clemow and the Hickey family. The study area includes a small portion of the Powell estate (properties along Powell Avenue) and the remainder of the properties adjacent to Central Park were part of Concession C, Lot G, owned by members of the Hickey family.

The Hickey family were among the earliest Roman Catholic settlers in the Glebe, migrating to the area from Tipperary, Ireland in the mid 19th century.¹² Thomas Hickey willed his land south of Stewarton to his brother John Hickey in 1834. John Hickey who had been a carpenter in Ireland, gardened on his land in the 19th century. He willed his estate to his wife Jane and their five sons after his death in 1863. According to the 1879 Carleton County Atlas, James, John, Thomas and William Hickey owned Concession C, Lot G. Present day Bronson, Bank, Powell and Isabella bounded the family's estate.¹³

In the mid-19th century, development beyond the urban core began. Beginning with Rochesterville, just south of Lebreton Flats, development also moved south from Upper Town through the Stewart property and south on Bank Street as market gardeners began to subdivide their land for residential development.¹⁴

The earliest section of the Hickey estate to be subdivided was the area that included Roseberry (now Rosebery) Avenue. Registered Plan 71572 shows the subdivision of Rosebery Avenue, Chamberlain Avenue and lots fronting on Bank Street. The plan was registered in May 1904. The earliest houses on Rosebery Avenue appear on the 1912 Fire Insurance Plan indicating that they were built sometime between 1904 and 1912.

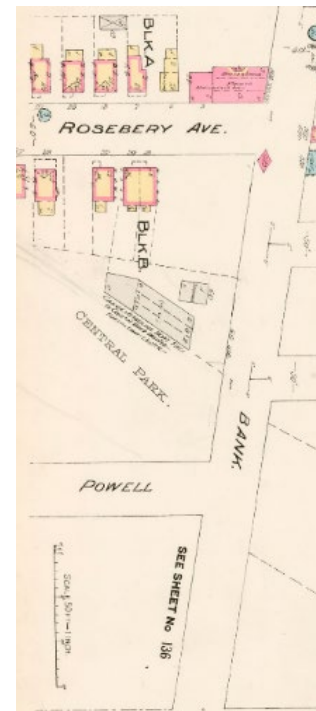


FIGURE 4: 1922 FIRE INSURANCE PLAN SHOWING ROSEBERY AVENUE (SOURCE: GOAD'S FIP 1922)

¹² <http://www.bytown.net/glebe.htm>

¹³ Carleton County Atlas, 1879

¹⁴ Elliot, Bruce. The City Beyond. Nepean, 1991.

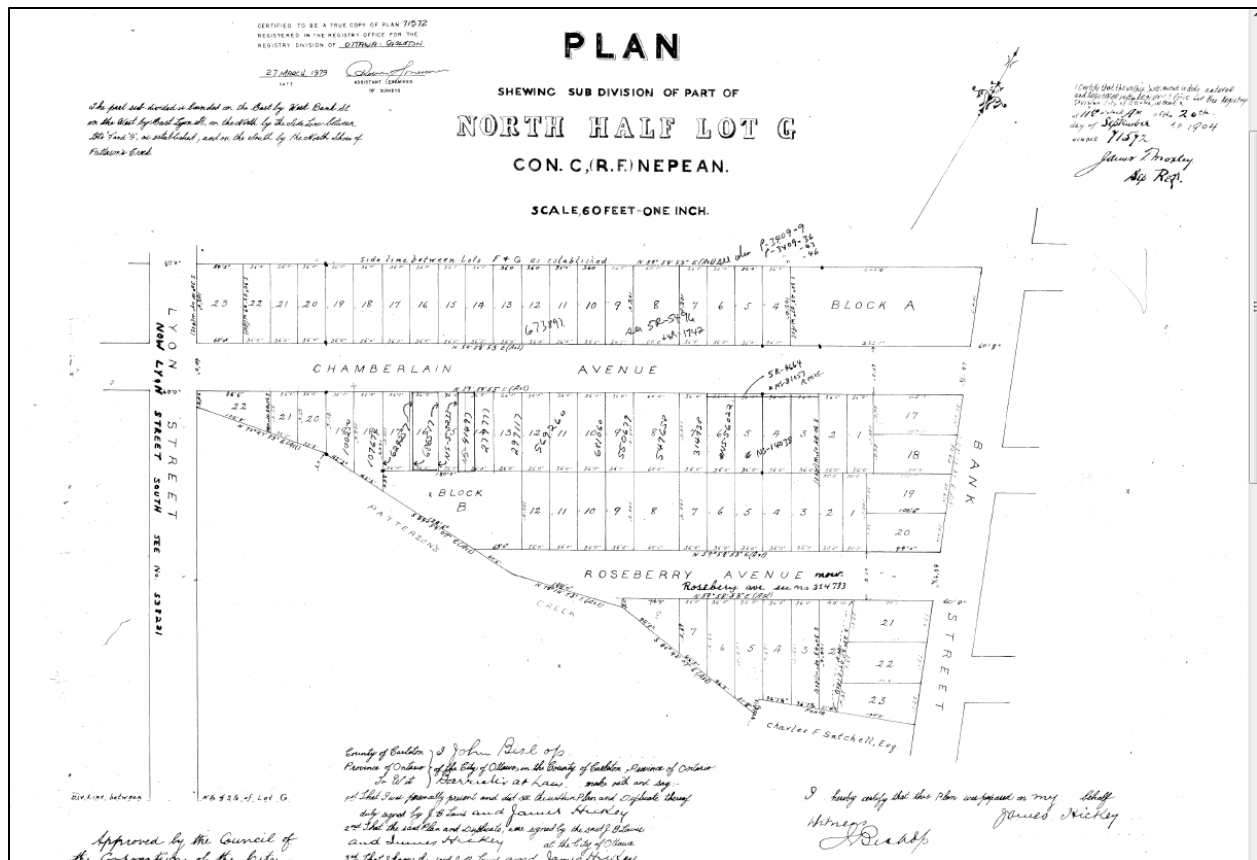
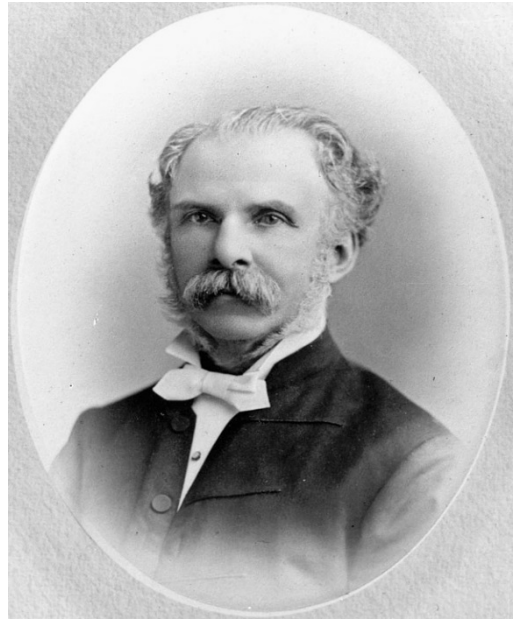


FIGURE 5: REGISTERED PLAN 71572, SOURCE: CITY OF OTTAWA

The second part of the study area to be subdivided included the properties fronting onto Powell Avenue, which formed part of William Powell's estate and were included in his larger, Clemora Park development. Plan M19 was registered in 1909 and included the lots on Powell Avenue backing onto Central Park.

William Powell inherited land in the area from his father, William F. Powell Senior¹⁵ who was a Conservative member of the Legislative Assembly from 1854-1866. He owned much of the area north of the glebe lands and east of Bank Street upon his death in 1889. His son, William Powell was also well known in Ottawa at the end of the 19th century, with his most prominent role as the chief of the Ottawa Police. Appointed to the position in 1896, Powell dramatically changed the way the force operated by instituting better documentation methods, establishing bicycle patrols and a patrol wagon, requiring officers to wear presentable uniforms, and participate in an exercise program. Powell's reforms influenced the management of the police force until the Second World War.¹⁶

Henrietta Clemow and William Powell formed Clemow-Powell Realty (later Clemora Realty) to develop the large area of land they owned at the north end of the Glebe. The Ottawa Improvement Commission drained their land in the process of developing the Driveways and the area was ready for development in the early part of the 20th century.¹⁷ Powell and Clemow subdivided the lands beginning in 1906 with the subdivision of the land between Patterson Avenue and Glebe Avenue (then Carling Avenue) west of Bank Street to create "Clemora Park" (see Figure 10).

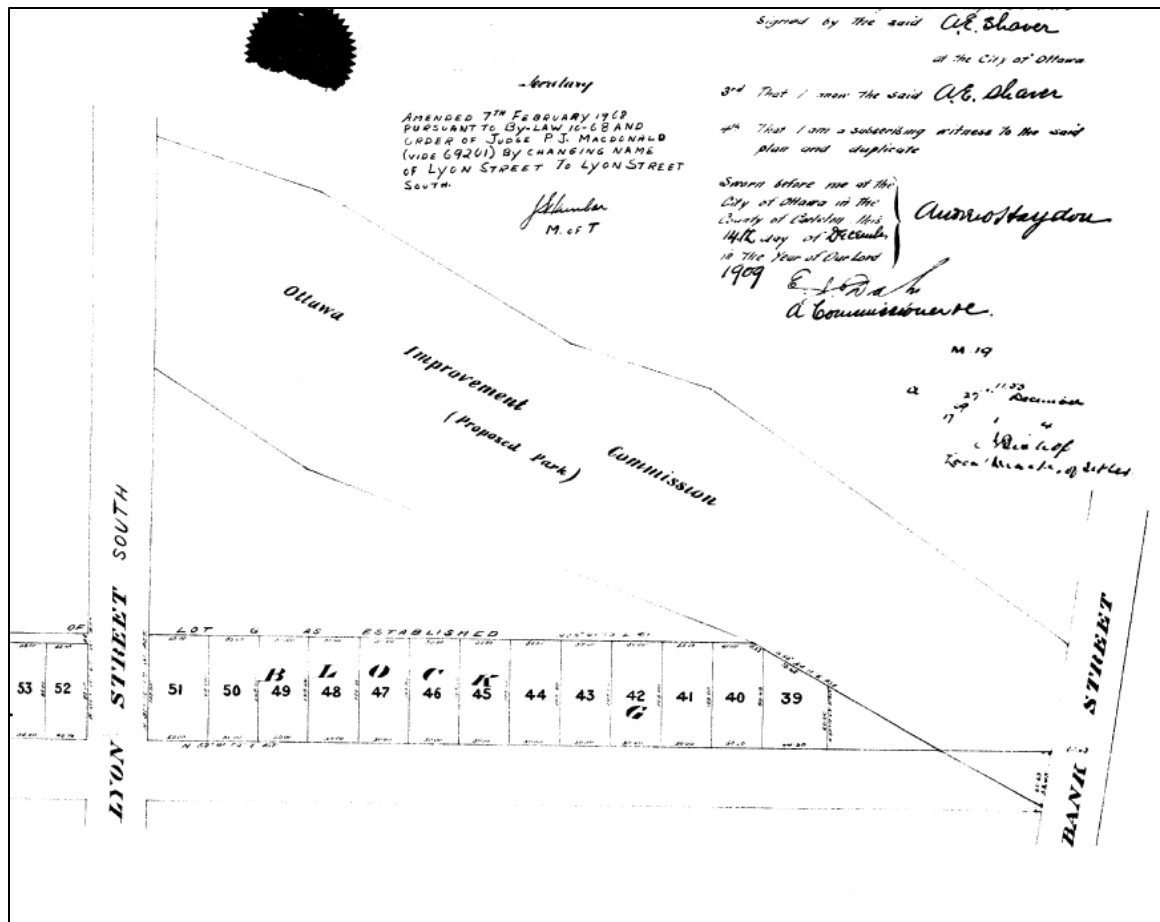


**FIGURE 6: WILLIAM POWELL,
SOURCE: WILLIAM JAMES TOPLEY
FONDS, LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
CANADA, MIKAN NO. 3240295**

¹⁵ William F. Powell was not typically known as "Senior" but for the purposes of clarity in this document, "Senior" will be used to distinguish father from son.

¹⁶ Taylor, John. *Ottawa: An Illustrated History*. James Lorimer & Company, 1986.

¹⁷ Ibid.



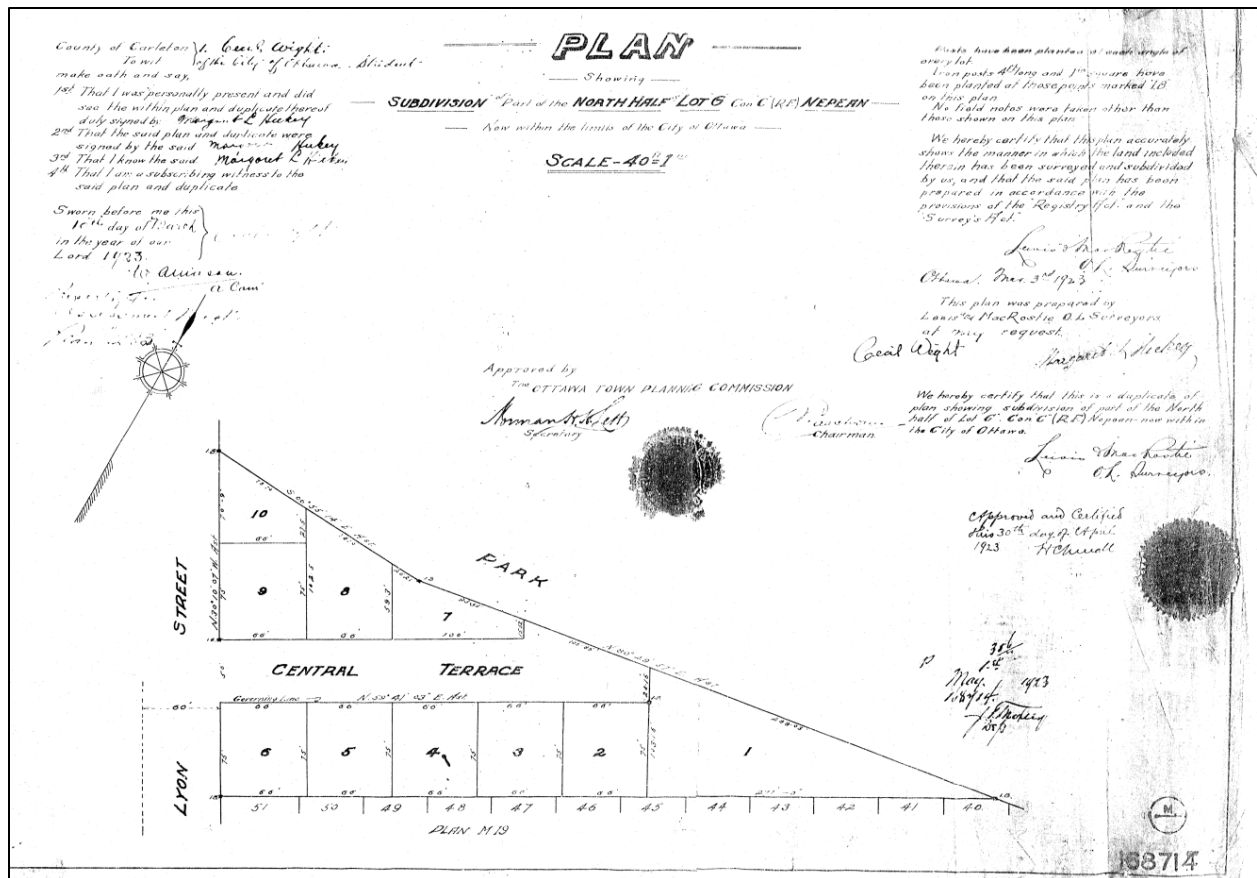


FIGURE 8: REGISTERED PLAN 168714, SOURCE: CITY OF OTTAWA

4.0 Architectural Analysis

As development of this area took place incrementally through the first three decades of the 20th century, the architectural styles and designs of the buildings are varied. The area is an example of the speculative development that characterized the Glebe in the early 20th century after the arrival of the electric streetcar line along Bank Street to Lansdowne in 1891.

Rosebery Avenue

The houses along Rosebery Avenue facing and backing onto Central Park are typical of early 20th century development found throughout the Glebe and many other Ottawa neighbourhoods. Most of the houses are simple buildings clad in red brick. There are a mix of front-gable, hip and gambrel roofs with two-storey porches and decorative details in the gable or gambrel end. Many of the houses feature simple stone details including sills and lintels and limestone foundations.



FIGURE 9: 28 ROSEBERY AVENUE (L) AND 34 ROSEBERY AVENUE (R)

Chamberlain Avenue

There are three properties backing onto the park on Chamberlain Avenue. All three buildings are recent buildings with no cultural heritage value.

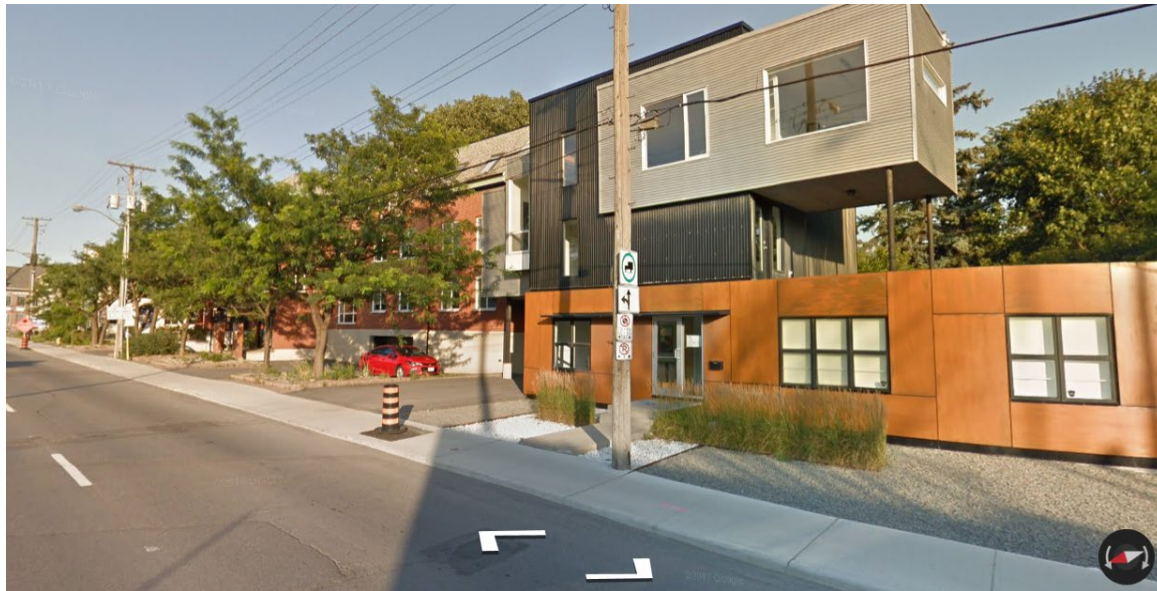


FIGURE 10: LOOKING EAST ALONG CHAMBERLAIN AVENUE (SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS)

612 Bank Street

The most distinctive building in the study area is the 1928 Ambassador Court Apartments designed by Werner Noffke for real estate developer David Epstein. Designed to take advantage of views to Central Park, it is a four storey, brick apartment building featuring stone stringcourses, sills and voussoirs. Most apartments overlooked the park and included modern amenities such as electric fireplaces.¹⁸ The north façade of the building is accessible from the park with no division between the public and private space. The building features elements of the Art Deco style including the geometric brick panels flanking the front entrance, decorative brick courses providing relief on the front façade and the recessed entrance bay with its two storey arched entrance with transom surrounded with limestone.

¹⁸ Ricketts, Shannon. Werner Ernst Noffke: Ottawa's Architect. Heritage Ottawa 2013.



**FIGURES 11-13:
AMBASSADOR COURT
APARTMENTS, 612
BANK STREET**



Powell Avenue

There are five houses along Powell Avenue that back onto Central Park. These houses are larger and grander than the others adjacent to this section of Central Park and are typical of the houses constructed along Clemow and Powell Avenues west of Bank Street in the early 20th Century as part of William Powell's Clemora Park development. All five houses on Powell are large red brick houses with Edwardian classicist details decorative details including half timbering, overhanging eaves with brackets and stone detailing around window and door surrounds.



FIGURE 12: 41 POWELL AVENUE (L) AND 33 POWELL AVENUE (R)

Renfrew Avenue

The houses adjacent to Central Park on Renfrew Avenue are representative of a later period of development in the Glebe. Constructed beginning after the registration of the subdivision in 1923, the seven houses on Renfrew Avenue adjacent to the park are mostly red brick and five of them are foursquare houses with a shed dormer.



FIGURE 13: 4 RENFREW AVENUE

625 Lyon Street

There is one house located on Lyon Avenue facing Central Park. The house has been proposed for demolition and redevelopment with town houses.



FIGURE 14: 625 LYON STREET

5.0 Contextual Analysis

Central Park and the buildings surrounding it form a cultural landscape at the north end of the Glebe. The interface between the public spaces of Central Park and the private properties is very different east and west of Bank Street. East of Bank Street, Central Park and Patterson's Creek are the heart of the neighbourhood and are the principal organizing feature. The properties backing onto the park east of Bank Street in the Clemow Estate East HCD feature a gradual transition to the park and there are few hard landscaping features delineating public and private space.

West of Bank Street, in the study area, there is a larger grade change between the park and the surrounding streets, which requires several stone and concrete retaining walls along the north and south sides of the park. The border of the park is also delineated by mature trees around the perimeter. Furthermore, the area developed incrementally with the development along Rosebery Avenue predating the completion of the park. As a result, the relationship between the public and private space is not as cohesive as that found east of Bank Street. The grade change on the north side of the park is not as dramatic and many of the yards feature fences between the park and the private spaces.



**FIGURE 15: GRADE CHANGE FROM
CENTRAL PARK TO RENFREW
AVENUE**



FIGURE 16: INTERFACE BETWEEN CENTRAL PARK AND BUILDINGS ON ROSEBERY AVENUE



FIGURE 17: STONE RETAINING WALL AND STAIRS TO RENFREW AVENUE

The exception to this is the interface between the Ambassador Court Apartments at 612 Bank Street and the park. The building, designed by Noffke (who was also responsible for many of the houses east of Bank Street) takes advantage of its location on the park and there is no division between the public and private space.



FIGURE 18: SOUTH FACADE OF AMBASSADOR COURT FROM CENTRAL PARK

This section of Central Park has also been altered since its original development in the early 20th century, the photos below show the original layout of the park with its flower beds and border of Lombardy poplars. The next set of photos illustrate the current conditions, showing the pathways and flower beds still evident east of Bank Street, however in this section, only the exterior circulation pathway remains. Despite this, Central Park as a whole remains an important cultural landscape in the Glebe and should be conserved.



FIGURE 19: CENTRAL PARK WEST SHOWING AMBASSADOR COURT, C. 1929. SOURCE: LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA, MIKAN NO. 5026414



FIGURE 20: CENTRAL PARK 1928, SOURCE: CITY OF OTTAWA



FIGURE 21: CENTRAL PARK WEST, 2017, SOURCE: CITY OF OTTAWA



FIGURE 22: CENTRAL PARK WEST 2018

6.0 Recommendations

Preliminary research and analysis has revealed that the study area does not represent a cohesive cultural landscape; it was built incrementally over a 30 year period, was not planned, and does not feature a group of buildings in a cohesive, unique or representative architectural style. The buildings in the study area are a mix of types typical of the early 20th century with varying levels of architectural quality and integrity. One building has recently been demolished, one building is proposed for redevelopment and several buildings are modern with no cultural heritage value. Furthermore, unlike the Clemow Estate East HCD the park is not the organizing feature of the study area. While Central Park is significant in its own right, the linkages between the park and the surrounding properties are weak.

Given the findings of this preliminary study, the following actions are recommended:

1. Do not proceed with a full Heritage Conservation District study of the area. This preliminary study does not support further study of the area or its designation as a Heritage Conservation District.
2. Initiate the process to designate Ambassador Court, 612 Bank Street under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act for its architectural and contextual values. The building was designed by W.E. Noffke, a significant Ottawa architect, exhibits elements of the Art Deco style and has strong linkages to Central Park.
3. Initiate the process to designate Central Park under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act to protect its character as a green oasis for passive recreation in the neighbourhood and for its association with the early work of the Ottawa Improvement Commission and Frederick G. Todd. The park is integral to the neighbourhood fabric and is contextually significant to the Glebe as a whole.
4. Recommend the following properties for listing on the Heritage Register under Section 27.1 of the Ontario Heritage Act as identified through the City's Heritage Inventory Project:
 - a. 29 Powell Avenue
 - b. 33 Powell Avenue
 - c. 41 Powell Avenue
 - d. 4 Renfrew Avenue

Sources

Gordon, David L.A. "Frederick G. Todd and the Origins of the Park System in Canada's Capital. Journal of Planning History. 2002;1;29-57

Leaning, John. *The Story of the Glebe*. M.O.M. Printing: October 1999

McKeown, Bill. *Ottawa's Streetcars*. Railfare Books: Pickering. 2004

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