<u>Item 8, Appendix 2</u> Heritage Advisory Committee Agenda – October 22, 2013

> Heritage Advisory Committee OCT 2 2 2013

# HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT ON THE PROPERTY AT 7181 LANCASTER AVENUE, MISSISSAUGA (MALTON COMMUNITY) LOT 193, PLAN 436

by Paul Dilse, Heritage Planning Consultant

for Tirth and Gursewak Singh and the City of Mississauga

August 12, 2013



Fig. 1 Front facade of bungalow at 7181 Lancaster Avenue

# HERITAGE IMPACT STATEMENT ON THE PROPERTY AT 7181 LANCASTER AVENUE

#### Background and Purpose of Statement

In 2005, the City of Mississauga adopted recommendations from a city-wide study of cultural landscapes by The Landplan Collaborative Ltd. and its associates. All the properties in the cultural landscape identified as War Time Housing (Malton) were subsequently added to the City's heritage register under Section 27 (1.2) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*.

In the Cultural Landscape Inventory, the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape was described as follows:

"This planned subdivision is located opposite the northeast corner of Pearson International Airport. The neighbourhood is close to where the original Malton Terminal was located and remains close to the present airplane manufacturing and service industry. Although some of the original houses have been altered with newer porches, dormers, raised basements and garages, many retain characteristics typical of the period with 1 to 1 roof pitches, central front doors, picture windowed living rooms to one side, kitchen and eating areas on the opposite side and bedrooms and bathrooms to the rear. According to local sources, one in four of the houses were moved from Bramalea Road when the airport was expanded in 1950. The relocated houses and lots sold for \$2,500.00 each. The street names in the area, including Churchill Avenue and Victory Crescent, act as reminders that this area was developed during the post-war period. Its significance lies in the fact that it retains a number of post-war houses which represent some of the first mass produced housing in the GTA."

The property at 7181 Lancaster Avenue in the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape is presently occupied by a frame bungalow and brick-veneer back addition. Its front facade is pictured on the report's front cover (Fig. 1). Tirth Singh and his Gursewak, propose to demolish the bungalow and addition and erect a two-storey house.

Their architect is Desmond

Roychaudhuri, who can be contacted at: 20 Davenrich Court, Brampton, Ontario L6Z 1N6; (416) 871-5761; desmondroy@gmail.com.

The heritage impact statement serves to:

• determine whether the existing property at 7181 Lancaster Avenue merits

designation under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act; and,

• if it does not warrant designation, offer measures for mitigating the impact of the proposed house on the attributes of the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape.

To study the property, heritage planner Paul Dilse and photographer Paul Till visited the site on July 11, 2013 and recorded it and its surroundings in photographs. The next day, Paul Dilse conducted a land title search for Lot 193, Plan 436 (the property's legal description) and a partial title search for the rural land preceding Plan 436 – West Half of Lot 11, Concession 7, Toronto Township, Southern Division. He also read and noted on-line sources of information about Wartime Housing Limited, the Avro Lancaster bomber and the Avro Anson training plane.

# Location and Surroundings

The bungalow at 7181 Lancaster Avenue is located in a Malton neighbourhood known as Victory Village (Fig. 2 in Appendix A). Victory Village, north of Derry Road East and east of Airport Road, is a Second World War subdivision of 200 house lots with park (Victory Park), community hall (Victory Hall) and church (Malton Bible Chapel). Lancaster Avenue lies at the eastern edge of the subdivision.

Victory Village is a community in transition. The small one-storey bungalows from the Second World War era are gradually being replaced with larger two-storey houses. The new houses are popular with extended families who can walk to the nearby Sikh temple.

Lancaster Avenue is a broad street with wide grassed boulevards (Fig. 3-4). Some silver maple trees growing in the boulevards are signs of the subdivision's maturity.

Three types of houses stand on Lancaster Avenue – 1) a one-storey bungalow with a medium-pitched gable roof, 2) a one-storey bungalow with a steeply pitched gable roof and 3) a two-storey replacement house in a variety of treatments (Fig. 5-12). The replacement houses break from the architectural and landscape patterns once prevailing in Victory Village. They are a storey taller than the Second World War bungalows, their cladding materials are different and diverse; and where they have integral garages, much of the front yard and boulevard are paved.

### <u>History</u>

Through much of the nineteenth century, the 100-acre farm on the west half of Lot 11 in

Concession 7 belonged to the McDonald family (Fig. 13). The village of Malton, which lay mostly on the west side of the town line between Toronto and Toronto Gore Townships (today's Airport Road), crossed the road to the east side and took a small tip off the farm where the Grand Trunk Railway intersected.

The Codlin family purchased 95 acres north of the Grand Trunk Railway from the estate of Eliza McDonald in 1890.

In 1937-38, the City of Toronto purchased 13 farms south of Derry Road, levelled farm buildings, and opened Malton Airport with federal and provincial government assistance. Donald Paterson in his 1957 article recounts what happened next:

"Events moved rapidly as construction of the airport began. In 1938, the National Steel Car Company of Hamilton built an aircraft factory adjacent to the airport to produce training planes. In August of that year, the first plane landed at the new airport. 1939 and the War brought the Commonwealth Air Training Plan into existence, and Malton was chosen as the location for No. 1 Elementary Flying Training School and for No. 1 Air Observers' School, through which were to pass airmen from all parts of the Commonwealth. Meanwhile, employment at the aircraft factory began to climb, bringing skilled workers from across the country. The factory was taken over by the federal government in 1942 and organized as a crown company, Victory Aircraft Limited. Employment began to climb more steeply as tooling for the production of the Lancaster bomber got underway.

By this time, steps had been taken to do something about the growing housing problem. In 1942 and 1943, Wartime Housing Limited built 208 houses and two large staff houses, providing new accommodation for about 1,000 persons. This 'temporary' community was well equipped compared to the old village, being provided with a four-room school, its own community hall, sewers and a sewage treatment plant and municipal water supply; the sewers and water supply were a luxury which the old village with its private wells, septic tanks and privies had not yet dreamed of possessing."

Wartime Housing Limited, a federal Crown corporation reporting to the Department of Munitions and Supply, was established in 1941 to provide emergency rental housing to factory workers in the war effort. Annmarie Adams and Pieter Sijpkes in their 1995 article explain:

"Upon the outbreak of World War II, Canada became a major supplier of armaments to the Allied forces. It was therefore necessary not only to build new factories all over the country (which were often located where land was available, rather than near existing housing stock) but thousands of new housing units for workers as well. At the beginning of the war, this new housing was financed under Part I of the National Housing Act of 1938, but it soon became obvious that this act, which stipulated that the federal government would guarantee part of the new house mortgage, did not fulfil the vast need for houses across Canada. In 1941, an Order in Council was passed, establishing Wartime Housing Limited (WHL).

"WHL was empowered to contract out the building of emergency housing across Canada. The units were wholly financed by the federal government and rented to the occupants. ... The buildings were designed to be prefabricated and 'demobilized' after the war in order to ensure a high salvage value for the materials employed."

Adams and Sijpkes go on to describe four basic house models erected in WHL neighbourhoods: 1) Type H1, a one-storey, 24 by 24 foot dwelling with a living room, two bedrooms, kitchen and bath; 2) the reverse of this plan; 3) Type H22, a slightly larger, 24 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> by 28-foot version of Type H1; and 4) Type H12, a one-storey, 24 by 28-foot dwelling with an additional two bedrooms in the loft enclosed by its tall roof. They include illustrations of three of the types as published in the *Journal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada* (Fig. 14).

In Malton, in April 1942, WHL expropriated 15.75 acres along Airport Road from farmer Frederick Codlin (where he and a Toronto developer had in 1939 registered a plan of subdivision), another acre on a branch of Mimico Creek for sewage disposal, and a right-of-way and easement for a sewer between the two parcels of land (Fig. 15). In June, WHL expropriated another half-acre adjacent to the parcel for sewage disposal; and in October, it took and paid for 73.36 acres contiguous to the two parcels.

In 1951, Ontario land surveyor H.C. Sewell surveyed the small subdivision of 200 house lots on the east side of Airport Road (Fig. 16). The dashed lines on his plan, Plan 436, showed the limits and streets of the 1939 plan of subdivision that was totally ignored when Victory Village was laid out. The house lots, usually 40 feet wide and 100 feet deep, were laid out in a grid that was intersected by curving Victory Crescent. Block A, where the park and community hall are, and Block B, where the church is found, were common lands in the planned community. The street names evoked the war effort. Lancaster Avenue, for example, was named for the Avro Lancaster heavy bomber, a variant of which was built at Victory Aircraft Limited in Malton. The four-engined Avro Lancaster was the main night bomber used by the Royal Air Force, Royal Canadian Air Force and squadrons from other Commonwealth and European countries serving with the Royal Air Force. The street currently called Etude Drive was originally named Anson Avenue for the standard twin-engined training plane used in the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan – the Avro Anson.

Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), successor to Wartime Housing

Limited, gradually divested itself of the subdivision's rental housing into the private real estate market. In 1963, CMHC sold Lot 193 in Plan 436 to Elmer Smith, a mechanic, and his wife, Edna, for \$3,150.00. The Smiths owed the property until 1980. The property changed hands five times between 1980 and 1989. These owners were, in chronological order, Charles and Margaret Forbes, John and Connie Borg, Benito Fionda, Umadai and Roopnarine Doobay and Thomas and Catherine Marling-Howes. According to the ledger of building permits issued in the City, the detached garage was built in 1982 and the back addition in 1985.

In 1989, Mairi Von Harten purchased the lot. Repair following fire damage was undertaken in 1998.

In 2013, Gursewak Singh bought the property from Mairi Von Harten.

# As-found Appearance of the Bungalow, its Addition, the Garage and the Lot

The wartime frame bungalow and its late twentieth century brick-veneer back addition are sited on the lot to have a front yard and back yard of some depth and narrow side yards (Fig. 17). The front yard is treeless, and the backyard has some scrub on the lot lines. The south side yard is just wide enough for a single-lane driveway, paved in asphalt and extending to a single-car garage in the lot's back corner. The north side yard is only wide enough for pedestrian passage.

Figure 1 and Figures 18 to 25 record the exterior appearance of the bungalow and its addition, the garage and the lot. Figures 26 to 34 record the interior appearance of the bungalow and addition.

The bungalow's low profile and horizontal emphasis correspond to a variant of WHL dwellings with medium-pitched gable roofs. Although the front facade's bow window, replacement double-sash window and synthetic siding are alterations, the simply designed front facade still bears some resemblance to the original form. The metal shed-roofed canopy over the front porch is also similar in form to WHL dwellings.

The hip-roofed addition is hardly visible from the street.

The bungalow's interior plan is as simple as the exterior elevations. Five rooms and a narrow front hall in the centre are contained within the bungalow – a living room, a room north of the living room, and behind the living room and north front room, two bedrooms and a bathroom placed between them.

There are not any architectural details, inside or out, to note.

# Cultural Heritage Value of the Property

The compact bungalow at 7181 Lancaster Avenue retains its wartime form and interior plan despite alterations that diminish its overall character. Built cheaply as emergency rental housing, the bungalow's small one-floor footprint was enlarged in 1985 with a back addition.

In itself, it is like many other humble dwellings from the 1940s. Its value lies in contributing to the collection of wartime houses in the Victory Village subdivision, whose house lots, common lands and both straight and curvilinear streets were laid out on land expropriated by the federal government in 1942.

As it appears today, the bungalow is not a representative example of wartime housing (Victory Housing). The property is lacking in design value (physical value) as defined in provincial criteria for determining cultural heritage value or interest. Unless the City were to designate each wartime bungalow in Victory Village for its historical value or contextual value (which is impractical), the designation of the property at 7181 Lancaster Avenue under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* cannot be supported.

# The Effect of Existing Planning Regulations on the Attributes of the Malton Wartime Housing Cultural Landscape

In terms of the built environment, a consistent scale of built features is an identified attribute that distinguishes the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape. The landscape's historical associations are also given as reasons for listing the cultural landscape.

Other physical characteristics of the cultural landscape appear to be:

- the combination of straight streets and curving Victory Crescent;
- the wide grassed boulevards planted with silver maples;
- the variants in bungalow forms those whose medium-pitched gable roofs create a low profile to the street and those whose steeply pitched gable roofs provide sleeping chambers in the upper loft; and,
- narrow driveways in the side yards and detached single-car garages located at the back of lots.

The current zoning provisions conspire against preservation of the surviving features of Victory Village. Notably, a new detached dwelling can reach 35 feet tall, its garage can span 20 feet, and a front-projecting garage is permissible. In addition, site plan control is not in effect in the neighbourhood; and the City has not developed urban design guidelines for new construction.

### Impact of the Proposed House on the Cultural Landscape

Figure 35 shows the proposed site plan. Figures 36 to 38 illustrate the proposed floor plans. Figures 39 to 42 depict the proposed elevations.

Although the proposed house was designed to satisfy the zone regulations in the zoning by-law, it is far different in character to the bungalows in Victory Village. Like other two-storey replacement houses on Lancaster Avenue, its height contrasts with the one-storey bungalows; and its pedimented bay over the double-car garage emphasizes the difference in scale. Much of the front yard is paved for a double-lane driveway, which necessitates paving of the grassed boulevard as well. The brick-veneer cladding differs from the prevailing clapboard configuration on the bungalows. The pseudo-casement windows and Palladian window do not relate to the flat-headed, double-sash windows in the bungalows. The choice of a hip roof ignores the streetscape pattern of gable roofs.

### Mitigation of Impacts

Permitted zone regulations are considered to be as-of-right unless there are other planning regulations in place – a heritage conservation district plan, Part IV designation by-law or heritage conservation easement.

Formulation of design guidelines that harmonize mass, setback, setting and materials is a feasible method for limiting negative impact.

Within the framework of the zoning by-law, the proposed design of the new house at 7181 Lancaster Avenue could be modified to mitigate its impact on the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape. The following three adjustments to the design are suggested:

1. The proposed wide driveway could be narrowed so that the curb cut and paved boulevard area is a single-lane wide. The driveway could begin in its present location on the south lot line and then widen as it approaches the garage doors.

By narrowing the driveway, the existing grassed boulevard is maintained; and more of the front yard is left as green space.

- 2. The wall cladding material on the upper floor could be differentiated from the wall cladding material on the ground floor. For instance, white or light grey brick on the lower floor and a grey wood clapboard siding on the upper floor would break up the two-storey mass and perpetuate the horizontal emphasis of the existing bungalows in Victory Village. A two-storey Colonial Revival house in the MacGregor/Albert neighbourhood in Waterloo demonstrates how its brick-veneer ground floor is visually separated by its clapboard upper floor (Fig. 43). Another approach to differentiating materials is to have a ground floor in grey stone and the upper floor in white or light grey brick. The colour palette of wall cladding materials should be in the neutral range to match or complement the prevailing colour pattern in Victory Village white, light grey or ivory.
- 3. Double-sash windows with moulded or beaded window surrounds for trim could replace the inappropriate pseudo-casement windows with their brick soldier-course heads. To serve as a model, a c. 1943 photograph in John Blumenson's book on architectural style in Ontario shows six-over-six, double-sash windows in wartime houses (Fig. 44). If the Palladian window in the front pediment is a preferred feature it is an anomaly in Victory Village it could be composed as double-sash windows to complement the other suggested double-sash windows. An example shown in Fig. 45 pictures a Palladian window with double sashes; the iron balcony in the example should not be replicated.

Efforts have been made to illustrate the suggested modifications: a revised site plan (Fig. 46), a revised front facade (Fig. 47) and a streetscape elevation showing the new house, as revised, in relation to the existing houses at 7185 and 7177 Lancaster Avenue (Fig. 48).

### Conclusions and Recommendations

The bungalow at 7181 Lancaster Avenue is by itself not a significant built heritage resource under the meaning of the Provincial Policy Statement. Its historic value lies in contributing to the collection of wartime houses in the Victory Village subdivision planned by the federal government's Crown corporation, Wartime Housing Limited.

The subdivision's small one-storey bungalows are gradually being replaced with larger two-storey houses. In addition to undermining the identified attribute of a consistent scale of built features in the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape, the taller new

houses are different from one another. The consistency of built form in the cultural landscape is being eroded away.

Existing planning regulations governing development in the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape are ineffective in preserving the neighbourhood's historic character. As well, the heritage impact statement process is often poorly understood by property owners and their agents. Its purpose seems poorly communicated to them when they come to the Planning counter.

Part V designation of a heritage conservation district under the *Ontario Heritage Act* is specifically intended for preservation of an historic area's character. Other planning tools, such as official plan policies, zoning by-law provisions and site plan control, can assist in preserving area-wide character; but they address new development and not the appearance of existing buildings. Part V designation provides the greatest protection from inappropriate development in that: 1) the heritage conservation district plan prevails over the official plan, zoning by-law, etc. and 2) its adoption prevents the municipality from carrying out public works and passing by-laws contrary to the district plan's objectives.

There are only two heritage conservation districts in Mississauga – Meadowvale Village and Old Port Credit Village. Even Streetsville which the Mayor suggested was a candidate for district designation has not been considered for the protection afforded by district designation. The current community and political support for district designation is unknown.

In advance of any heritage conservation district study of the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape, an internal planning study conducted by a City land use planner and a heritage co-ordinator should be undertaken to:

- review the existing protocol of communicating the purpose and procedures of the heritage impact statement process to applicants specifically seeking development permission in the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape;
- assess the level of architectural integrity that remains in the Victory Village subdivision by identifying the best-preserved bungalows, the least-disturbed rows of them and the places where two-storey houses have been erected;
- determine the rate of change in the Victory Village subdivision by a review of development applications over the last decade;
- assess the apparent physical condition of the bungalows and the opportunity for

their appropriate enlargement;

- compare options and combinations of options for improving planning regulations in the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape – site-specific policies in the official plan, corrections to the zone regulations, introduction of site plan control with associated urban design guidelines for the design of new houses, and designation of part or all of the Victory Village subdivision under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act; and,
- consider City policy for maintaining the subdivision's grassed boulevards and tree canopy, including the planting of new large-canopied trees.

It is recommended that the City:

- approve the demolition of the existing dwelling at 7181 Lancaster Avenue;
- seek to modify the exterior appearance of the proposed two-storey house in ways outlined in the heritage impact statement; and,
- conduct an internal planning study of the Malton wartime housing cultural landscape.

### Appendix A: Illustrations

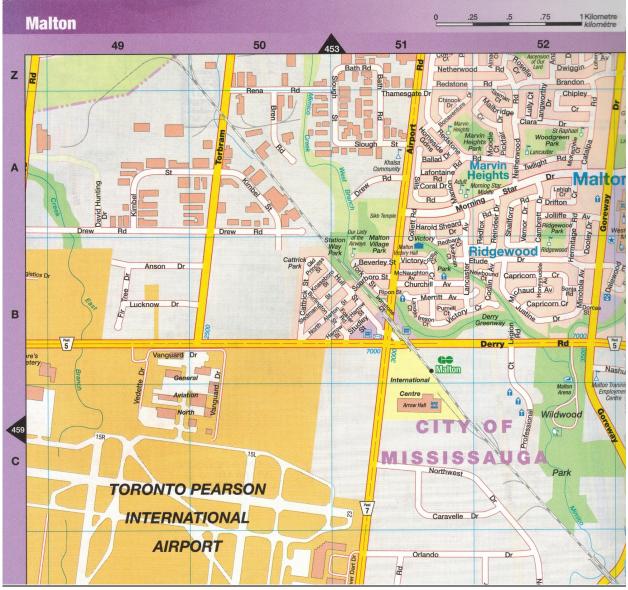


Fig. 2 Detail from MapArt, Toronto & Area (Oshawa, Ont.: Peter Heiler Ltd., 2010), pl. 460.



Fig. 3 Intersection of Etude Drive and Lancaster Avenue, looking south (7181 Lancaster Avenue is the second bungalow from the corner and is mostly hidden from view in this photograph by the hedge at 7185 Lancaster Avenue.)



Fig. 4 Wide boulevard in front of 7181 Lancaster Avenue (note silver maple in the distance)



Fig. 5 Streetscape view on east side of Lancaster Avenue, including, from left to right, 7185, 7181 and 7177 Lancaster Avenue



Fig. 6 7185 Lancaster Avenue at the southeast corner of Lancaster Avenue and Etude Drive: an example of a bungalow with a steeply pitched roof



Fig. 7 7177 Lancaster Avenue: an example of a bungalow with a medium-pitched roof



Fig. 8 7182 Lancaster Avenue, opposite 7181 Lancaster Avenue: an example of a bungalow with a medium-pitched roof



Fig. 9 7186 Lancaster Avenue at the southwest corner of Lancaster Avenue and Etude Drive: an example of a bungalow with a steeply pitched roof



Fig. 10 Replacement house closest to 7181 Lancaster Avenue, located between 7165 and 7173 Lancaster Avenue



Fig. 11 Replacement house at 7170 Lancaster Avenue



Fig. 12 Replacement house at 7157 Lancaster Avenue

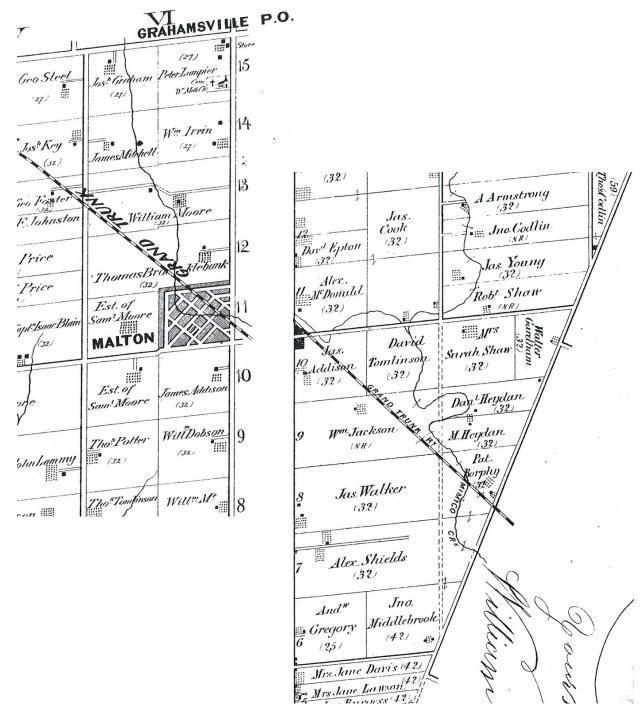
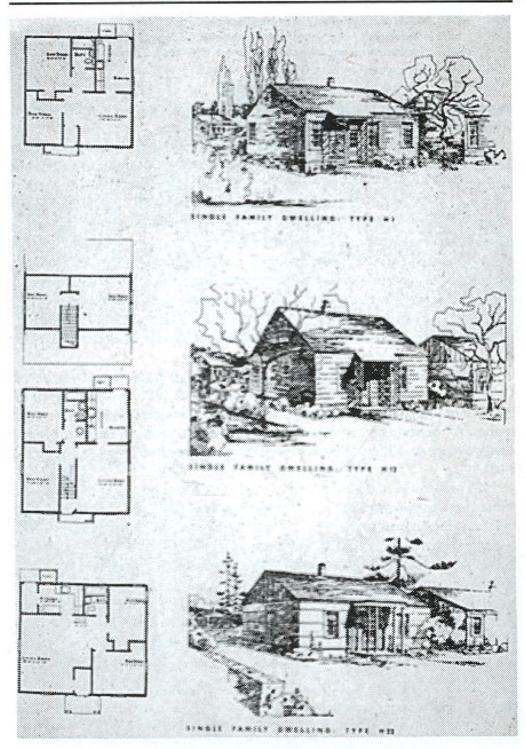
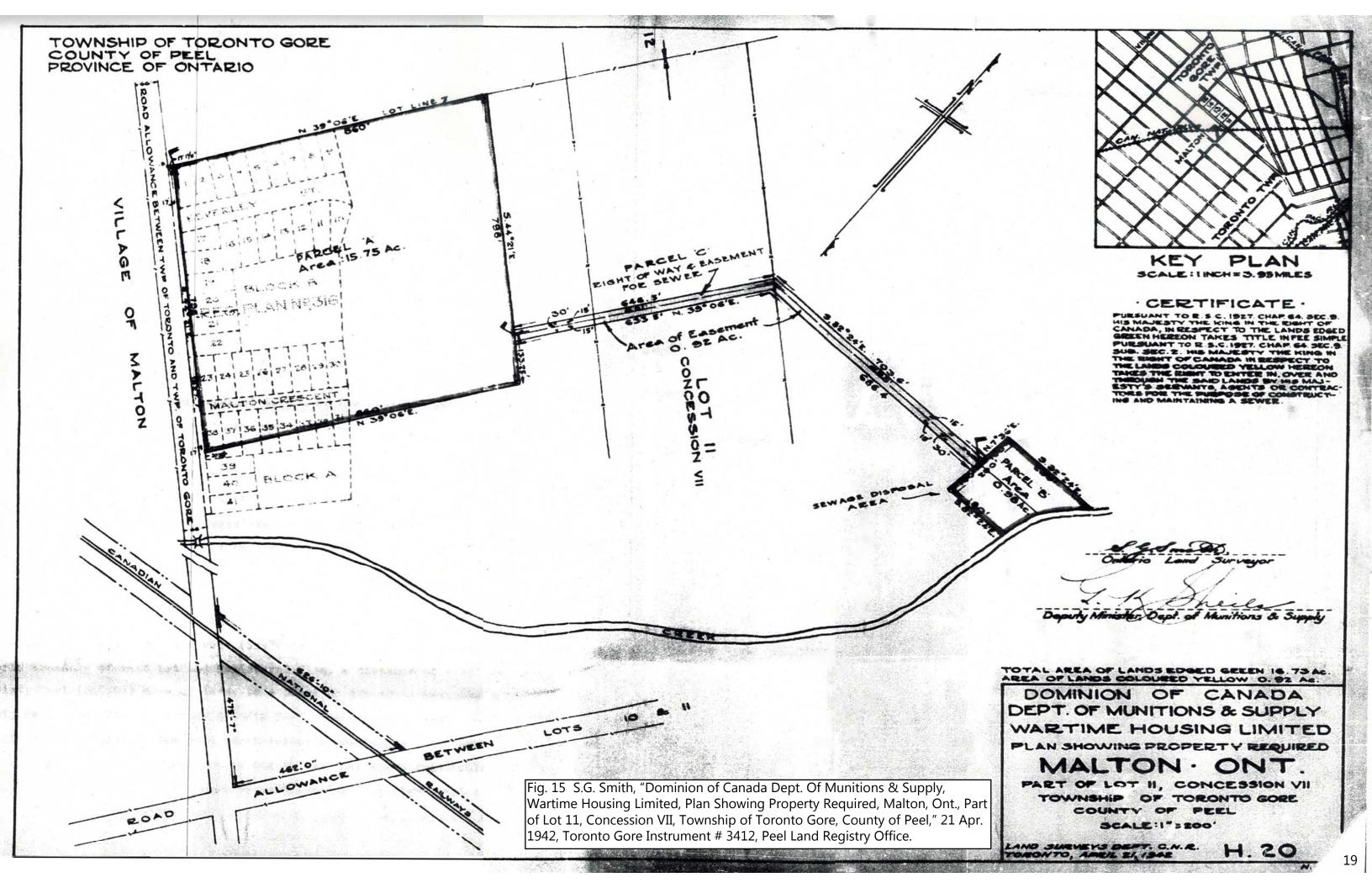


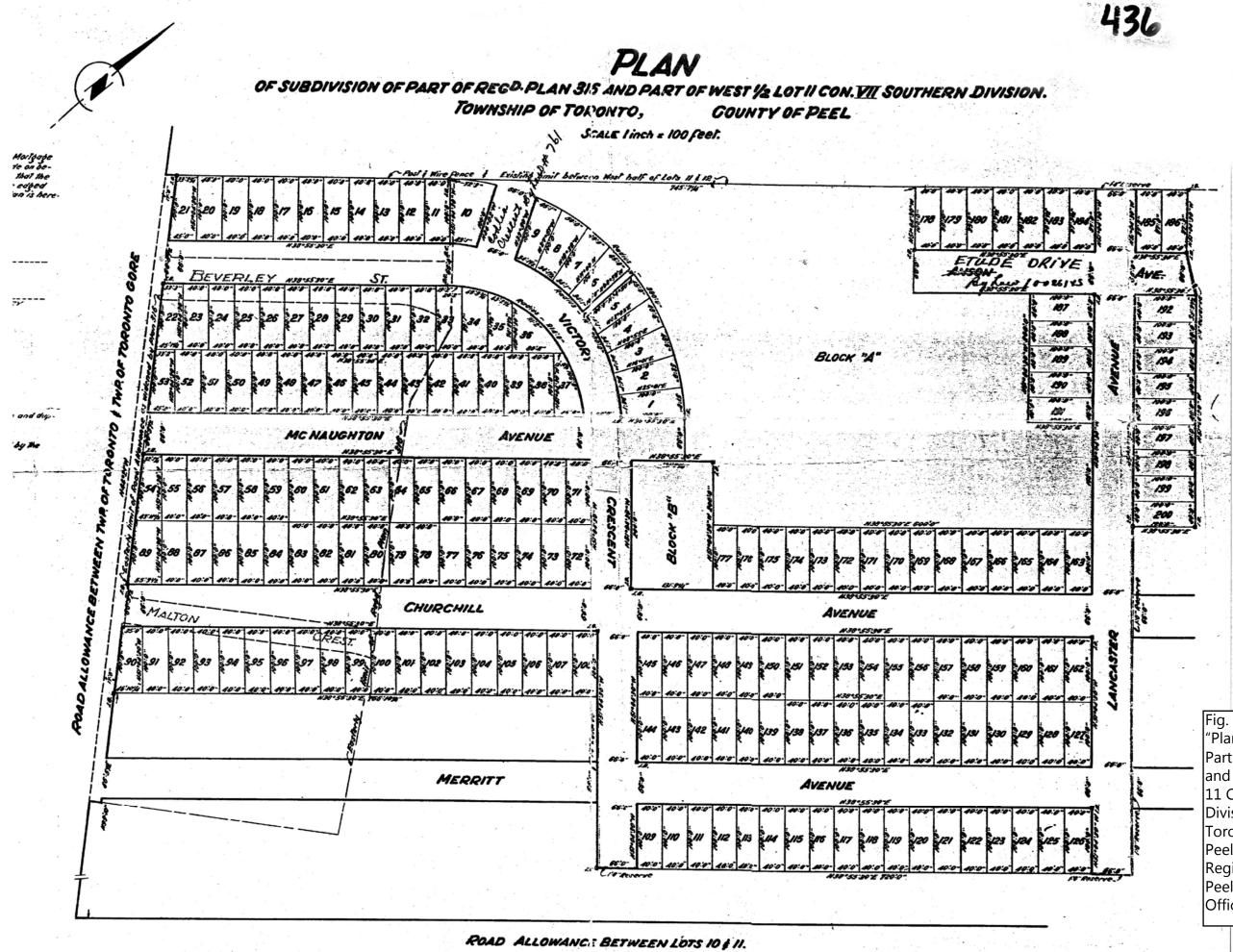
Fig. 13 Detail from "North Part of Toronto" and from "Gore of Toronto" in J.H. Pope, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Peel, Ont.* (Toronto: Walker & Miles, 1877), pp. 21 and 33.



Types of wartime housing, from RAIC Journal.

Fig. 14 Annmarie Adams and Pieter Sijpkes, "Wartime Housing and Architectural Change, 1942-1992," *Vernacular Architecture* V. 17 N. 2 (1995).





Constant Astro-



Fig. 16 H.C. Sewell, "Plan of Subdivision of Part of Reg<sup>d</sup>. Plan 316 and Part of West ½ Lot 11 Con. VII Southern Division. Township of Toronto, County of Peel," 5 Nov. 1951, Registered Plan 436, Peel Land Registry Office.

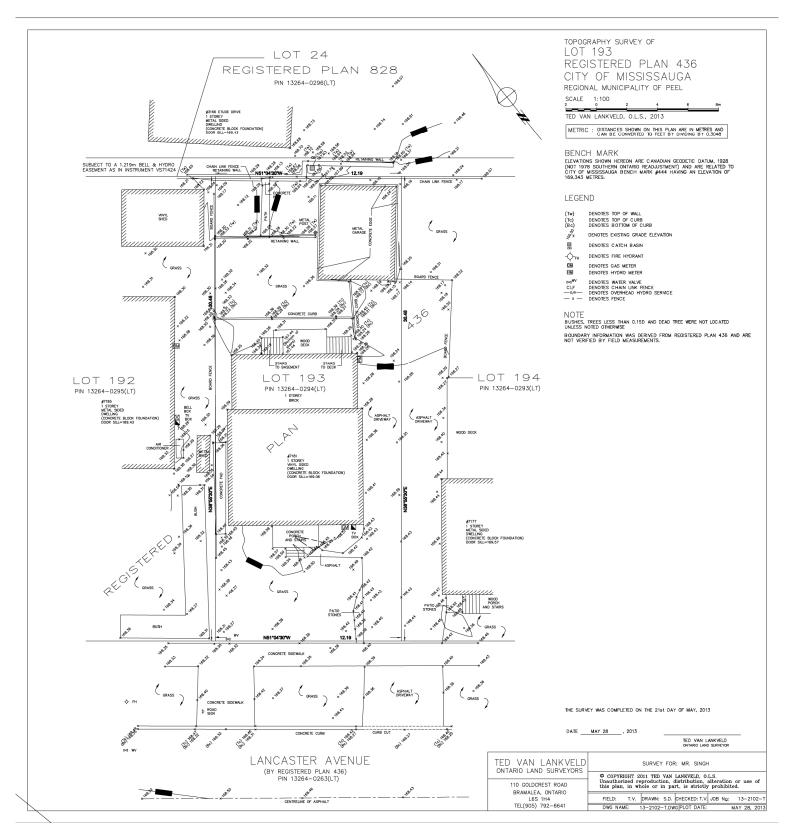


Fig. 17 Ted Van Lankveld, "Topography Survey of Lot 193, Registered Plan 436, City of Mississauga, Regional Municipality of Peel," 2013.



Fig. 18 Front facade (west elevation) and front yard



Fig. 19 Corner view, showing front facade and south elevation. At the back is a detached garage. In the background is a brick-veneer house outside of Plan 436.



Fig. 20 South side yard, looking east



Fig. 21 South side yard, looking west



Fig. 22 South elevation



Fig. 23 Rear (east) elevation



Fig. 24 North elevation



Fig. 25 Backyard, looking east



Fig. 26 Front hall



Fig. 27 Living room



Fig. 28 North front room



Fig. 29 Bedroom behind living room



Fig. 30 Bedroom behind north front room



Fig. 31 Bathroom



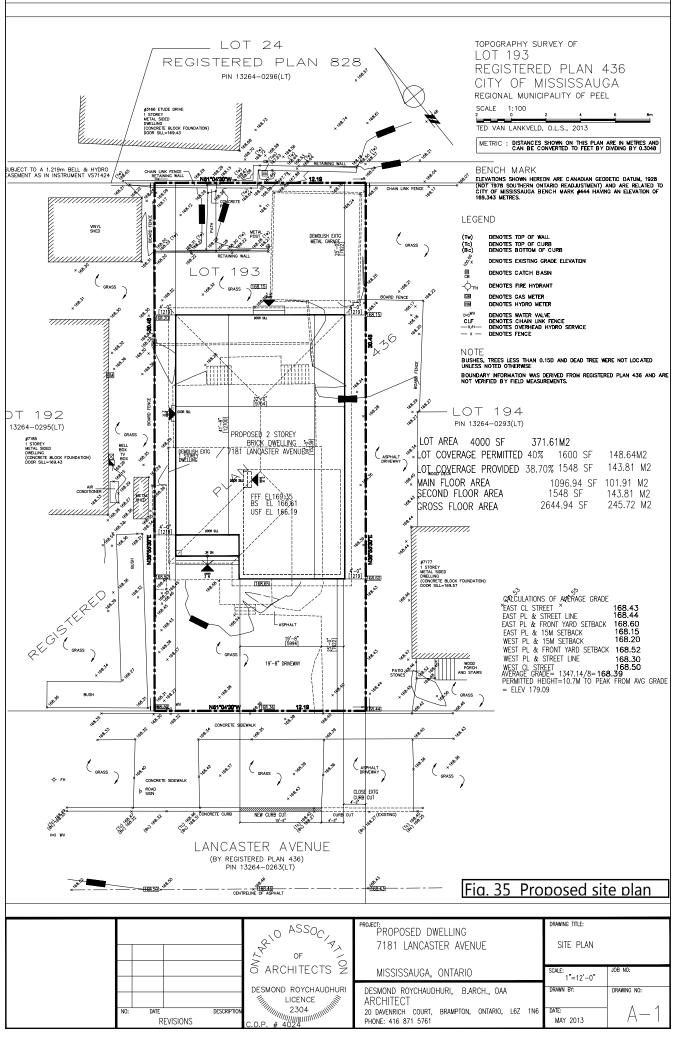
Fig. 32 Back hall and three steps up to back addition

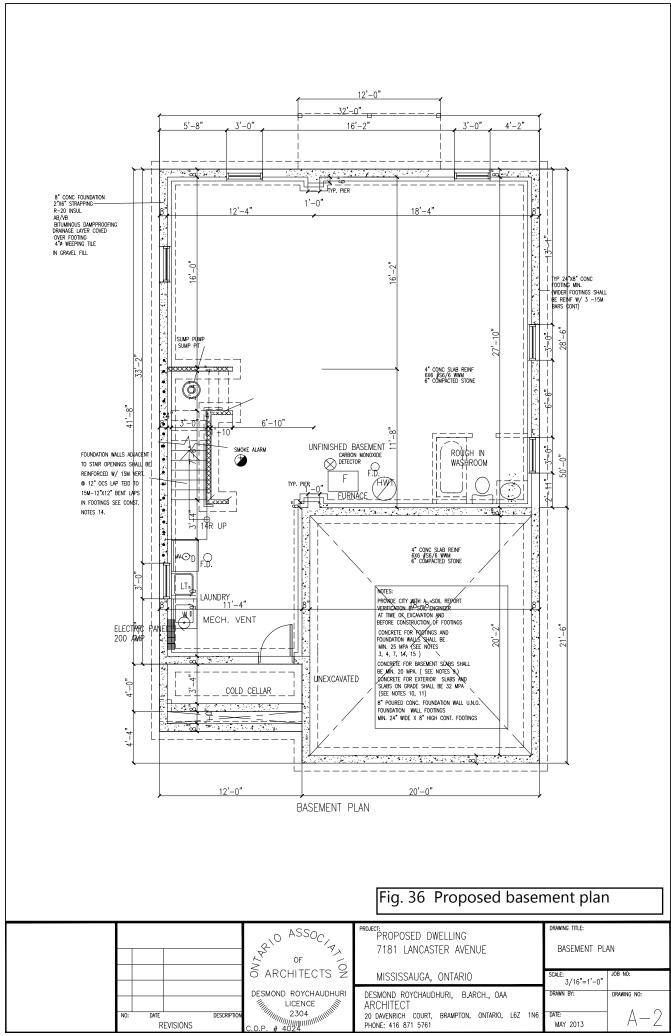


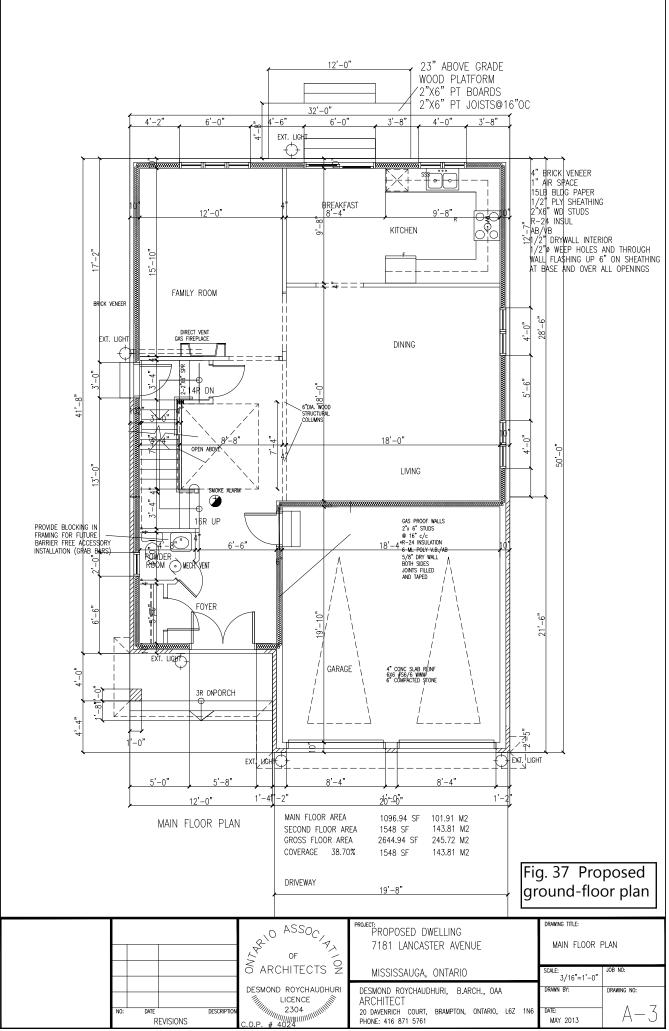
Fig. 33 Kitchen in back addition

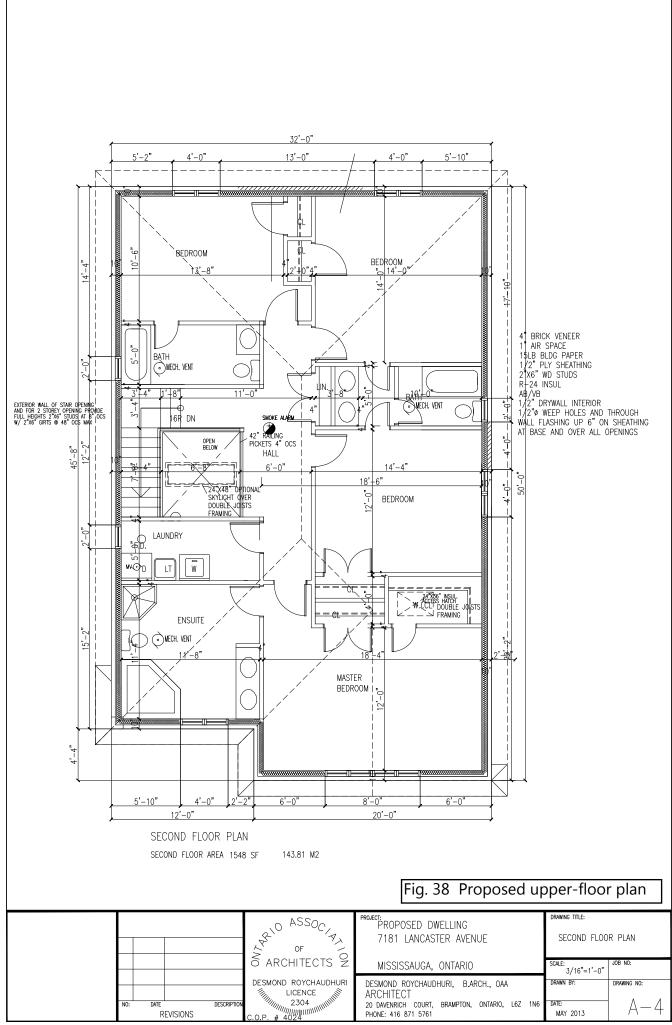


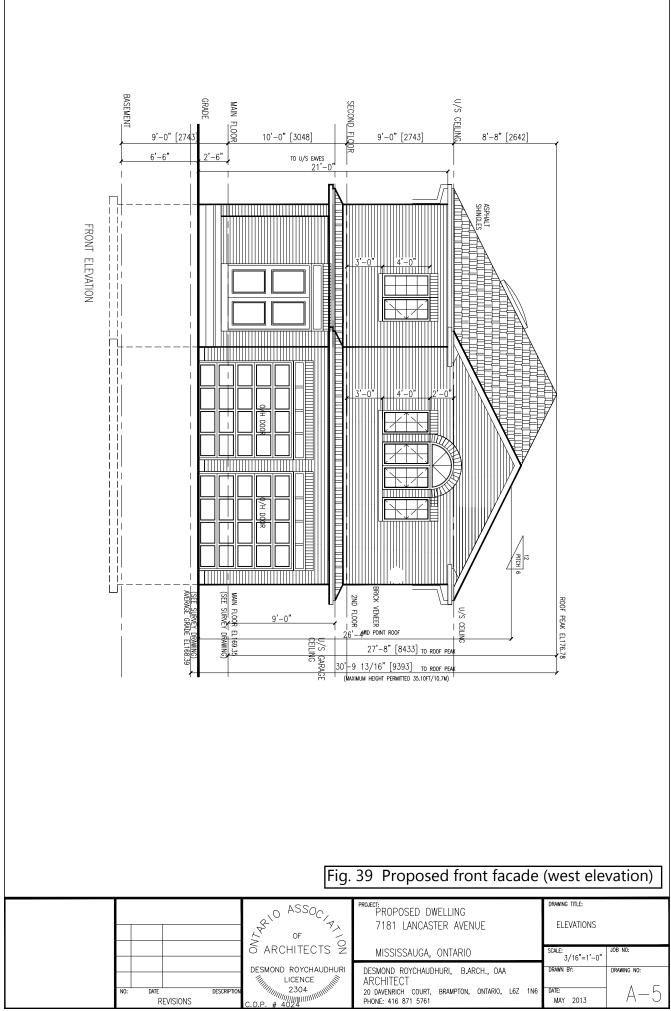
Fig. 34 Dining room beside kitchen in back addition

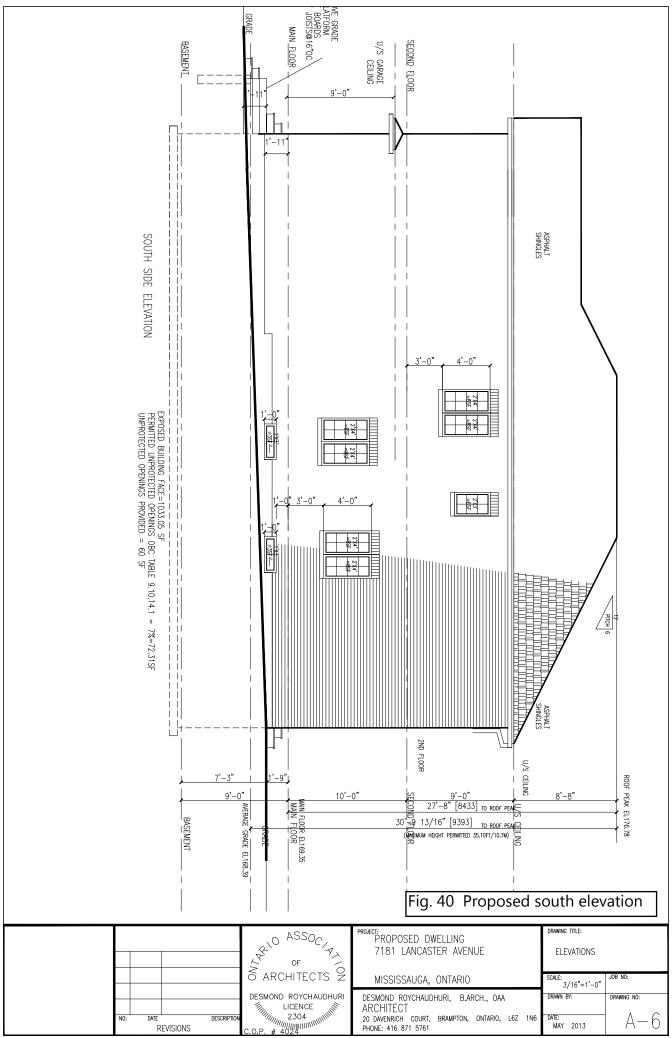


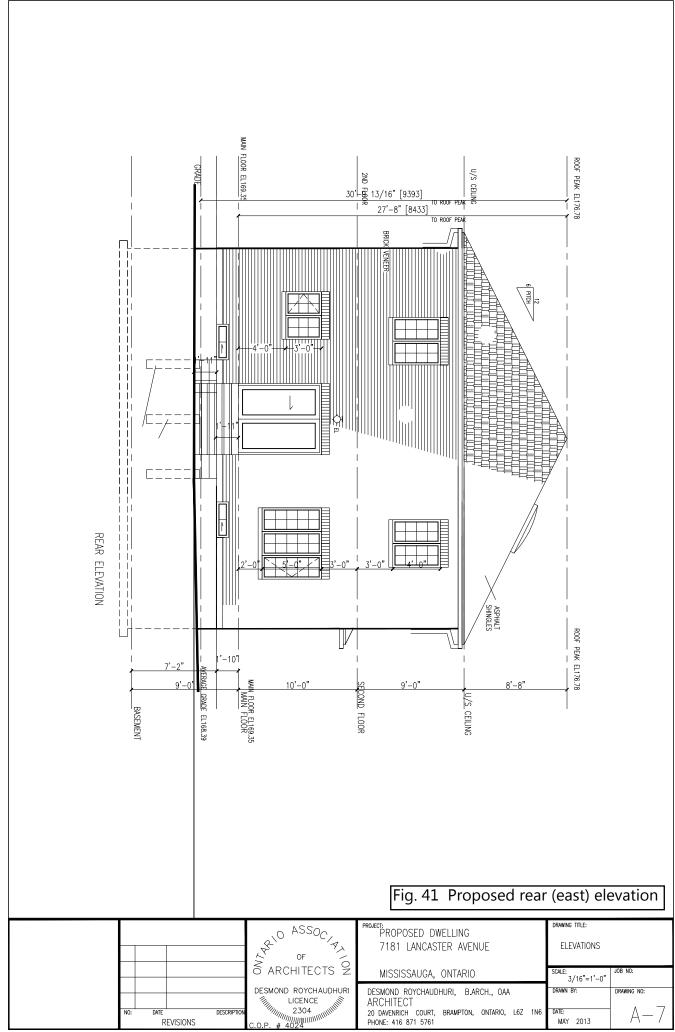












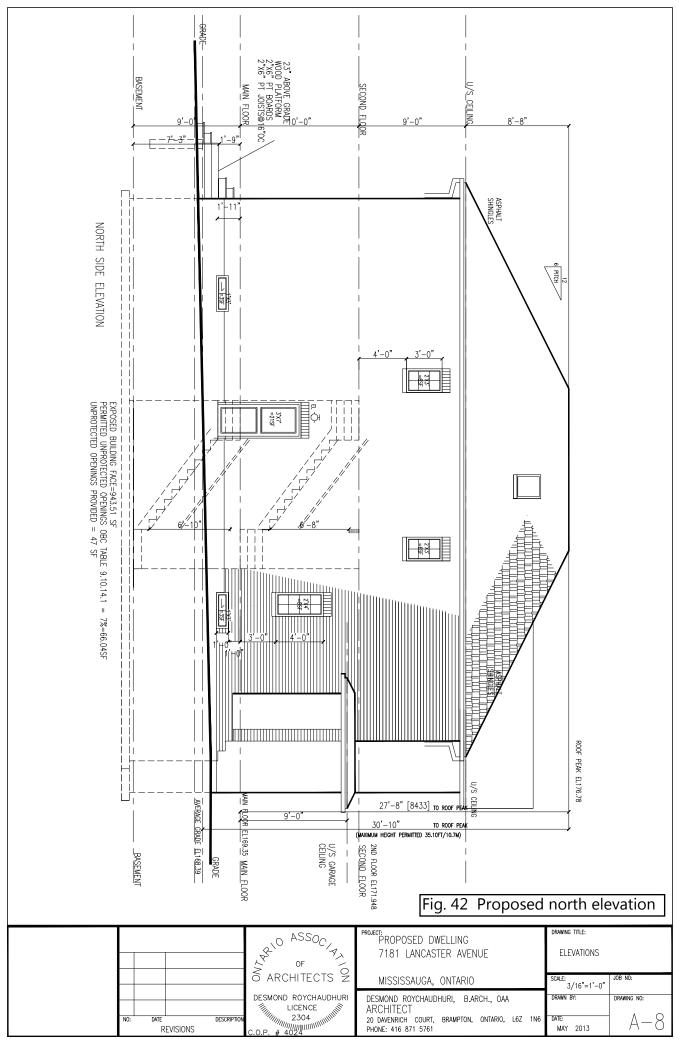




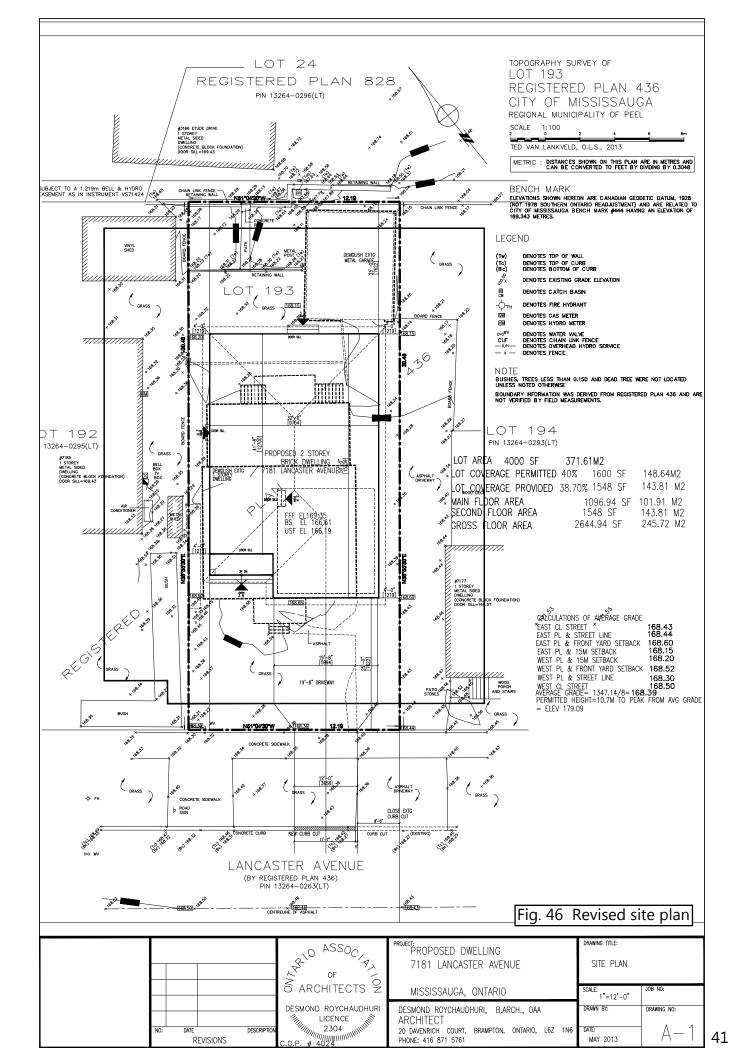
Fig. 43 Front facade of 57 Albert Street, Waterloo in Christopher Borgal, Paul Dilse and Owen Scott, "Heritage Conservation District Plan for the MacGregor/Albert Neighbourhood," 15 Jun. 2006, Appendix A, p. 5.

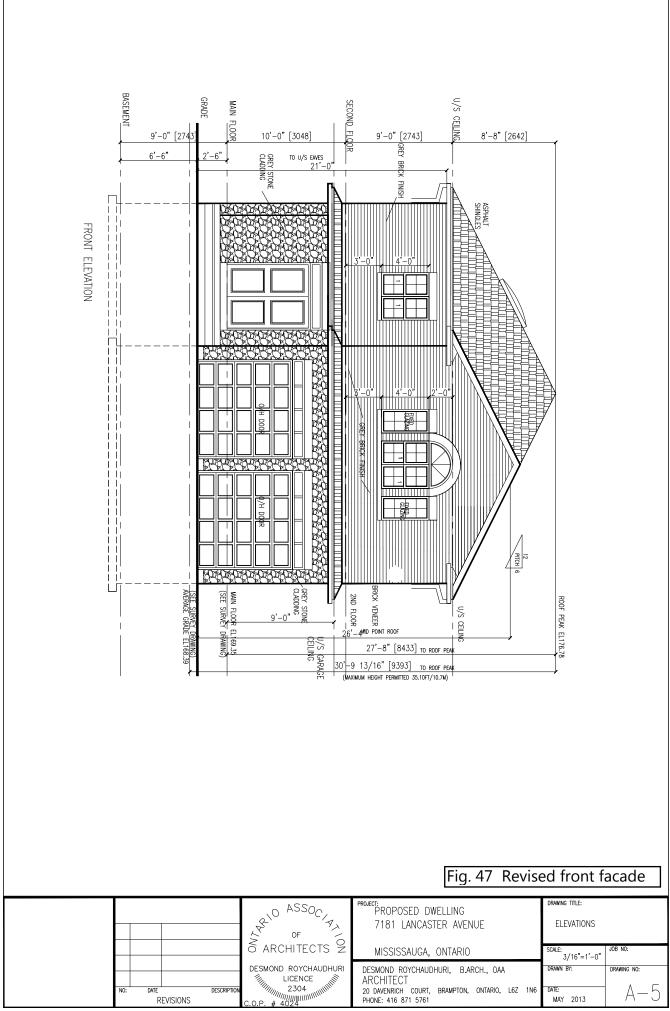


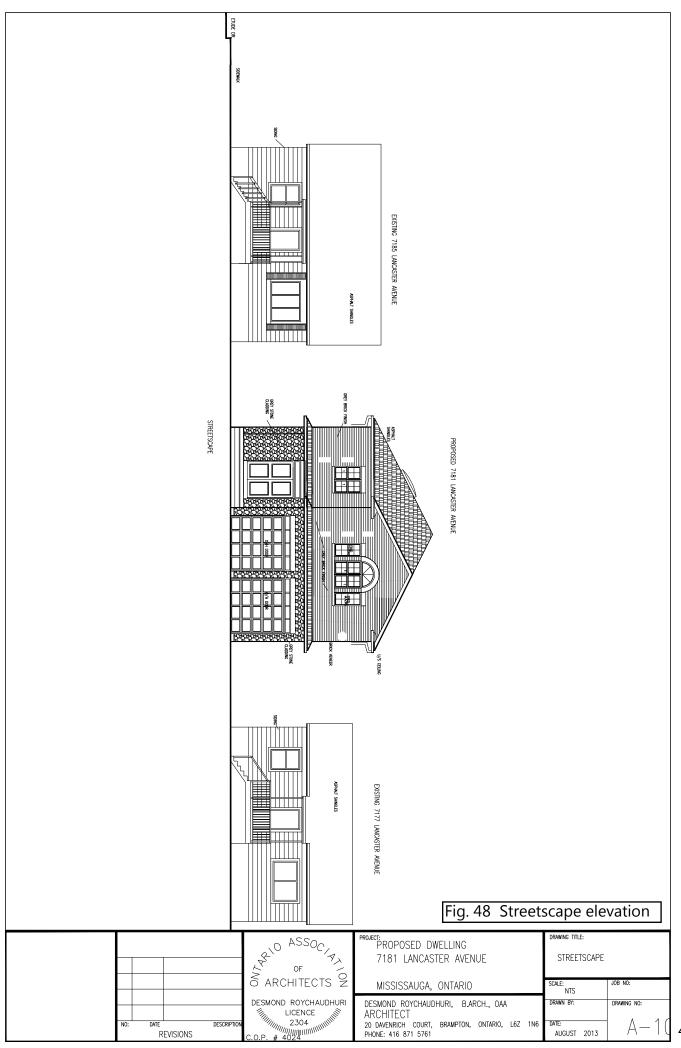
Fig. 44 John Blumenson, Ontario Architecture: A Guide to Styles and Building Terms, 1784 to the Present (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1990), p. 221.



Fig. 45 Stephen Calloway and Elizabeth Cromley, *The Elements of Style: An [sic] Practical Encyclopedia of Interior Architectural Details from 1485 to the Present* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991/96), p. 145.







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# Appendix C: Author's Qualifications

Paul Dilse has specialized in heritage planning and historical study since his graduation from the professional planning school at the University of Waterloo in 1979.

He has written official plan policies on heritage conservation for the former Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and for the City of Cambridge (his related official plan background study, in which he delineated the boundaries of prospective heritage conservation districts, has remained a reference document there for three decades). He has surveyed the entire rural and exurban municipality of the Town of Caledon to compile a comprehensive inventory of built heritage resources located on 1,643 properties. He has assessed the cultural heritage value of two French Canadian Roman Catholic churches in rural Essex County as well as the cultural heritage landscape of the David Dunlap Observatory in Richmond Hill, and successfully defended their designation under the *Ontario Heritage Act* at Conservation Review Board hearings. He has also provided expert witness testimony at the Ontario Municipal Board, successfully defending the designation of the first heritage conservation district in the Town of Markham and contributing to the positive outcome in favour of retaining a complex of rare garden apartments in the Leaside neighbourhood of Toronto.

In addition to the Thornhill-Markham heritage conservation district, he has produced heritage conservation district plans for Old Port Credit Village in Mississauga, the MacGregor/Albert neighbourhood in Waterloo and Lower Main Street South in Newmarket. His study of the George Street and Area neighbourhood in Cobourg led to its designation as a heritage conservation district – the fourth in the town. He is also the author of a report on the feasibility of establishing heritage conservation districts in Downtown Brampton and co-author and editor of a report describing three prospective heritage conservation districts in Downtown Whitby. As well, he has prepared conservation-based design guidelines for the historic commercial centres of Alliston, Beeton, Tottenham and Picton.

Since 2004 when municipalities in Central and Southwestern Ontario started requesting heritage impact assessments from him, he has written 50 such reports. He has written text for commemorative plaques, including several for the Ontario Heritage Trust, and has planned an extensive program to interpret the history of the Freeport Sanatorium at the Grand River Hospital in Kitchener. His major work in 2011, a history of the Legislative Building in Queen's Park and a statement on its cultural heritage value, forms part of an historic structure report commissioned by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Paul Dilse is qualified as a planner and historian by the Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals, of which he is a founding member.