

# Wychwood Park

Wychwood Park sits on a height of land that was once the Lake Iroquois shore. The source for Taddle Creek lies to the north and provides the water

for the pond found in the centre of the Park. Today, Taddle Creek continues under Davenport Road at the base of the escarpment and flows like an underground snake towards the Gooderham and Worts site and into Lake Ontario. Access to this little known natural area of Toronto is by two entrances one at the

south, where a gate prevents through traffic, and the other entrance at the north end, off Tyrell Avenue, which provides the regular vehicular entrance and exit. A pedestrian entrance is found between 77 and 81 Alcina Avenue.

Wychwood Park was founded by Marmaduke Matthews and Alexander Jardine in the third quarter of the 19th century. In 1874, Matthews, a landscape painter, built the first house in the Park (6 Wychwood Park) which he named "Wychwood," after Wychwood Forest near his home in England. The second home in Wychwood Park, "Braemore," was built by Jardine a few years later (No. 22). When the Park was formally established in 1891, the deed provided building standards and restrictions on use. For instance, no commercial activities were permitted, there were to be no row houses, and houses must cost not less than \$3,000.

By 1905, other artists were moving to the Park. Among the early occupants were the artist George A. Reid (Uplands Cottage at No. 81) and the architect Eden Smith (No. 5). Smith designed both 5 and 81, as well as a number of others, all in variations of the Arts and Crafts style promoted by C.F.A. Voysey and M.H. Baillie Scott in England. Between the two World Wars, a number of smaller houses were built when the Wychwood Park Trustees sold a portion of small lots along the western side of the Park. These houses varied stylistically from the earlier larger homes. After 1950, a few "modern" houses were erected on undeveloped lots.

In the 1980s the Park was threatened by the demolition of the large house at No. 16 for the purpose of redevelopment. This provided the impetus for the Park Trustees and other residents of the Park to seek designation of the Park as a Heritage Conservation District under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. After many meetings with Park residents and with the assistance of the Toronto Historical Board, a District Plan was approved by City Council and By-Law 421-85 was passed and approved by the Ontario Municipal Board in March 1986.

*John Blumenson*



MWF

## Casa Loma

1 Austin Terrace  
Architect, E.J. Lennox  
Completed 1909–13

### The gothic inspirations of Casa Loma

Built between 1911 and 1914, Casa Loma was home to financier and military officer Sir Henry Pellatt and his wife Mary. Through wise investments in electrical development, real estate and the Canadian Pacific Railway, Pellatt was one of the few men who were said to “own” Canada at the dawn of the 20th century. In 1905, he was knighted for his involvement in bringing electricity to the City of Toronto from Niagara Falls.



Pellatt engaged one of the foremost architects of the day, E.J. Lennox, to design Casa Loma and its associated buildings. Construction began on Pellatt Lodge (situated on the northwest corner of Walmer Road and Austin Terrace) and the Stables (to the north) in 1905. Upon completion, the Pellatts moved from their prestigious house on Sherbourne Street to the Lodge. From there, they were able to watch as construction on Casa Loma began.

The desire to build an ostentatious house was not uncommon in North

America- wealthy industrialists, such as the Hearsts and Vanderbilts, commissioned huge houses in the latter half of the 19th century. In Canada, however, Casa Loma was unlike anything ever seen before – it was the largest house ever built, comprising 180,000 square feet and costing Pellatt the princely sum of \$3.5 million. By today's standards, Casa Loma would have cost Pellatt \$44 million.

The architectural character of Casa Loma reflects the passion Pellatt held for the Gothic. The unusual combination of its elements (which include a three-storey bay window, a Norman and a Scottish tower, crenellations, heraldic beasts, Elizabethan-inspired plasterwork, and a 65-foot-high hammer-beamed Great Hall) draws from the Gothic and Romanesque styles. The effect created links Casa Loma to the first great Gothic Revival houses of 18th century England – Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill and William Beckford's Fonthill Abbey, which demonstrate an imaginative interpretation of the Gothic. The fact that Pellatt had, in his painting collection, *A View of Fonthill Abbey* by J. M. Turner and *A Portrait of Sir Horace Walpole* by Sir Joshua Reynolds, further establishes the stylistic connection.

Despite the historic references, Casa Loma was fitted with the most modern conveniences of the early 20th century. Lennox shared Pellatt's interest in new and innovative technologies, such as electric lighting, heating and cooling systems, elevators, telephones and central vacuuming systems, and he had them all incorporated into the castle. Casa Loma was also embellished with exquisite plasterwork, beautiful wood flooring, and European marbles. No expense was spared on the materials used or the quality of workmanship.

The Pellatts moved into their largely unfinished house in 1913, but the onset of the First World War halted construction. The economic downturn that followed the war further stalled the project and, with the collapse of the Home Bank of Canada in 1923, Pellatt's finances failed. Lady Pellatt died shortly thereafter. In 1924, unable to pay the municipal taxes on Casa Loma (which had risen from \$600 per annum to over \$1,000 per month in 1920), Pellatt was forced to suffer the heartbreak of selling off his personal belongings and collections at a five-day auction. He moved out in that year and, by the early 1930s, the City of Toronto took possession of the property. The interior of Casa Loma was never completed to Sir Henry Pellatt's original designs.

*Joan E. Crosbie*

## Castle Hill Development

Completed 1991

Gabor + Popper Architects

Every corner of every  
city has a story to tell.

The history of Spadina Road between Dupont and Davenport tells a remarkable story of urban development, of social and political history, of poetry and personal tragedy.

The site of the Castle Hill development, south of the IROQUOIS Escarpment – the shoreline of a vestigial glacial lake that is now Lake Ontario, was occupied by more than one DAIRY: *Acme Farmer's*, and *Sealtest*. Just west, at the corner of Bathurst and Davenport, currently occupied by public transit service yards, commercial gardeners marked the landscape with FURROWS

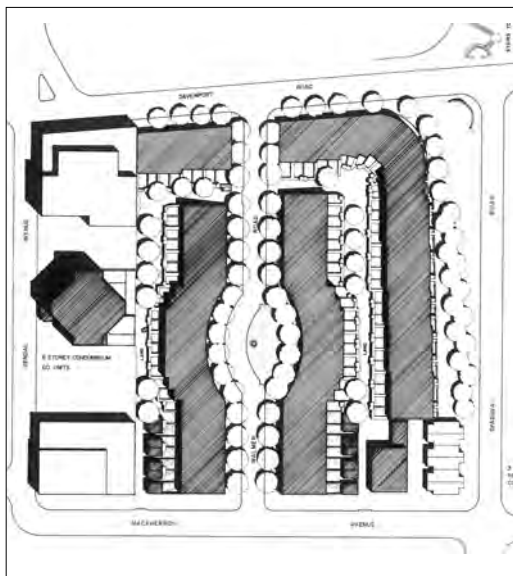


to grow food for the local community. William Baldwin, who built and lived in Spadina House, was responsible for the SURVEY of Spadina AVENUE, Toronto's original grand avenue. Sir Henry Pellatt, Baldwin's neighbour at his eccentric Casa Loma, was president of the Toronto Power Company which provided both the physical and political POWER that contributed to the growth of the city. Documents that record these and many more local histories are housed in the Toronto ARCHIVES, located on the east side of Spadina, south of Davenport.

Every building in every city has a story to tell.

● Gabor + Popper

The history recalled by the Castle Hill development is one of a time and place far removed from the corner of Dupont and Davenport. Castle Hill's story evokes the Georgian period in England, stylistically interpreted by John Nash's neo-classical Park Crescent Terraces in London and by John Wood's Royal Crescent in Bath. Here, on Spadina Road, the Castle Hill marketing materials applied names such as "The Regency," "The Knightsbridge," and "The Cambridge" to the three-storey, stone-and-stucco row houses and spoke of a



"Georgian-inspired community which echoes the old world overtones of Casa Loma ... every feature focused on making your life more comfortable and your entertaining more elegant."

Because it attends to aspirations that are similar to Sir Henry Pellatt's Casa Loma, Castle Hill makes a questionable selection of the history it chooses to include and that which it omits. A few short years after the construction of Casa Loma, Sir Henry was unable to maintain the financial opulence of his dreams and was forced from his home. Rather than allowing the industrial history of the site inspire the project, Castle Hill reminds us of Sir Henry's tragic story of unsustainable folly.

Castle Hill has a story to tell.

One can only wonder why it is the recounting of the Georgian period in England and not the story of an evolving community and its relationship to the local landscape.

*Words capitalized above are part of an artwork titled Spadina Line (Brad Golden and Norman Richards, 1991) which recalls the history of the site.*

*Spadina Line runs between Davenport and Dupont, on the west side of Spadina Road.*

*Brad Golden and Lynne Eichenberg*

## The Annex

living. Over 16,000 Annegonians occupy its approximately one-half square mile that runs from Avenue Road on the east to Bathurst Street on the west, and from Bloor Street north to the CPR railway lines. Simeon Janes, who developed most of the central Annex in 1886, referred to the area as the Toronto Annex, hence the unimaginative name. We can divide its past into three periods – up to 1913, to 1950, and since then.

The Annex is one of Toronto's best-known and most-sought-after neighbourhoods – at least among those who prefer central-city



### Period 1: The formative era

The 1793 rural survey of York Township defined the future shape of the Annex. With Queen Street as the base line and Yonge Street as the north-south dividing line, Bloor northward to St Clair Avenue, one mile and a quarter, became the Second Concession from the lake. The first sideroad west from Yonge, also a mile and a quarter, became Bathurst Street. Within the Yonge-Bloor-Bathurst-St Clair block were five long, north-south, 200-acre farm lots, only a quarter-mile in width. The Annex covers much of the southern half of the block.

Within this rural template, beginning in 1857, speculators laid out their subdivisions. Most of the subdividing happened in the economically ebullient mid-1880s. In a few areas, subsequent subdivisions altered the original plans. Following the long, narrow farm lots, the subdividers created long north-south streets; however, not all east-west streets met one another, although most of the long, north-south blocks, are divided into three. The chief exception

to the usual pattern is the strip east of Bedford Road, where the streets are oriented east-west, the result of the first subdivision. In 1883 that strip became part of the City of Toronto when the City annexed the Village of Yorkville. The City took over the remainder of the Annex in 1886 and 1887, providing it with public services such as water, fire protection, sewers, and pavements, the latter two paid in part through local improvement taxes. Building followed, but erratically and patchily.



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As was the case everywhere in North American urban places, speculators laid out their plans, often well in advance of building. These “premature subdivisions” (as early 20th-century planners labeled them) usually preceded the buildings by one business cycle – in the Annex seventeen years, on average. Speculators sold piecemeal – to brokers who then sold to others, to individuals, and mainly to small-scale speculative builders who put up few houses at a time. The result was first a patchy pattern of houses, then in the next cycle, general infilling. In the Annex the process of building took over a third of a century – from the 1870s in the Yorkville strip to 1913 on the west side of the district.

Janes intended the central Annex, especially St George Street, to be upper income, as did the Baldwins, who initially laid out the curved stretch of Walmer Road. Both succeeded in persuading the rich to build villas, mostly in the late 1880s and into the early 1890s. Some of these successful businessmen also contributed large amounts for new churches in the neighbourhood, most of which still stand. Here and there on some other streets, upper-middle-class houses went up, but there were few lower-



middle/working-class, bay-n-gable-style houses, so common south of Bloor. Janes and others also made it clear that commercial activity would be restricted to Bloor Street and other peripheral roads. After the depressed 1890s, building picked up again, but these later houses, while still substantial, were, owing to rising material and labour costs, largely a cut below the late-1880s style. A majority were semi-detached (which according to Patricia McHugh is the “Annex house”). Upper-middle-class Annegonians dominated the neighbourhood. Home ownership ran to 80 percent. Most tenants lived in the few low-rise apartments and industries were mostly located next to the railway tracks.

## **Period 2: Decline**

From the 1920s to the 1950s, the social composition shifted. Although “invasion-succession” was much less pronounced than in, say, Chicago, larger houses gradually became rooming houses after the children of the affluent moved to Forest Hill and North Rosedale. Many households boarded University of Toronto students and single professionals and clerks. During the Great Depression and World War II, these trends intensified. Many homes were put to institutional uses, for example, as national head-offices such as the Ecumenical Institute on Madison Avenue. In the 1920s neither the first zoning controls nor the Annex Ratepayers Association (ARA) could stem the tide of change. By 1945, the population had risen to over 16,000 from 12,000 in 1923.

## **Period 3: Post-war rebuilding and stabilization**

Other than some late 1930s infilling with mock-Tudor two-storey houses, little building had occurred since 1913. From the mid-1950s to the early 1970s, high-rise apartment structures replaced many of the elegant houses on large lots. The 1954 zoning system and the 1958 neighbourhood plan (the first in Toronto) had allowed the change. The Ontario Housing Corporation built the largest apartment block. Rooming houses continued to exist, and multiple occupancy of many houses lifted the population. The ARA revived to limit change and had its finest hour when the Province shelved the Spadina Expressway, which would have split the district down Spadina Road.

Since 1972, when a reform-minded City Council reduced development possibilities and the economy weakened, changes have been relatively minor. The city built three small social-housing projects. Conversions to single family residences gained ground, although many of the conversions house tenants. Many rooming houses became bachelorettes. Thirteen houses became group homes. Several condominium-tenure apartment blocks went up on the margins of the district. Parking has become more difficult and many residents have to buy street parking permits. An aura of stability seems to reign but, underneath, the residents are deeply concerned about the Province’s reduction of public services and weakening of protection for the tenant majority.

*Jim Lemon*

MWF



CPD/JT

## 217, 228, 230, and 234 St George Street

Architect, George Popper

the grand streets of the Annex. The Annex, known as one of the City's first "suburban" neighbourhoods, retains many of its historic houses, typically now home to professors, writers, and university students. Recently, the historic houses at 217 and 230 have gone through a conversion to condominium housing units by Urban Corp.

The condominium units at 217 St George incorporate the historic house at



217 St George Street and the three historic houses across the street at 228, 230, and 234 St George typify the single family houses that once lined

the north end of the complex (note the original red sandstone columns at the entrance shared with Unit 14). The housing complex was designed to allow each unit owner a private street entrance. Owners of second-floor units also enter their unit at street level and immediately ascend a staircase to their two-storey unit with a roof top patio.

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In the other condominium conversion project, at 230 St George, the developer links the three historic houses together with a new multi-housing unit to the rear to make one housing complex. Completed in 1996, the condominium complex retains the distinct appearance of the three original houses. The building at the south, 228 St George, was designed in 1901 by Arts and Crafts architect, Eden Smith (1858–1949). Originally from England, Smith established an architectural practice in Toronto and went on to design over 2,000 houses in the city, the best known of which are in the historic district of Wychwood Park. In the middle of the trio of houses stands a house designed in 1909 by local architects, Edwards and Saunders. At the north, 234 St George was constructed in 1903 as the home for Robert Watson, who commissioned one of Toronto's most influential architects, E.J. Lennox (1855–1933), for the design. Lennox was architect of the west wing of the provincial Legislative Assembly building at Queen's Park, the similarly styled Old City Hall (Queen and Bay streets), and Casa Loma (1910) at the top of Spadina Avenue.

*Tamara Anson-Cartwright*

## 44 Walmer Road

Completed c. 1965

Architect, Uno Prii

One of Toronto's most prolific designers of developer housing, Uno Prii was responsible for over 250 buildings, containing some 20,000 apartment

units, built between 1957 and 1981. While many of these are indistinguishable from the general production of Modernist apartment towers, a few stand out for their distinctive sculptural approach and playful whimsy.

Several of these buildings are located in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood, interspersed among a dense fabric of 19th and early 20th century Victorian single family homes. Of these, 44 Walmer Road captures, perhaps better than most, Prii's playful flamboyance coupled with an otherwise conventional planning strategy, allowing for the construction of highly identifiable buildings within typical market driven budgets. The units are assembled to produce a rectilinear, cruciform plan point tower, which Prii adorns with a layer of curvilinear balconies sporting a circular railing motif. A playful canopy and fountain in the forecourt recall the exuberance of the Miami hotels of Morris Lapidus, bringing an unexpected lightness and joie-de-vivre to sometimes staid Toronto.

Although 44 Walmer and other nearby apartment towers by Prii were criticized for their typical Modernist insensitivity to the surrounding Victorian fabric, their idiosyncratic quality and lightheartedness, along with a renewed interest in Modernism, have earned them a certain cult status among young architects, and they continue to attract media attention.

*Marco Polo*



## 190 St George Street

Architect, Joseph A. Medwecki  
Completed 1972

One of the most arresting images of the early Modern period has to be the Mies van der Rohe photomontage of curvilinear towers of

stacked concrete floors completely enclosed in glass. The purity of this image tantalized generations of architects, and indeed the problem of realizing the idea of this kind of transparency was central to Mies's entire career in building. The problem was that one could never achieve that kind of actual transparency. The architect had to use other means to achieve the ideal. (There have been architectural problems like this since the Egyptians tried to build reed houses out of stone.)



But with transparency, the lure of literalness is always present, that is, confusing the use of glass as equaling the effect of transparency. Also, the inevitable encumbrances of window frames, the need for privacy, the backs of refrigerators, etc., always get in the way. It has only ever been achieved at great cost and under high-art conditions by someone like Mies who really knew what he was doing. Only achieved by Mies that is, until the great, late-Modern trick of the continuous balcony was discovered. (And I admit here that I don't know who came up with the trick first...)

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By pushing the floor slab edge and the outer column line beyond the tower's facade, the eye is refocused on the structural patterns and away from the enclosing walls, which are then free to accommodate the contingencies and impurities of human occupation. The squinting eye can almost recapture the giddy energy of the early 1920s when people were declaring that "new living demanded new forms."

190 St George is an elegant solution to the continuous-balcony apartment type. The bold, white slab edges and exposed structure stand out crisply against the simple steel handrails and mostly glass enclosure wall – but I understand the apartments are difficult to furnish or hang pictures in because they're mostly glass-walled. The prow of the east and west balconies add a suitably minimalist-expressionist touch.

The building is one of the earliest condominium developments in the city, which may account for its better level of finish and well-kept appearance (condominium corporations having to take care of their investment by law).

It is also a reminder of a time when a new development strategy could link itself with the notion of progressive architecture – and still be considered marketable. 190 St George shows up the more recent Georgian-style condohulks being erected in the name of "preserving resale value."

[Also notable is the pair of continuous-balcony gems at 10 Avoca Avenue, southeast of Yonge and St Clair (1971, Seligman and Dick Architects).]

*Ian Panabaker*

## George Gooderham House (York Club)

135 St George Street  
Architect, David Roberts Jr  
Completed 1892

The house at 135 St George Street was completed in 1892 for George Gooderham (1820–1905). Gooderham was the president of the Gooderham and Worts Distillery, a family-

owned company founded in 1832 and, by the late 19th century, the largest enterprise of its kind in the British Empire. In addition to his role in industry, Gooderham served as president of the Bank of Toronto and of several insurance companies. The Toronto General Hospital, the University of Toronto, and the Toronto College of Music were among the institutions to receive his philanthropic support. Gooderham financed many of Toronto's landmark buildings, including the King Edward Hotel (1902) and the famous "Flat Iron Building" (1892), the headquarters of his business empire. He commissioned Toronto architect David Roberts Jr to design his residence on Bloor Street West, at the south end of the popular Annex neighbourhood.



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The George Gooderham House

displays the hallmarks of Romanesque Revival design, the most popular style of the time, with castle-like forms, round-arched openings, and elaborate sandstone detailing. The sprawling plan is anchored by a corner tower and, off St George Street, a porte-cochere. Toronto sculptors Holbrook and Mollington created the intricate carvings, with grotesques and human faces (including one of architect Henry Sproatt, who collaborated on the design). The elaborate interiors incorporate finely detailed wood finishes, a monumental three-storey staircase, and parquet floors with mahogany inlay. Gooderham named the house "Waveney," after a river near his birthplace in Norfolk, England. Gooderham resided here until his death in 1905, when he was described as the wealthiest man in Ontario, with a personal fortune of \$25 million. The York Club, a private club for gentlemen, has owned the property since 1910. The George Gooderham House is the last surviving example of the mansions that lined Bloor Street in the late 19th century.

*Kathryn Anderson*

## Rochdale College

(now the Senator David A. Croll Apartments)  
341 Bloor Street  
Architects, Tampold and Wells  
Completed 1968

Rochdale College, together with nearby Tartu College, brought a characteristic 1960s-style, high-rise dormitory architecture to the northern fringe of the University of Toronto

campus – a genre introduced by Tampold and Wells in their earlier Student Family Housing towers at 30 and 35 Charles Street West – but, in Rochdale’s case, history and legend far outstrip anything that architecture might provide. Conceived as a combination of student co-op and “free university” experiment, it quickly descended into an unruly, anarchic state and became notorious as *the* nexus for Toronto’s counterculture. After innumerable police raids and drug casualties, what remained of Rochdale was closed down in 1975; following extensive renovations, the building was matter-of-factly reborn as a seniors’ apartments in 1979, but the rosy-lensed heart of “the runaway college” in all its colourful legend has, and probably for the

better, not died so easily (as evidenced by its numerous subsequent histories and retrospectives, as well as the happily vestigial “Unknown Student” sculpture up front).

It seems paradoxical, in retrospect, that an icon of “anti-establishment” culture was housed in a building that, within the context of 1970s urban reform, must have epitomized bad old “establishment” ways in architecture and urbanism. (For a useful contrast, refer to the adjacent Sussex-Ulster neighbourhood, much of which was reincarnated as student co-op housing in the wake of the urban



reform movement.) One can sense that the apparently frank concrete Brutalism of Rochdale highlighted the offbeat harshness as well as the creative fervour of the activities within. Yet, in its current happy afterlife as the Croll Apartments, Rochdale presents a surprisingly urbane aspect. All things considered, its Brutalism is fairly restrained, the offset tower mass (not unlike that of Tampold and Wells’s earlier Charles Street apartments) is attractively proportioned, and the corner plaza can be seen as a positive contribution to the Bloor streetscape. Even the retail-related alterations and fine-tunings over the years don’t seem to have compromised Rochdale’s fundamental lines. We may not build cities or universities like this anymore, but a third of a century after its conception, this oft-mythologized landmark deserves, in its own right, a certain appreciative respect.

Adam Sobolak

EJR

## Tartu College

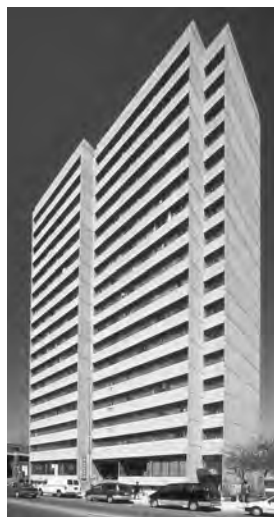
310 Bloor Street West  
Architects, Tampold and Wells  
Completed 1969

In scale (18 floors), style (Brutalist), and function, Tartu College is a two-year-younger sister building to Rochdale College. It was built as a general undergraduate student

co-op combined with a library, archive, and study centre serving the Estonian-Canadian community. Having escaped the melodrama that befell Rochdale, Tartu remains to some extent a microcosm of dormitory fashion of its time. The basic housing unit is a spartan six-person suite, and there are five suites on each residential floor. The arrangement is fundamentally modular, as was fashionable in student housing during the 1960s and 1970s. Surprisingly little of this type of student housing was built in the University of Toronto environs (due to funding cutbacks and changes in the political and planning climate), although it is a leitmotif of newer campuses, such as York, Waterloo, and Trent universities. Tartu's compact, conventional apartment-building form overcomes the overwrought, Skinner-maze effect that plagues many of its contemporaries to a greater or lesser degree. Meanwhile, the Corbusian architectural overtones remind us of how Le Corbusier's "machine for living" ethic achieved some of its purest, most appropriate expression in 1960s and 1970s student housing – as those who've spent any time in it will readily attest.

A somewhat purer, if less self-consciously monumental rendition of concrete Brutalism than Rochdale (with Aaltoesque "Scandinavian" traits that must have suited the building's sponsors), Tartu also suffers more from the heavy-handed urban narcissism that soon gave Brutalism a bad name; its entrance is overly dark, steep and tight, and the building turns its back to the corner of Bloor and Madison, a far cry from the generous corner plaza offered by Rochdale. On the other hand, these sins are easy to overlook because Tartu has survived the years and can now be cherished for the nature of much of its detailing – most especially, the superscaled, cast-in-place concrete lettering flanking the entrance. Ironically, Tartu's placid history has led to its becoming, in lieu of Rochdale's ghost, an evocative reminder of the long-gone, sideburns/bell-bottom/Wallabee era in university culture.

*Adam Sobolak*





## Sussex-Ulster Residents' Association

One day in 1968, the residents of Robert Street, south of Bloor, woke up to find that a whole block of houses was being torn down.

The zoning called for high-rise, like St James Town. Two 20-storey buildings were erected, but the residents fought another two to a draw. Eventually, the developer gave up and traded for the University of Toronto Aura Lee Field beside Ramsden Park. The University got a field almost on campus and the developer got two towers overlooking a park.

From that feisty beginning, the Sussex-Ulster Residents' Association has taken on some big battles and scores of little ones. When issues arose, the residents of 1,300 homes, from Bloor south to College and between Spadina and Bathurst, have always had a committee to go to City Council or the Ontario Municipal Board. Early in the 1970s for example, we got a traffic maze even though the Works Department wanted faster streets. Council voted for one-way streets with a turn at every corner, which brought about a 30% decrease in cars and lower speeds that have reduced accidents dramatically. Despite ten years of successful experience with the northern maze, however, the residents south of Harbord had to fight for their maze for five years.

In the early 1980s we prevented a bank from tearing down a terra cotta gem at Bathurst and College. In 1987, we celebrated the City's 150th anniversary by getting plaques for many of the fine century townhouses. We sent around a pamphlet explaining that "your house is worth \$10,000 more if it has the original facade." The neighbourhood has seen most of the older immigrant groups migrate to bigger lots in the suburbs, and new, younger families arrive and convert the student rooming houses to single-family homes. They strip the brick and rebuild the porch detail. At least two have rebuilt slate roofs. What were primary colours have retreated to subtle Victorian shades.

Perhaps our most dramatic battle was against Doctors' Hospital. We fought for ten years, including three and a half weeks at the Ontario Municipal Board, against a half-block, 87-foot-high complex facing low-rise houses on both sides. The fight cost \$12,000. We lost, but by the time the Doctors' Hospital "won," the provincial government had changed, hospitals were being amalgamated, and the project was cancelled. Now, another ten years later, they want to create "extended" care beds for "nursing home" care.

Most of our fights have been on the Spadina side where University proposals continue to intrude into the residential neighbourhood. There have been several plans to build in the playground on Robert Street. None have been built so far. It would be ironic to fight off a developer's highrise, but get another from a humanistic institution such as the University. Just last year the University erected "the giant O" student residence. They brought in a famous American architect to erect what most old-time residents see as an ugly blot on the street. A herd of architects arrived at the public meet-

ing to try to convince us that jarring is beautiful. What with “Fort Book” (the Robarts Library) and “Fort Jock” (the Athletic Centre) along Harbord, the lessons of history are slow to be learned.

Bloor Street has become what one might call a restaurant anthill. The bad old days saw us fighting off screaming music from open windows and wet-tee-shirt contests at local pubs. Who hasn't had their fence kicked in, listened to fights or cleaned up after party-goers? The Liquor Licence Board may have turned down an application for another dance hall, but we now have a photocopy centre open twenty-four hours. We beat off the bingo parlour, closed the rooftop patio, but succumbed to the betting shop. Nightclubs have brought generations of “newest look” teenagers. Cafes are found on every corner. After we reached 52 restaurants, the residents demanded and got a new by-law restricting restaurant size and ensuring that parking be built. Homeless folks have now decided that Bloor Street is a great place for getting change from wealthy diners.



E/R

The story of our neighbourhood would be incomplete without the tales of driving round and round looking for a parking spot. You give up and park on the wrong side. You get a ticket, just like the visitors who have taken not only the legal spots, but parking all along the other side. It is virtually impossible to get a fire truck through.

The homeless shelter, temporarily at Doctors' Hospital, took a hundred people off the streets in the winter of 1998. Some folks thought the neighbourhood was doomed. Surprise ... we all got along. As we did when House Link built a low-rise apartment for former psychiatric patients. No problem.

We were told the neighbourhood was a slum in 1973. We couldn't get a mortgage because “the houses were all run down and made out of wood.” We were told the area would be redeveloped, just like St James Town, and we'd make a fortune. But the mission of the Sussex-Ulster Residents' Association was to restore to life our part of the inner city. And we have!

*Bob Barnett*