

APPENDIX D: BACKGROUND RESEARCH & ANALYSIS

The following summarizes historical research and analysis of the Site done in preparation for this report.

2.1 Historical Context

Pre-European Contact

The Site is located on the traditional territory of the Wendat (Huron), the Anishinabeg, Haudenosaunee, Metis, and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

Archaeological evidence suggests that the Wendat (Huron) occupied and cultivated portions of the land that would become Toronto as early as the 15th century. European contact, the fur trade and disease initiated the displacement of the Wendat (Huron) in the 17th century, whereupon the Haudenosaunee occupied the territory.

The territory is the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Anishinabeg and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

Early European Settlement

In 1787, British Loyalists negotiated the first Toronto Purchase from the Mississaugas of the New Credit, purchasing over 250,000 acres of land for small amounts of money and supplies, including gunflints, rifles, mirrors, and European clothing. In 1805, the 1787 Purchase was revised and the two documents were amalgamated as Crown Treaty Number 13.

The British moved quickly to survey these newly acquired lands for the purposes of establishing their own settlement. In 1793, the Town of York was established as the capital of the Province of Upper Canada. The original Town – now known as “Old Town” - was laid out as a compact 10-block gridiron bounded by Front, George, Duke, and Berkeley streets. In 1794, construction began on the first Legislature of Upper Canada; two simple military barracks near Front Street East and Parliament Street, named the Palace of Parliament.

In 1797, 5 years after the establishment of the Town of York, government administrator Peter Russell created a “New Town” extension of the original town, extending west from Jarvis Street to the ordnance boundary of Fort York’s 1000-yard firing range. The new western boundary was named Peter Street by Russell, after himself.

Within this new extension of York, John Elmsley, the first resident Chief Justice of Upper Canada, built a large estate on the block bounded by King Street, Simcoe Street, Wellington Street West and John Street. In 1813, the provincial government purchased the Elmsley property for use as the Government House, the residence of the Lieutenant-Governor.

Following the battle of York in 1813, in which American forces burned down the original Palace of Parliament, a new pair of Georgian-styled Parliament Buildings were constructed at Simcoe Place, directly south of the Government House and west of the Site. These structures were destroyed by an accidental fire in 1824, prompting the House of Assembly to meet at the York General Hospital at King Street West and John Street (see Figure 12). By 1832, the Parliament Buildings were reconstructed at Simcoe Place.

Establishment of the Urban Core

With the construction of Upper Canada College on the northwest corner of King and Simcoe Streets in 1831, a pattern of institutional buildings and uses was established within the southern portion of New Town. Front Street West, with its unobstructed views of Lake Ontario, became the residential street of choice for Toronto’s fledgling aristocracy.

In 1841, Upper Canada was absorbed into the Province of Canada, and its capital began rotating between various locations. The Parliament Buildings, to the west of the Site, served as the seat of government for the new province between 1849 -1859. Following Confederation in 1867, the Parliament Buildings became the home of the Ontario Legislature until the completion of the existing Legislature Building at Queen’s Park in 1893.

Beginning in the 1850s, the lake south of Front Street was in-filled to accommodate the construction of railway lines and industrial uses. The Esplanade, a 30m-wide embankment into the harbour, was completed in 1856, creating developable land to the south of Front Street West.

By 1858, the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) constructed the first Union Station; a series of wooden structures on the south side of Front Street West, between Simcoe Street and York Street, shared with the Northern Railway of Canada and the Great Western Railway. The newly created land was occupied by rail lines and switching yards, with industrial warehouses and manufacturers located at their periphery.

Railway Expansion and Industrial Growth

By the 1870s, the original Union Station struggled to accommodate the city's growing industrial capacity and population. As a result, the GTR constructed a new, larger Union Station on the same site in 1873. Designed by Thomas Seaton Scott in the Italianate/Second-Empire style, the new Union Station was the largest and most opulent railway station in Canada at the time.

As the GTR absorbed several smaller railways serving Toronto, passenger trains were increasingly consolidated at Union Station. By 1884, with the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway, traffic at the station surpassed sixty trains a day. The station was expanded north towards Front Street in 1892, with an arcade extending over Station Street connecting the new section to the old.

Increases in passenger attracted hotels, taverns and shops to the blocks near Union Station, including the Avondale Hotel on the Site. As the industrial presence surrounding Union Station increased, administrative and institutional functions, and their associated residences, were relocated to the city's rapidly expanding northern fringe.

By 1903, the Grand Trunk Railway purchased the parcel formerly housing the Parliament Buildings for further expansion of the GTR freight yards. In addition, the parcel containing Upper Canada College was subdivided and redeveloped for industrial uses (see Figure 13).

Following the Great Fire of 1904 that engulfed the area bound by Melinda Street to the north, the Esplanade to the south, Yonge Street to the east and the west side of Bay Street, many industrial uses relocated in the vicinity of the GTR yards, further intensifying the area's industrial character. Shortly afterwards, the Canadian Pacific Railway purchased the Government House lands, demolishing the Government House in 1912 and replacing it with a CPR Express Building and freight yards.

Auto-Oriented Development

mid-1970s, Canada's 'Big Five' banking institutions, comprised of CIBC, RBC, BMO, TD and Scotiabank, had all constructed large head offices within the area bound by University Avenue to the west, Yonge Street to the east, Queen Street to the north, and Front Street to the south.

By the early 1970s, the CPR declared their Express Building and freight yards (formerly the Government House lands) as surplus. As part of the planned redevelopment of the block Marathon Realty, the development division of the CPR, offered the site to the City for the construction of a new concert hall. Roy Thomson Hall was opened in 1982, beginning the area's transition into one of the city's cultural hubs; the Entertainment District.

Through the late-20th and early-21st centuries, development in the area intensified, as former surface parking lots were redeveloped for multi-storey towers containing residential and commercial uses. Cultural and institutional uses also continued to locate in the area, with the completion of the CBC Centre in 1992, the Princess of Wales Theatre in 1993, and Canada's Walk of Fame in 1998.

Development in the Entertainment District has further intensified in recent years, with the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of former industrial buildings for residential and hotel uses, and the construction of numerous mixed-use developments.

2.2 Site History

Following the establishment and expansion of the Town of York, the Site was located at the northwest corner of Bishop John Strachan's estate, which stretched from Front Street north to Market Street (now Wellington Street West), and from York Street west to Graves Street (now Simcoe Street). Strachan constructed a large house to the south of the Site in 1817-18, which remained until its demolition around 1943.

Following the in-filling of Lake Ontario south of Front Street and the construction of rail infrastructure in the mid-19th century, the Strachan estate was subdivided and sold for redevelopment.

A review of archival mapping and city directories indicates the parcel containing the Site was initially developed in 1883, with the construction of the Continental Hotel (owned by F. J. O'Hara) at the corner of Simcoe

Street and Wellington Street (57-59 Simcoe Street). The hotel was renamed the Avondale Hotel in 1894, changing names again to the Grand Central Hotel in 1902.

City directories indicate the development of industrial uses at 145 Wellington Street West (at the northeast corner of the Site) generally corresponds with the relocation of many of the city's industrial functions westward, following the Great Fire in 1904. By 1913, several industrial and manufacturing uses were located on the Site in addition to the Grand Central Hotel, including, a button manufacturer, surgical instruments manufacturer, and publisher.

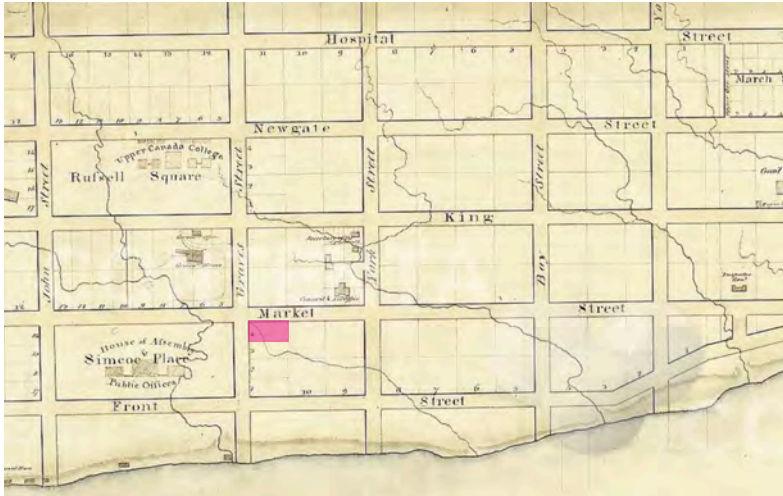
The 1925 City Directory indicates that 145 Wellington Street West was named the Cobalt Building, although it remained occupied by industrial manufacturers. The building renamed in 1934, becoming the Stevens Building, although it too remained occupied by industrial manufacturers.

In 1927, the Grand Central Hotel at 57 Simcoe Street was renamed the Continental Hotel. City directories indicate the Continental Hotel was in operation until 1934, after which the building was removed and replaced by a surface parking lot. Aerial photographs show that the surface parking lot remained until the mid-1980s.

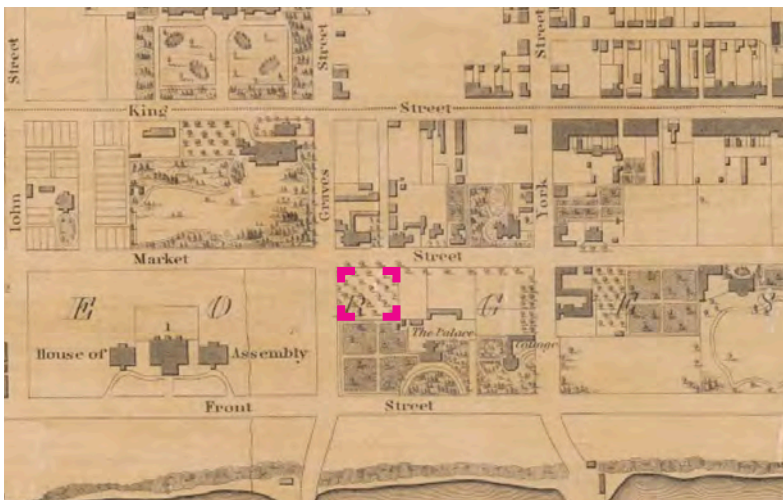
A review of aerial photographs and City Directories indicate that the Stevens Building at 145 Wellington Street remained in operation until the 1970s. By 1976, the building was removed and the whole of the Site was used as a surface parking.

The existing building on the Site was completed in 1987, infilling the surface parking lots that had been in use through the 20th-century.

Site Evolution



27. 1827 J. G. Chewett Map of the Town of York, West Canada, showing the approximate location of the Site in pink; note the House of Assembly Public Offices to the southwest of the Site. (Source: City of Toronto Archives, annotated by ERA Architects).

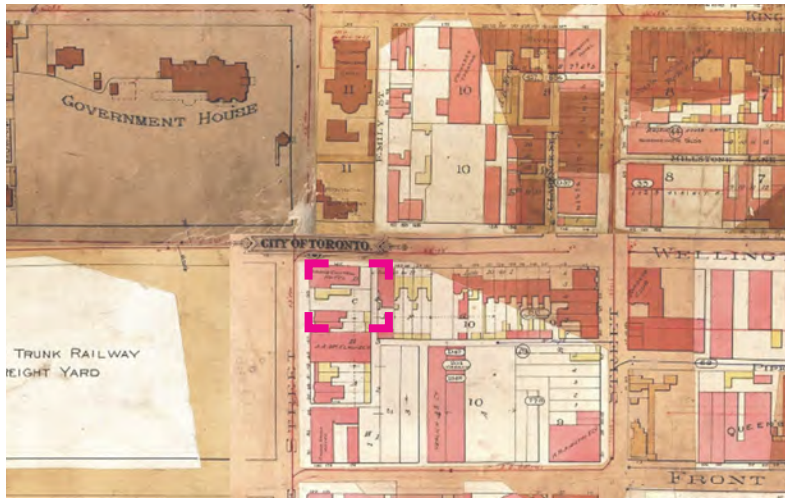


25. 1842 Cane Map, with the approximate location of the Site in pink. (Source: City of Toronto Archives, annotated by ERA Architects)

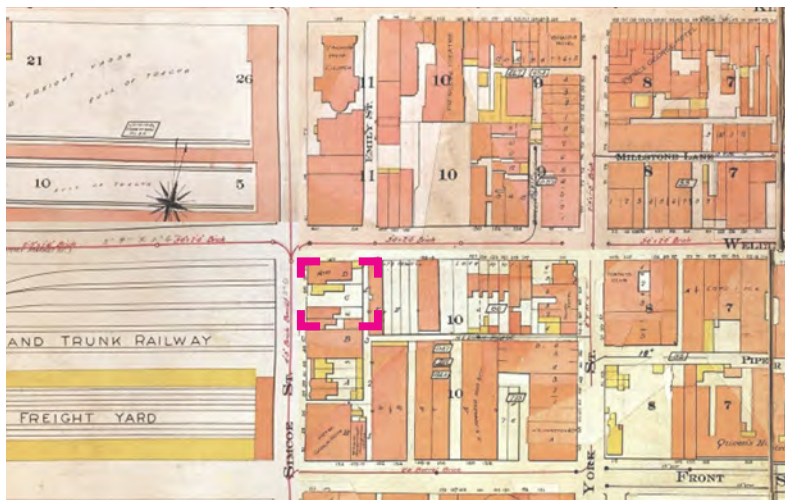


26. 1884 Goads Fire Insurance Plan showing the approximate location of the Site in pink; note the renaming of Market Street to Wellington Street West, in addition to the development to the east and west of the Site, along Wellington Street West. Infill of Lake Ontario for industrial uses can be seen to the south of Front Street. (Source: City of Toronto Archive, annotated by ERA architects).

Site Evolution



28. 1903 Goads Fire Insurance Plan showing the approximate location of the Site outlined in pink; note the redevelopment of the Ontario Government buildings to Grand Trunk freight yards, to the west of the Site. (Source: City of Toronto Archive, annotated by ERA architects).



29. 1924 Goads Fire Insurance Plan showing the approximate location of the Site outlined in pink; note the presence of 145 Wellington Street at the eastern edge of the parcel, as well as the expansion of the Grand Trunk freight yards to the north side of Wellington Street West. (Source: City of Toronto Archive, annotated by ERA architects).



30. 1947 aerial photograph with the Site outlined in pink. Note the realignment of University Avenue to the east of the Site. (Source: City of Toronto Archive, annotated by ERA architects).

By the late 1920s, with a growing population and increased car ownership, downtown traffic congestion had become a significant issue in the city. With a pressing need to increase the number of thoroughfares through the city core, University Avenue was selected for expansion south of its then-terminus at Queen Street. In 1928, the Advisory City Planning Commission recommend University Avenue be continued south to Richmond Street, then extended in a south-easterly direction, terminating at Front Street, opposite the new Union Station.

To mask the shift in alignment at Richmond Street, the Commission suggested the construction of a monumental traffic circle around a vast memorial to Canada’s fallen service members (see Figure 9), naming the project Vimy Circle. In addition, Vimy Circle would have incorporated an axial road, running south-easterly from the circle to merge with Wellington Street at Spadina Avenue.

Although the expansion and realignment of University Avenue south of Queen Street was completed in 1931, the stock market crash of 1929, and ensuing Great Depression of the 1930s, saw the remainder of the Vimy Circle plan shelved. Development in the area was further limited through the interwar period, largely due to material and financial constraints brought about by the Second World War (WWII).

Post-War Redevelopment

Following WWII, industrial uses, rail and shipping activity declined throughout the inner-city, and the area was steadily rehabilitated for a range of cultural, institutional and office uses. In addition, several changes in land use were linked to the growing prevalence of auto-ownership.

In 1962, University Avenue was extended further south, to connect to the newly-constructed, elevated portion of the Gardiner Expressway. Around this time, King Street West began to develop as a hub of cultural activity, largely driven by Ed Mirvish’s investment in the Royal Alexandra Theatre and several nearby restaurants. From the mid-1960s onward, as cultural and office uses increased, portions of the GTR lands were redeveloped into surface parking lots to serve these emerging uses.

Although several financial institutions had established themselves to the east of the Site through the late-19th and early-20th centuries, the second half of the 20th-century saw an intensification of financial services and the birth of Toronto’s present-day Financial District. By the

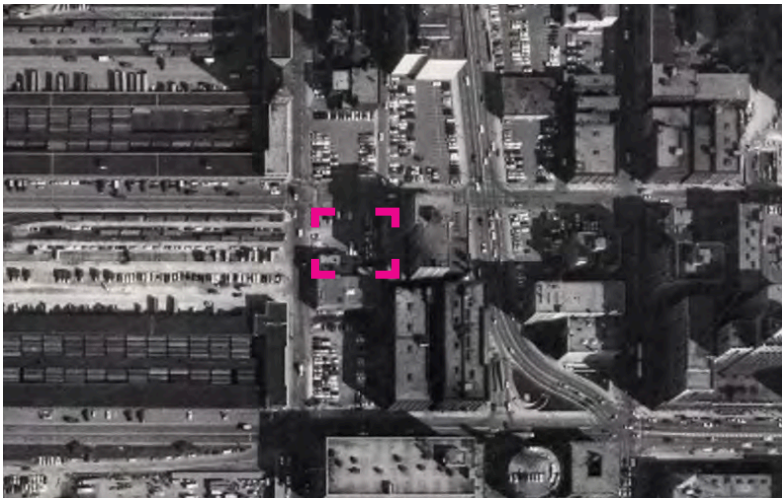


31. 1929 Vimy Circle Plan (Source: City of Toronto Archives)

Site Evolution



32. 1957 aerial photograph with the Site outlined in pink. (Source: City of Toronto Archive, annotated by ERA architects).



33. 1967 aerial photograph with the Site outlined in pink. Note the re-development of the parcel to the south of the Site, and portions of the Grand Trunk freight yard to the west, to surface parking lots. (Source: City of Toronto Archive, annotated by ERA architects).

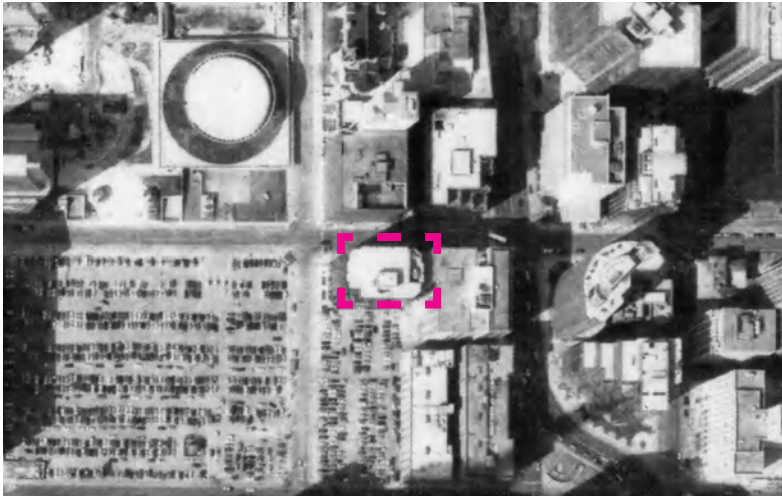


34. 1977 aerial photograph with the Site outlined in pink. Note the removal of 145 Wellington Street West and the redevelopment of the Grand Trunk freight yards to surface parking, to the west of the Site. (Source: City of Toronto Archive, annotated by ERA architects).

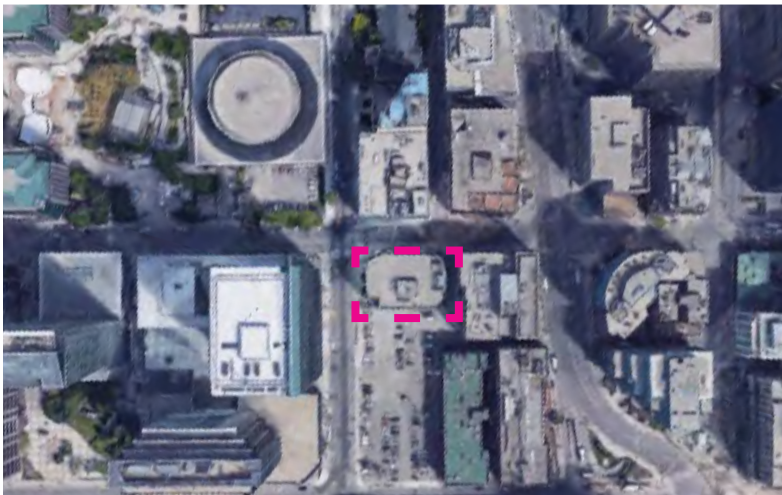
Site Evolution



35. 1987 aerial photograph with the Site outlined in pink; note the construction of the existing building on the Site, in addition to the construction of Roy Thomson Hall, to the northwest. (Source: City of Toronto Archive, annotated by ERA architects).



36. 1992 aerial photograph with the Site outlined in pink. Note the demolition of the building to the south of the Site for surface parking (Source: City of Toronto Archive, annotated by ERA architects).



37. 2015 satellite view with the Site outlined in pink. Note the redevelopment of the surface parking lots to the west of the Site. (Source: City of Toronto Archive, annotated by ERA architects).

2.3 Design

The Site currently contains a 13-storey office building. The building is rectangular in plan with a series of projecting bays running nearly the full height of each elevation. Materials consist primarily of green, reflective glazing, with small portions of both transparent glazing and granite panelling at grade.

2.4 Architect

Online resources consulted indicate 145 Wellington Street West was designed by E.I. Richmond, Architect. The firm remains active as Richmond Architects Ltd.

ERA