



**Heritage Assessment
Clarence Square Landscape Revitalization Strategy
Toronto, Ontario**

DRAFT

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ISSUED:
April 2007

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Clarence Square endures as one of the oldest remaining park spaces in the downtown core of Toronto, established when the area was still known as the Town of York. Although the area surrounding the square has seen gradual transformation from its original upscale residential roots to a largely industrial area, and back again, it's strong relationship to Wellington Street and complementary park space Victoria Square persists. Designed originally as an important feature in an exclusive area of the city, the square became a largely neglected space when the rail yards and industrial warehouses inhabited adjacent areas. The internal layout of the square also transformed from a more formal pattern with a central fountain and radiating paths, to linear paths traversing east to west to reflect mostly trans migratory pedestrian traffic across the space. As industrial uses leave the neighborhood while it transforms once again back to a primarily residential and commercial area, the square has not yet evolved in the same fashion to reestablish its prominence in the district.

2.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

The development of the King West-Spadina area of Toronto, including Clarence Square Park, evolved in a second wave of intensification for what would eventually become the central core of the city. Prior to 1830, the Town of York was confined to an area east of Peter Street, immediately adjacent to what would be Clarence Square and Wellington (then Market) Street. The large military reserve defending the area lay to the west of Peter Street, dominated by the Garrison Fort York at the mouth of the harbor. Preliminary plans for the Town of York were determined with the defense of the settlement from outside invasion being the greatest concern. Early plans for the area regularly illustrate the radial distance canon fire could travel from the Garrison Fort York and potentially impact on new areas of settlement (Figure 1). Several of the preliminary designs for the area show street layouts following the known distance of this canon fire (Figures 3, 4 and 5).

A schematic plan of the area drawn in 1833 (Figure 2) illustrates that although little construction had taken place to that point west of Peter Street, it was destined to be a prominent area within the growing city. When York was officially designated the City of Toronto in 1834, the Ontario Parliament Buildings, Government House and Upper Canada College were already located or planned immediately to the east of Peter Street, stacked north to south on consecutive blocks between Newgate (Adelaide) and Front Street. Eventually, a new garrison was built further to the west of Fort York, and a quantity of surplus military land was determined to be dispensable. In 1833 Lieutenant Governor Sir John Colborne proposed to sell part of the garrison military reserve to accommodate the rapidly growing core of the city. He authorized the auction of eighteen lots to raise money for the new fortification west of Fort York.

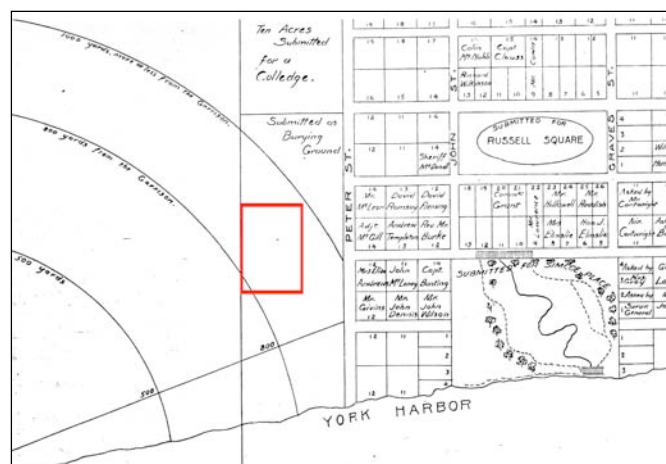


Figure 1: The subject property overlaid on a diagrammatic map from 1797, showing a model of anticipated future growth for the area.

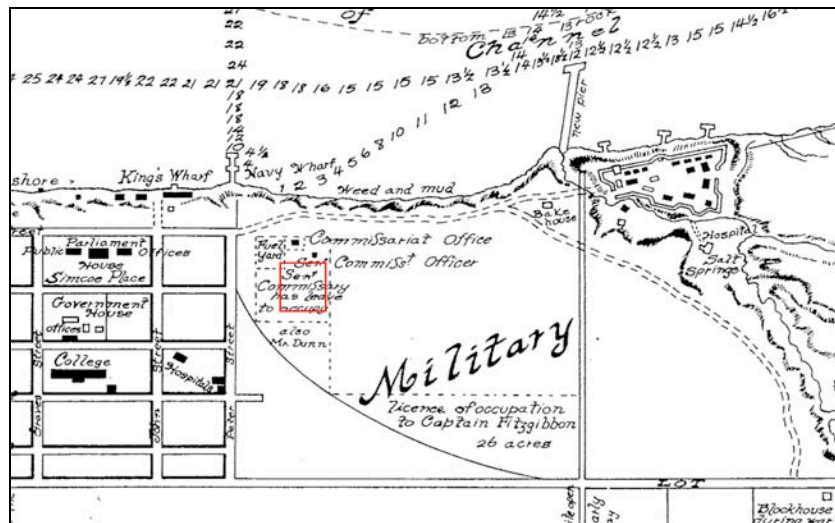


Figure 2: Sir Richard Bonnycastle's No. 1 Plan of the town and Harbour of York, Upper Canada, and also of the Military Reserve showing the site of the new barracks and work around them as proposed to be erected near the western battery from 1833 shows the district east of Peter Street nearly vacant, although prominent buildings lie nearby to the west.

Local representatives and stakeholders drew numerous models for the subdivision of the new sector of the city before a final plan was settled. All were based in part on city/town planning models originating elsewhere within the British Empire. They shared common features considered essential to a properly planned neighborhood such as a marketplace, church/burial grounds and park spaces (Figures 3, 4 and 5). After several preliminary plans were drawn up to subdivide the land, including several proposals to locate the new Government House where Clarence Square now sits (Figure 5 and 6), a satisfactory layout for the area was resolved by 1837 which included Clarence Square in its present location (Figure 7).

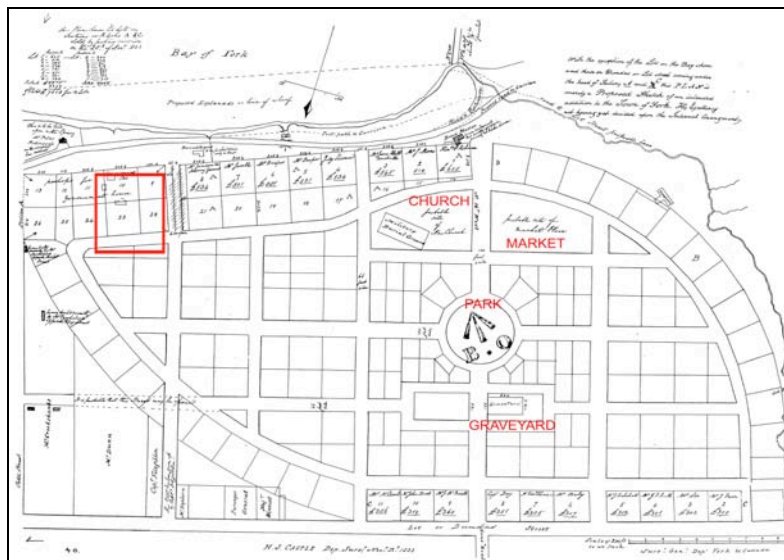


Figure 3: The subject property overlaid on a survey by the Deputy Surveyor H.J. Castle, dated November 22, 1833. This plan showed a central park space with residences/services radiating out from it in grid form.

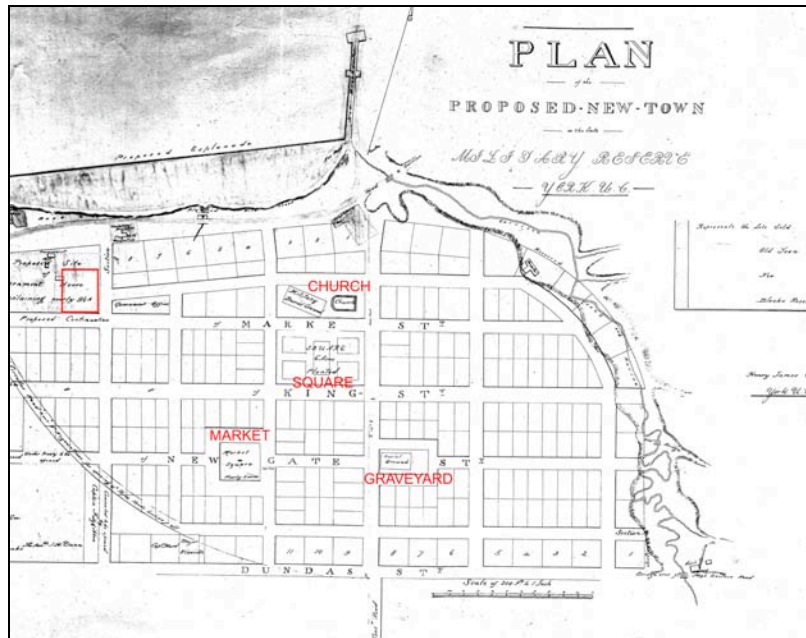


Figure 4: The subject property overlaid on a conceptual survey *Plan of the Proposed New Town on the late Military Reserve York* from 1834. This diagram shows an internal square with residences/services radiating out from it.

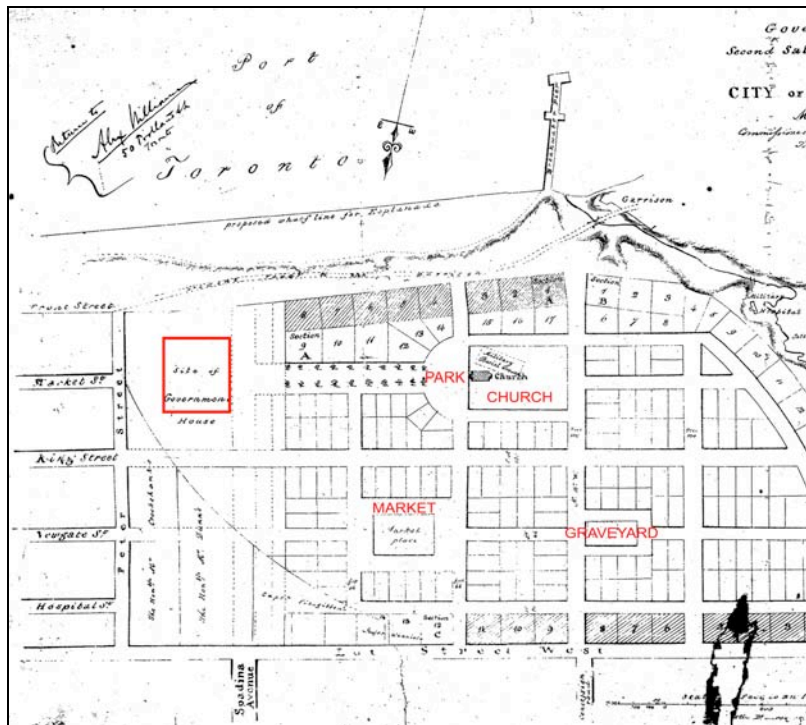


Figure 5: The subject property overlaid on a proposal for the district from 1834, *Government second sale of lots in the City of Toronto, May 1834*. This layout shows a configuration closer to what was realized, with two prominent features linked by a wide principal axis street. In this scheme, a new Government House occupies the Clarence Square space.

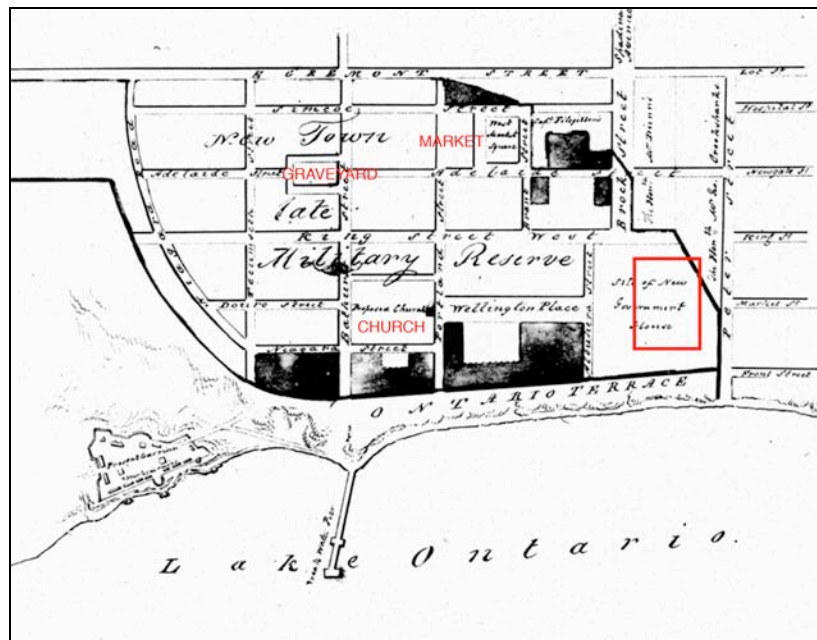


Figure 6: The subject property overlaid on a portion of the map *Plan of the part of the military reserve given up for the benefit of the Town of Toronto Upper Canada as laid out in 1855* by the Royal Engineer Office, September 1835. This plan shows the required amenities for the area, and Wellington Place as prominent axis.

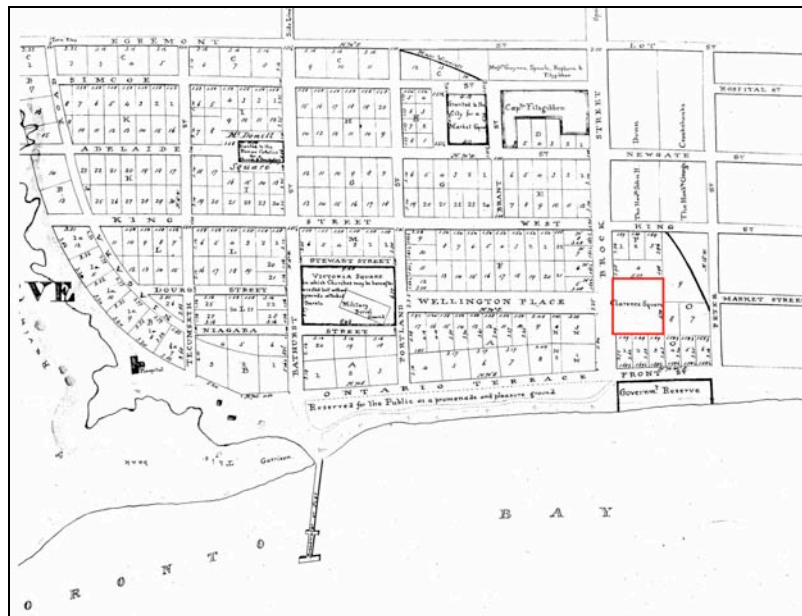


Figure 7: From the map labeled *William Hawkins, Surveyor Toronto March 1857*, now showing Clarence Square reserved as a park space at the east end of Wellington Place. This plan was the closest to what was realized in the area.

When the new Government House was located off the land now occupied by Clarence Square, rather than turn the land over to more commercial or residential use, it was reserved for a park space to serve the surrounding area. Wellington Place was planned as a wide, tree lined and prominent boulevard axis, with a dominant presence in the new quarter. A park space, square or other principal focus to anchor the east end of the Wellington Place spine was required, according to better planning principals of the time, and Clarence Square was created. The

model used for town planning of this pattern was found in the British style of Regency Planning. Clarence Square was influenced by London's Regent Street, designed in 1811 by architect John Nash. When completed in 1825, Regent Street was considered an innovation in civic planning and Nash was praised for implementing London's most thorough civic planning scheme. Its wide boulevards connected the royal estate to Portland Place (Figure 8). Originating in more ancient planning principals (Figure 9), it acted to connect parks and other public spaces via grand boulevards. A similar arrangement can be observed in the layout for Edinburgh, Scotland's "New Town", designed in 1766 by architect James Craig, which was based on a simple grid pattern with a principal thoroughfare linking two garden squares (Figure 10).

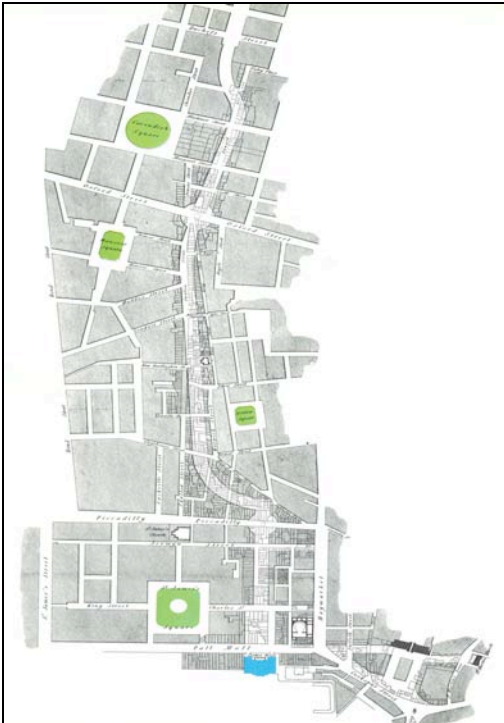


Figure 8: Formation of John Nash's 1811 Regent Street in London, with a wide boulevard connecting significant landmarks.

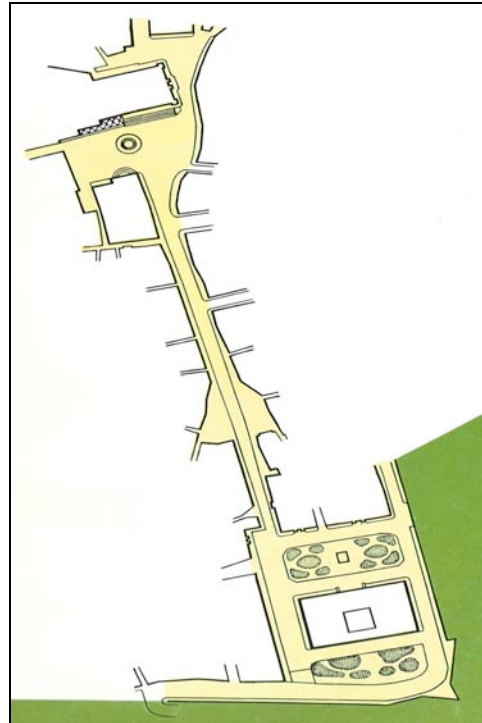


Figure 9: A medieval period village in Italy, with a strong axis street connecting two important squares in the town.



Figure 10: Plan of "New Town" in Edinburgh, Scotland displaying a central axis thoroughfare linked on both ends with park spaces, a similar configuration as the relation of Wellington Place to Clarence Square and Victoria Square.

Also based on British civil planning principals, James Oglethorpe's plan for Savannah had a similar scheme. Devised in 1734, the design was developed on a citywide scale and had military origins. Oglethorpe's army experience, coupled with knowledge of Roman military camps, were sources for this planning rationale. Savannah's small lots and squares created a compact plan that was easier to defend from native raids and Spanish invasion. As Nash emphasized a spatial relationship between boulevards and parks, similar plans for Savannah stressed a rhythmic intersection of public squares and roadways, with boulevards occasionally interrupted with the placement of a public square (Figure 11). An early plan for Toronto (Figure 12), designed by British Royal Engineer Gother Mann in 1788, predicted that Toronto would be laid out in strict grid fashion, and displayed a similar logic as the plan found in Savannah.



Figure 11: The grid pattern used in Savannah, Georgia on a citywide scale.

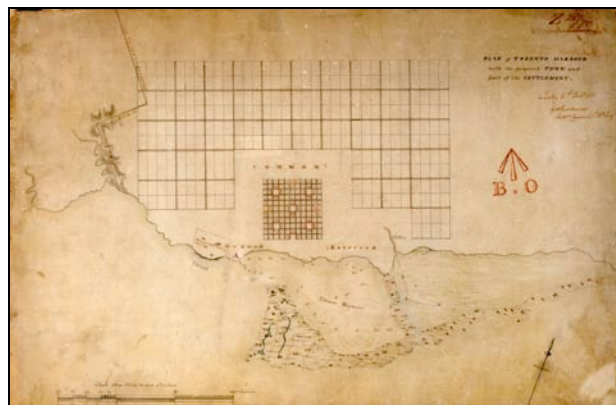


Figure 12: Gother Mann's 1788 *Plan of Toronto Harbour with the Proposed Town and part of the Settlement*. This preliminary plan displays a strict grid layout similar to that of Savannah.

Clarence Square emphasizes components of these English civic planning standards. Wellington Place, a wide tree-lined boulevard, connects Clarence Square with Victoria Square, located to the west. Similar to Regent Street, monumental structures were to be located within these parks. Although plans for a Government House within Clarence Square were envisioned in the 1830's, the scheme was not realized. The square also drew inspiration from English landscape-design tradition and from seventeenth and eighteenth-century France. The stylistic influence of lieutenant governor Sir John Colborne, and numerous architecture and planning professionals, advocated Regency style plans for the York area. Spadina Avenue, University Avenue (north of Queen Street) and Wellington Place (now Wellington Street) are the results of such planning principles.

Development of the area continued to evolve with the enlargement of the neighborhood beyond its original boundaries. St. Andrew's Market (Figure 13) was established within the vicinity to serve the community, and local churches, businesses and residential areas were constructed (Figure 14). Plans were further created in 1853 to develop

the lands between the new town area



Figure 13: St. Andrew's Market, shown in 1921, was planned and constructed to serve the new community west of Peter

and the water's edge below Front Street. This area, now considered surplus military land as well, was envisioned as an elaborate Victorian style parkland to be beautified for the benefit of residents living north of this area and for Toronto itself (Figure 15).

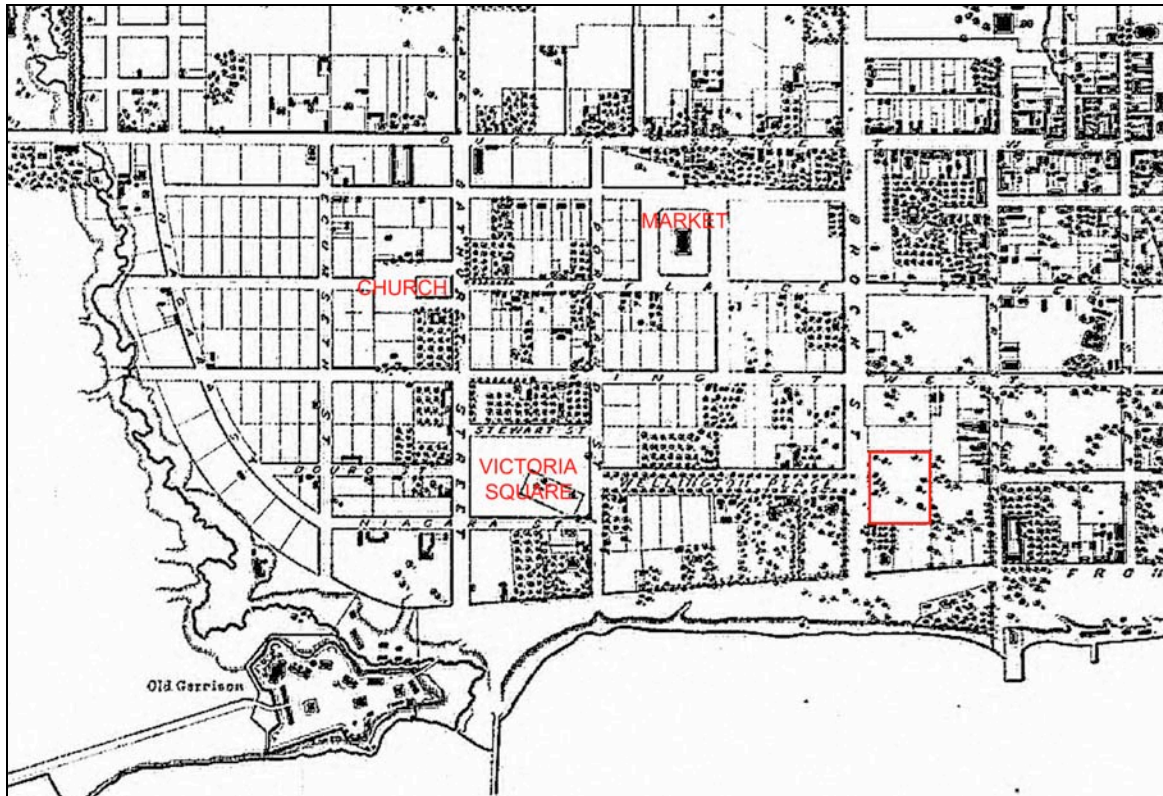


Figure 14: Portion of a topographical map from 1851 showing the development of the area, and regions north of Queen Street.

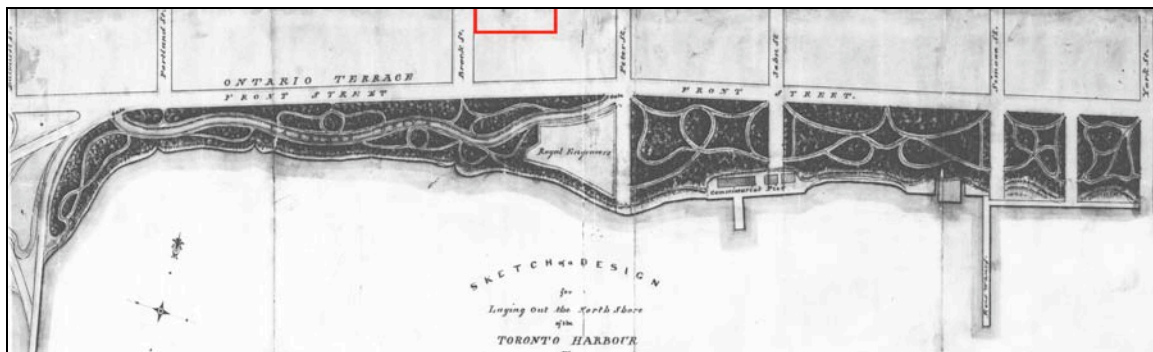


Figure 15: Schematic plan *Sketch of a design for laying out the North Shore of the Toronto Harbour in Pleasure, Drives, Walks, and shrubbery for the recreation of the Citizens* from 1852 showing the land below Front Street developed as a Victorian parkland.

These plans were soon shelved however when the area was given up to the requirements of the ever expanding railways, which could now efficiently link Toronto with more distant regions and promote economic development for the province. Clarence Square was finally divided from its adjoining lands around 1856, when roadways separated the square from residential lots. By 1859, attention was given to properly laying out and landscaping the park when grass was planted, paths laid out, trees planted and a fence erected around the square. The property

was conveyed to the City by Crown grant on March 19, 1860 and was formally identified as Clarence Square at that time. In 1876, a twelve-foot high fountain was installed at the center of the park to further beautify and improve the general appearance of the square. Canadian Pacific Railway lines were constructed to the south of the park, as roadway and rail congestion increased around the area. The rail lines serviced the region's expanding waterfront and downtown core (Figure 16).

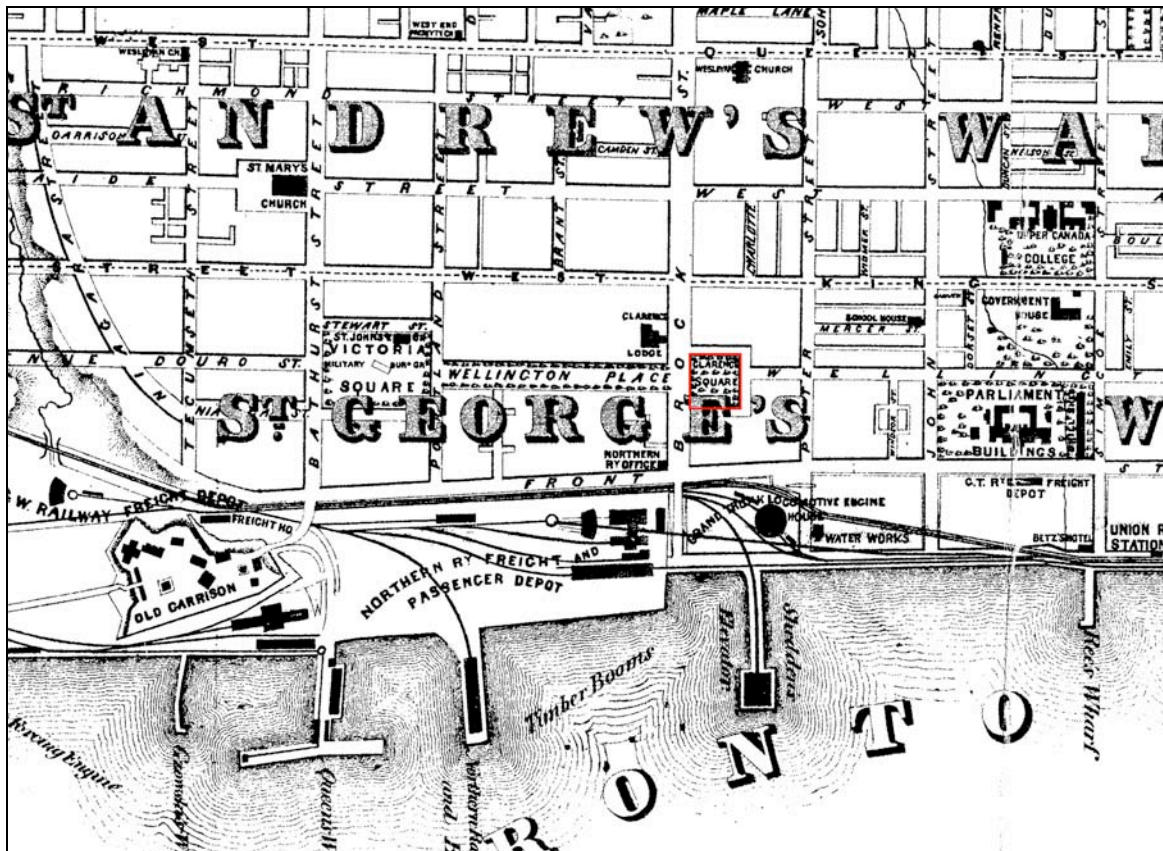


Figure 16: *City of Toronto Compiled from Surveys made to the present date 1866* plan of the area with Clarence square now separated from the adjoining residential lots by roads north and south. The land below Front Street has been committed primarily to rail and industrial use.

Once roadways were in place to the north and south of the park, the land on both sides of the square was subdivided in 1879 into residential plots. A series of terrace houses were built on the north and south sides of Clarence Square in 1879-80. The houses on the north side remain the only residential buildings extant from the original plans. Registered by the City of Toronto's Preservation Services as Clarence Terrace, these structures originally set the urban design character for the square in terms of massing, height, setback and building character. An 1886 winter scene painting of Clarence Square, looking southward, clearly shows a fountain at the center of the park and a series of row houses facing the Square (Figure 17). These residences were later demolished and replaced with warehouse buildings. A plan of the park from 1872 (Figure 18), and birds-eye-view rendering of the area dated 1876 (Figure 19), show what appears to be a modified Union Jack configuration of the paths within Clarence Square, with the fountain at the center (for a further historical timeline, see Appendix A).



Figure 17: A painting from 1886 by Robert Wiley Jr. called *Clarence Square Toronto from North Side* shows the park in winter, with a fountain at the center and houses to the south (now destroyed) facing onto the square.

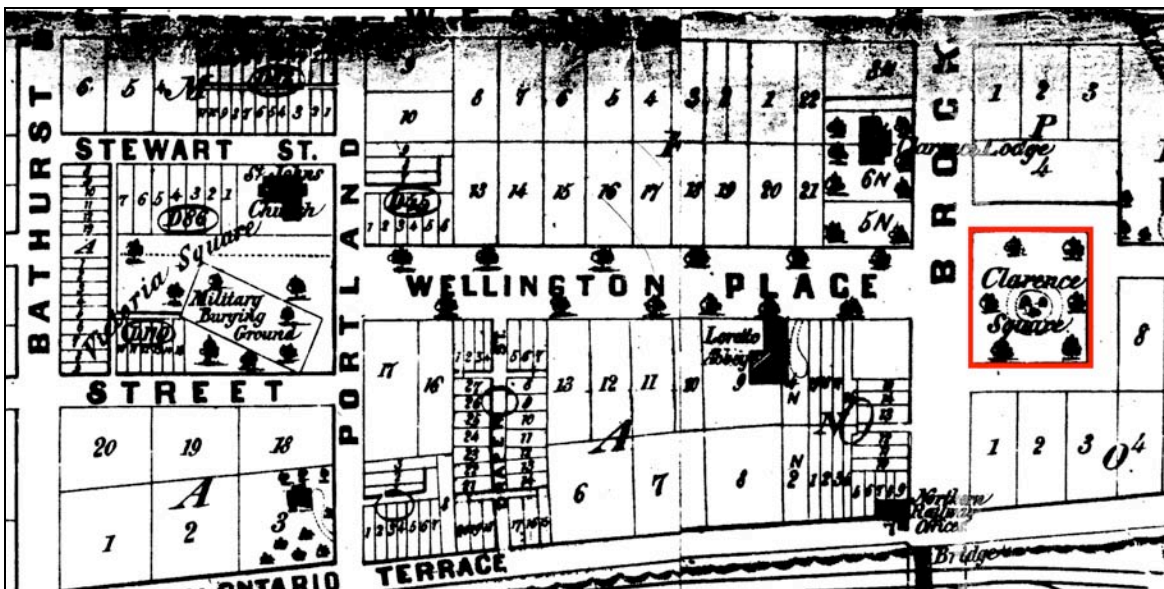


Figure 18: Map of Victoria Square and Clarence Square, 1872, showing what appears to be a circular path at the center of the park.

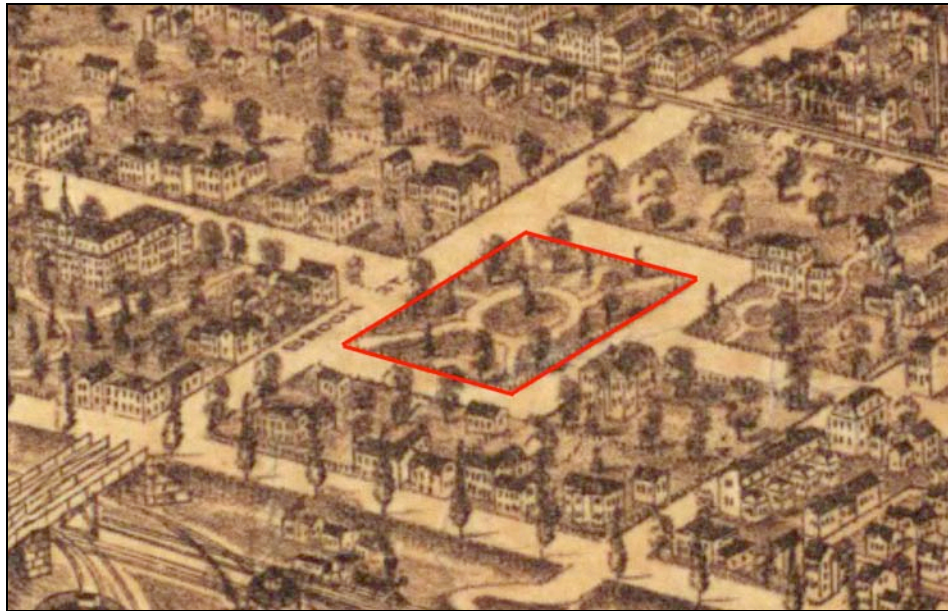


Figure 19: portion of 1876 birds-eye-view rendering with Clarence Square outlined. There is a fountain at the centre of the park, with a circular path outlining it and radiating paths extending outward to the surrounding streets in a modified Union Jack layout.

By the 1870's, Toronto's periphery had expanded to St. Claire in the north, Parkside Drive in the west, and Woodbine Avenue in the east. Residential neighborhoods began to sprawl outwards to further outlying lands, and the industrialization of the area around Clarence Square Park continued unabated in the subsequent years. By 1912, the Ontario Parliament Buildings, Government House and Upper Canada College immediately to the west of the park had been demolished to make room for more rail yards and warehouses. Tracks were laid east and west of Spadina and immediately south of the Clarence Square site (Figure 20).

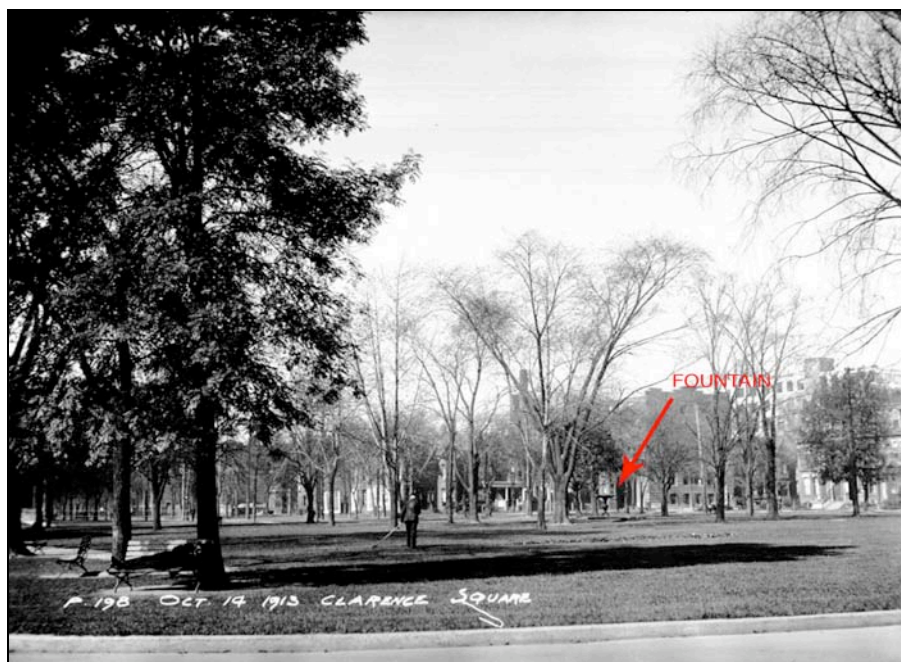


Figure 20: 1913 photograph of Clarence Square, with fountain extant at the center of the park.

The configuration of the paths in the park also changed with the evolution of the neighborhood. With the industrialization of the area, the park became less of a gathering space as originally intended, and more simply a space to pass through to get from Wellington Place and Spadina on the west to Wellington Street on the east. In a drawing produced in 1923 by the Toronto Parks Department (Figure 21), the paths are now laid out in a linear arrangement from east to west following pedestrian patterns traversing the park. In a series of aerial photographs from 1927 onward, the paths in the park can clearly be seen to begin as three arteries at the west side of the park at Spadina, and converge to a single path at Wellington Street (Figures 22 and 23). The fountain was removed as well at an undetermined time.

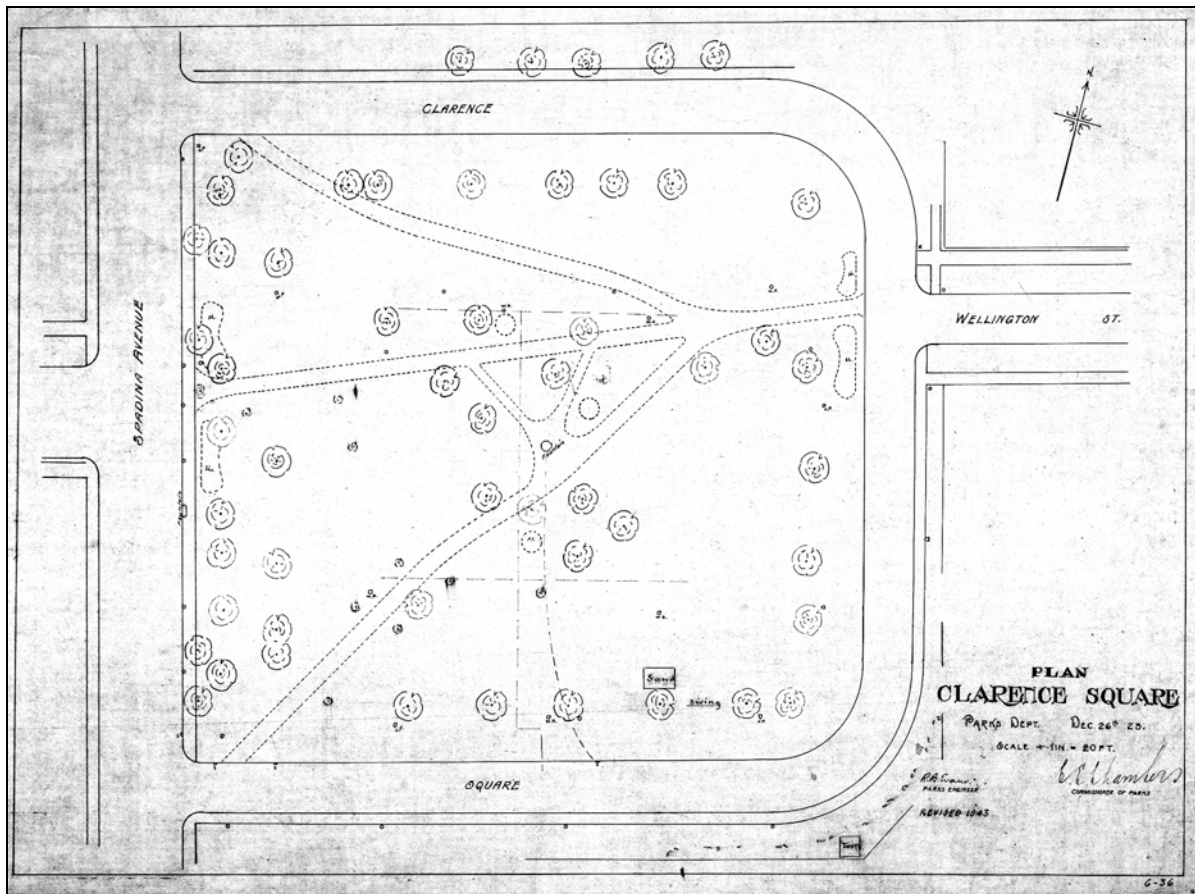


Figure 21: 1923 City Parks Department drawing showing the layout of the paths and landscaping in Clarence Square.

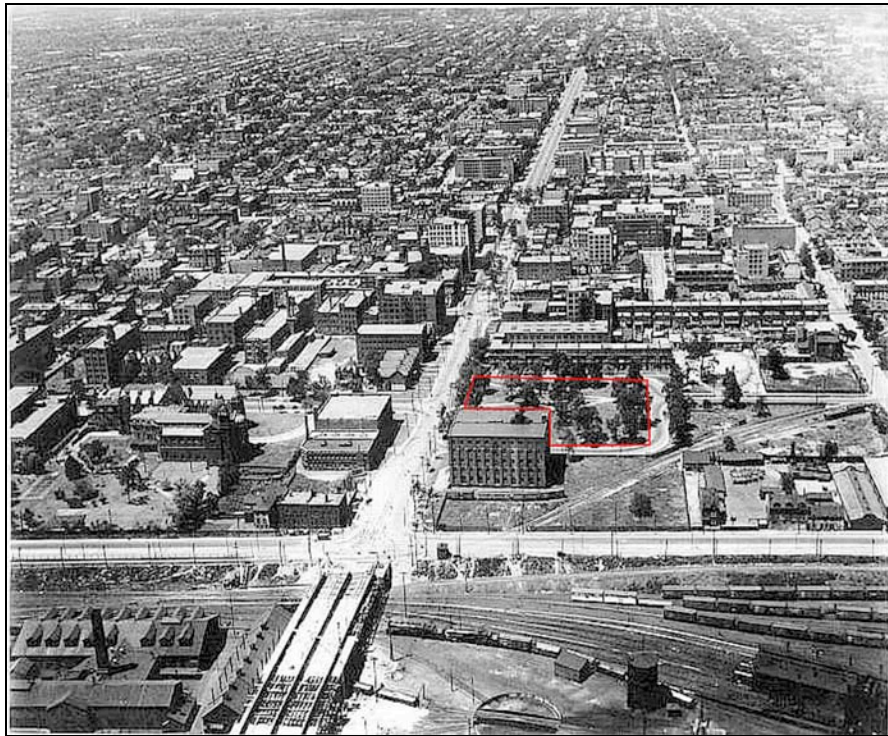


Figure 22: Aerial view from the south of Clarence Square, taken in 1927. The paths can be seen to converge at the east end of the park to meet Wellington Street. Houses to the south have been removed and industrial buildings now surround the square on all sides.



Figure 23: Aerial view of Clarence Square from 1965, showing converging paths within the park and dense rail yards immediately to the south and east.

3.0 CONCLUSION

With the boom of suburban expansion, Toronto's downtown core became increasingly industrial following the Second World War. Canadian National Railways purchased more land in the area, as the coach yard and engine terminals were positioned one block south of Clarence Square. This rail expansion and the construction of the Gardiner Expressway also further isolated nearby Fort York. Despite the transformation of this neighborhood, Clarence Square's relationship to Victoria Square remained largely intact. The sequential aerial photographs demonstrate a greatly increased industrial concentration surrounding the site, as automobile and transportation systems transformed the area. Maps of the neighborhood from the 1970's (Figure 24) capture the railway's dominance of the waterfront region, as lines and rail congestion relegated the small park into an underutilized corner of the city. As the neighborhood is witness once again to a resurgence in residential/commercial use, and industrial functions move out, the square now lies once again within a prominent and vibrant sector of the downtown core.

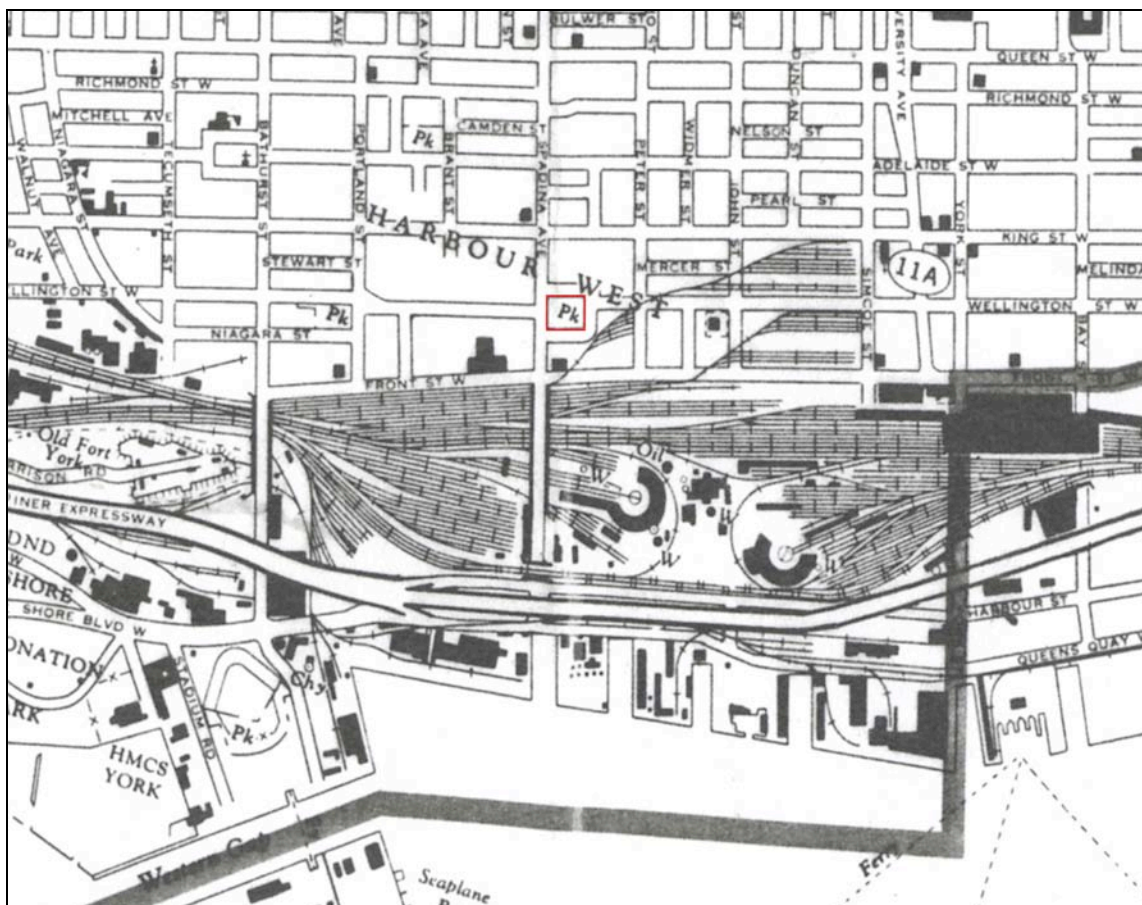


Figure 24: A map from 1974 shows the park outlined in red, sitting within an increasingly industrialized area, with rail yards and lines surrounding the site to the south and east.

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5 . 0 A P P E N D I X A

Clarence Square

August 28, 2006

David Spittal

The lands of Clarence Square are part of the original Ordnance Reserve, established by Legislative Order-in-Council and mapped in 1817. The property lay at the eastern edge of the military lands.

A plan of the area in 1836 showed the lands held by Licence of Occupation by the Senior Commissariat Officer of the British Army. His quarters lay near the corner of the present day Spadina Avenue and the south side of the park.

The property surrounding Clarence Square was reserved for a new Government House at this time.

In 1837, lands of the Ordnance Reserve between Peter Street and the Garrison Creek east of Bathurst Street were divided into housing lots and sold to private individuals. Some properties, like Victoria Square, were created at this time and maintained as freehold Ordnance lands. Clarence Square was also created at this time but set aside as a public square. The square measured 5.07 chains E-W by 5.79 chains N-S or about 2.94 acres. Clarence Square is named in honour of the Duke of Clarence, King William IV, the uncle of Queen Victoria.

The Square lay on the east side of Brock Street (the modern Spadina Avenue) opposite Wellington Place (which connected Victoria and Clarence Squares). At the rear of the square, the street then known as Market Street (Wellington Street) did not extend west past Peter Street to the square.

City of Toronto Board of Works Report No. 13 recommended on September 29 1856 that grading and turnpiking of Wellington Street on Clarence Square be contracted for and commenced immediately. This may be when the roadways around the edges of the square were first opened. Roads are not shown as part of the Square on the plan of the City published by Hugh Scobie in 1853 but are shown on the Boulton atlas of the city in 1858.

The Committee on Public Walks and Gardens reported to City Council on September 27, 1858 in its fifth report that a contract for the enclosure of Clarence Square had been awarded to William Lavin for 496 dollars.

In 1859, in the Standing Committee on Public Walks and Gardens, in their Report No. 7, recommended that the Mayor be requested to address the proper Government authorities for the purpose of obtaining titles to the Square. Subsequently, Clarence Square was ceded to the City of Toronto as a Crown Grant from the Province of Canada in March of 1860. A restrictive covenant was placed on the land at that time maintaining it as a public square forever.

The standing committee reported in 1859 that Clarence Square had been thoroughly drained and seeded down, and the committee recommended that as early in the spring as possible, the

walks should be formed and graveled, and suitable trees planted. This was done in 1859; a fence was also erected around the square and painted.

In 1860, the Committee on Walks and Gardens again recommended the planting of trees in the square. This was done in 1861.

The City's Chief Engineer reported in 1876 that a thirty inch pumping main had been laid under Wellington Street from John to Clarence Square and thence west through Clarence Square across Brock (Spadina) Street.

About this time (c. 1876), a caretaker was hired to maintain the grass and trees of the Square in the summer months. This was extended to the winter season a short time later.

In 1876, the Globe reported that the Committee on Walks and Gardens had recommended the purchase of a fountain for Clarence Square (Globe Aug 22, 1876 p.4). The fountain was twelve feet high, nine feet in diameter at the base or lowest basin, the largest overflowing basin was four feet six inches and the diameter of the upper basin was three feet. The cost of the fountain was \$12. In the City Executive Committee Report No. 3 for 1877, it was ordered that a short picket fence be erected around the fountain. The pipes of the fountain were repaired in 1880. In 1880, the Committee on Property requested that the height of the fountain be reduced. Twenty-five elm trees were requested for planting that year and 690 yards of leveling and sodding was ordered.

The Committee on Property (Report No. 4) reported to Council in 1879 that "the fencing of the Square was much in need of repair, but as the whole of it is so very much decayed, your Committee are of the opinion that it would be wasting money to repair and paint the same" and "therefore ask authority to have the present fence removed and posts and chains, or iron rods, erected in lieu thereof".

New garden seats were also asked for at this time.

Land north of the Square (originally Lot 4, Section P, Military Reserve) was subdivided and recorded 26 February, 1879 on Registered Plan D293. Lands south of the Square fronting on Front Street (originally Lots 1-3, Section O, Military Reserve) were divided and recorded on March 23, 1874 as Plan D-167. They were subsequently divided again and registered on Plans 307 (September 12, 1879) and 310 (November 21, 1879). Private dwellings were constructed both north and south of the Square in 1879.

As laid out in 1837 and ceded to the city in 1860, the Square had no circumferential roads. Neither did Wellington Street (formerly Market Street) extend west from Peter Street to meet the east side of the Square. Private dwellings constructed along the north side of the park in 1879 were serviced by a 10 _ foot laneway to the rear of these lots. To the south, a 15 foot wide back lane serviced dwellings in that area. Roadways along the edges of the Square (in the 1850s) were constructed within the original area of the square itself but were not dedicated public roads.

The Committee on Works (Report 17) recommended in 1883 that cedar block pavements and wood curbs be constructed on the north and east sides of the Square. By-Law No. 1445 was enacted by Council in August of 1884 to provide money for this construction.

Wooden sidewalks were constructed on the north side of Clarence Square from Wellington to Spadina in 1890 (Committee of Works Report 19).

In 1898, the Committee of Works recommended the construction of a 24 foot cedar block pavement on a gravel foundation with wood curbs on the north, east and south sides of the Square.

Committee of Works recommended (Report No. 17) in 1893 that a 6 foot sidewalk be constructed along the south side of Clarence Square. The same committee (Report No. 13) recommended in 1902 that five foot concrete sidewalks be constructed on the north and east sides of the Square.

In 1909 the roadway was asphalted.

City Council received in January 1910 a motion to construct permanent walks across Clarence Square.

In 1922 By-Law 9247 was enacted to make traffic one way on the streets around Clarence Square.

The roadway was resurfaced to about 25 feet in width in 1962.

In April of 1968, the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation recommended that the paved areas within the square were, in effect, part of the City's street system and that they should be formally dedicated as a public highway. In order to do this, a change to the City of Toronto Act was necessary to affect a release from the restrictive covenant of the 1860 Crown Grant of park land to the city and a city bill was required to dedicate a 66 foot wide strip of land for public purposes. Consequently, the City of Toronto Act, 1968 was enacted to vest the lands of Clarence Square in fee simple clear and free of the provisions of the original 1860 grant (Statutes of Ontario 17 Elizabeth II 1968). Subsequent to this, the City of Toronto enacted By-Law 240-68 to dedicate a 66 foot wide strip of land within the lands of the Square along the east, south and north sides of the Square for public highway purposes. In 1970, the northerly east-west portion of the street was named Clarence Square and the other parts of the street were named Wellington Street West. On March 1, 1972, City By-Law 42-72 was passed for the laying out and dedication of lands in the Square for public highway purposes.

In 1976, the City of Toronto entered into an easement agreement with the Ontario Hydro Corp. The Toronto Executive Committee recommended the adoption of a report from the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation (September 13, 1976) that the easements required by Ontario Hydro be granted and this report was adopted by Council on September 15, 1976. The easement agreements proceeded in February of 1977 and construction occurred the same year. The easement allowed the burial of two 115 kilovolt electrical lines through Clarence Square. These lines originate at the John Street transformer station and extend west to Fort York and eventually the Strachan Avenue substation. The two lines extend west along Wellington Street from the transformer station, cross the north central part of Clarence Square and then cross Spadina Avenue to Wellington Street. The buried lines are indicated on the ground in the park by Hydro markers. The total area affected by the trenches is .068 acres. The trenches for these cables were backfilled with 24 inches of clean earth and six inches of topsoil above the crushed limestone screenings protecting the cables. For the purposes of protecting the cable, no building or structure can be erected or placed above the

trenches and the trenches must remain undisturbed by any other work which might damage the cable.