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

Clarence Square

August 28, 2006

David Spittal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

New garden seats were also asked for at this time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In 1909 the roadway was asphalted.

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

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

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

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

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

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