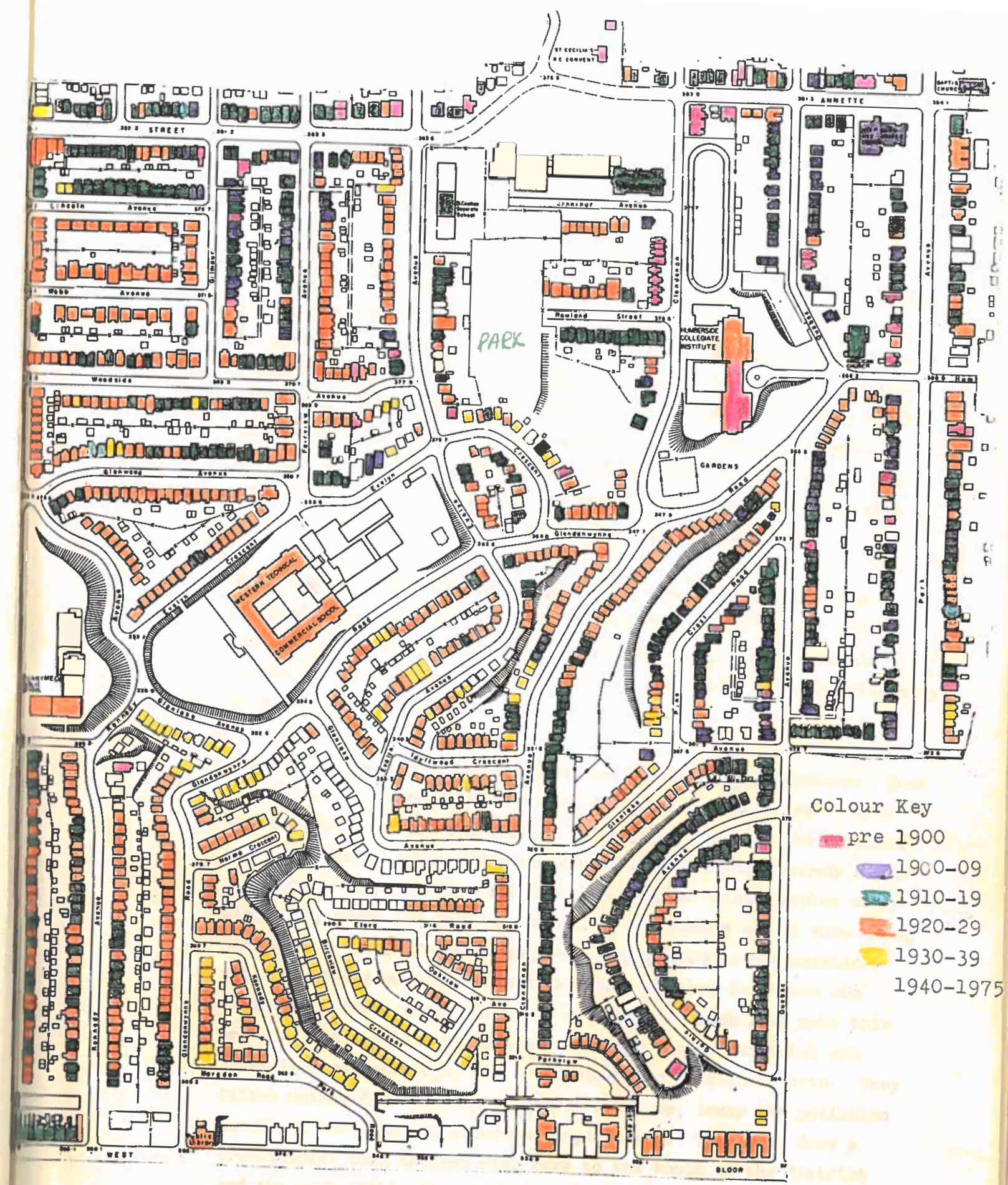




PART IDEFINITION

- (1) The Humberside district is composed of a number of curved streets set within the framework of Bloor Street, Runnymede Road, Annette Street and High Park Avenue. Its curvatures make it stand out from the predominantly straight street area around it.

It is also cohesive geographically, being composed of a ravine which extends from Grenadier Pond and the hills to either side. Historically the area comprises the old St. Leger and Kennedy estates as well as part of the Keele estate and a few small properties.



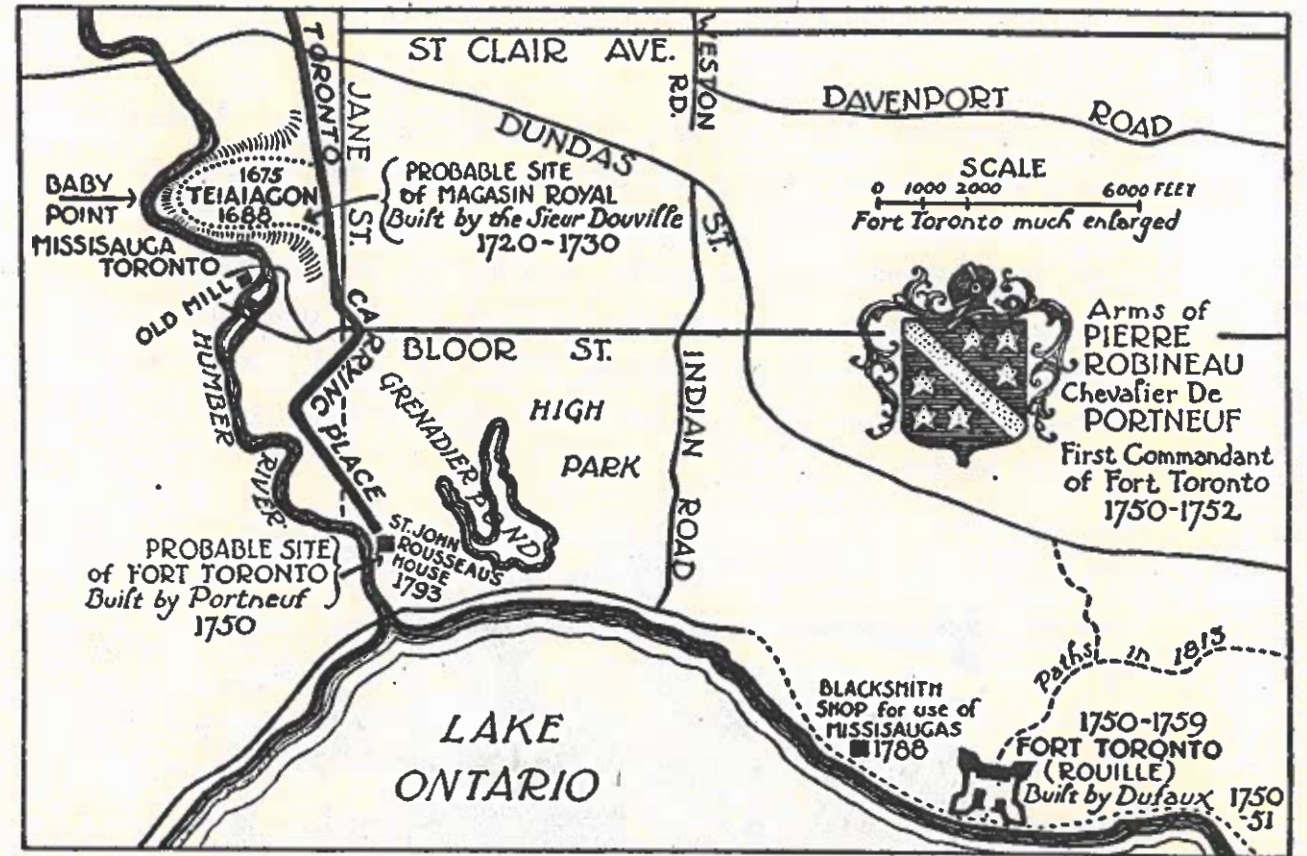
Colour Key  
 pre 1900  
 1900-09  
 1910-19  
 1920-29  
 1930-39  
 1940-1975

Humberside Heritage District

of 400 livres a year, although as much as 3,000 livres had been offered. Within ten years, the Magasin Royal failed, thus leaving no official French post between 1730 and 1750.

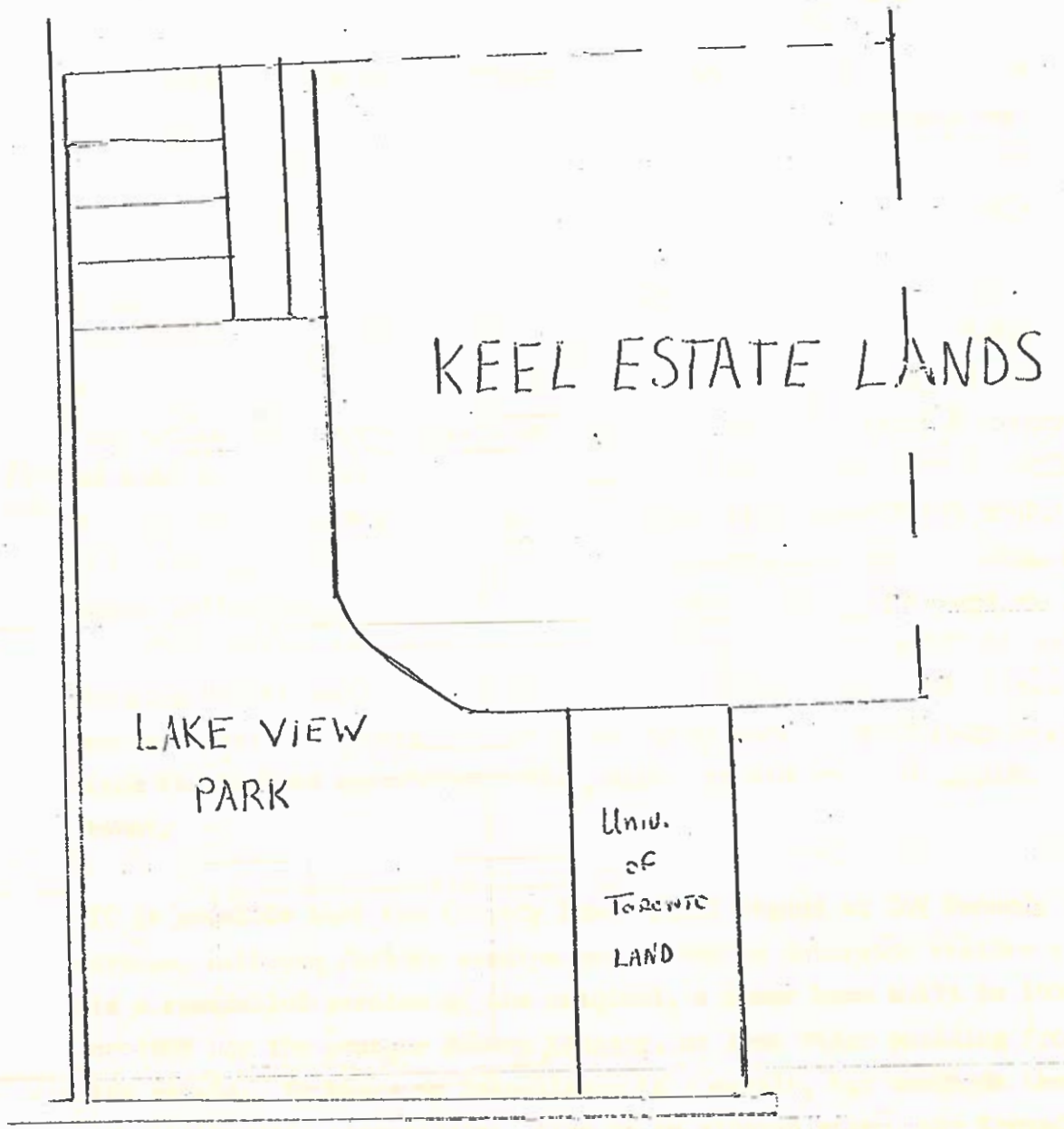
The construction of Fort Toronto was approved in 1750 by the colonial Minister of Finance, Antoine Louis Rouille. The colonial government sent Pierre de Portneuf and a trader to the mouth of the Humber with all the supplies necessary to trade. "Within two months a post consisting of pallisades and a small storehouse was constructed and 79 bundles of pelts, valued at 18,000 livres, were collected."<sup>5</sup>

The main purpose of the fort was to dissuade Indians from trading with the English, meaning that liquor was used as an inducement. Due to the objections of powerful religious factions in the colony, the sale of liquor to the Indians had been prohibited. At Fort Toronto the trade in alcohol was again instigated, and business flourished. A larger fort was built to accomodate the increased volume of trade within the year. In the spring of 1751 the Fort Rouille was erected on the present-day Exhibition Grounds at the foot of Dufferin St. The fort was in existence until 1759 when the French lost control of their colonial possessions to the British.



Map showing the position of the French posts at Toronto. - Picture Gallery of Canadian History.

The first true colonial settler in the area was Jean-Baptiste Rousseau (or St. John). His father established a temporary trading post on the site of old Fort Toronto. It was here, at the base of the Toronto Carrying Place, that St. John made his home. The Humber, then known as the St. John River, was graced with orchards. Rousseau has been called "the last citizen of the old French Toronto and the first of the new English York."<sup>6</sup> His background allowed him to maintain close contact with the Indian tribes, thus making him indispensable as an interpreter and guide. Because his was the only dwelling in the area, Rousseau and his family played host to many visitors, including Langlade and Reume, La Force and Bouchette, Frobisher and the North West fur traders, and Chief Brant. He and his second wife, the adopted



1880

An 1851 map of the area<sup>3</sup> shows our district as wooded with a clearing near the White Swan Tavern at Keele and Dundas. Otherwise the nature of the Keele estate until 1857 is still largely a matter for conjecture. In that year the Carlton race track was laid out, the western side of the course being the present High Park Avenue.

Tremaine's 1860 map of York County shows the property on either side of Runnymede Road between Humberside and Annette as the property of a Mr. Mitchell. Later owners (1878) of the northwestern square included in our district are G. Willsman, J. Veech and R. Burton.

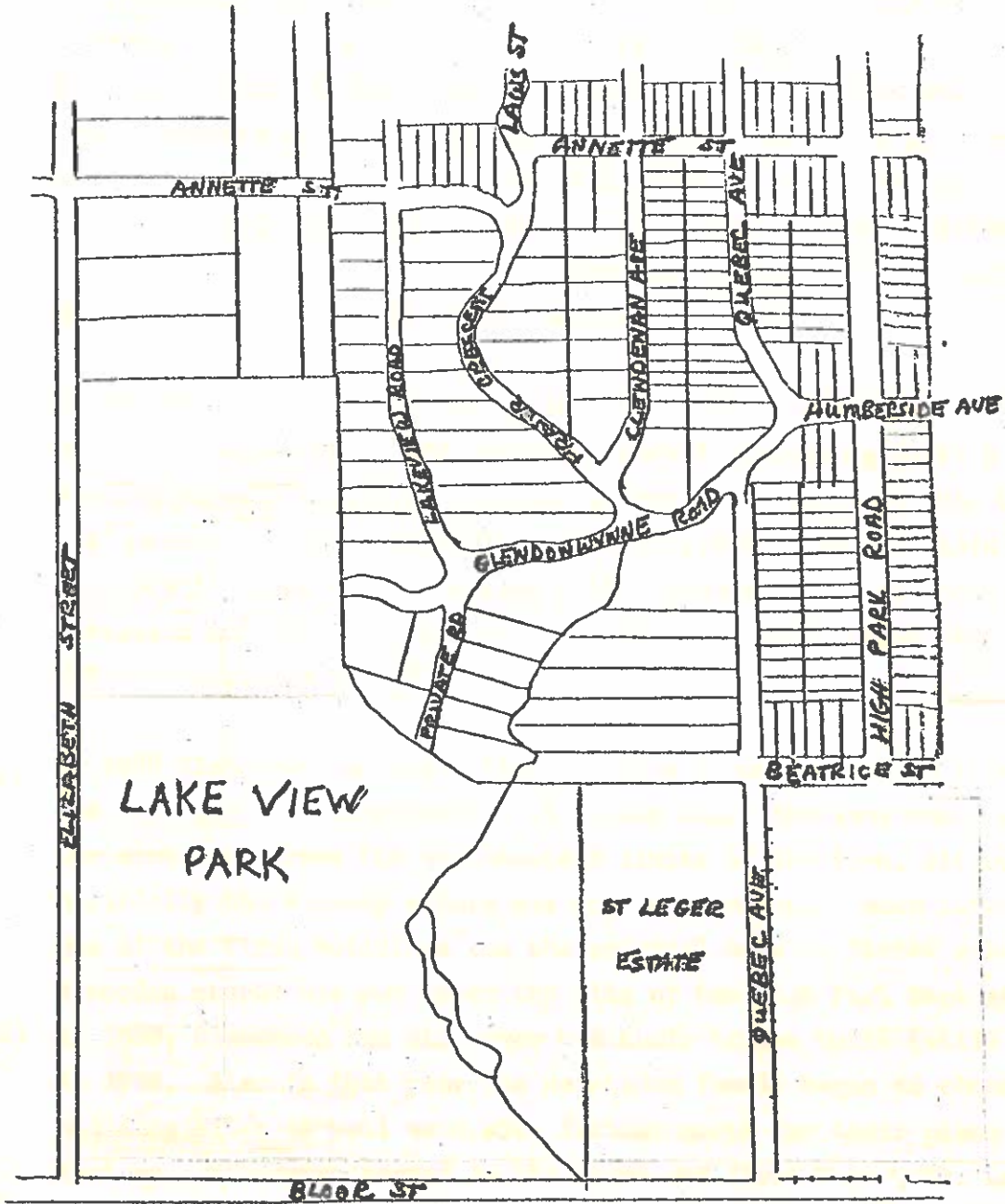
(9)  
Map About 1874 the second large estate in the area was purchased by David Kennedy, and "L" shaped property from the foot of the Gothic Avenue escarpment to Runnymede Road, and north along Runnymede to Humberside in a narrower section beside the Keele estate. A description of Lake View Park where Kennedy "retired" with his wife and 10 children borders on the fantastic.<sup>4</sup> An illustration shows a palatial house, like some mediaeval castle, far in the background while the foreground shows landscaped grounds and stream that can only be described as idyllic. The whole estate was fenced and three large artificial ponds constructed along the stream which fed Grenadier Pond. The stream seems to have originated in the vicinity of Humberside Collegiate, from the look of early maps. The ponds were stocked with 40,000 trout.

It is possible that the Kennedy house still stands at 347 Kennedy Avenue, although further studies are needed to determine whether it is a remodelled version of the original, a newer home built in 1901 or 1903 for the younger Robert Kennedy, or some other building from the estate. It bears no resemblance to a castle, but commands the top of a hill quite effectively. Also in an altered state, the Kennedy trout ponds are still with us.<sup>5</sup>

3. Map of the Township of York, 1851, Browne (Baldwin Room)

4. A History of Toronto and the County of York, Vol. II, 1885, p.226

5. Guillet, Pioneer Life in the County of York, 1950, p.164



1884

Period 2 - 1880-1889

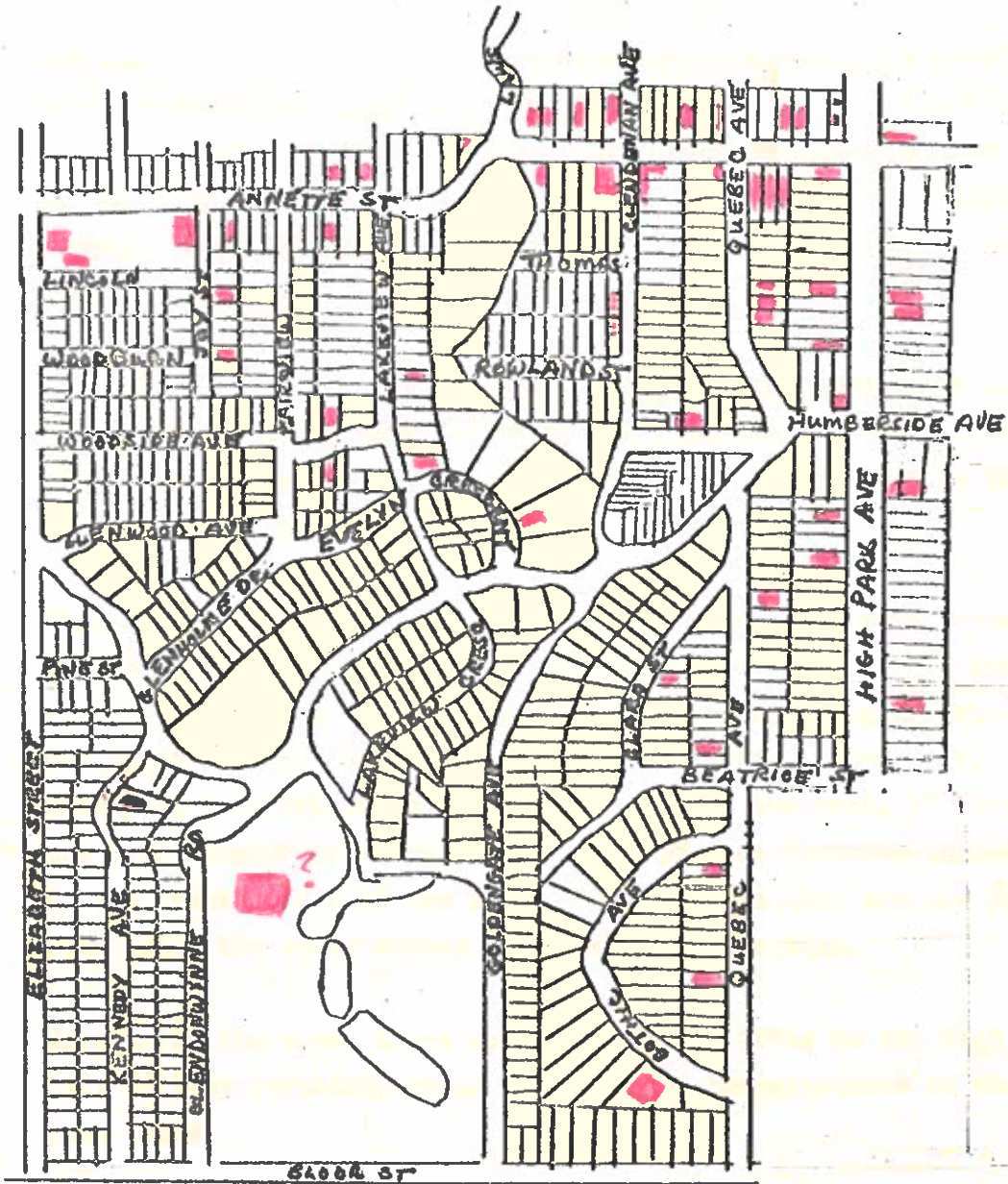
Until 1882 then, the whole area was estate land except for the Quebec-Gothic site which still belonged to the University of Toronto. About that time the prospects of a Canadian Pacific Railway station at Dundas and Weston Road became evident and Daniel Webster Clendenan, barrister, lately of Toronto, purchased the Carlton race track and other of the Keele lands from the Keele heirs. Also in 1882 George Johnston St. Leger, Toronto alderman, purchased the Quebec-Gothic site, hereinafter known on the York West tax rolls as the St. Leger Estate.

- (11) Clendenan, together with the Keele heirs and a few adjacent landowners, had a plan drawn up in 1883 which presented a pleasing pattern of winding streets following natural contours. A year later St. Leger, not content with the simplicity of nature, had his street laid out as a Gothic arch, hence the name Gothic Avenue. Both of these energetic men were well prepared for the boom which began when the CPR was completed in 1885.

- By 1888 Clendenan had the village of West Toronto Junction incorporated and a larger area incorporated as a town under the same name in 1889. Our district formed the southwestern limits of the town, although officially the Kennedy estate was not included until much later.<sup>1</sup> One of the first buildings was the original Annette Street school. A wooden church was put up on the site of the High Park Baptist Church
- (12) in 1888; Clendenan and St. Leger had their houses built (still standing) in 1889. Also in that year the Heintzman family began to choose building sites as well as a site farther north for their piano factory. Clendenan served as the Reeve and first Mayor, St. Leger as the second mayor.

1. see Goad's Atlas maps 1890, 1910, etc.





1900

Period 3 - 1890-1910

By 1890 a Methodist Church was established in a wooden building at High Park and Annette. It was the last year of the original boom period, although several fine homes (including 3 Heitzman houses) and the first section of Humberside Collegiate Institute were built during the 1890's. However, homes were thinly sprinkled and streets unpaved except for Evelyn Avenue (then known as Lakeview Avenue) and Evelyn Crescent, whose residents paid for their own cedar block paving. A woodsy, park-like atmosphere continued to be the dominant mood of the area.

A.B. Rice, the editor of the West Toronto Tribune and chief chronicler of the town's early days, lived at 354 Clendenan Avenue and John Ellis, school architect, bought an adjacent lot on which he later built an interesting home.

High Park Avenue, Evelyn Avenue and Evelyn Crescent were exclusive residential districts where only one house per 50 foot lot was allowed. The plan of High Park Avenue is interesting to note. It was planted with double rows of elm trees along either side, approximately 55 feet between elms in the centre of the road, 15 feet for the bath between trees on either side, 35 feet from the inside elm to the front corner of the house. Some of the elms are now 50-60 feet tall, the older houses are around 35 feet high.

Except for the elms, there are virtually no trees on the High Park lots — they certainly would have been an inconvenience on the race track.

(13) During the 1890's and the early part of the 20th century depression replaced boom. Around 1905 building picked up again, parts of the Kennedy estate had been subdivided, the town was eventually incorporated as a city and became a part of Toronto in 1909. Several street names were changed so as not to duplicate those on Toronto streets. Many other streets retained the names of local citizens, or their original descriptive names.

Period 4 - 1910-1919

In the period between 1910-1919 another boom was gathering momentum. Annette, High Park, Quebec, Gothic and the top half of Clendenan Avenues were filled; Pinecrest, Gilmour, Evelyn and Evelyn Crescent developed to a lesser extent and starts made along Runnymede, Woodside, Lincoln, Kennedy and the lower part of Clendenan. The immense project of raising Bloor Street high enough to cover the sewer pipes being laid was undertaken. Just "over the bridge" of earthworks, shops went up between Kennedy and Runnymede along Bloor. St. Cecelia's School was built, a new school replaced the one at Annette Street and St. John's Anglican Church moved to its present location from Dundas Street. High Park Avenue now had more than one house to a lot in several cases.

The High Park Mineral Baths on the site of the St. Leger pond were a much publicized local attraction. The St. Leger house had become the High Park Nerve Sanitorium, complete with hydrotherapy. The centre part of the Kennedy estate retained its stream and cows grazed peacefully along Bloor Street at this point. According to a local resident the cow paths "up Jenny Brown's hill" were the basis for later sections of Glenlake and Glendonwynne Avenue's.

Period 5 - 1920-1929

The Evelyn's became a more crowded and less exclusive district. A block of 70 houses was built along Lincoln, Webb, Gilmour and  
(14) Runnymede by the Toronto Housing Commission. They were sold for \$5,000.00 each on condition that the buyer could resell only for the original price plus improvements. Humberside Collegiate was enlarged, Western Technical School was built, as well as the Runnymede Library.

The final burst of building took place in this period. The stream which feeds Grenadier Pond was rerouted underground and the trout ponds, which had become a swamp in later years, were partially filled and eventually stocked with houses. A pump had to be installed to get the water across to High Park.

The area along Bloor Street was filled to some extent for further building. Throughout development, however, the natural contours of the land, even trout ponds, were followed so that fill is the exception.

The mineral baths continued to be a recreational attraction of some magnitude, featuring the only Olympic height diving board in Toronto.  
(15) The first apartment buildings, mostly along Bloor, were built. The city also planted maple trees to fill in any bare spots, so the park-like atmosphere of earlier days continued as characteristic of the area.

Period 6 - 1930 to Present

A few more houses and apartments were built in the 1930's including those on land drained by the pumping station, but the character of the area was completely formed by this time. Another few houses were built in the 1940's to fill in the last spaces. In the next several years some square triplexes replaced an occasional home from the turn of the century. All remained static, more or less, and peaceful in the extreme until the 1960's.

Around 1965 high rise apartments and the subway invaded the prevailing calm. Huge towers on High Park and Quebec began to dominate the whole district, visible from virtually every portion of it. The subway now roars past the homes and businesses along Bloor and creates a sort of division between business and residential areas. However, the subway generally isn't much more disrupting than the arterial traffic along Bloor. Its main effect has been to provide a centre for high density development at the High Park station, to raise property values and to remove the High Park Mineral Baths, now marked by a sunken parking lot. Western Tech has also expanded, necessitating demolition of some homes.

The St. Leger estate (Quebec-Gothic) has been a proposed high rise site for five years, causing a great deal of concern to area residents, particularly those within its shadow. The proposed expansion of the library and the Heintzman house at Annette and Laws is another problem. Will these expansions be in keeping with the neighborhood? Should they be done at all?

We would like to preserve the beauty and charm of our neighborhood against further erosion. To our mind development is at the maximum possible, if the atmosphere which has characterized it from earlier times is to be maintained.

PART IVCOMMUNITY RESOURCESA. Housing

The majority of the housing units in the district are brick houses, detached or semi-detached. Most are between thirty and sixty years old, with a few dating from the 1800's. They are generally well-built square two or three story houses with almost every one having at least one decorative feature which makes it attractive or distinctive such as leaded or stained glass windows, wrought iron work or landscaped gardens. Almost every house is the original house on its site, and even the modern houses generally fit in well with their surroundings.

Multiple family units range from duplexes to low-rise apartment buildings. An attractive house at 259 Glendonwynne was built in 1918 as a single family unit.

see slide  
(45)

In the 1920's it was converted to a duplex, with a second "front" entrance added facing onto Quebec Avenue that matches the original front on Glendonwynne. Another well-converted duplex is at 293 and 295 Quebec Avenue. There is a good example of a building originally built as a duplex on the south-east corner of Elora Road and Oakview Avenue.

(16)

Several buildings in the district have three or more units, each with its own entrance. One is at Gothic and Quebec Avenues (119, 121 and 123 Gothic) and another is on the corner of Glenlake and Clendenan (443 and 445 Glenlake).

(17)

There are some reasonably attractive two and three story apartments in the district - 1990 and 2110 Bloor Street, built in the 1920's, and 251 High Park Avenue, built around 1930.

see slide  
(4)

## B. Schools

The Canadian Pacific Railroad, which was responsible for the creation and naming of West Toronto Junction, was also indirectly responsible for its public school system. The influx of population in the 1880's made local residents realize that first a public school and soon afterwards a high school were necessities. A.B. Rice, the editor of the local Tribune and Dr. J.T. Gilmour, M.P.P. for York West led the campaign to establish a high school. Gilmour was the first chairman of the public school board and chose the site Humberside Collegiate. Gilmour Avenue in the northwest corner of our district is named for him.

The Annette Street Public School is reputed to be the oldest public institution in the West Toronto area. A public school building has stood on the corner of Annette and Clendenan since before West Toronto Junction was incorporated in 1888. The original brick building, which had already been enlarged from two to twelve rooms, was torn down following amalgamation with the City of Toronto. The present structure was built in 1911 and 1912 with several further additions.

The Runnymede Public School, at Runnymede Road and Colbeck Street was begun in 1915. Additions in 1920, 1922, 1924, 1930 and after World War II have greatly enlarged the capacity of the school.

Humberside Collegiate Institute, originally known as Toronto Junction High School, opened in temporary quarters on Pacific Avenue in 1892. Its first principal, J.C. Robertson, served from 1892 to 1894, when he became a classics professor at the University of Toronto.

(18) In 1894 the building was completed and the school was moved to its new quarters, the nucleus of the present day school. In the same year, F.C. Colbeck became principal, a position he held until his retirement in 1925. Colbeck Street, south of Runnymede School, was named for him 1909. His home at 117 Evelyn Crescent was one of the houses absorbed by the expansion of Western Tech.

Humberside has had seven additions and four different names. It began with only two teachers other than the principal, who had teaching duties as well. Before World War I, students from farms as far away as the Village of Islington attended Humberside, commuting daily by train.

Western Technical-Commerical School opened in 1928, and was originally two separate schools in one building. The Western Branch Technical School and the Western High School of Commerce did not combine under one principal and one name until 1936. It was the first secondary school in Toronto to combine commercial and technical training.

Saint Cecilia's Separate School has served this area since it opened in 1912. The two oldest wings of the school, facing Annette Street, were built in 1912 and 1914.



C. Churches

The oldest church building in the area is the Annette Street Baptist Church at High Park Avenue, whose cornerstone was laid in 1906. The congregation predates the structure, having been in existence since 1888.

The High Park-Alhambra United Church was originally the West Toronto see slide (40) Methodist Church. The first site was at Annette and Quebec Avenues, starting in 1884 with the present site being purchased in 1890. The church building now on the site dates from 1909. Its congregation recently combined with the Alhambra United Church congregation on Bloor Street.

St. John's Anglican Church has been at the corner of Humberside and Quebec Avenues since 1923. The congregation began in 1881, when the first St. John's Church was built on Louisa Street, later re-named St. John's Road. The site of the church was changed when the majority of the congregation lived south of Annette Street.

Other churches serving members of the community are Runnymede United, Runnymede Baptist, Third Church of Christ Scientist, Victoria Royce Presbyterian and St. Cecelia's Catholic Churches.

PART VNOTABLE BUILDINGSA. Historic Sites

- (19) 1. 32 Gothic Avenue was built for George J. St. Leger in 1889. It was named Glandeboye after the county seat in Ireland of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava and featured a stone arch over the driveway inscribed "Cead Mille Faith".<sup>?</sup> St. Leger and family only lasted 6 years, after which the house was sold to Hugh Ryan, who was an absentee landlord until 1905 when he sold the house to George A. Griffith, proprietor of the Keeley Institute. In 1907 William James McCormick bought the house and shortly thereafter it became the High Park Nerve Sanitorium, complete with theraputic baths. Today it is a home for the aged.
- (20)  
(21) 2. 166 High Park Avenue was built for Herman Heintzman in 1892.
- (22) 3. 178 High Park Avenue was built for George P. Wagner, 40, manufacturer, Methodist, and his wife and child in 1892.
- (23) 4. 204 High Park Avenue (at Humberside) was built in 1891 for J.T. Jackson, town treasurer in 1893, on the site of the judges box on the former Carlton race track. It is now the Ontario Christian Seminary.
- (24) 5. 220 High Park Avenue was built in 1892 for John Pearce, 54, gentleman, Anglican, family of four.
- (25) 6. 288 Annette Avenue (corner of Annette and Laws) was built in 1892 for Theodore Heintzman, 75, one of the founders of the famous piano firm, and later occupied by George Heintzman. It eventually became a convent associated with St. Cecelia's Church.

7. Runnymede Library (Bloor and Glendonwynne) was built in 1929. of Credit Valley and Cooksville stone, John M. Lyle architect. It was designed to have a Canadian character, as well as a residential character to fit the neighborhood. The roof is
- (26) of a type common to French Canada, Indian motifs are used in
- (27) the cornice under the eaves, the grillworks on the windows and entranceways. Shutters on either side of the windows complete the domestic character. There is a separate adult entrance and boys and girls entrance.

B. Other Potential Historic Sites and Interesting Buildings

- (28) 1. 347 Kennedy Avenue (at Colbeck Street) belonged to Robert Kennedy, veterinarian, in 1903. However, it is not listed in West Toronto assessment rolls for that year, nor are any Kennedy's associated with the estate listed in directories or assessment rolls at the City Archives previous to 1902. It could be an earlier building from the estate and a check of the York West records is needed.
- (29) 2. 372 Annette Street was standing in 1888, owned by George W. Edgar, merchant. A check of York West records may reveal an earlier date.
- (30) 3. 191 High Park Avenue was built in 1889 for D.W. Clendenan, his wife and 6 children. It is brick veneer and rather unusual. He was the first major and chief promoter of West Toronto Junction.
- (31)  
(32) 4. 125 Evelyn Avenue was built in 1890 for A.B. Pipher (?), architect.
- (33) 5. 219 Quebec Avenue was built in 1890 by a Mr. McKay, a carpenter who lived next door at the time.
- (34) 6. 350 - 354 Clendenan Avenue were built for A.B. Rice in 1891. In 1892 he moved into 354 and built an addition to it in 1896. Rice was the editor of the West Toronto Tribune and an influential member of the community. One of his tenants was James A. Ellis, who later built the interesting corner house at 358 Clendenan.
- (35) 7. 146 Evelyn Avenue was built in 1891 by J.W. Norwood, builder. He rented it to J.C. Robertson, the first principal of Humberside Collegiate, between 1892-4.
- (36)  
(37) 8. 24 Woodside Avenue was built in 1894 for a Mr. Farquahar.
- (38) 9. 23 Woodside Avenue was built in 1896 for George Heintzman, 31, of the piano Heintzman's.

- (39) 10. 358 Clendenan Avenue was built in 1902 by James A. Ellis, architect, for himself and his family.
- (40) 11. High Park-Alhambra United Church at High Park and Annette was  
 (41) built in 1907. It shows an art nouveau influence in windows  
 (42) and interior light fixtures. The interior has a vaulted ceiling with a wooden keystone, painted green with gold trim to co-ordinate with the colour scheme of the windows. The sanctuary is in a pattern of circles.
- (43) 12. 129 High Park Avenue was built in 1911 for William J. and Christine C. Deeth, Methodists, and their 5 children. Mr. Deeth was a builder.
- (44) 13. 124 Gothic Avenue was built in 1916 for Reuben F. Punnett. Its shows an interesting use of corner location and unusual stone.
- (45) 14. 259 Glendonwynne was built in 1918 for Redford Murdoch. Another interesting use of corner location.
- (46) 15. 115 High Park Avenue was built in 1922 for Wellsley B. Redfern. The keyhole entrance makes it a unique house.
- (47) 16. Humberside Collegiate Institute was extensively redone in the late 1920's and the date on the front for the final refacing reads 1931. Arthur Lismer painted the murals in the auditorium and there is a stained glass window dedicated to the World War I dead as well. The building's original date is 1894 with frequent additions since.

NOTE: Many other interesting homes are in evidence and further investigation, picture taking and dating will considerably lengthen the list. Dating is complicated because of several complete changes in street numbers and alphabetical directory listings for the town in early years. Records prior to 1888 are in the York Archives (and in a mess). Little detailed research has been done on the modern buildings as yet.

The Bloor Street frontage, on the other hand, could be extensively redeveloped under the existing zoning and with commercial and/or residential densities ranging from 2.0 to 5.0 times the lot area, structures would be erected which are completely out of keeping with adjacent areas.

In general, the area is considered by the city to be a stable, attractive residential neighborhood with unique typographical features complemented by a sympathetic street pattern. The City assures us that it will continue to attempt to preserve these characteristics.\*

\* The residents would prefer a 3 or 4 storey (or 45 foot) height limit on all buildings.

HUMBERSIDE HERITAGE DISTRICT

A Proposal by

The Humberside Residents Association

in conjunction with

The Quebec-Gothic Residents

and Tenants Association

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

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PRESENTED TO THE TORONTO HISTORICAL BOARD IN 1975