

# FORT YORK: SETTING IT RIGHT

Fort-Centred Planning and Design Principles  
June 2000



The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common ■ The Fort York Management Board

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien  
Prime Minister of Canada

June 15, 2000

The Honourable Michael D. Harris  
Premier of Ontario

His Worship Mel Lastman  
Mayor of Toronto

Gentlemen:

The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common (The Friends) and The Fort York Management Board (The Management Board) are pleased to publish "Fort York: Setting It Right". The focus of this study is Fort York and its surroundings, the birthplace of Toronto, Canada's largest city. The study demonstrates active citizen support for the development of Toronto's waterfront and for the recommendations of The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force chaired by Robert Fung.

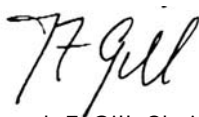
The study group whose deliberations led to the report was formed as a Committee of The Friends in June 1999. The objective was to achieve a consensus among Fort York's stakeholders on the appropriate guidelines and principles that should be followed in the development of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Fort York lands. The process leading to this report is an outstanding example as to how empowered citizen groups can work constructively and positively with city officials to the benefit of all.

As "Fort York: Setting It Right" was being completed, Robert Fung and his Waterfront Revitalization Task Force released their report. We strongly support the recommendations in this report and urge both the Provincial and Federal Governments to provide the financial support necessary for its implementation. We are pleased that the recommendations of the Task Force for the Fort York area are consistent with those in "Fort York: Setting It Right".

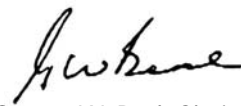
It would be our hope that the principles set out in "Fort York: Setting It Right" will be recognized officially by the City of Toronto, perhaps through the approval of a Master Plan for the Fort York Heritage Conservation District. On our part, we plan to proceed with further studies. The Board of the Friends of Fort York and the Fort York Management Board have set up a study group to pursue consensus views on the nature, size and location of the buildings that should comprise an Interpretive Centre Complex at Fort York. As well, the Fort York Business Plan, co-authored by the Friends and the Toronto Historical Board and released in 1997, will be updated to reflect the many developments in the last few years.

Finally, we wish to thank all of the members of the Committee and to pay special recognition to the two individuals who were largely responsible for gathering together all of the thoughts of the Study Group and for writing this report. Robert Allsopp, with the support of his associates at the firm of du Toit Allsopp Hillier, and Catherine Nasmith spent many long hours and the quality of the report reflects their energy and skill as well as their devotion to Fort York and its place in our history.

Respectfully submitted,



Joseph F. Gill, Chair,  
The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common



George W. Beal, Chair,  
The Fort York Management Board.





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## Two Citizen Boards Working Together for the Future of Fort York

**The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common** is an independent group of over 200 citizen volunteers organized as a non-profit corporation and qualified as a charitable organization. The focus of its activities is the communication of the early history of Fort York and Toronto and the preservation and enhancement of Fort York for the benefit of the citizens of, and visitors to Toronto.

**The Fort York Management Board** is a citizen board appointed by Toronto City Council and charged by its governing by-law with the management and direction of the operations of Fort York.



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# INTRODUCTION

The document which follows summarizes discussions held between August 1999 and January 2000 and sets out fort-centred principles to guide planning in the area around Fort York. The Friends of Fort York began that task with *Revealing Fort York*, a document which was highly successful in influencing the Bathurst/Strachan plan in 1994. Subsequently, the Friends participated in the Fort York Working Group in 1994, chaired by the provincial facilitator, Dale Martin. The findings were published as; *Report of the Bathurst/Strachan Working Committee*, April 18, 1995.

On September 27/28, 1996 the Fort York Ideas Workshop involving more than 100 people, including neighbourhood representatives, landscape architects, architects, engineers, planners, landowners, politicians and members of the heritage community, spent the weekend at Fort York Armouries sharing their ideas about the future of Fort York and its environs. The workshop was jointly sponsored by the Friends of Fort York, Heritage Toronto and the City of Toronto Urban Development Services. The proceedings were published under the title, *Fort York in the Community, an Ideas Workshop*.

Building on this previous work, the present Study Group's discussions focused on the relationship between the fort, its surrounding landscape, and the emerging neighbourhoods around it. This report is seen as a companion to ongoing work by the Fort York Management Board, the Friends of Fort York, and the City of Toronto's Culture office on restoring the site's heritage buildings, recovering archaeological features, renewing exhibits, and improving visitor amenities.

The Study Group was sponsored by the Friends of Fort York, with participation by members of the City of Toronto Urban Planning and Development Services, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, Heritage Toronto, and Councillor Joe Pantalone.

## The Need for Fort-Centred Planning Principles

Fort York, a humble British military outpost, and the birthplace of Toronto, though lost behind industry and railways, buried under landfill, and romantically altered, is, (almost miraculously), still there to be proudly revealed to its community and to its nation. The succeeding settlement layers, while arguably unsympathetic to the significant military history of the area, also contain the story of the growth of an industrial nation.

As the city moves towards the new knowledge economy, this area is experiencing a third wave of settlement as industry is replaced by new housing, entertainment facilities, and other institutions of the information age. With the imminent redevelopment of most of the lands adjoining the fort, there is a fresh opportunity to recapture a focal position for Fort York in a new urban landscape.

## The Study Group Participants

See Appendix III

Robert Allsopp  
Carl Benn  
Ian Cooper  
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Catherine Nasmith  
David O'Hara  
Stephen Otto  
Joe Pantalone  
Eric Pedersen  
Jo Ann Pynn  
David Spittal  
Eberhard Zeidler





**“View of the Garrison at Toronto or York, Upper Canada,”** March 11, 1805, attributed to Lieut. Sempronius Stretton (William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan).

*In the beginning, Fort York occupied both banks of Garrison Creek at its mouth, seen here to the left of the flagpole.*

Certain proposals trigger certain discussions, and can create the opportunity to get value added to the fort. For example, the proposal to build Fort York Boulevard brings the opportunity to interpret the old shoreline, but it also blocks a key, authentic view from a low level of the fort. Another example is the desire to link the Niagara Neighbourhood to the Fort. A proposal to bridge the railway at Tecumseth Street raises the question of whether it is more important to use regained land north of the fort for a place to land a bridge, or to restore the bastions that were lost. In the absence of a set of clear principles it is difficult to evaluate or comment on such emerging proposals.

The 1999-2000 discussions reviewed issues on all flanks of the fort, and established a set of principles and actions for the restoration and interpretation of the fort and its lost landscape within the context of emerging new plans for the area.

## The Importance of Fort York to Toronto and Canada

Fort York and its surroundings form an internationally-important, authentic, historical resource, central to the story of Toronto. Important events woven into Fort York’s history include:

- its birth as an urban centre in 1793;
- the frontier crises of the 1780s-90s;
- the War of 1812;
- the Rebellion of 1837; and
- the Fenian Crisis at Confederation.

Beyond these major events, the fort possesses tremendous potential for exploring such subjects as military and social history, aboriginal history, early Toronto, and the story of the Canadian heritage preservation movement.

Fort York and its adjacent area encompasses:

- the site of the founding of urban Toronto,
- a significant stretch of the original Lake Ontario shoreline,
- the mouth of the Garrison Creek,
- components of a major battlefield,
- military cemeteries,
- rare historical buildings,
- substantial archaeological assets,
- a nationally-important artifact collection, as well as
- other features of consequence to the history of the Great Lakes watershed.

The following also attest to over two hundred years of continuous military history in this area:

- Stanley Barracks,
- Fort York Armouries,
- HMCS York,
- remnants of the wartime industries along Strachan Avenue,
- the World War I memorial at Coronation Park, and
- the island airport, used by the Royal Norwegian Air Force in World War II.

With so much historical significance attached to Fort York and neighbouring heritage resources, it is essential that re-development renew the fort's important position in the Toronto landscape. This will enable the public to appreciate the fort's critical place in the history of the community as well as the larger events in which the fort played a role.

### Priorities for Planning

The fort is at the edge of five distinct planning areas, the Railway Lands, Garrison Common North, the CNE and Ontario Place, Bathurst/Strachan, and Bathurst Quay and Coronation Park. While all of these plans acknowledge Fort York, only the Bathurst/Strachan Plan has adequately addressed the opportunity that Fort York presents for enhancing and connecting all of these areas into a fort - centred precinct. The fort should be as essential to the identity of its immediate neighbourhoods as The Beach or High Park are to theirs.



Lieut. Sempronius Stretton, "York Barracks, Lake Ontario, May 13, 1804" (National Archives of Canada, C-14905).

*This is the part of the fort on the east side of Garrison Creek, which was burned by the Americans in July 1813, and never rebuilt.*

Where planning has acknowledged the fort, the tendency has been to treat it as if only the southern edge is significant. Insufficient attention has been paid to the important opportunities for restoration, recovery, and connections that exist on the other edges.

Archaeological studies will be necessary to fully understand and to preserve, interpret and reveal lost features and landscape patterns around the fort, and to protect the Burial Grounds and other archaeological materials in the vicinity of the fort.

Opportunities for the restoration of the fort and the recovery of its lost surroundings must take precedence in planning the areas around the fort. All sides of the Fort York Precinct are significant. It is recommended that the planning boundaries be re-considered to allow for the development of a fort-centred plan, and the most historically resonant boundaries would be those of the original Garrison Common, amended to include lake-filled areas to the south.

### **Summary of Fort-Centred Planning and Design Principles**

The report sets out a set of principles that should govern development proposals at Fort York wherever possible. A discussion of the historical background, current developments and possible future plans follows to provide the context in which the principle was developed. This discussion is set out under the heading "Background". For each principle, there follows a section on "Action" which provides a list of recommended actions or directions consistent with the principle. No attempt has been made to prioritize these recommendations, nor is it contemplated. Some cannot be implemented in the short term. It is hoped that a review of these recommendations would enable a capital management plan for the next three to five year period (and subsequent periods at a later date) to be developed that would deal with priorities and timing.

The overriding objective is to bring back dignity, legibility, visibility, and accessibility to this national historic site. Revealing the underdeveloped and hidden heritage of Fort York and its neighbourhood will not only further historical and community understanding, it will also enhance Toronto's attractiveness as a tourist destination at a time when 'heritage tourism' is the fastest growing segment of the travel-trade industry.

The following are the design and planning principles which should guide the future development of Fort York and its surroundings. They form one cornerstone of a larger program to restore the site's heritage buildings, recover archaeological features, renew exhibits, and improve visitor amenities.

## The Principles

- The restoration of Fort York should preserve and interpret the various eras of its history. Evidence of previous restoration efforts should also be preserved and interpreted.
- The topographic landscape setting of Fort York should be recovered, restored and interpreted.
- The outstanding archaeological resources associated with Fort York and its neighbourhood should be recognized and protected and, where appropriate, should be explored professionally.
- The cultural elements of the Fort York Precinct should be recovered and restored.
- The Fort York Armouries should be included in the Fort York Heritage Conservation District.
- New constructions or other elements introduced into the fort landscape should be clearly distinguishable from the historic layers of the landscape.
- The common history of Fort York and The Fort Neighbourhoods should be commemorated.
- The massing and design of new buildings and other structures near the fort precinct should be compatible with the fort.
- Views to and from the fort should be protected and enhanced.
- A system of parks and open spaces should connect the Fort York Precinct with the adjoining neighbourhoods and the waterfront:
- A public pathway system should link the paths in the Fort York Precinct, the sidewalks of the surrounding streets, the paths in adjoining neighbourhoods and the waterfront promenades and trails.
- New streets should give the Fort York Precinct a new address, enhance opportunities for interpretive views of the fort, and improve access for pedestrians, cyclists and transit passengers as well as for motorists.
- The dismantling of the elevated Gardiner Expressway and its below-grade replacement south of the Fort York Precinct should be strongly supported.
- Vehicular access and parking should be provided in ways that support other objectives for restoring the landscape setting of the fort while ensuring ease of access for visitors.
- Visitor Services and the Interpretive Centre facilities should be provided in ways that support other objectives for restoring the fort and its landscape setting while accommodating and enriching a full range of visitor experiences.



# THE FORT-CENTRED PLANNING AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

for Fort York, its Associated landscape and the Surrounding neighbourhoods



In the principles, three different definitions are used: Fort York, the Fort Precinct, and the Fort Neighbourhoods. These are defined as follows:

**Fort York:** The Fort, its buildings, and fortified areas.

**The Fort Precinct:** The area bounded by Fort York Boulevard, Front Street Extension and the Rail Corridor, Bathurst Street, and Strachan Avenue, plus Block 36 of the Railway Lands. This "precinct" includes the City-owned lands of the Fort York Heritage Conservation District.

**The Fort Neighbourhoods:** The districts which surround Fort York and have a historic relationship to the fort and which are generally within the boundaries of the original Garrison Common: the Railway Lands, the Niagara Neighbourhood, the Bathurst/Strachan Area, and the Exhibition Grounds.

# RESTORATION OF FORT YORK

## Principle:

**The restoration of the Fort York should preserve and interpret the various eras of its history. Evidence of previous restoration efforts should also be preserved.**

## Background:

Fort York was a functioning military post between the 1790s and the 1930s, and has been treated as a historic site since the 1880s. Within this long history, periods of intense military activity have included:

- the founding of Toronto at the site during the Frontier Crisis of the 1780s-90s,
- the War of 1812,
- the Rebellion Crisis of 1837-41, and
- the annexationist threat during the Confederation era of the 1860s.

As well, the 'history of public history' at Fort York is recognized as being of interest.

In restoring and reconstructing buildings, landscapes, and other features, it is important that the fort's different military periods be preserved and interpreted to ensure that the public has access to the entirety of the site's rich history. As well, it is important that heritage elements from the different periods of the military phase of the fort's life are not lost during restoration processes. Renovations to architectural elements added during the site's life as a historic site museum must be approached with sensitivity to ensure that desirable references to some of the earlier restoration efforts continue to be visible in situations where they have larger significance in understanding the past.

Under the terms of the 1909 agreement that transferred the fort and other waterfront lands from the federal government to the City of Toronto, the city is obligated to restore Fort York to its 1816 condition as shown on a plan signed by G. Nichols, 24 June 1816. Failing this, the transfer would immediately become null and void, and the Dominion Government would have the right to re-enter all or any part of the lands. Given the latitude that has been shown in the interpretation of this condition to date, it seems reasonable to assume that as long as the City is acting in the spirit of the condition, the federal government will not hold it to the letter.

From the early part of the twentieth century, thinking about heritage preservation also has evolved. It is now good practice to preserve layers of evidence from several eras in the history of a site, rather than destroy some layers to permit the clearer interpretation of others. At Fort York this changed approach has particular relevance, because the site played significant roles

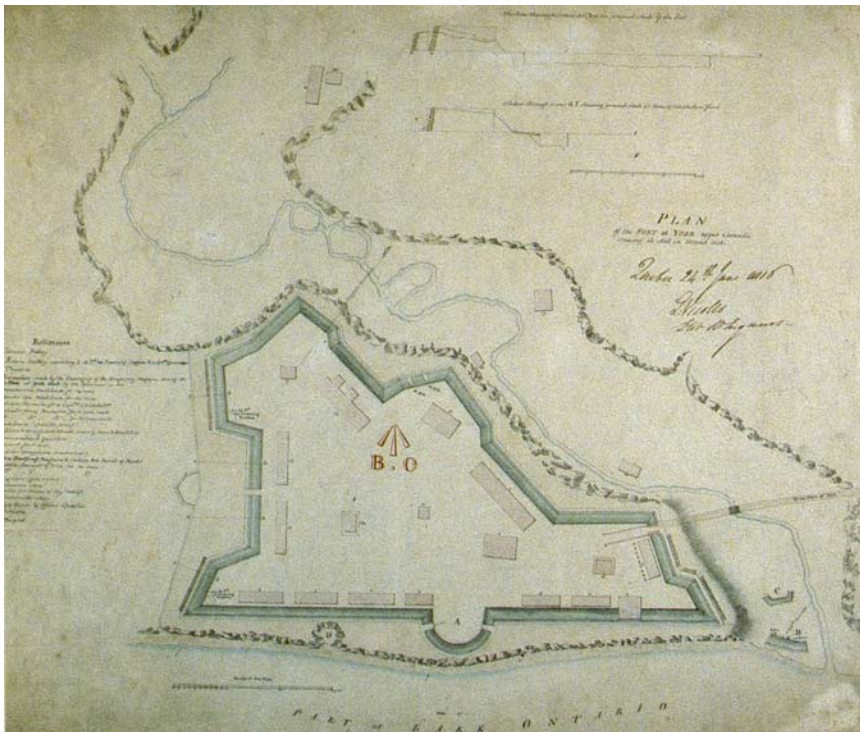


during the 1837 Rebellion and the defense crisis of the Confederation era, in addition to its part in the War of 1812.

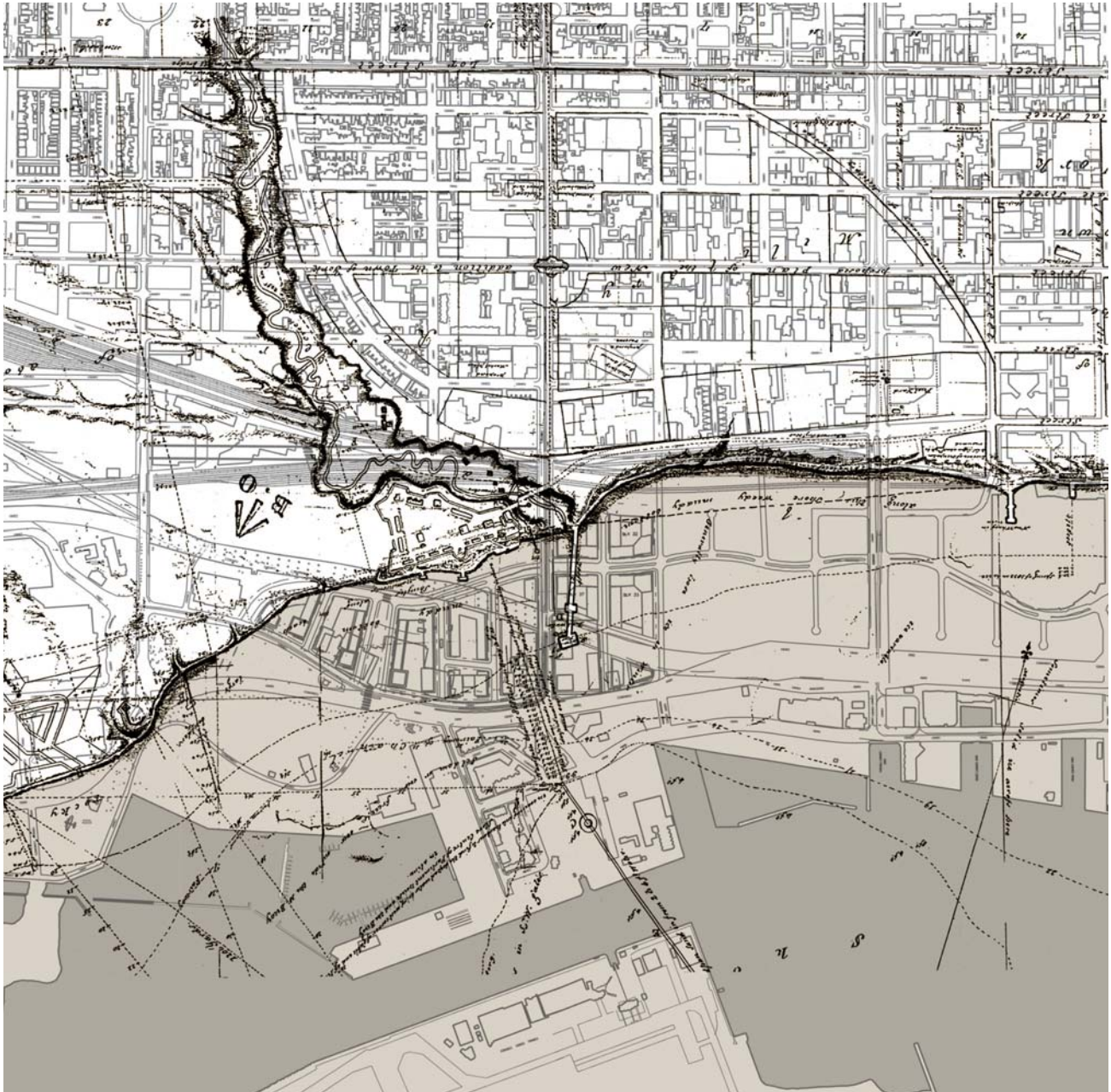
In many instances, interpretation and commemoration of lost features will be more appropriate and more historically meaningful than attempting a literal restoration or reconstruction.

**Action:**

- Apply good, modern restoration, interpretative and commemorative practices to present the multiple dimensions of the fort's history and evolution, including the interpretation of earlier restorations.
- Consider an amendment to the 1909 agreement to permit restoration of the fort according to modern heritage practices, while maintaining the commitment to preserve the 1816 buildings and related features.



**"Plan of the Fort at York Upper Canada shewing its state in March 1816."**  
J[ean]-B[aptiste] DuBerger, Royal Engineers Drawing Room, Quebec, 16th Feb. 1816.  
[Sgd.] G[ustavus] Nicolls, Lt. Col. Royal Engineers, Quebec, 24th June 1816 (National Archives of Canada, NMC 23139).



## RECOVERY OF THE LANDFORM

### Principle:

**The topographic landscape setting of Fort York should be recovered, restored and interpreted.**

Opposite: *1999 City of Toronto topographic base map with superimposed 1833 map of Garrison Common.*

### Background:

The original strategic location of Fort York has been rendered meaningless by industrial development, incursions of railways, roads, the expressway and the filling of the lake. Understanding the founding landscape is essential to understanding the strategic location of the fort.

Fort York was constructed at the mouth of Garrison Creek on the shoreline of Lake Ontario and at the entrance to Toronto Harbour. In this location the garrison could defend the town to the east by protecting the mouth of the harbour, the open areas to the west and north of the fort and the creek valley. Almost all of this original landscape has been altered or lost.

The topography, which provided the strategic location for Fort York, was also ideal for the construction of railways in the 1850s. This led to the eventual circling of the fort by the railways and industrial activities that were the foundation of Toronto's economic growth. Most of the industrial development and the supporting local rail infrastructure has been cleared from the area, and there is now an opportunity to re-establish, literally or figuratively, much of the original landform around the fort.

On the south side of the Fort Precinct, the planned construction of Fort York Boulevard opens up the possibility of an early restoration of the south bastions, the original shoreline embankment and the edge of the lake. Archaeological research to date suggests that clear lines of the original lakeside topography, as well as a wealth of historical artifacts, lie well protected below the layers of later land fill. An application has been made for funding the necessary and more complete archeological investigations to parallel the design and implementation phases of Fort York Boulevard, with a view to restoring as much as possible of the authentic profiles of the Fort Precinct's southern edge.

The recovery of the historic shoreline of Lake Ontario should extend as far east and west as possible, from the mouth of Garrison Creek (east of Bathurst Street) to the Armouries. Beyond these points it may be more appropriate to reference the extended shoreline, possibly continuing to the southern edge of the Exhibition Grounds in the west and into the North Linear Park in the east.

In the area between the proposed Fort York Boulevard and the restored shoreline there is the opportunity to further strengthen the fort's authentic setting by restoring or commemorating the lake. This might be achieved by introducing a water body, as close as possible to the historic lake level, which



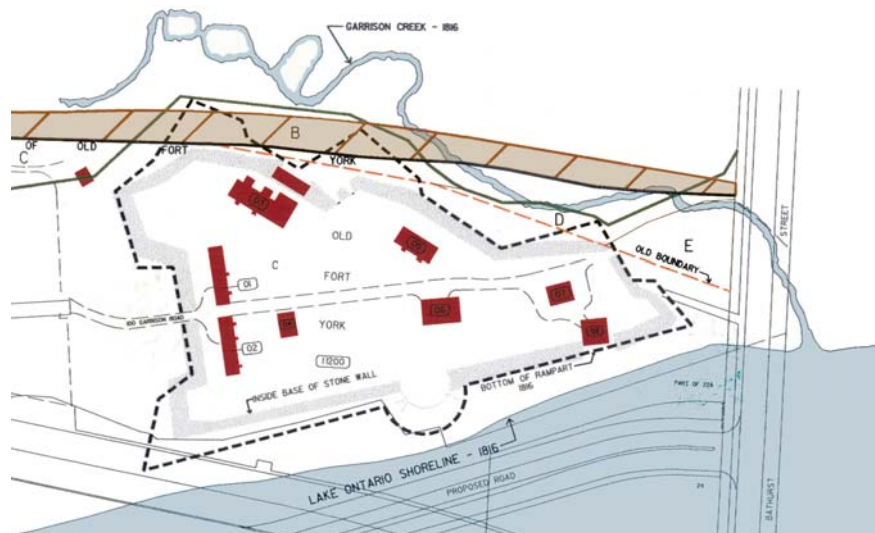
could double as a storm retention pond, skating rink and/or model sailboat pond. Such a water feature will need to be large and have a sufficient length of beach shoreline if it is to convincingly represent a disconnected remnant of Lake Ontario. Other, more symbolic representations of "lake" also might be considered.

To the east and north of the fort, the public ownership of Block 36 and the return of land along the north side of the fort, presents the opportunity to restore the north bastions and the banks of Garrison Creek together with the approach to the east gate of the fort. These "forgotten" faces of the fort will take on much greater importance as new city streets and buildings are developed. Particularly important for the fort will be the implementation of the Front Street Extension, which, if designed as a conventional urban street (with rail relocation), could establish a new built-up edge and a new public face for the Niagara Neighbourhood that addresses the north face of the fort. The restored north side of the fort could also become an important introductory landmark to the downtown for train passengers entering on the Lakeshore and Newmarket/Galt rail corridors (the latter may be linked in future to Pearson Airport).

On the west side of the Fort Precinct, there is an opportunity to recapture the unique, long distance prospect of the fort across the open area of the "plateau lands" and to restore the west bastions, the military cemetery and the road to the New Fort (Stanley Barracks in Exhibition Place). The recovery of this area of the Precinct could provide a larger, more meaningful place for re-enactments, and other cultural events, directly related to the fort. Restoration will require the phased removal of the tree nursery and the redundant rail overpass and relocation of surface parking and service areas.

**"Sketch to illustrate land exchanges in the vicinity of the north limit of Old Fort York."** M. Powlowski, Works and Emergency Services, City of Toronto, April 27, 2000.

*City Council has agreed to acquire from CN a strip of land along the rail corridor north of Fort York, (shown as toned here), that would allow the north ramparts and bastions (dotted line) to be rebuilt in their original positions.*



**Action:**

- Recover the topography of the Garrison Creek Ravine to the North and East.
- Recover the historic shoreline of Lake Ontario and the lakeside topography from the Armouries to the mouth of the Garrison Creek (east of Bathurst). Shoreline "references" extending further west and east should also be considered.
- Develop a water body or another symbolic reference to the Lake Ontario edge below the south bastions of the fort.
- Recover the open area to the west of the fort from Strachan Avenue to the west bastions including the cemetery and the mustering ground.
- Restore appropriate native vegetation associated with the landforms.



Henry Bowyer Lane, "The Fort, Toronto, Upper Canada, 1842," 1842 (Private collection, courtesy of the Art Gallery of Ontario, with permission of Lawrence Fine Art of Crewkerne).

*This may be the earliest view of 'old' Fort York in the middle distance and the New Fort, now known as Stanley Barracks, in the Background.*

## ARCHAEOLOGY



Archaeological Excavations adjacent to Blockhouse Number 2, 1992 (Toronto Historical Board).

### Principle:

**The outstanding archaeological resources associated with Fort York and its neighbourhood should be recognized and protected, and, when appropriate, should be explored professionally.**

### Background:

Human activity in the neighbourhood of Fort York extends back to the end of the last ice age when early hunters migrated into the region from New York in search of large game animals. With the arrival of John Graves Simcoe in 1793, human endeavour increased dramatically as he built Fort York and set in motion the process that led to the growth of modern urban Toronto. During the British army's time at Fort York, from 1793 to 1870, there was a considerable amount of construction undertaken both inside the fort and in the neighbouring areas to defend Toronto and to house the troops posted to the garrison. Furthermore, the unique development of the Garrison Reserve lands (south of Queen Street between Peter and Dufferin streets) owes much to their eighteenth-century military origins

As a result of this historical activity, archaeological resources abound in the region. As the archaeological work that already has taken place at Fort York has demonstrated, these resources are especially rich and important, and can tell us much about our history that cannot be obtained through any other endeavour.

Yet, archaeological resources are extremely fragile. One misplaced scoop by a backhoe will destroy a unique feature in a matter of seconds. Once lost, an archaeological resource cannot be recovered, and the stories it might have told us about our past will remain forever silent. As the fort and its neighbourhood are developed, it is crucial, therefore, that archaeological sites be identified, protected, and, when appropriate, explored through professionally led excavations and monitoring.

Previous archaeological excavations at Fort York have proved to be the subject of enormous interest and curiosity for visitors to the site. A professionally organized archaeological program together with strong public presentations of the investigative procedures and the recovered artifacts, could be a central part of the fort's interpretive program. The scheduling, location and presentation of the ongoing in situ archaeological work should be coordinated to optimize both the visitor experiences and the research objectives.

**Action:**

- Identify and communicate awareness of significant archaeological sites to ensure that they are not lost through misadventure or ignorance.
- Develop and implement a strategy to protect or explore these sites at levels appropriate to their individual levels of historical importance.
- Where appropriate or necessary, utilize legislative and regulatory opportunities to protect these sites.
- Protect grave sites from inappropriate disturbance.
- Where appropriate and possible, divert development away from archaeologically significant sites.
- Ensure that excavations and monitoring operations that do take place are conducted professionally, with adequate resourcing, and in conformity with appropriate ethical standards
- Leave undisturbed some portions of otherwise excavated sites so that they can be explored by future generations of archaeologists who will have better technologies to interpret these resources.
- Where appropriate, stabilize excavated archaeological remains in situ and interpret them through vista-board or other suitable display techniques.
- Ensure that the data recovered in excavations and monitoring is fully documented and analysed, that the resulting reports are deposited in a number of institutions to guarantee easy and permanent public access to these reports and related data, and guarantee that archaeological materials are properly catalogued and stored for ongoing study and exhibition.
- Communicate the results of archaeological excavations to a wide public through scholarly, public history, and general interest publications and other media as well as through exhibits and displays.
- Exploit the strong public interest in ongoing archaeological investigations as interpretive attractions on the Fort York site.



## CULTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE FORT PRECINCT

### Principle:

**The cultural elements of the Fort York Precinct should be restored and recovered.**

### Background:

A number of important cultural elements have been lost over the years as the lands around the fort have been altered by lakefill, industrial activity, rail and road construction.

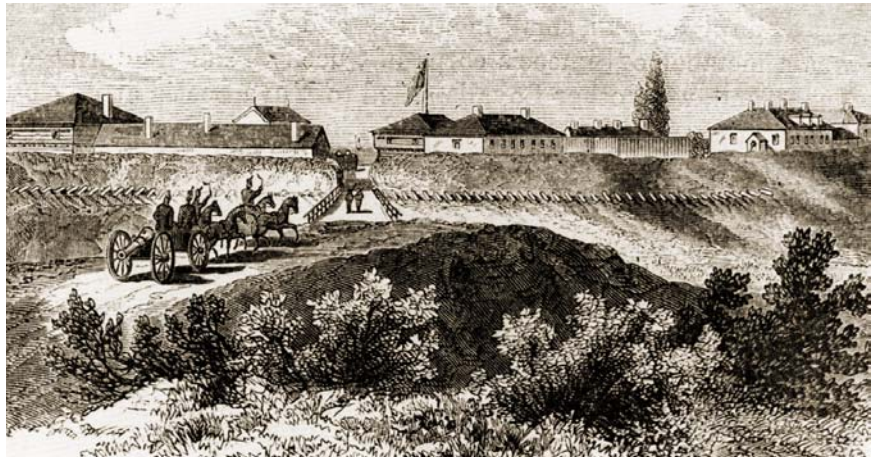
In restoring the fort and its surrounding landscape the military use of the fort will generally take precedence over the interpretation of the important succeeding layers of development in the area such as the railway and industrial history. However, if archaeological work reveals significant remains of the succeeding uses which do not unduly interfere with the restoration of the military landscape, these elements could be incorporated or interpreted in the surrounding landscape (e.g. remains of outlying wharves, or railway elements that were built on landfill).

The elements fall into three categories: military fortifications; changes to the landscape which occurred during battles; and elements such as cemeteries, and roads which existed because of the presence of the military. These elements, along with the recovery of lost landform elements, will take priority in the redevelopment of the landscape around the fort. Paths, roads and view corridors should be aligned to enhance the restoration and interpretation of these lost cultural element.

More detailed information on each of these elements is presented in Appendix I.

Benson J. Lossing, "Old Fort at Toronto in 1860" (Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812*; New York: Harper & Brothers, 1869, p.593).

*This view is of the east end of the fort from the foot of Bathurst Street.*



**Action:**

Restore or commemorate as appropriate, the following features:

***Military Fortifications***

- The perimeter bastions to their full height and location on all faces of the fort
- The Western Battery
- The Earthwork at Strachan and Fleet

***Military Presence***

- The path and bridge across Garrison Creek which connected the fort to the Town of York
- The road to the New Fort.
- The Strachan Avenue military cemetery
- The military structures to the west of the fort
- The Old Garrison cemetery (Victoria Square)

***Battle Remnants***

- The crater produced by the magazine explosion in 1813.



Anon., "Cemetery West of the Garrison," (John Ross Robertson, Landmarks of Toronto; Vol 1, p.67. Toronto, 1894).

*All texture has been eliminated from the Strachan Avenue Military Burying Ground by levelling the mounds and moving the grave markers into a flanking wall to simplify groundskeeping.*

## THE FORT YORK ARMOURIES



*1999 aerial view of the Fort York Armouries from the west.*

### Principle:

**The Fort York Armouries should be included in the Fort York Heritage Conservation District.**

### Background:

The site for the Armouries on Fleet Street, secured by the City from the Toronto Harbour Commissioners, was leased to the Government of Canada for 99 years. The building, designed by Marini, Lawson and Morris Architects, was completed in 1934.

The Fort York Armouries are the most important element of the continuous military use of Fort York besides the fort itself. It has been proposed that this building be converted for school or other community uses when the lease to the federal government expires. The building also might become part of the interpretive complex for the fort area, or these functions might be combined with other community uses.

For further information on the history of the Armouries refer to Appendix II.

### Action:

- Retain and reuse the Armouries building, with commemoration of its military use, if the military use of the Armouries decline.
- Incorporate and restore the lands surrounding the Armouries into the landscape of the fort.
- Consider using the Armouries as part of the interpretive complex for the Fort Precinct.

## NEW INTERVENTIONS IN THE LANDSCAPE

### Principle:

**New constructions or other elements introduced into the Fort York Precinct should be clearly distinguishable from the historic layers of the landscape.**

### Background:

The current fort landscape is a result of continuous alteration and landfill around the site. It is not possible for the casual observer to understand how much of it is authentic to the fort, and how much is an altered landscape.

As the original topography is revealed by archaeological work or recovered by other means it will be very important to the understanding of the site to be able to easily distinguish what is the original landscape, and what are later interventions.

For example, where the new Fort York Boulevard contacts the landscape of the former shoreline, the road should sit on a new and apparently separate structure that clearly can be interpreted as a later intervention.

One of the ways of creating the desired distinctions is to develop a common palette of materials, and detailing for new elements such as walkways, paving, lighting, furnishings and plantings which are clearly distinguishable from the heritage elements.

The Fort York landscape should be planted with native and appropriate historical plantings and maintained in a similar condition to its appearance under military use. In new areas, more modern planting and materials might be used.

### Action:

- Establish a design review panel of appropriate professional disciplines (heritage, architecture, landscape architecture, engineering) for new constructions within the Fort York Precinct.
- Develop a common palette of materials and detailing for new walkways, paving, lighting, furnishing which can be distinguished clearly from heritage features.



**"Old Fort, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1932"** (City of Toronto Archives, Parks Dept. #1543).

*The stone walls lining the inside of the ramparts are not authentic, but were built during the Great Depression to create employment.*

## THE BROADER CONTEXT

### Principle:

**The common history of Fort York and The Fort Neighbourhoods should be commemorated.**

### Background:

The history of the fort and the military, the railways, and the industrial growth of Toronto are intertwined in the neighbourhoods around the fort.

The first development plans for the area to the north were quite different than what actually was built. In the 1850s, the City fought the railway coming through this part of the city, hoping to preserve parkland along the course of Garrison Creek and along the waterfront, for future generations. The plan at that time was for larger lots along this parkland, to house the growing civil service associated with the second parliament buildings.

The City lost the battle with the railway. The area grew in an entirely different way and for about 100 years the area was home to some of Canada's greatest industries, Massey-Harris, Inglis and many others. Housing for factory workers was mixed in with larger houses for some of the management.

An example of the intertwining of these histories is the Central Prison. It was located on the former Garrison Reserve, and bounded by two railways. The prison's supply of cheap labour was one of the factors that brought industry to the neighbourhood. Today, a fragment of the Central Prison chapel remains on the former Inglis property, west of Strachan Avenue.

There are other types of military history represented in the area. The Armouries has had a special relationship to the fort, continuing the military presence in the area. During the two world wars, the industries along Strachan Avenue were essential to Canada's war efforts.

The story of the fort's relationship to its neighbourhoods could be told with plaques or other interpretive measures along the approaches to the fort, or at the various sites identified below. New construction in the area, or repairs to the existing fabric will likely yield further archaeological material and this should be monitored.

### Action:

- Monitor construction activities in the area for archaeological resources.
- Commemorate the history of the area through such means as new street names, vista boards, public art works, monuments, landscape and/or building references, and other interpretive devices.

- Commemorate the following sites:

***Railway Lands***

- Portions of the 1798-1813 Fort which were on the east side of Garrison Creek
- The mouth of Garrison Creek and the former shoreline of Lake Ontario
- The Ravine Battery
- The burning of the frigate, HMS Sir Isaac Brock
- Commissariat facilities along Front Street
- Naval dockyard (at Union Station)

***Bathurst Quay***

- The Royal Norwegian Air Force

***Bathurst/Strachan***

- Former docks
- Former industry
- Queen's Wharf
- Queen's Wharf Lighthouse

***The Niagara Neighbourhood***

- Lunatic Asylum
- Central Prison
- Police Station
- Rail corridors
- Transfer Station
- Bathurst Street Barracks and observatory (at the southeast corner of Queen and Bathurst)
- War industries

***CNE, Coronation Park, Toronto Islands***

- Immigrant sheds
- Exhibition grounds
- Ontario Place
- Blockhouse on Gibraltar Point
- Battery on the Island
- Military wharves and related facilities
- Stanley Barracks
- Stanley Barracks Gates
- Coronation Park
- Exhibition Camp
- Fort Rouillé
- The Western Battery
- Key points in the battle of York



**Provincial Lunatic Asylum, Toronto, ca. 1860** (City of Toronto Archives, SC-655-10).

*This landmark building sat at 999 Queen Street on a site that was formerly part of the Garrison Common. It was built in 1846-9 and demolished in 1976.*

Further detail on the significance of the sites listed can be found in Appendix II.

## THE BUILT-FORM SETTING

### Principle:

**The massing and design of new buildings and other structures near the Fort York Precinct should respect and not dominate the fort.**

### Background:

The present setting of Fort York Precinct is a visually chaotic jumble of expressway structures, railways, industrial remnants, electronic advertising signs and other unsightly bric-a-brac. This visual mess will not be eradicated easily nor quickly, but the long term objective should be a more dignified and "calmer" setting for the fort. This can be achieved by the phased removal of the most blatant visual intrusions on the fort, carefully sited new tree plantings and by establishing built-form and design controls for all new development on sites near the Fort Precinct.

Fort York is a Heritage Conservation District. It may be possible to employ (and expand) the powers of the Heritage Act to ensure that new neighbouring development is compatible with the Heritage Conservation District, through the application of building massing, architectural, signage, materials and other controls.

The visual impact of proposed developments or the effect of built-form controls can now be accurately assessed at an early planning stage using computer-generated, three dimensional modelling techniques. Such techniques seem to be particularly appropriate for the Fort York Precinct, where the topography is both complex and subtle and where three-dimensional relationships are critically important. It is therefore suggested that an accurate topographic model be developed for the Fort York Precinct and the Garrison Common, perhaps by extending the existing Garrison Creek computer model.

### Action:

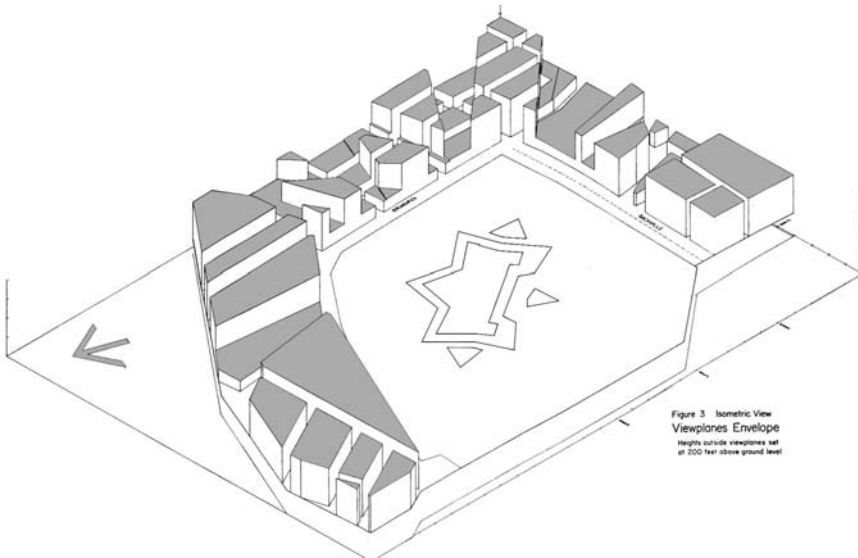
- Institute a phased program for removing the existing visual encroachments on the Fort York Neighbourhood.
- Establish built form and urban design guidelines for new development in the Fort York Precinct
- Research the potential for using the powers of the Heritage Act to establish design and other controls and advocate appropriate changes.
- Develop a computer-generated topographic model of the Fort York Precinct and Garrison Common to provide an accurate tool for assessing potential visual impacts.





**Aerial view of Citadel Hill, Halifax, N.S. and diagram of maximum building massing (view plane envelopes) of surrounding development (The City of Halifax, Planning Department).**

*A system of height controls, intended to maintain or create a sympathetic urban environment around Citadel Hill in Halifax takes into account the impact of building massing seen from three types of locations: from the streets at the foot of Citadel Hill, from the citadel ramparts, and from the parade square within the citadel.*



**Figure 3 Isometric View Viewplanes Envelope**  
 Heights outside viewplanes set at 200 feet above ground level

## VIEWS TO AND FROM THE FORT

### Principle:

**Views to and from the fort should be protected and enhanced.**

### Background:

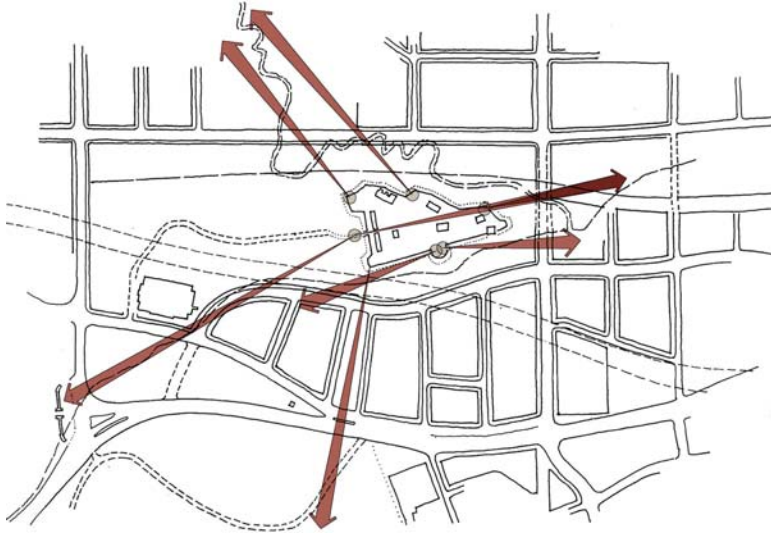
The fort is a rather subtle feature in the landscape. Unlike many earlier military installations which had impressive, massively constructed fortifications, Fort York was built with a low profile and integrated with the natural slopes of the site. The buildings inside the perimeter earthen, palisaded bastions were also kept low, generally below the profile of the bastions, in order to present as small a target as possible to cannon fire, particularly from vessels on the lake. Apart from its flag poles, the fort has no tall identifying structures or other major landmark features that are readily visible from within today's built-up city.

In order to enhance the visual subtlety of the fort, carefully considered measures will be required to protect unobstructed view corridors towards the fort and control future building development around the Fort Precinct.

*Circa 1990 view of the downtown skyline looking east from the West Gate of Fort York (dTAH).*



### ***Views from the Fort***



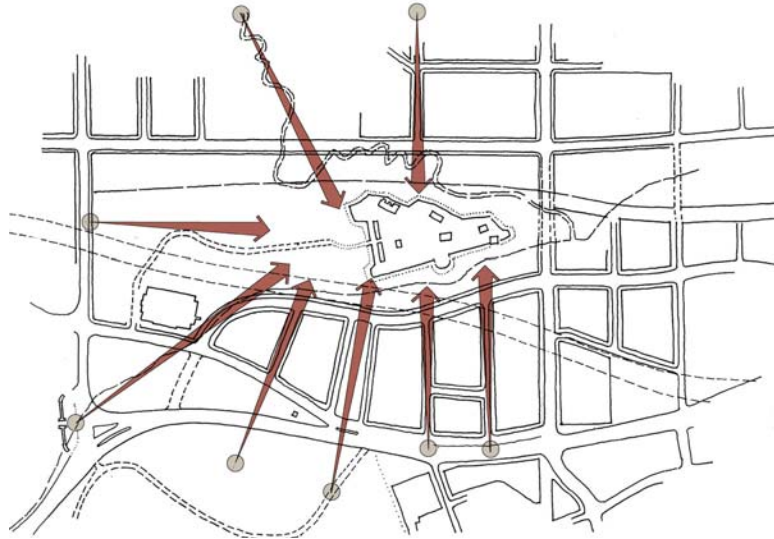
The important views from inside the fort which should be protected and orchestrated, are the views through the gun emplacement portals and the entrance gates. The protected view corridors from these points should generally support the understanding of the fort's early strategic setting and its history. Examples of these include views along the restored shoreline, along the Garrison Creek and across the mustering ground. Other view corridors should extend to the Armouries and the Princes' Gate and to the present waterfront.

A further view, from the fort's central pathway, looking across the fort to the downtown skyline has become a special, totemic view of fort in its contemporary urban setting. New development in the west Railway Lands and the Bathurst/Strachan area should be designed to enhance this special view which links the birthplace of Toronto to the modern city.

### ***Views To The Fort***

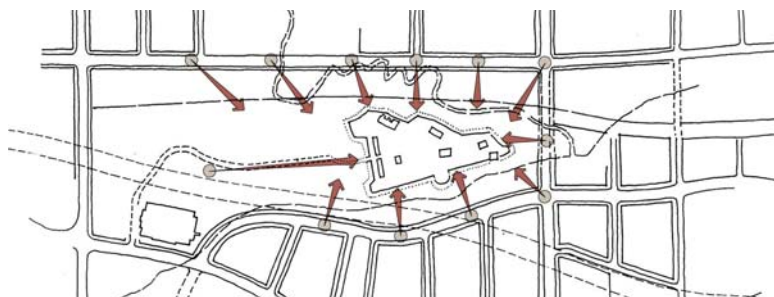
The views to the fort are here grouped into three categories (see diagrams): long distance views, usually across open parkland or along street corridors; short range views from high level vantage points; and short range views from a low level equivalent to the lake and creek valley.

### ***Long Distance Views***



There are few long-distance views to the fort today. (The best is down Tecumseth Street, looking across the rail corridor towards the north flank of the fort). New long-distance views could be opened up as redevelopment occurs. These include views from the south along the new street corridors and the Link Park in the Bathurst/Strachan area; the views from the Princes' Gate; along Garrison Creek; and across the military cemetery and mustering ground. The latter, with appropriate restoration of the foreground landscape, is potentially one of the most important authentic long-range views of the fort, since it provides the only opportunity to see the fort across an open landscape.

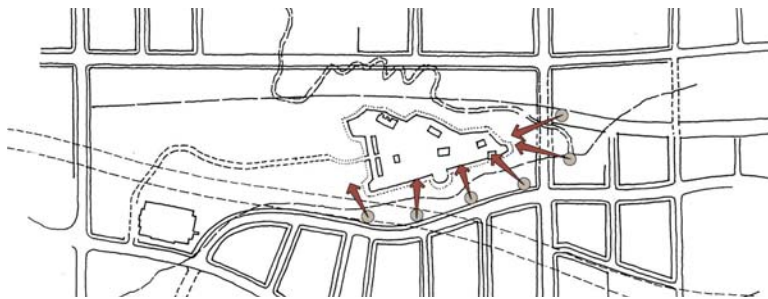
### ***Short Range Views (High)***



Short range views of the fort from a high level are available from the Bathurst Bridge. Many more will be opened-up by the construction of Fort York

Boulevard and Front Street Extension. Foreground obstructions are not likely to be an issue from the new vantage points, but the design and massing of buildings which will form the visual backdrop to the fort, should be controlled to ensure that they do not visually overwhelm the fort.

**Short Range Views (Low)**



Short range views of the fort from the low, lake level will be opened-up by the restoration of the shoreline and the mouth of the Garrison Creek, to reveal important prospects of the fort that are barely discernable today. Careful alignment of the paths at the shoreline level, north of Fort York Boulevard and below the Bathurst Bridge, and the use of appropriate landscape materials will help to reconstruct a sequence of authentic "attackers" views of the fort's waterfront defences. Because of the low vantage points and the relative heights of the fort's bastions, it is not likely that new buildings will be visible above the fort from these low level views.



*Circa 1995 view of Blockhouse No. 1 from "lake level" close to the Bathurst Street Bridge (dTAH).*

**Action:**

- Identify and protect key views to the fort from vantage points in the city and in the restored areas of the heritage landscape:
  - from under the Bathurst Bridge and from the former creek level at the mouth of Garrison Creek
  - from the Princes' Gates, along the former shoreline
  - from the south at the former lake level
  - from Tecumseth Street
  - from the Front Street Extension
  - from Strachan Avenue across the mustering ground
  - from Fort York Boulevard
- Protect and enhance views from the fort, particularly from gun emplacements and other strategic locations:
  - along Garrison Creek ravine
  - across the mustering grounds to the west
  - to the new city to the east



## INTEGRATION INTO A BROADER SYSTEM OF PUBLIC PARKS

Opposite: *Diagram of existing and planned public parks and recommended park connections in the Fort York Neighbourhoods (dTAH).*

### Principle:

**A system of parks and open spaces should connect the Fort York Precinct with the adjoining neighbourhoods and the waterfront:**

### Background:

There are a number of existing or proposed parks in the area which could be linked together to form a chain of public open spaces that would effectively integrate the western part of the central waterfront and the city to the north. Fort York would be the centrepiece of this park network.

Many of these parks are remnants of two former systems of land in public ownership, the former Garrison Reserve and the Garrison Creek lands.

The forest was cleared for a mile radius around the fort, known as the Garrison Reserve, to guarantee visibility, and all of the lands within this zone were retained in military ownership. As the fort lost military importance, lands in the reserve were transferred or sold for public purposes, such as the Lunatic Asylum and the Central Prison, and remaining lands were transferred to the City of Toronto in 1909, on condition that they remain as public parkland.

The Garrison Creek Linkage Plan is a recent City of Toronto initiative which has particular relevance to the fort. Many of the lands along the course of the creek, which were not subdivided in the earlier periods of settlement, remained in public ownership and later were developed for parks, schools, and institutions. The Garrison Creek Linkage Plan seeks to reconnect these open spaces into a continuous park system extending from the Iroquois shoreline (St. Clair Avenue) to Lake Ontario.

At the Fort York end of the creek system, a southerly extension of Stanley Park on public land, coupled with an on-grade Front Street extension and a footbridge from this street, across the railway, to the west side of the fort, could establish an important conclusion to this Garrison Creek park system.

On the east side of the Precinct, connection should be made to the "Linear Park" on the north edge of the railway lands (Concord Adex) development. The City-owned Block 36, on the east side of Bathurst Street, is the location of the mouth of the Garrison Creek at Lake Ontario. This site provides the opportunity to both interpret the creek and the lake edge and to enable a grade transition from the higher linear park to the lower (lake) level, extending below the Bathurst bridge to the restored lake edge south of the fort.

Archaeological investigations of Block 36 may reveal evidence of the 1798-1813 garrison, and traces of bridges or fords across the creek which marked a route between the fort and Town of York. Any such evidence would clearly bring further dimensions to the park's design.





To the south and west, new and improved park connections should be made to integrate the Fort York Precinct with Gore Park, the Exhibition Grounds, (Princes' Gate Forecourt), Coronation Park and other parks along the waterfront.

The "Link Park" proposed in the Bathurst/Strachan secondary plan will establish a further park connection to the fort, across Fort York Boulevard, from the south. To be fully effective, this park should be linked, across Fleet Street and Lake Shore Boulevard, to Coronation Park, thereby completing a new park sequence between the old Garrison Creek and the new waterfront.

Other parks that should be connected to the fort via elaborated sidewalks and street tree plantings include: Victoria Memorial Park (military cemetery) and the related Wellington Street/Clarence Square composition; the Esplanade (Bremner Boulevard); Bathurst/Spadina Park, and the Southern Linear Park.

#### **Action:**

- Retain and recapture lands which were part of the Garrison Common Reserve and along the former alignment of Garrison Creek for public open spaces.
- Retain as parkland lands transferred to the city as part of the 1909 agreement.
- Support the Garrison Creek Linkage initiatives.
- Construct the Front Street Extension on-grade and develop city-owned land for parks extending Stanley Park to Front Street.
- Construct a footbridge across the rail track connecting the Front Street Extension sidewalk with the Fort York Precinct, west of the fort.
- Initiate archaeological investigation of Block 36.
- Develop the city-owned Block 36 for parkland to link North Linear Park with the lake-level parkland extending beneath the Bathurst Bridge.
- Commemorate the mouth of Garrison Creek and other historic features.
- Provide park connections to the west and south, particularly the connection of the Link Park to Coronation Park, to complete the north-south chain of parks to the present waterfront.
- Enhance streetscape links with Victoria Memorial Park (formerly Victoria Square), Wellington Street/Clarence Square, and other local parks.

## PATHWAY LINKAGES

### Principle:

**A public pathway system should link the paths in the Fort York Precinct, the sidewalks of the surrounding streets, the paths in adjoining neighbourhoods and the waterfront promenades and trails.**

### Background:

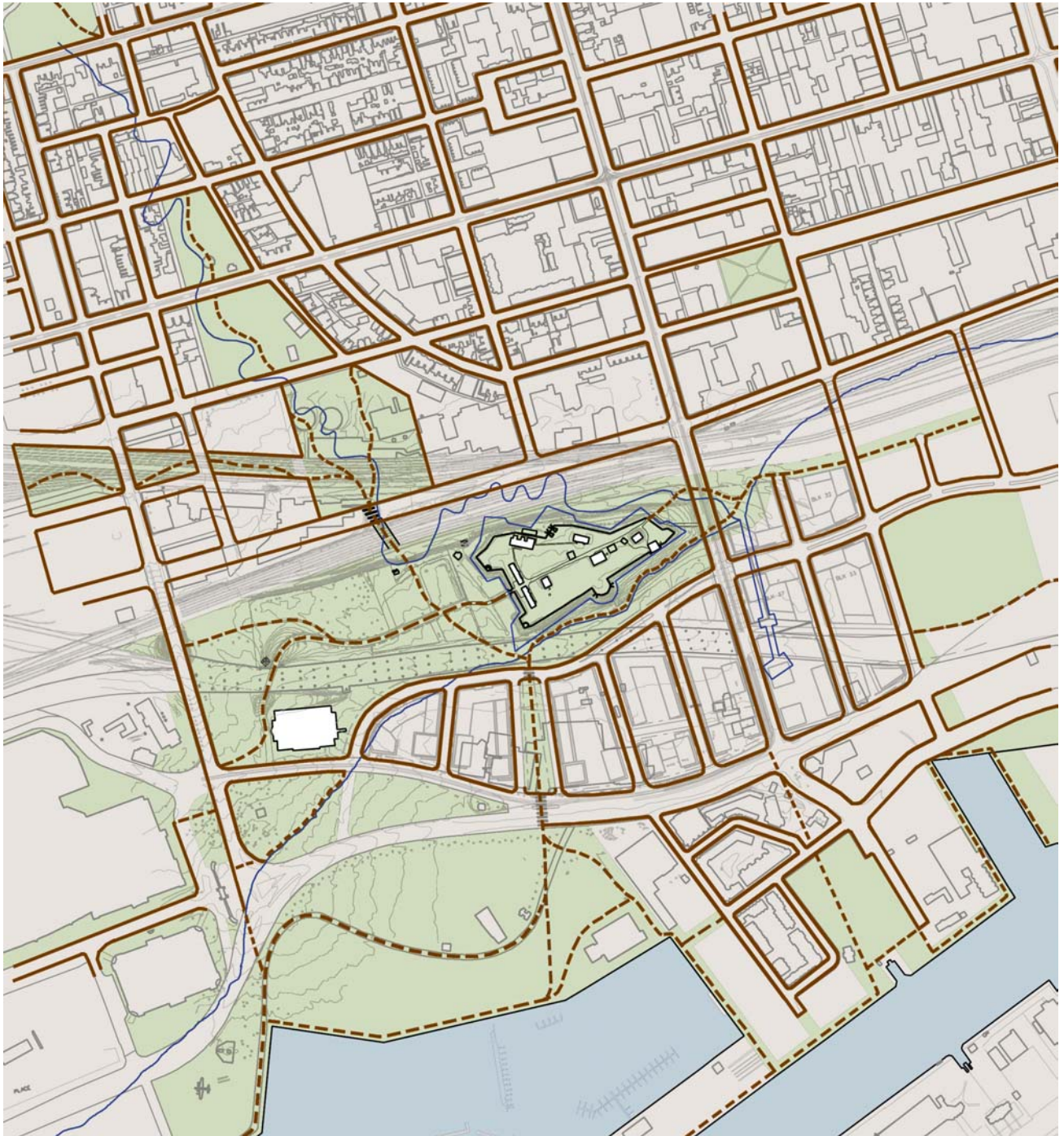
New and extended pathways in the Fort York Precinct could be connected to the other existing and planned pathways to create a continuous system of public cycle routes, pedestrian trails and sidewalks. The preferred location for a new east-west pathway within the precinct is along the south side of the fort at the restored "beach" level. A path in this position will afford authentic attackers' views from below the fort's defensive bastions and will facilitate a path connection below the Bathurst Bridge, across Block 36 to the Northern Linear Park pathway. The potential should be explored for aligning the new pathway in Block 36 with the early trail which led from the fort's east gate, across a bridge of Garrison Creek, towards the old Town of York. At its western end, the new "beach" pathway should connect to the Armouries and extend across Gore Park to the forecourt of the Princes' Gate, possibly following and demarcating the original lake shoreline.

At the western end of the Fort York Precinct, the pedestrian entrance from Strachan Avenue requires substantial improvement to provide a fully accessible route, across the mustering grounds to the fort's west gate. This pathway could generally follow the line of the earlier road between the fort and the Stanley Barracks which were located in the present Exhibition Ground.

It is important to maintain pedestrian access at the east gate, but the current bridge from Bathurst Street is unsightly. It would be desirable to restore the great east gate, in conjunction with other landscape restoration.

A new north-south pathway also should be planned. This should connect in the north to the new railway footbridge and the extended Garrison Creek pathway system, cross the precinct and continue southward to the Martin Goodman/Waterfront Trail in Coronation Park.

Particularly important for increased pedestrian accessibility and visibility of the Fort York will be the sidewalks of the streets surrounding the precinct. Both Fort York Boulevard and the Front Street Extension will open up new prospects of the fort and its associated landscape. Their sidewalks on the fort side should be generous and commodious, and designed as integrated parts of the Fort York Precinct. Together with improved sidewalks on the Strachan and Bathurst bridges they should connect seamlessly to the paths within the precinct.



**Action:**

- Develop a new pathway along the south side of the fort at "beach" level linked to the North Linear Park below the Bathurst Street Bridge.
- Construct a new bridge across the railway to connect northwards to the Niagara Neighbourhood following the alignment of Garrison Creek, and connect southwards to the Link Park.
- Develop at least one major pathway link across Lake Shore Boulevard, between Bathurst Street and Strachan Avenue, to the Martin Goodman Trail in Coronation Park.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle connections on Bathurst Street and Strachan Avenue.
- Provide a new pathway link across Gore Park to the Princes' Gate forecourt.
- Provide new or improved sidewalks on the surrounding streets, designed as integral parts of the precinct.

Opposite: *Diagram of existing and proposed sidewalks and paths and recommended pathway connections in the Fort York Neighbourhoods (dTAH).*



John Elliott Woolford, "Fort at York, 1821" (National Archives of Canada, C-99558).

*A winding road along the lake shore leads to a bridge over Garrison Creek and through the great east gate of the fort.*

## STREETS

### Principle:

**New streets should give the Fort York Precinct a new address, enhance opportunities for interpretive views of the fort, and improve access for pedestrians, cyclists and transit passengers as well as motorists.**

### Background:

Many new arterial and local streets are planned for the areas around the Fort York Precinct. The massive capital investments involved in this new transportation infrastructure also represents an opportunity to address a broad range of city building issues and specifically, to re-establish Fort York's position in the urban environment.

The new streets will dramatically alter the patterns of access and the perceptions of the fort. With proper coordination, the streets can also help to recapture much of the fort's setting. Particularly important is a respect for the historic topography of the fort, the lake edge and the Garrison Creek valley. The alignment and elevations of new roads can also help to open up long and short "authentic" views, both to and from the fort, that are now largely obscured and the street sidewalks can be designed as parts of a larger network of pedestrian paths linking through the Fort York Precinct.

Fort York Boulevard: The current proposal for Fort York Boulevard creates a number of advantages in giving an address and new visibility to Fort York. The early construction of the Boulevard is therefore strongly supported.

However, because of the high elevation of its proposed intersection with Bathurst Street, a portion of the new road will block a key view of the fort from the south. To mitigate the impact on the views of the fort it is suggested that the space under Fort York Boulevard be used as a viewing area and be incorporated into proposed buildings on the south side of the street.

Alternative alignments for Fort York Boulevard have been suggested. For example, it has been proposed that the Boulevard be located further south to a position where the intersection with Bathurst would be closer to the old shoreline level. To date these suggestions have proved unfeasible because of existing agreements with landowners and traffic planning considerations. However, the discussions of the removal of the Gardiner may create new opportunities to reconsider the intersection of Fort York Boulevard and Bathurst.

Front Street Extension: There are two options for the Front Street Extension under discussion, one with, one without the rail relocation. With rail relocation, Front Street, could be constructed on-grade following the natural contour of the Garrison Creek Valley and could provide normal on-grade street frontages for redevelopment sites on its north side. Without rail relocation, the Front Street Extension would be built above grade to cross the railway, raised to about the same height as the Gardiner to the south of the fort. Without rail relocation, Front Street would create a new barrier between the fort and the communities to the north, thereby frustrating efforts to link the Garrison Creek park system with Fort York and the parks along the waterfront.

Bathurst Street: Bathurst Street and the Bridge crowd the fort and create a visual obstruction in views from the fort. However the current Bathurst Street Bridge has historic value and its restoration in its current location is supported.

There are many opportunities for authentic views of the fort from under the bridge and from the lands to the east. Should there be a reason to consider reconstruction, the new bridge should spring across the tracks and land further south than it currently does, to allow for unobstructed views to and from the fort, below the bridge.

Strachan Ave: Strachan Avenue is a key linking street between the waterfront and the community to the north, linking Trinity College Gates to the Princes' Gates. There is currently an on-grade rail crossing on Strachan which may need to be eliminated in future if there are sufficient increases in road and/or rail traffic. The only satisfactory plan that allows for grade separation and the retention of Strachan Avenue is the Rail Relocation Plan.

Garrison Road: The current Garrison Road bridges over a railway spur which is no longer in use. As the topography around the fort is recovered, the bridge should be demolished and the road should be replaced on its original alignment to the New Fort. In the long term, use of this road might be restricted to pedestrians, bicycles, service and emergency vehicles.

New Local Neighbourhood Streets: New local streets in the adjoining neighbourhoods should be located to take advantage of potential view corridors which open up views of the fort and allow long views from the fort to the lake and along the line of Garrison Creek.

**Action:**

- Support the Rail Relocation option for the Front Street Extension and the elimination of the on-grade rail crossing of Strachan Avenue.
- Support the early construction of Fort York Boulevard.
- Support efforts to move Fort York Boulevard further south if the opportunity arises.
- If the present alignment of Fort York Boulevard is maintained, encourage the construction of building accommodation below the road, connected to the development parcel to the south.
- Promote improved access and viewing opportunities below the Bathurst Street Bridge.
- Align new local streets to exploit views to and from the fort.
- Reconstruct Garrison Road in its original alignment and treatment (paving type, width, etc.) and remove the bridge over the redundant rail corridor.
- Support the re-naming of Bremner Boulevard between Spadina Avenue and Bathurst Street to Fort York Boulevard.
- Support the use of names associated with the history of Fort York in the naming of new streets.



# RELOCATION OF THE GARDINER EXPRESSWAY

## Principle:

**The dismantling of the elevated Gardiner Expressway and its below-grade replacement south of the Fort York Precinct should be strongly supported.**

## Background:

The construction of the elevated Gardiner Expressway in the 1950s sadly diminished the scale and visibility of Fort York and severely restricted visual connections between the city and the lake.

The future of the fort is critically interwoven with the future of the Gardiner Expressway. The present expressway is an unacceptable neighbour for the fort and while carefully designed redevelopment of the area adjoining the fort with new streets, public parks and buildings may recapture some visibility, accessibility and dignity for the fort, the existence of the Gardiner structure will continue to frustrate the full accomplishment of these objectives. Uncertainty about the expressway's future also impedes planning in the Fort York Precinct, just as it does in so many other areas of the central waterfront.

There have been many proposals in the past decade or more for relocating the Gardiner. The most encouraging is the recently released recommendations of the Toronto Waterfront Task Force which includes the proposed demolition of the existing structure in the area of the fort and its replacement with a below-grade highway between Strachan and Spadina.

If implemented this proposal could be enormously beneficial to the Fort York Precinct. A replacement expressway in a tunnel (or "cut and cover") could open up many positive opportunities for connecting the restored landscape of the fort with the waterfront and for truly revealing Fort York.

A new alignment for the Gardiner should be to the south of the fort to avoid archaeological sites and a below-grade structure should provide sufficient depth of cover to allow for landscape restoration.



*View of the existing Gardiner Expressway, looking toward the Fort from Garrison Road, north of the Fort York Armouries.*



**Action:**

- Support plans for the relocation of the Gardiner Expressway.
- Locate replacement expressway underground south of the fort.
- Extend the historic landscape over the highway.
- Plan short term improvements and restoration of the Fort Precinct to both meet the present circumstances and to facilitate the relocation of the expressway.



*The existing Gardiner Expressway (left) and the proposed reconfiguration of the expressway corridor (right).*

**Detail portions of illustrations from *Our Toronto Waterfront*, (Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, *Our Toronto Waterfront*, pp.36-37, March 7, 2000).**

## VEHICULAR ACCESS AND PARKING

### Principle:

**Vehicular access and parking should be provided in ways that support other objectives for restoring the landscape setting of the fort while ensuring ease of access for visitors.**

### Background:

A balance must be found between efficient access (particularly visitors and tour bus drop-off) and convenient parking (particularly handicapped parking) very close to the fort entrance, and the restoration of the landscape to the west of the fort.

Because of the fort's present isolated and dislocated position, visitation is dependent on easy visitor access by car and tour bus and conveniently located parking. Unfortunately, this necessary convenience comes at a high cost to the historic value of the precinct landscape. The physical and visual impact of Garrison Road and the present parking lot, in combination with the tree nursery, service areas, and associated paraphernalia, severely fracture the western part of the precinct. The fort is effectively cut-off from the mustering ground and there is no worthy view of the fort on the approach from the west.

The large site area to the west of the fort presents a unique opportunity to re-establish, on a broad scale, the fort's authentic context. The long-term goal should be to restore and reconnect this part of the Precinct landscape. This will require the relocation of all but the most essential interventions, including the parking and associated roadways.

Replacement parking should, in the long term, be provided outside the Fort Precinct or in the lower areas of the Precinct, preferably below grade, and possibly in conjunction with new development in the adjoining neighbourhoods.

However, it should be recognized that the consequences of relocating the existing road access and parking without providing satisfactory replacements or alternatives, could be to frustrate other efforts to increase the fort's attractiveness and visibility as a visitor destination. The restoration of the "plateau" landscape and the relocation of parking must therefore be carefully phased.

Fort York, in a new neighbourhood, with good connections to other facilities will no longer be as dependent on car access for visitors. Indeed, if visitation to the fort, were to increase as desired without improving other means of

access to the fort the site could be overwhelmed by parking. It will be absolutely key to find ways to accommodate much of the needed parking in the new neighbourhoods around the fort, where it can do double duty for other attractions in the area. Parking should be considered under new parks in the area, such as the Link Park, the proposed park at the corner of Strachan and Fleet, and possibly under the Gardiner Expressway although this may not be compatible with plans to remove the expressway.

The early construction of Fort York Boulevard and other redevelopment in the surrounding area will undoubtedly alter the reality and the perception of the fort's accessibility. (Pedestrians on the north sidewalk of Fort York Boulevard will be closer to the west gate of the fort, than a car parked at the western end of the present parking lot). This new proximity of the fort may change the mode of arrival and reduce the demands for on-site parking.

A new urban context for the fort will bring new connections by road, transit and pathways not only to the fort but to other tourist facilities in the area. Within a few blocks are Ontario Place and the CNE, Harbourfront, the Skydome, the Roundhouse, and the CN tower. The fort will become a much more prominent member of the city's many waterfront attractions and give greater impetus to the shared use of facilities such as car and bus parking, or private tour buses which link various tourist destinations.

Public transit improvements which might benefit the fort, include the connection between the Bathurst/Fleet Street streetcar line and the Queen's Quay L.R.T., and possible transit on Fort York Boulevard/Bremner Boulevard. New local streets in the Bathurst/Strachan area will bring the Fleet Street streetcar stops within a block of the fort

While the many transportation and other changes in immediate area of Fort York may alter the "modal split" of visitor travel, facilities will be necessary to accommodate on-site tour and school bus loading and unloading, and car drop-off adjacent to the fort's entrance. Fort York Boulevard, as the new 'address' street, will provide the most obvious point of entrance to the Fort York Precinct. However, because of the change of elevation between the Boulevard and Fort York, and the desire to restore the lake shoreline and protect archaeologically important areas, it will be difficult to achieve a vehicular site entrance close to the fort. An entrance driveway, off Fort York Boulevard, close to the Armouries appears to provide the best option.

**Action:**

- Plan for the long-term relocation of most of the surface parking and Garrison Road from the upper level of the Precinct and the restoration of the landscape.
- Wherever possible, site needed parking in the new neighbourhoods where it can serve double duty.
- Consider developing parking below new parks.
- Coordinate car and bus parking and possible tour bus links with other tourist attractions in the area.
- Provide bus and car drop-off and pick-up access close to visitor facilities.
- Locate the driveway entrance to the Fort York Precinct off Fort York Boulevard to meet restoration objectives and protect archaeologically important areas, possibly close to the Armouries.

## VISITOR SERVICES AND INTERPRETIVE CENTRE FACILITIES

### Principle:

**Visitor Services and the Interpretive Centre facilities should be provided in ways that support other objectives for restoring the fort and its landscape setting, while accommodating and enriching a full range of visitor experiences.**

### Background:

Over the years there has been much discussion of the best location for the interpretive centre for Fort York. The current preferred location is at the western gate, although the case has been made for locating the visitor centre at the edge of the Fort Precinct, with an underground connection to the west gate.

A design proposal for an interpretive centre, donated by the Zeidler Roberts Partnership to the Friends of Fort York, was reviewed. The proposal, for a large facility located immediately outside the western gate, has a number of advantages in bringing visitors very close to the fort gates, and providing a wide range of centralized facilities. Concern was expressed, however about the facility's impact on views of the fort from the west and views from within the fort.

Another suggested alternative to reduce the visual impact of the interpretive centre, while still bringing visitors close to the west entrance, is to locate the visitor centre underground, with its entrance off Fort York Boulevard. This would allow visitors to make the transition from Fort York Boulevard, up to the gates of the fort within a hidden building.

A further suggestion is to review the program of the proposed centre to determine how much could be broken into smaller facilities and perhaps integrated into reconstructed historical buildings on the fort grounds. This could require a smaller facility more focussed on visitor reception and interpretive features to be placed at the west entrance to the fort.

For example, the reconstructed Rebellion Barracks could provide a large hall for exhibits, receptions and other events as well as ample space for offices, meeting rooms and training facilities. Reconstructed soldiers barracks on the south side of the fort could house facilities for the Fort York Drums and Summer Guard, the interpretive staff and an appropriately equipped facility for period dining events. Facilities for revenue generation could similarly be accommodated within the fort while still leaving all the historical buildings for exhibits.

### Action:

- Develop siting criteria for the Interpretive Centre facilities which are compatible with the principles of *Fort York: Setting it Right*.
- Review the accommodation program for the Interpretive Centre facilities to determine the feasibility of developing several smaller building components.

## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX I: HERITAGE FEATURES RELATED TO FORT YORK AND THE MILITARY RESERVE TO BE RESTORED OR COMMEMORATED

### Introduction: The Military Reserve and Related Sites

The original military reserve in Toronto, established by John Graves Simcoe in the 1790s, encompassed all the land north of the waterfront to Queen Street, between Peter and Dufferin streets on the east and west. The creation of the reserve set in motion the distinct evolution of that part of the city and established a series of inter-connected legacies that affect the community today. For example, there continues to be a military presence in the district, as there has been since 1793. As well, governments utilized this public land to build facilities to meet their own needs for such things as a lunatic asylum or to help create public amenities (such as the CNE,) or to support certain kinds of industrial and commercial development that they favoured (such as the wartime industries along Strachan Avenue and King Street).

In addition to the military reserve, the colonial-era British army met broader defensive needs by establishing a presence elsewhere in the community, such as during the Rebellion Crisis of 1837-41 when it erected blockhouses around the outskirts of Toronto to protect the city from rebel raids.

The distinct development of the military reserve and the army's presence elsewhere in colonial Toronto form an interconnected and complex story of considerable importance to the city's history. Yet, this fascinating story has not been told in its entirety and has not been 'pulled together' to facilitate public access to it (despite some small but largely unconnected commemorative efforts). Therefore, it is highly desirable to pull together these stories. In some cases, this might mean recovering a landscape or heritage feature; in most, it probably requires only commemoration and interpretation through a system of inter-related vista-boards to interpret specific events and sites within the broader cultural matrix associated with this history. These vista-boards would be free-standing, like commemorative plaques, but tell a better story because they are technologically able to present graphics and illustrations as well as text to the public.

## Colonial-Era Military Features Within the Fort York Heritage Conservation District<sup>1</sup>

### ***Missing and Deteriorated Features Within Fort York***

Within the fort itself, a large number of buildings and other features have been lost over the decades. Some of these could be restored, such as the U.S. Civil War era battery. A few of the missing buildings could be reconstructed to improve the overall interpretation of the site's rich history and house various public and museum functions that the site must offer if it hopes to meet public demands and thereby attract a greatly-expanded audience. Other features could be interpreted through vista-boards or similar devices rather than be reconstructed or restored. In some cases an archaeological programme will need to precede work in order to recover the historical data buried in the soil and to inform the restoration process to maximize authenticity.

### ***Fort York Perimeter Defences***

Fort York's own exterior walls around the fort need to be restored to their original impressive appearance, which consisted largely of a cliff-like earthwork and a palisade. In addition, a small earthwork on the west side of the moat needs to be reconstructed, and the north wall and parts of the west wall probably ought to be returned to their original location (having been shrunk inwards in modern times). A strong archaeological research programme will have to precede the restoration of the walls to maximize our knowledge of the history of these features to ensure an accurate restoration and to recover the artifactual collections buried in the earth. As well, a variety of vista-boards and other interpretive features will be necessary to ensure public access to the story of the defences.

### ***Grand Magazine Crater***

During the battle of York of 27 April 1813, the British blew up a gunpowder magazine (on the site of the today's south wall of Fort York) before retreating in the face of the overwhelming American attack. The explosion caused 250 casualties among the Americans, including the mortal wounding of their field commander, Brigadier-General Zebulon Pike. The explosion also formed an enormous crater at the magazine site that remained visible for years afterwards. It could be recovered archaeologically and the foundations of the magazine could be exposed and stabilised. Its story then could be presented through a vista-board.

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<sup>1</sup> Toronto City Council established the Fort York Heritage Conservation District under the provisions of the Ontario Heritage Act in 1984. It consists of Fort York and the neighbouring city-owned land on Garrison Common, the Strachan Avenue military cemetery, and the parking lot on the northeast corner of Fleet Street and Strachan Avenue.

### ***East Gate, Road to York, and Bridge Over Garrison Creek***

The east gate of Fort York was the 'main' gate historically in terms of its relationship with the civilian community. It sat at the head of a road that ran northeast across a bridge over Garrison Creek and over to modern Front Street. The gate may have been a physically impressive architectural element, judging from one illustration dated 1821. Therefore, it ought to be reconstructed if further research and archaeological exploration confirms our current impressions. The road and bridge associated with it likely could be rebuilt or otherwise represented in the Garrison Creek Valley through vista-boards and perhaps through some form of creative presentation.

### ***Road to the New Fort***

There was a road, roughly along today's Garrison Road, that connected Fort York with the New Fort (Stanley Barracks). With the redevelopment of the neighbourhood around the fort, this road could cease to be a city street and could take on a more appropriate historical appearance from the west gate of Fort York to its connection to Fleet Street as part of a larger programme to develop Garrison Common to represent its historical characteristics as part of the military reserve.

### ***Military Structures to the West of the Fort***

During the Victorian era the army built a number of structures along Garrison Road. They could be interpreted through a vista-board. Depending upon the development of the area, these buildings may need archaeological investigation if their sites are to be disturbed.

### ***Strachan Avenue Military Cemetery***

The Strachan Avenue Military Cemetery, located on Garrison Common just east of Strachan Avenue, was used for interments of soldiers and their families between the 1860s and the 1910s. Today a small number of headstones remain on the site, mounted in a modern and deteriorating wall (that incorrectly marks the eastern end of the graveyard and which is hastening the deterioration of the original stones). The headstones ought to be remounted to enhance their longevity, the cemetery ought to be redesigned to add dignity to reflect its role as a burial site, and a plaque and a vista-board should be erected to improve the public's understanding of the site.

### ***Earthwork Near Strachan Avenue and Fleet Street***

There was a small earthwork near the corner of Strachan Avenue and Fleet Street at the time of the battle of York. Its exact location needs to be determined through historical and possibly archaeological research. If it was located on the site of the current parking lot, it could be rebuilt and interpreted through a vista-board. If it were located on an already-occupied site, such as Fort York Armouries, a vista-board would fulfil the need to interpret this feature.

## **West of the Fort York Heritage Conservation District**

### ***Western Battery***

The Western Battery, located near today's CNE Princes' Gates, was a small fort in its own right that helped Fort York guard the entrance to Toronto Bay. It ought to be commemorated at a minimum with a vista-board.

### ***New Fort/Stanley Barracks***

In 1841 the bulk of the garrison troops moved to new barracks one kilometre west of Fort York. The 'New Fort' (renamed 'Stanley Barracks' in 1893) housed troops until the late 1940s. As well, Stanley Barracks saw other uses, most controversially as an internment facility for 'enemy aliens' during World War I. Most of buildings were torn down in the 1950s, with only the officers' quarters being left standing. This impressive building must be interpreted on its exterior in an appropriate manner and the rest of the facilities and their stories ought to be told at least minimally through vista-boards.

### ***Fort Rouillé (Near the CNE Bandshell in Exhibition Place)***

In the 1750s, Fort Rouillé was a small outpost of Fort Niagara (located at modern Youngstown, New York). The French used Fort Rouillé as both a trading post and diplomatic centre during its imperial struggles with Britain. When Fort Niagara fell to the British in 1759, the garrison at Fort Rouillé burned and evacuated their post. There is a monument at the site today along with some other interpretive features. It could be made stronger by moving the inappropriate British cannons of the Victorian era now at the site to Fort York and by otherwise improving intellectual access to the site's history minimally with vista-boards.

## East of the Fort York Heritage Conservation District

### ***Portions of the Fort York Site on the East Side of Garrison Creek***

The current Fort York site also is the site of the first British fort established by John Graves Simcoe in 1793. However, between 1798 and 1813, the bulk of the garrison lived in buildings on the east side of Garrison Creek. That site has been largely obliterated, but it ought to be commemorated through vista-boards. In some areas, there may be archaeological remains that at the very least ought to be explored should the site come under construction or similar pressures.

### ***Old Garrison Cemetery***

The original cemetery, in use from the 1790s to the 1860s, occupies part of the park in Victoria Square (a block east of Bathurst Street and a block south of King Street). There is a memorial marking the spot along with some other plaque texts. The cemetery could be marked and landscaped to reflect its history and original use better.

### ***St. John The Evangelist Church***

In 1859, St John the Evangelist (Anglican) Church opened near the Old Garrison Cemetery northeast of Fort York. It served both the military and the local residential population until modern times when the church was demolished. A commemorative plaque commemorates the church, which could be supplemented with a vista-board.

### ***Military Facilities Along Front Street***

The military had commissariat and other buildings along Front Street and a navel dockyard stood on the site of Union Station. These features should be commemorated through vista-boards.

## North of the Fort York Heritage Conservation District

### ***Military Buildings in the Creek Valley and Neighbouring Regions***

The old Garrison Creek valley was the site of various military buildings in the nineteenth century. These logically could be represented through vista-boards. As well, these sites ought to be excavated archaeologically if they come under any kind of construction pressure.

### ***Bathurst Street Barracks and Observatory***

At the time of the Rebellion of 1837, the army built barracks at the southeast corner of Queen and Bathurst streets. These facilities also were used as the first magnetic observatory in Canada. The Bathurst Street Barracks ought to be commemorated with a plaque and/or vista-boards.

## South of the Fort York Heritage Conservation District

### ***Gibraltar Point Blockhouse and Battery on the Toronto Islands***

The British army maintained defences at Gibraltar Point on today's Toronto Islands between 1793 and the 1820s. Nothing remains of these works, which are commemorated with a provincial plaque. Vista-boards are required to tell their story and that of the role of the islands and harbour in Toronto's military history.

## The Battle of York

### ***Various Elements***

The battle of York of April 1813 began in Parkdale (near the Boulevard Club) and was fought for six hours through what today is Parkdale and the CNE grounds, climaxing at the site of Fort York. Afterwards, British forces retreated east along Front Street, burned a ship, the HMS Sir Isaac Brock at a naval dockyard at the site of Union Station, and then continued their retreat to Kingston. Various points of significance in the battle ought to be interpreted through a series of vista-boards.

## Rebellion of 1837

### ***Various Elements***

During the Rebellion Crisis of 1837-41, Toronto was a centre of heightened military action as well as the scene of some of the fighting, treason trials, and state executions. Elements central to that story and with close connections to Fort York ought to be identified and commemorated through vista-boards or plaques.



## Environmental Elements

### ***Garrison Creek***

Garrison Creek emptied into Toronto Bay on the east side of Fort York. Its presence and the valley that it ran through were important factors in the decision to fortify the Fort York site. The creek now largely has been captured by various city sewers. However, the valley it ran through survives in much of the downtown. The development of the creek valley ought to be sensitive to its origins and, whenever possible, such as in public parks, ought to recover at least some of the heritage landscapes. As well, a series of vista-boards are needed to interpret the creek in the larger history of the city.

### ***Former Shoreline of Lake Ontario and Related Built Features***

The shoreline immediately south of Fort York has been moved 900 metres to the south through lakefill operations between the 1850s and the 1920s, and all along the southern face of the old military reserve lakefill has taken place, although not on quite as dramatic a scale. The old shoreline ought to be recovered intellectually through some creative marking system, such as a line located in the sidewalk, streets, etc., marking its original location. In the area immediately south of Fort York, the old shoreline ought to be represented in some grand manner, whether it be a water feature or through some other dynamic presentation. Vista-boards also are needed to make sense of these features.

The Queen's Wharf, erected in the 1830s just southeast of Fort York, along with its lighthouse and a variety of other government and commercial wharves form part of the story of Toronto's development and the evolving nature of the old shoreline. They too need to be commemorated, and, in the case of the Queen's Wharf lighthouse, which survives along Fleet Street, effort must continue to ensure that it remains structurally viable and secure. Likewise, the history of the railway in the city owes much to the particular development of the waterfront and is tied to the ability of government to utilize military reserve lands to support railway development. Therefore, this story too needs to be incorporated through vista-boards, and perhaps archaeological work and recovery in some cases.

## Other Cultural Elements

### ***Garrison Reserve Development***

As noted in the introduction, the military reserve developed in a distinct manner because of its original government ownership. Some of the many important government-created features related to this particular history

include the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, Parliament Buildings, Central Prison, and immigrant sheds. As well, the government used this land to support public amenities, such as the Crystal Palace and the CNE. In addition, the development of residential, commercial, and industrial endeavour in the military reserve was driven, to a large degree, by government policy (such as in the 1830s when the area east of Bathurst and south of King was opened for development by the army). As a result, a series of vista-boards ought to be installed to tie this history together.

### ***World Wars I and II***

During the two world wars, much of the area around Fort York saw considerable military and related activity. There were important wartime industries in the neighbourhood, the CNE grounds became a large military camp, Stanley Barracks saw use as an internment centre during the First War in addition to fulfilling military needs, the Royal Norwegian Air Force in exile utilized the island airport during the Second War, and various other local sites saw military use. These events ought to be commemorated through plaques and vista-boards. In addition, Coronation Park contains important memorial features to remember Canadian participation in the world wars. These ought to be maintained well and interpreted. Fort York Armouries and HMCS York also have links to the world wars and should be commemorated with plaques or vista-boards.

## APPENDIX II: THE FORT YORK ARMOURIES

In the mid-1920s, when the University Avenue Armouries were overcrowded and many of the city's militia units were training in various leased quarters, a proposal to erect a second armoury gained support. The selection of a site created delays, however, and then the Depression put a damper on plans and forced the federal government to defer capital projects. Faced with this situation, Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Harbottle, first commanding officer of the Toronto Scottish Regiment allied himself with other commanding officers as the 14th Infantry Brigade Association to propose that the City of Toronto provide a site for the armouries, that the building be erected with funds advanced to the association by conventional mortgage lenders, and the federal government grant sufficient funds to the association in the form of grants over a period of twenty years to discharge the mortgage. At the end of the mortgage period the building would be owned by the federal government. This course was followed after certain laws were amended to permit insurance companies to lend on the security of the property.

A site on Fleet Street, secured by the City from the Toronto Harbour Commissioners, was leased to the Government of Canada for 99 years from November 1, 1932. Plans for the building were prepared by Marani, Lawson & Morris, Architects, of Toronto, whose senior partner, F.H. Marani, was commanding officer of the Toronto Regiment. He described the building as being in a "Military Georgian" style. It comprised a parade square spanned by a lamella roof of geodetic construction rising at its highest to a point 52 feet above the floor, which was surrounded by store rooms, canteens, mess rooms, dressing rooms and washrooms. A partially excavated basement accommodated rifle ranges and additional store rooms, and gave direct access to a military transport compound to the east. The building was brick trimmed with stone. Contracts for its construction were awarded in March, 1934. The work was completed later that year.

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## APPENDIX IV: TWO CITIZEN BOARDS WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE OF FORT YORK

**The Friends of Fort York and Garrison Common** is an independent group of over 200 citizen volunteers organized as a non-profit corporation and qualified as a charitable organization. The focus of its activities is the communication of the early history of Fort York and Toronto and the preservation and enhancement of Fort York for the benefit of the citizens of, and visitors to Toronto.

Members of the board:

Joseph F. Gill - Chair	Ian S. Keith
Donald G. Brydges - Vice Chair	Bronwyn Krog
John L. Barclay - Fundraising Chair	Gerald A. Murray
John Lowden - Treasurer	Rollo H.H. Myers
J. Murray Philp - Secretary	Catherine E. Nasmith
Robert Allsopp	Stephen A. Otto
Anne Beach	Bret D. Snider
George W. Beal	Peter N. Twist
Christopher W. Bovaird	George E. Waters
Richard W. Dodds	Hank Young
David R. Keating	Carl Benn - Historical Consultant

**The Fort York Management Board** is a citizen board appointed by Toronto City Council and charged by its governing by-law with the management and direction of the operations of Fort York.

Members of the board:

George W. Beal - Chair	Councillor Chris Korwin-Kuczynski
Richard W. Dodds - Vice-Chair	Vladimir Pilar
William W. Barrett	James Purdon
Michael H. Gedz	Bret D. Snider
Ross T. Henderson	Peter N. Twist

## APPENDIX V: HOW TO USE “SETTING IT RIGHT”

### Approvals of Friends of Fort York Board and Fort York Management Board

- In May 2000 the Board of the Friends of Fort York and the Fort York Management Board received and endorsed the Principles of “Fort York: Setting It Right” as:
  - a continuing planning framework for the areas surrounding Fort York
  - a method of evaluating specific proposals for such areas.

### Scope of the Report

- “Fort York: Setting It Right” establishes principles for the planning and development of areas surrounding Fort York which:
  - place Fort York within the historical context of the City of Toronto and of the communities contiguous to the Fort
  - preserve and/or represent for visitors and citizens of Toronto, the authentic heritage shaped by and springing from the presence of Fort York.

### Principles – A Definition

- Principles are the statement of ideal desired end-states. They are guidelines to planning.
- The goal is to achieve the highest degree of compliance with the principles that is practical without destroying or compromising authentic history.

### Action Steps in using “Fort York: Setting It Right” in Assessing a Proposal

- Evaluate and document the degree of a plan’s conformance to the principles as follows:
  - Select those principles impacted by the proposal.
  - For each selected principle, identify the elements of the proposal that do or do not achieve the principle.
  - Summarize the overall impact of the proposal versus the principles.



