

# The Development of an Interwar Suburb: Kingsway Park, Etobicoke

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Article abstract

An examination of planned suburbanisation is provided in this study through a discussion of the activities of the Home Smith and Company, and in particular, by an examination of the development and building of one of the Company's premier subdivisions, Kingsway Park. The study presents further evidence that the inter-war period encompassed a pivotal period in the evolving city-building process, bridging the transition between the fragmentary system employed in building the Victorian suburbs and the highly integrated land development process in place today.

# The Development of an Interwar Suburb: Kingsway Park, Etobicoke

Ross Paterson

## *Résumé/Abstract*

*L'article traite de planification suburbaine à partir d'un examen des activités de la Home Smith and Company, et en particulier du développement et de la construction de Kingsway Park, une des premières subdivisions de cette compagnie. De plus, l'étude montre que la période de l'entre-deux-guerres constitue une période charnière dans l'élaboration du processus de construction du milieu urbain, servant ainsi de transition entre le système fragmenté utilisé durant la période victorienne pour la construction des banlieues et l'actuel processus, fortement intégré, de développement du territoire.*

*An examination of planned suburbanisation is provided in this study through a discussion of the activities of the Home Smith and Company, and in particular, by an examination of the development and building of one of the Company's premier subdivisions, Kingsway Park. The study presents further evidence that the inter-war period encompassed a pivotal period in the evolving city-building process, bridging the transition between the fragmentary system employed in building the Victorian suburbs and the highly integrated land development process in place today.*

The genesis of the post-1945 suburbs in Canada has usually been attributed to the creation of E.P. Taylor's Don Mills (Toronto) development in the early 1950s.<sup>1</sup> Recent research findings, however, have suggested that the post-war pattern of city building was essentially a refinement of earlier developments. The first half of the twentieth century would appear to encompass a pivotal period in the evolving city-building process, bridging the transition between the fragmentary system employed in building the Victorian suburbs<sup>2</sup> and the highly integrated land development process in place today.<sup>3</sup>

Rapid urban growth, qualitative improvements in transportation and an expanding middle-class favoured the emergence of the Land Subdivider during the 1890s and 1900s. This combination of broker, promoter and land merchant pioneered the notion that land assembly and development, together, could be an important entrepreneurial activity and a profitable speculative venture. Weaver has found evidence of land subdividers and developers operating across Canada between 1900 and 1914: the McKittrick

Syndicate in Hamilton, Morisset and Morisset in Ottawa-Hull and F.C. Lowe in Calgary. Canadian railway companies also became involved in suburban development. Perhaps the best known of these are the Canadian Pacific Railway's Shaughnessy Heights in Vancouver and the two-square-mile suburb of Leaside, Toronto developed by the Canadian Northern Railway.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, studies of Lawrence Park, Toronto; The Uplands, Victoria; and Westdale, Hamilton have provided a detailed examination of interwar suburbanisation.<sup>5</sup> A major conclusion of this research has been that:

In Canada, planned suburbs with racial and social segregation, the evolution of the real estate agent, changes in land development and the building trades and an expanded government role were initiated in the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

Further evidence of early twentieth century planned suburbanisation is provided in this study through a discussion of the activities of the Home Smith and Company and, in particular, by an examination of the development and build-

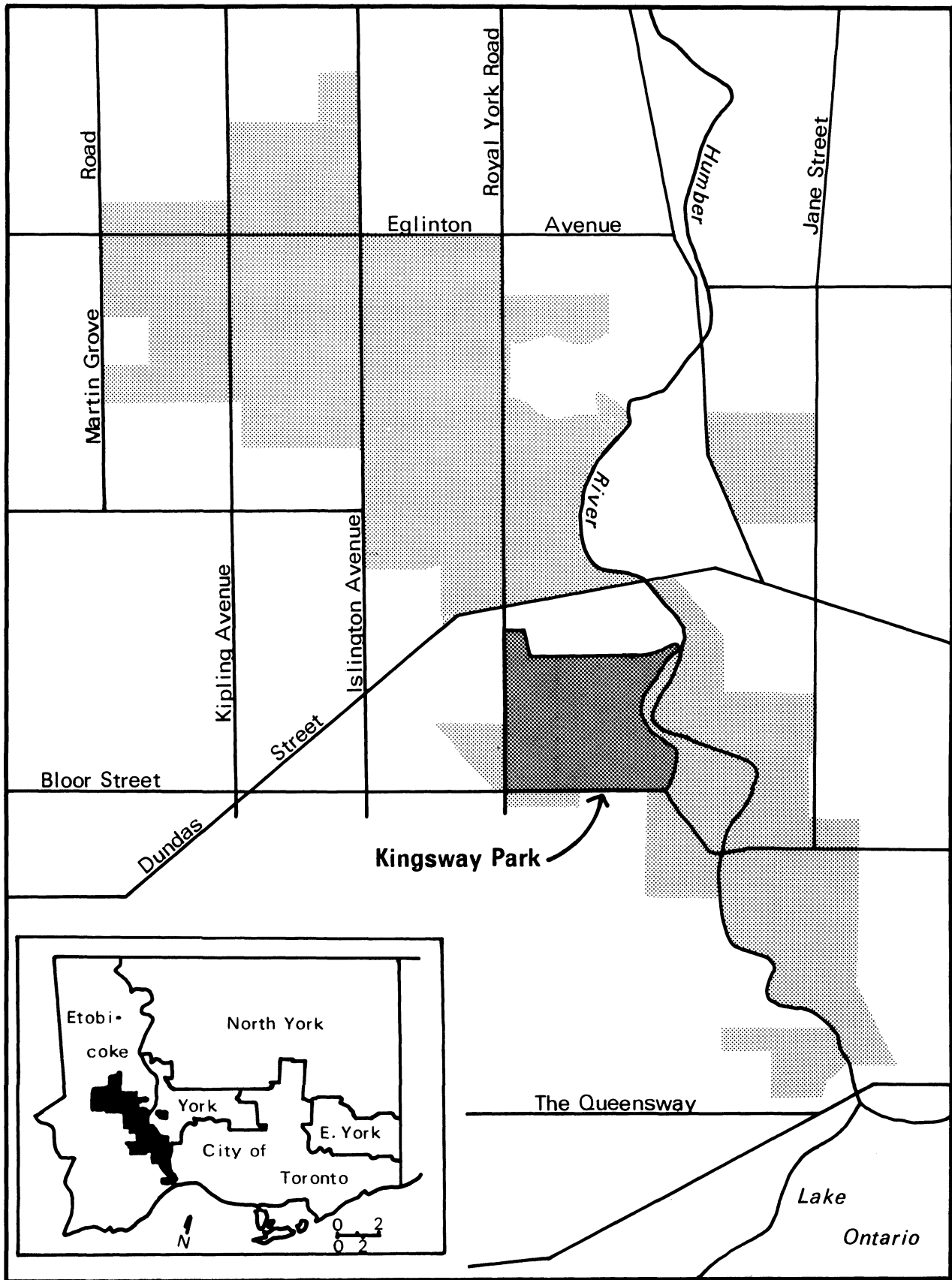


FIGURE 1. The Home Smith and Company's 3,000 acre Humber Valley Surveys.

SOURCE: The Home Smith and Company Papers.

ing of one of the Company's premier subdivisions, Kingsway Park.

The approach adopted here employs the city-building process as a framework within which to analyse the activities of the various actors and institutions involved in land conversion. The principal data sources used in the study are the Home Smith and Company Papers,<sup>7</sup> the Assessment Rolls of the Township of Etobicoke and *Might's Directories* for the City of Toronto and Suburbs, 1931-1946 and interviews with former employees of the Home Smith and Company: Mr. Norman Irwin and Mr. Robert Hanks, architects and Mr. Ernest McNaughton, manager.

### Robert Home Smith and the Humber Valley Surveys

Through their location and investment decisions, land developers have been identified as having a major influence in determining the form and internal structure of cities. Yet, with the exception of Bordessa and Molyneux,<sup>8</sup> relatively little is known of the personal role played by developers, particularly in the period before World War II, in transforming large segments of the urban environment. In the case of Robert Home Smith and the Humber Valley Surveys this appears to be a most important factor. Between 1906 and 1912 Home Smith put together a 3,000 acre land assembly which occupied prime land along the lower stretches of the Humber Valley and a large swath of central Etobicoke (see Figure 1). The conscious creation of upper-middle class communities in the Surveys proved to be a powerful force in shaping the residential geography of the western suburbs of Toronto. Indeed, the social composition of central Etobicoke has changed very little since its development in the first half of this century.

Although Home Smith is generally remembered today for his land developments, he was involved in a wide variety of business ventures. He would certainly fit the profile of the early twentieth century land developer drawn by Bordessa; "a 'wheeler-dealer' in business deals, a man who juggled money from various investments and carried for the most part a large overdraft to keep in business."<sup>9</sup> Robert Home Smith was born in Stratford, Ontario in 1877 and died, at the age of fifty-eight, in 1935, at which time his business affairs were taken over by his close friend and Toronto businessman, Godfrey Pattit.<sup>10</sup>

The beginnings of Home Smith's career can be traced to 1899 when, at the age of twenty-two, he was called to the bar of Upper Canada after legal training at Osgood Hall. In 1901 he joined the legal department of the National Trust Company and it was through this position that he became involved in real estate and land development. Home Smith gained considerable first-hand experience in property development when the York County Loan and Savings company failed and the National Trust was appointed liquidator. The

York Loan estates in the High Park and Sunnyside Beach areas were entrusted to Home Smith. This appears to have been the catalyst which spurred him to become privately involved in real estate development, beginning in 1906. Both High Park and Sunnyside Beach are immediately to the east of the Humber Valley Surveys.

Having completed the main part of his assembly in the Humber Valley in 1912, he retired from the National Trust in 1913. However, he continued an association with the trust company long after his retirement. Indeed, it was through this association that he became installed as the President of the financially troubled Mexico North West Railway and its subsidiaries. Through a friendship with Sir James Dunn, founder of Algoma Steel, he was appointed President of the Algoma Central Railway with responsibilities in a number of allied companies; Algoma Steel, the Algoma Eastern Railway and the Great Lakes Power Company. Home Smith was a heavy investor in northern Ontario gold mines and had business associations with a number of mining investment firms. Notable among other Home Smith investments and perhaps indicative of a move towards vertical integration in the development industry was the purchase of the Caledon Shale and Brick Company in 1928.

These many business responsibilities do not include the numerous land companies and farm properties which Home Smith also operated. The 3,000 acre land assembly in the Humber Valley was held by Home Smith through a number of seemingly unrelated land companies. Home Smith's valuable land holdings in the Toronto central business district were the responsibility of the Amulet Realty Company. Agricultural properties included a 1,850 acre cattle farm in Caledon Township, 800 acres at Niagara-on-the Lake and 26,000 acres in the tobacco growing region of Norfolk County.

Home Smith was conservative in politics and was an active fundraiser and organiser for the Tory party in Ontario. This service was repaid by his appointment to a number of government boards and commissions, including the City of Ottawa Planning Commission and Chairman of the Niagara Parks Commission. Appointments not involving political patronage included Toronto Harbour Commissioner (1912-1923) and Governor of the University of Toronto. There can be little doubt that, in addition to his business acumen and pedigree, Home Smith's good looks and warm personality helped smooth his way into the Toronto establishment. This was a position he was able to use to advantage in influencing business associates, particularly those who had become wealthy through mining investments, to purchase the choicest properties in the Surveys and set the tone for the development of the project.

It is noteworthy that Home Smith acquired his very large land assembly far in advance of immediate building require-

ments and before the widespread use of the automobile. Indeed, that part of the assembly to the north of Dundas Street (see Figure 1), with the exception of the Royal York Golf Course, was only actively developed in the 1950s and 1960s. The acquisition of the Humber Valley Surveys entailed an outlay of capital in the order of one and a half million dollars.

While funds were raised through family and friends and through his investments, the major part of the financing came from the incorporation of the Home Smith and Company in 1910. In that year Home Smith travelled to London to seek English financing for his venture and this was arranged through the renowned brokerage house of Kitcat and Aiken. In the same year a further \$170,000 was expended on land preparation. The amount of additional expenditure on the preparation and submission of plans of subdivision, for the neighbourhoods south of Dundas Street, and on promotion is not known. However, it is evident that his total investment in the period 1906 to 1912 was very substantial.

There was no immediate return on this investment as building in the Surveys did not seriously get underway until the mid-twenties. Due to the uncertainty brought about by the First World War, the Home Smith and Company did not sell a single lot between 1914 and 1919. Unlike many other land subdividers of the period, Home Smith had the resources to wait through this long period of inactivity. A further obstacle impeding development, especially in Etobicoke, was the question of accessibility. Until high level bridges were constructed across the Humber at Bloor and Dundas Streets in the late 1920s it was difficult to attract clients or even convince the conservative builders to move across the river. For this reason the subdivisions on the east side of the river in Swansea and at Baby Point were built slightly ahead of those in Etobicoke.

The Humber Valley Surveys was an interesting promotional technique. It allowed all of the various subdivisions and services to be advertised under one collective title. The purpose behind this was that while the Home Smith and Company were in the business of developing quality residential areas, there was variation in house styles and price ranges both between and within subdivisions. These distinctions were outlined in the Company's promotional literature, for example, from the 1941 Humber Valley Surveys brochure:

To the average salaried man Silver Birches offers many distinct advantages — moderately priced, yet substantial homes. . . .

A jewel set in a scenic sea . . . a house in Kingsway Park. . . . Entering Kingsway Park on Bloor Street you pass through the handsome Home Smith Memorial Gates whose dignity and grandeur provide fitting symbols to the district that lies within.<sup>11</sup>

### Kingsway Park: The City-Building Process

With its overwhelmingly English atmosphere, English financial backing and anticipated Anglo-Saxon clientele, it could be inferred that the Garden Suburb movement played an important role in the design of Kingsway Park. However, the Garden Suburb concept, which provided the model for Lawrence Park another early twentieth century suburb,<sup>12</sup> had no impact whatsoever on Home Smith or the planning of his subdivisions. Rather, it appears that the topography directed the plans of subdivision. Kingsway Park is situated on a relatively level parcel of land and as a result, the plan adopted is a modified grid-iron pattern. This plan enabled the incorporation of a variety of lot sizes. Long, thin lots align many of the straight north-south streets which follow the channels of streams which formerly drained into the Humber.

At the time of subdivision rudimentary gravel roads were installed. In addition to this form of land preparation, some basic services had to be provided before building could proceed. Before the Second World War municipalities were responsible for financing the provision of hard services; waterlines, sewers, and street-lighting. At that time these expenditures were expected to be recouped through future increased property taxes. The cost of soft services such as parks and recreation facilities was the responsibility of the developer. In most cases this usually meant that this element of the design was given short shrift.

The question of financing is one of the most important considerations in examining the installation of utilities and services in Kingsway Park. While the Home Smith and Company received substantial co-operation from the Township of Etobicoke, the predominantly rural township was reluctant to make any extensive outlays of capital to finance services. Another important consideration is the fact that building did not begin in earnest until the late 1920s. As the Depression took hold, Etobicoke became not only more reluctant but increasingly unable to provide large amounts of capital.

It is difficult to obtain information on the specifics of the provision and installation of utilities during the interwar period. There are no public records of this kind for Etobicoke. It is known that the original gravel roads were gradually upgraded and paved as building commenced. Main line sewers were not installed in Kingsway Park until 1937 by which time approximately half of the houses had been constructed. Sanitary arrangements prior to the installation of sewer lines are best described in the 1912-13 Humber Valley Surveys brochure:

. . . cesspools can be installed at a small cost and with satisfactory results. This district is one of sand and gravel soils. . . providing unexcelled natural drainage, and an easy solution for sanitary sewage . . . a local water service,

drawing its supply from pure local springs, will be installed during the year 1913.<sup>13</sup>

Street-lighting was so sparse that the Company sent out a flyer requesting that residents leave their porch lights on during the evening to provide some illumination. The two major streets, the Kingsway and Kingsway Crescent, to this day do not have side-walks.

While hard services in Kingsway park were rudimentary, the quality and variety of soft services was unparalleled. The Home Smith and Company was very interested in the well-being of the residents and in creating a spirit of community-awareness. To this end, the Company sent out questionnaires to solicit comment on local schools, recreational facilities, clubs, shopping and accessibility. Circulars were distributed throughout the neighbourhood on such diverse topics as the damage resulting from grass and brush fires to a request that the trilliums on the golf course be left unpicked. A garden nursery where trees, shrubs and plants could be purchased was operated on site.

With the donation of one hundred and five acres of the Humber Valley flood plain for parkland and the building of the Royal York Golf Club (presently the St. George's) Kingsway Park was well served with parks and green space. These open spaces provided the perfect backdrop for a variety of sports activities. The golf club was an important locale for socialising and meeting friends. This would have been quite significant to these new suburbanites and would have enabled them to enjoy a social life without the tedium of commuting downtown. Equally important in this regard were the facilities of the Old Mill Tearoom and Restaurant which afforded fine dining and dancing.

The Home Smith and Company also set aside land for businesses, churches and schools. The commercial strip on Bloor Street adjacent to Kingsway Park was not constructed until the mid-1930s. Until that time, area residents were advised that shopping and banking needs could be met at the nearby shopping area at Jane and Bloor Streets. The Company operated a small bus service which ran the length of the Kingsway and deposited passengers at the streetcar loop at Jane and Bloor. By the late 1930s a pharmacy, a bank and a number of fashionable shops had located in the Kingsway Park retail district.

Upon visiting Kingsway Park, the wide variation in the sizes, prices and styles of housing is immediately apparent. On the basis of property assessments, Kingsway Park can be subdivided into three distinct areas; 1) an area of older, opulent homes on the large lots on the Kingsway and Kingsway Crescent, and to a lesser extent on King George's Road, 2) a zone of small, modest homes on long, thin lots in the area between King George's Road and Bloor Street, and 3) the remainder, composed of substantial properties built on

medium sized lots with the houses set broad side to the street.<sup>14</sup>

The very large houses in the first area, many on deep, riverine lots, were mostly products of the late 1920s. By 1931 only about twelve per cent of the properties existing in 1981 had been constructed. Construction during the 1930s and 1940s continued on a much more modest scale in Kingsway Park. Unlike contemporary housing developments, Kingsway Park took over a decade and a half to build. What makes construction activity in Kingsway Park so interesting is that forty-eight per cent of the homes were built between 1932 and 1936, some of the worst years of the Depression. Thirteen per cent of the homes were built between 1937 and 1941 with a further twenty per cent constructed between 1942 and 1946. The remaining seven per cent were constructed between 1947 and 1981.

The most striking difference between the pre- and post-World War II land conversion process lies not in land development but rather in house building. Before the Second World War housing construction was not generally carried out by land subdividers but was the responsibility of a fragmented construction industry.

An important source of information on the building process and housing construction during the first half of the twentieth century is Weaver's study of Westdale, a suburb of Hamilton.<sup>15</sup> Weaver's study is particularly pertinent to this discussion since the building process he identified is, in most respects, identical to that found in Kingsway Park:

In a sense, Westdale emerged at a mid-point in the evolution of the property industry. It had the benefit of sophisticated town planning but, unlike recent packaged suburbs, construction was not a branch of the developers' activities. Given this absence of corporate integration, Westdale's completion drew upon an array of traditional crafts and specialists whose relationships tended for all their diversity, to be intimate and co-ordinated . . . contractors and subcontractors worked separately, but their ability to deviate from the developer's vision of the community was constrained.<sup>16</sup>

The early twentieth century witnessed the founding and growth of the real estate industry. According to Weaver this nascent industry had definite ideas about the aspirations and dislikes of middle-class homebuyers.<sup>17</sup> Informed opinion held that these homebuyers had an aversion to non-conforming land uses and certain ethnic groups. Middle-class clients sought conformity and, as a result, developers had to have stricter controls over their subdivisions. To this end the Victorian system of lot auctions was abandoned with the added dividend that speculation in building lots was virtually terminated.

The use of real estate agents and the legalities of planning and restrictive covenants provided two effective tools for a screening process which would produce the desired conformity. All of this in turn affected the activities of builders who, because of their dependence on credit and reputation for reliability with the developer, were forced to obey any restrictions. Home Smith and his associates were very much of the opinion that non-conforming land uses were antithetical to quality residential development. However, unlike the case of Westdale, there were no restrictions on the racial or ethnic characteristics of potential house buyers in the Humber Valley Surveys. The fact that clients had to meet the financial exigencies of purchasing a high quality home and operate a car for commuting would have ensured the desired homogeneity, in any respect. The protective restrictions of the Home Smith and Company were principally concerned with the value and quality of the housing, for example, the architectural department of the Company had to approve all house plans, preventing the intrusion of non-conforming land uses.

There were a number of routes whereby clients were connected with builders when they investigated purchasing a house. Many of the homes in Kingsway Park, with the exception of the most prestigious homes aligning the Humber, were built speculatively. For example, a builder would secure a lot and architectural plans from the Company and build a house in the hope that it would be purchased soon after its completion. This process of speculative building meant that there was a steady supply of homes for inspection and occupation. People who wished to commission a house could use the facilities of the Company's architectural department which would prepare the plan and design of the house, put out tenders for construction and help select a suitable lot. When one adds the influence of real estate agents and the Company's very professional promotional material, it becomes evident that there were many different options in the process of acquiring a property.

Almost all builders in Kingsway Park operated on a small scale, reflecting the fragmentary nature of the pre-World War II Canadian house-building industry. On the average Kingsway Park builders constructed about two and a half houses and the typical builder constructed fewer homes than the average builder. The small scale of operations meant that builders could weather the vagaries of an economy which had succumbed to Depression. Moreover, it further enabled the developers to control the activities of the builders. It also meant that the building techniques and methods used in the early twentieth century hardly differed from those of the previous century.

Once a builder secured a lot, building plans and some form of financing construction would commence. As was the case in Westdale many of the builders selected adjacent lots in order to stagger the work. The Company did, however,

have a policy of not selling more than three lots together to one builder. The typical Kingsway Park house took about three and a half months to construct. Many of the builders were principally carpenters whose greatest responsibility was the co-ordination of a building process involving many sub-contractors.

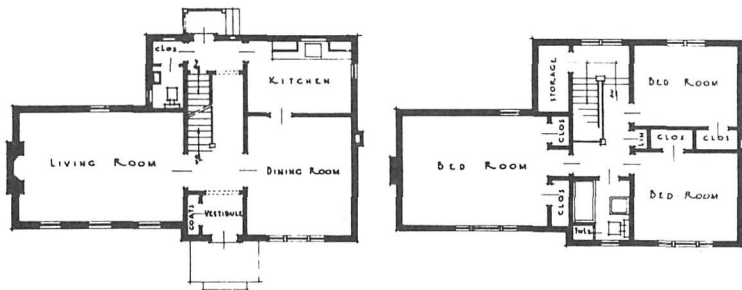
The lack of mechanisation and a wide selection of pre-fabricated building materials ensured that building was a labour intensive activity. The subcontracting of work began at the beginning of construction since the builder would have to hire an excavator with a horse and scraper to dig out the basement. A foundation would be installed and blocklayers contracted to build the basement. The builder, if he were a carpenter, could then put the frame up and lay the floors. Following this the completion of the house relied exclusively on subcontractors; plumbers, electricians, masons, bricklayers, lathers, plasterers, roofers, painters and glaziers.

Although the builders had to struggle to get operating capital, the same did not hold true for those people who wished to purchase Kingsway Park homes. Many clients had financing either through the sale of a previous home, savings or mortgages from financial institutions. Some builders took back mortgages at six per cent but required a commitment of about seventy-five per cent of the purchase price. However, aside from searching registry office records, it must be noted that there is virtually no information on the financing of housing construction or acquisition during the interwar period.

An examination of information from the Home Smith and Company's 1936 promotional brochure *Your New Home in the Humber Valley*<sup>18</sup> (Figures 2-5) illustrates not only the different architectural styles employed but also house sizes, prices and internal organisation. The first home in the brochure (Figure 2), priced at \$6,200, is quite small and built on a long, thin lot rather than broad side to the street. In Kingsway Park, houses of this size could be given a Georgian treatment, with classical door frames and window mouldings, oval windows and fan lights, or an Elizabethan/Jacobean treatment with half timbering, field stone and stained glass.

The second home (Figure 3) is slightly more expensive with the larger lot size enabling the house to be set broad side to the street. Advertised at \$12,900, the third house (Figure 4) is a faithful adaptation of the Neo-Georgian style. The use of brick, the symmetry of form and the classical door frame and moulding render this house reminiscent of both eighteenth century English and American colonial housing. Kingsway Park is best known for its Tudor inspired architecture, an example of which is portrayed by the fourth house (Figure 5). The first storey of this L-plan house is constructed of yellow-buff river stone while the second storey has stucco and half timbering.

Abundant fresh air and sunshine and where children may play in safety.



**\$8,500**

Here is a chance to own a lovely home in a select neighbourhood at a very modest price, highest grade materials and workmanship, basement playroom, decorated throughout, fully caulked and insulated, near downtown car line.

HOME SMITH AND COMPANY

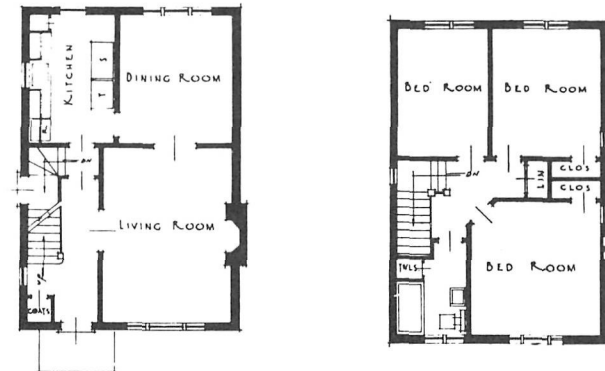
House Sales Department  
MR. THOMPSON

LY. 3141 - Evenings: LA. 3816

FIGURE 3. Second home in promotional brochure.

SOURCE: Home Smith, Scrapbook, Metropolitan Toronto Library.

Open surroundings give maximum sunlight— plenty of room for garden and flowers.



**\$6,200**

A perfect little home, the latest thing in new designing, tastefully decorated throughout, fully caulked and insulated, basement playroom, located just outside of City where taxes are low, all improvements are in.

HOME SMITH AND COMPANY

House Sales Department  
MR. THOMPSON

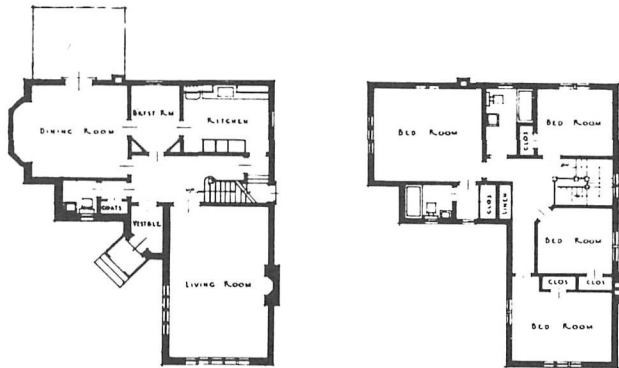
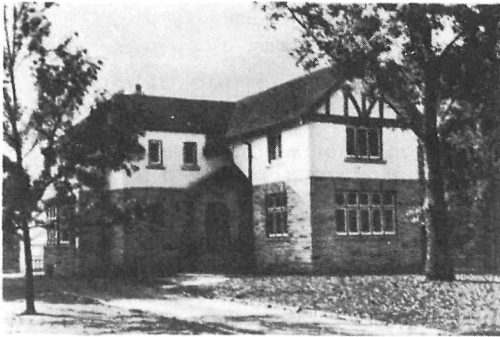
LY. 3141 - Evenings: LA. 3816

FIGURE 2. First home in promotional brochure *Your New Home in the Humber Valley*.

SOURCE: Home Smith, Scrapbook, Metropolitan Toronto Library.



*The scenic beauty of the Humber district is unsurpassed anywhere about Toronto.*



**\$15,800**

Elizabethan architecture, reception hall panelled to ceiling in oak, basement sportsroom with snack bar and washroom, summer and winter air conditioning system with oil burner, marvellous workmanship and finish.

HOME SMITH AND COMPANY

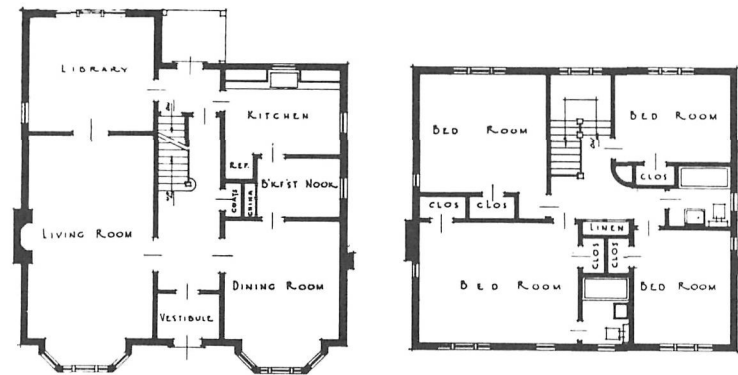
House Sales Department  
MR. THOMPSON

LY. 3141 - Evenings: LA. 3816

**FIGURE 5.** Fourth home in promotional brochure.

SOURCE: Home Smith, Scrapbook, Metropolitan Toronto Library.

*The sun, air, and privacy of a country place—yet only twenty minutes' boulevard drive downtown.*



**\$12,900**

Typical Georgian plan, not an inch of space wasted, the entire house flooded with health-giving sunshine, solid doors between living room and library, airy sportsroom with adjoining washroom, exceptionally well constructed and finished, delightful Kingsway location.

HOME SMITH AND COMPANY

House Sales Department  
MR. THOMPSON

LY. 3141 - Evenings: LA. 3816

**FIGURE 4.** Third home in promotional brochure.

SOURCE: Home Smith, Scrapbook, Metropolitan Toronto Library.

It is evident from the floor plans that inside these houses space was used efficiently and encouraged family intimacy. The internal arrangements of these homes reflected the changing demographic patterns and life-styles of the early twentieth century. The advent of electricity and labour saving devices like refrigerators and vacuum cleaners made it easier for middle-class families to dispense with the expense of servants. The smaller size of housing meant that rooms had to become multi-purpose. The largest room in these plans is the living room where the family could congregate for talking, entertaining or listening to the radio. Here the formalities and restrictions of the Victorian parlour have been abandoned. Also incorporated into the designs were large, airy bedrooms with seating areas, which provided some privacy.

The suburban expansion of cities allowed urban residents to have a much broader choice of housing and in the process accelerated the shift from heterogeneous to homogeneous residential areas. Weaver described the process in Westdale:

The owners and tenants of the suburb sorted themselves out in ways that conformed with attitudes and economic conditions that were continental in scope.<sup>19</sup>

This form of residential organisation also occurred at a time when Canada was experiencing its first taste of major immigration from outside north-western Europe. It is disquieting to realise that the timing of this immigration should coincide so closely with the emergence of residential suburbs whose homogeneity was protected by a screening process involving property restrictions, real estate agents and popular attitudes and prejudices. Specification of this process of residential organisation may lead to further insights regarding the underlying causes of residential differentiation in North American cities.

The marketing and promotion of Kingsway Park, indeed all of the Humber Valley Surveys, was carefully designed to attract a middle-class clientele. The leitmotif of the Home Smith and Company 'Angliae par Anglia procul' (A little bit of England far from England) lends credence to the argument that the target population was also Anglo-Saxon. This information would be considered revealing in most North American metropolises but it must be remembered that until the 1950s Toronto had remained a predominantly British city. Based on this information, it is not difficult to anticipate the results of a social composition analysis of the original residents of Kingsway Park.

Kingsway Park is entirely composed of single-detached housing and fits the stereotype of the owner-occupied suburb. In 1946, ninety-five per cent of the homes were owner-occupied compared with forty-two per cent for the City of Toronto. Blue-collar and unskilled occupations were virtually non-existent among the heads of household in Kingsway Park. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s more than

three-quarters of the households were represented by professional and managerial occupations.

The homogeneity of Kingsway Park is also evident when examining the ethnic background and religious adherence of the community's population. Based on surnames as a surrogate for ethnicity, over ninety per cent of the population was British between 1936 and 1946. During this same period Roman Catholics were the only non-Protestant group represented and the Protestants were, in the main, aligned with the major church groups; Anglican, United and Presbyterian. Roman Catholics comprised six per cent of households in 1936 rising to nine per cent in 1946.

The average number of persons per household during this period ranges around 3.5. However, these households were largely composed of adults. The average number of children per household ranged from .70 in 1936 to .97 in 1946. To one familiar with the child-centred suburbs of the post-World War II period this information is most revealing. Reflective of this dearth of children was the average age of the head of household — forty-five years in 1936 which gradually increased to forty-nine years in 1946. In many ways the household structure of Kingsway park reflected the demographic changes occurring in Canada during the 1930s and 1940s. The typical Kingsway Park household would have been occupied by a couple in their mid-forties with perhaps one child of school age. Other members of the household might have been an elderly relative or children of college age.

Where did these new suburbanites move from? The attempt to trace the previous addresses of Kingsway Park residents revealed a number of interesting facts. During the three time periods examined; 1936, 1941 and 1946, at least sixty per cent of the households could be traced in the five years previous city directory. The principal source of Kingsway Park residents was the west end of Toronto, particularly Swansea, High Park and the Roncesvalles-Parkdale area. Two other less important areas were the suburban districts of North Toronto and the Beaches. Addresses in the inner city neighbourhoods adjacent to the central business district and the communities in the east end were conspicuously absent. Furthermore, once a family moved into Kingsway Park they generally remained, indicative of a high level of residential satisfaction. For example, of the households in 1936, seventy-three per cent had remained in the neighbourhood by 1941.

## Conclusion

The period from 1870 to 1940 witnessed fundamental change in the social, economic and political organisation of North American cities; change mirrored in and compounded by urban spatial structure. The two key transformations of urban spatial organisation were the seg-

regation of land uses and the segregation of urban populations by social class. Thus, in order to understand the shape and form of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century city, one must examine the underlying processes promoting segregation.

It has been suggested in this study that land developers played a significant role in influencing the pattern of urban form through the adoption of a more integrated approach to city-building. Marketing strategies were devised and reflected the social divisions among suburban house-buyers. For example, parks and planning innovations were employed in middle-class communities while working-class suburbs were located adjacent to factories.<sup>20</sup> In order to improve accessibility and assure steady development, the provision of services needed to be co-ordinated.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, to insure the integrity of the entrepreneur's vision of the development, the activities of builders had to be overseen and controlled.

The strength of this new approach to city-building is well illustrated by the Humber Valley Surveys. Toronto's principal high status residential areas (Rosedale, Forest Hill and Bayview-Post Road), lie in a sector extending through the north part of the metropolitan area. Home Smith's vision and the phenomenal power, even by contemporary standards, acquired through controlling a three thousand acre land assembly enabled the establishment of a second high status sector in the western suburbs of Metropolitan Toronto. (This is, perhaps, best illustrated by the inset in Figure 1). The quality of the Home Smith subdivisions set the tone for other land developments in central Etobicoke further consolidating this sector. The shaping of urban form was also achieved through the creation of lower middle-class and working-class suburbs as can be clearly seen in the cases of Westdale, Hamilton and Maisonneuve, Montreal.<sup>22</sup>

These changes in the land conversion and city-building processes not only had considerable local impact but were an integral part of social and economic change which was continental in scope.<sup>23</sup> It is as a result of this that caution must be taken in estimating the importance of the developer. Clearly the activities of developers were, and are, circumscribed by many factors beyond their control: the population growth and economic development of a city; the availability and cost of capital; the demand for housing by competing social classes; the physical characteristics of the land; the actual or proposed use of adjacent land assemblies; and, popular attitudes towards housing styles and housing tenure.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, the analysis of city-building processes provides a useful integrative framework within which to examine the activities of the various agents and institutions involved in land development and housing. It facilitates the investigation of the interaction between these agents and the constraints they impose on each other as a result of their

different objectives and relative power. Moreover, it allows analysis of the housing constraints imposed on and the housing choices afforded to different classes or groups within the city.

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## NOTES

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2. Michael Doucet, "Building the Victorian City: The Processes of Land Development in Hamilton, 1847-1881" (Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Geography, University of Toronto, 1977).
3. Lorimer, *The Developers*.
4. John Weaver, *Shaping the Canadian City: Essays on Urban Politics and Policy, 1870-1920*, Monographs on Canadian Urban Government, no. 1 (Toronto: The Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1977), 15-16.
5. Karina Bordessa, "A Corporate Suburb for Toronto: Lawrence Park, 1905-1930" (M.A. Thesis, Department of Geography, York University, 1980); Charles Forward, "The Immortality of a Fashionable Residential District, The Uplands," in *Residential and Neighbourhood Studies in Victoria*, ed. Charles Forward, Western Geographical Series, vol. 5 (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1973), 1-39; John Weaver, "From Land Assembly to Social Maturity: The Suburban Life of Westdale, (Hamilton) Ontario, 1911-1951," *Histoire sociale/Social History*, 11 (1978): 411-40.
6. Weaver, "From Land Assembly to Social Maturity," 411-12.
7. The Home Smith and Company Papers are housed in the Baldwin Room, Metropolitan Toronto Public Library.
8. Bordessa, "A Corporate Suburb for Toronto"; Gary Molyneux, "Planned Land Use in an Urban Setting: The J.C. Nichols Company and the Country Club District of Kansas City" (Ph.D. Thesis, Department of Geography, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, 1979).
9. Bordessa, "A Corporate Suburb for Toronto," 33.
10. Biographical information on Robert Home Smith is principally derived from: Robert Given, *The Story of Etobicoke* (Etobicoke: Etobicoke Centennial Year Council, 1967); Sir C.G.D. Roberts and A.L. Tunnell, eds., *Canadian Who Was Who, Vol. II* (Toronto: Trans-Canada Press, 1938); W.S. Wallace and W.A. McKay, *The MacMillan Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1978).
11. The Home Smith and Company Papers.
12. Bordessa, "A Corporate Suburb for Toronto."
13. Roberts Hanks, personal copy.
14. Examples of houses in the second area depicted in Figures 2 and 3 while those in the third area are portrayed in Figures 4 and 5. These figures are discussed in greater detail later in the paper.
15. Weaver, "From Land Assembly to Social Maturity."
16. *Ibid.*, 420.
17. *Ibid.*, 420-1
18. The Home Smith and Company Papers.
19. Weaver, "From Land Assembly to Social Maturity," 412.
20. Paul-André Linteau, *Maisonneuve ou comment des promoteurs fabriquent une ville* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1981), 38.

21. See, for example, Linteau, *Maisonneuve*, 123-46.
22. Weaver, "From Land Assembly to Social Maturity"; Linteau, *Maisonneuve*.
23. Weaver, "From Land Assembly to Social Maturity," 438-9.
24. Linteau, *Maisonneuve*, 39-41; David Cannandine, "Urban Development in England and America in the Nineteenth Century: Some Comparisons and Contrasts," *Economic History Review*, 33 (1980): 322.