

Heritage Ottawa Annual Conference

Bus Tour of Beaverbrook – 26 Sept 2015

Overview – The Original Concepts for Beaverbrook Kanata

Beaverbrook represents one of the first and the most complete examples in Canada of a fully planned community based on 20th century urban planning concepts. Its genesis was William Teron's personal study (1957-1960) of the deficits of post-war Canadian bedroom suburbs. His research culminated in an extensive world tour in 1960 that included the World Design Conference in Tokyo. New garden cities were also toured in Scotland, Finland, Sweden, and the USA. As a result, Teron created a business plan that aroused the interest of four great architects and planners: Irving Grossman, Arthur Erickson, Dimitri Dimikopoulos and Norbert Schoenauer, who met with him and offered their expertise. He was ready to "stand on the shoulders of giants"; to lead by example and to offer a garden city community up front. Beaverbrook would become the first community in this future city.

Teron's planned community was designed according to the maxim: "the widest range of diversity possible within the mobility of a tricycle". To create the living and working environment that Teron envisioned, he included key innovative features that made Beaverbrook the gold standard in urban planning:

1. Social and economic diversity in housing options were a cornerstone, to create a multi-generational community with stability and continuity. Beaverbrook included rental and owned townhouses, apartment buildings, semi-detached houses, co-op housing, seniors units as well as single homes. Each neighbourhood created a sense of arrival and of belonging through the use of distinctive and unifying building materials, finishes, and colour palettes.
2. Human connections were promoted. Each neighbourhood was centered on a school. Land was dedicated for a network of pathways and parks, to provide safe play areas and walking/biking options. Thus, children travelled to their schools safely and social connections between neighbourhoods were promoted. Through traffic was directed away from houses, creating quiet, safe zones. The Beaverbrook Covenants provided guidelines for commonality of vision and a reduction of potential social conflict.
3. Pathways also connected neighbourhoods to "institutions for association" to achieve inclusions and engagement. A shopping centre was combined with a community centre for recreational and cultural activities, a swimming pool, tennis, a teen club, and meeting rooms, A library was founded, and a professional services building included doctors, lawyers, and consultants. Undeveloped land was opened to the public for community access to nature.
4. Teron focused on providing economic stability by setting aside land for the Kanata North Business Park. Incentives encouraged new high-tech industries to establish here, offering a wide range of employment opportunities for citizens.
5. Nature was chosen as the prime architecture of Beaverbrook. It was to be more dominant than houses. Forty percent of the community was green space. Nature was used to define small clusters of homes, enhance the sense of community, and provide the buffer between different uses. This created a Zen philosophy of naturalness, peacefulness and connectedness to the environment that further promoted social well-being.

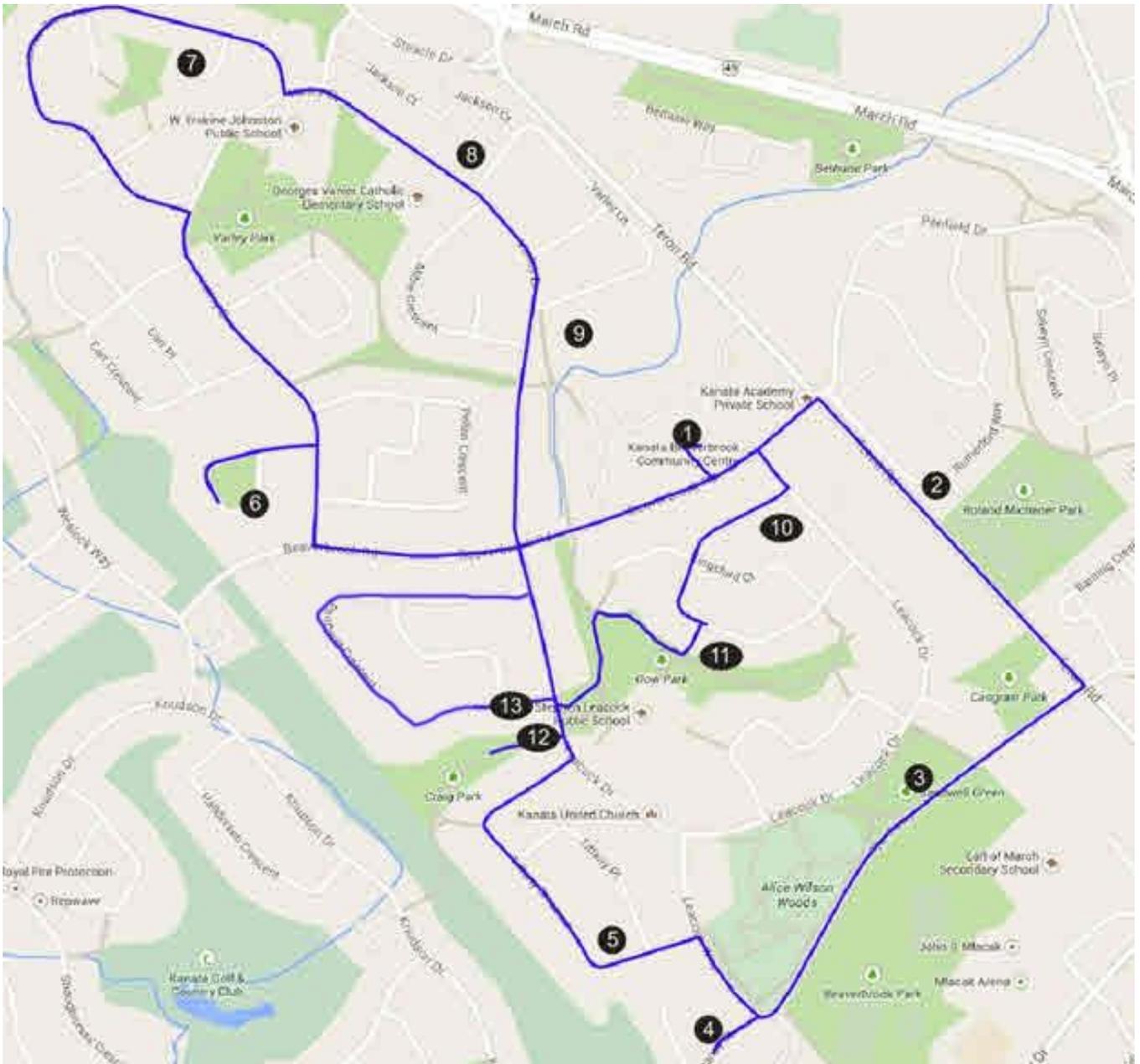
In the 1960's Bill Teron was an urban planning visionary and a pioneer. He designed and built his original City of Kanata and the Technology Park, applying concepts that have now become the expected norm of good urban planning. Beaverbrook represents the living proof that these concepts work, and that they provide direction to the future ideal of a livable city.

Maps

Tour Map and Schedule

The focus of this tour is to introduce Heritage of Ottawa members to various aspects of the planned garden community of Beaverbrook (intended to be part of the whole garden City of Kanata). A key emphasis is on “Nature is the architect”: Individual buildings intended to blend with environment rather than dominate, plus on planned nature of the community; from houses to “clusters” to the local community to the city

From the start Beaverbrook was designed to be a complete community. The developer designed and built a commercial/professional hub where people could casually gather. Rationale: Employees are more productive when their families are happy and their children are growing up in an environment that nurtures their future success as adults.



- 15 Min 1. Bus from St. Joh’s Church to the Beaverbrook Mall by Main Mall Entrance**
Quality of architecture - HARMONY
- Intended to be the community hub for Beaverbrook (local community/commercial)
 - Teron’s role in providing this right at the start – promised and delivered within the first year. Pool, tennis court; community centre
- Also
- Grocery, bank, drug store, restaurant, barber, hair dresser, video store, (community volunteer library),
 - Across the street: lawyers, doctors, accountant, gas station (Commercial buildings were built in the same style)
 - Across Teron: fire hall; library; Seniors Retirement Building
 - Other: Riding stables; 9 hole golf course; ski trails; beaver pond skating
- Focus: Variety of housing for all ages and stages of life; proximity of nature**
- 5 Min 2. Teron** –Co-op housing; Elsie Stapleford Child Care, Roland Michener PS; community baseball/soccer fields; Bell building
- 5 Min 3. R. on Parkway;** stop to point out Post Office – mid-century municipal building design. Earl of March / Mlacak centre; Sandwell Green; Alice Wilson Woods
- 5 Min 4. Reaney Court** –show nestled community; community pool; all homes back on green space originally cost less than \$10,000. There are 10 condominium corporations in Beaverbrook + 3 rental locations (a apartment, 2 townhouse communities)
- Mitel/Matthews compound
- Focus: Midcentury Modern Architecture with houses designed to blend with nature rather than dominate nature**
- 5 Min 5. Tiffany Cr.** –1st section built
- nestled bungalow on corner;
 - #40 at top of hill – house is part of the rock landscape
 - Note #4 which had a huge elm on top of rock outcrop
 - Note building materials/colours dark cedar/brick
- Focus: Distinct elements identify each cluster**
- 5 Min 6. Borduas Ct.** -2nd section built ; Note:
- cedar/stucco finish
- Island purchased by original owners
- 10 Min 7. Drive Varley/Lismer/Varley to Beaverbrook**
- 8. Schools and town homes** – W. Erskine Johnston, Georges Vanier, Jackson Court
- 9.** 8 storey Apartment in large greenspace, change in house style
- 5 Min 10. Kingsford** -3rd section; building materials – red/white
- Focus on unifying purpose of parks/pathways – pathways converge on school which was “a point of association”.**
- 15 Min Walk**
- 11.** Pathway to Stephen Leacock PS; Continue to Leacock Dr. (Gow Park, Stephen Leacock School)
- 12.** Path between Tiffany/Leacock to Pentland Cr.
- 5 Min 13. Pentland** Meet bus at corner Pentland Way/Cr. Drive around Pentland Cr. (cedar/stone).
- 15.** Return to St. John’s Church

Drive back to St. John's

Focus: on the essential role of the Kanata North Business Park

- Stop by 1131 Teron site and briefly outline community concerns –proximity to townhouses, road, traffic, hydro lines – proposed building will not facilitate residents becoming a part of the community.
- Importance of Teron's vision in donating over 200 acres of land to created a business park. Enough space for employees to also have nature and green space that promote creativity and harmony.
- Note original Atomic Energy of Canada building – first employer

Focus: Protect/ Revive/ Grow – The future of Beaverbrook?

(What should intensification look like?)

Beaverbrook represents an opportunity to preserve a district with a very unique heritage significance.

Typically, a community grows over time and gradually develops a character that represents an historical period. In this situation, the unique character was planned and developed at the outset. One developer designed not just a suburban tract housing, but a complete city.

After 5 years, Bill Teron moved on, to become Canada's head of CMHC and Deputy Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs and the company that took over did not have the same commitment to the vision.

Fortunately, because the community was governed by a local municipal council, residents were able to maintain some control and force the new developer to adhere to some of the core principles. This required a great deal of volunteerism, determination, and commitment by a large section of the population. "By the people, for the people". E.g: Katimavik; Kanata Lakes; - Marianne's role

The focus on the planned garden city was diluted when the western communities of Kanata, Glen Cairn and Bridlewood were joined into the new city of Kanata.

It was eliminated as a decision making basis with amalgamation into the expanded City of Ottawa. Kanata no longer had any control over development. We were just one part of the big pond, no longer seen as distinct.

Currently, a great part of this community is still intact.

How can we accommodate the reality of intensification without losing the distinct heritage value of the community?

There is limited understanding of the need to protect this excellent example of a fully planned community.

- The mayor calls the Post Office "An ugly, old, brown box". – He had not actually seen it.
- The Parks Department plants trees in an evenly spaced line along the Parkway, without understanding the concept of a planned "natural" landscape.
- Resident replaces a hedge with white PVC fencing. (Rutherford Cr.)
- Resident changes exterior of house to imitate "Tudor style" (Banting Cr.)
- Residents add decorative features that are the "flavor du jour" because there are no guidelines. (various)
- City replaces illuminated street signs with practical generic City of Ottawa Street Signs

Current heritage protection

No buildings are currently protected. The Post Office was nearly lost to a developer who was given permission to tear it down and build a 96 unit, 8 storey condo. It has been saved by economic considerations, not by any heritage attempt at protecting it.

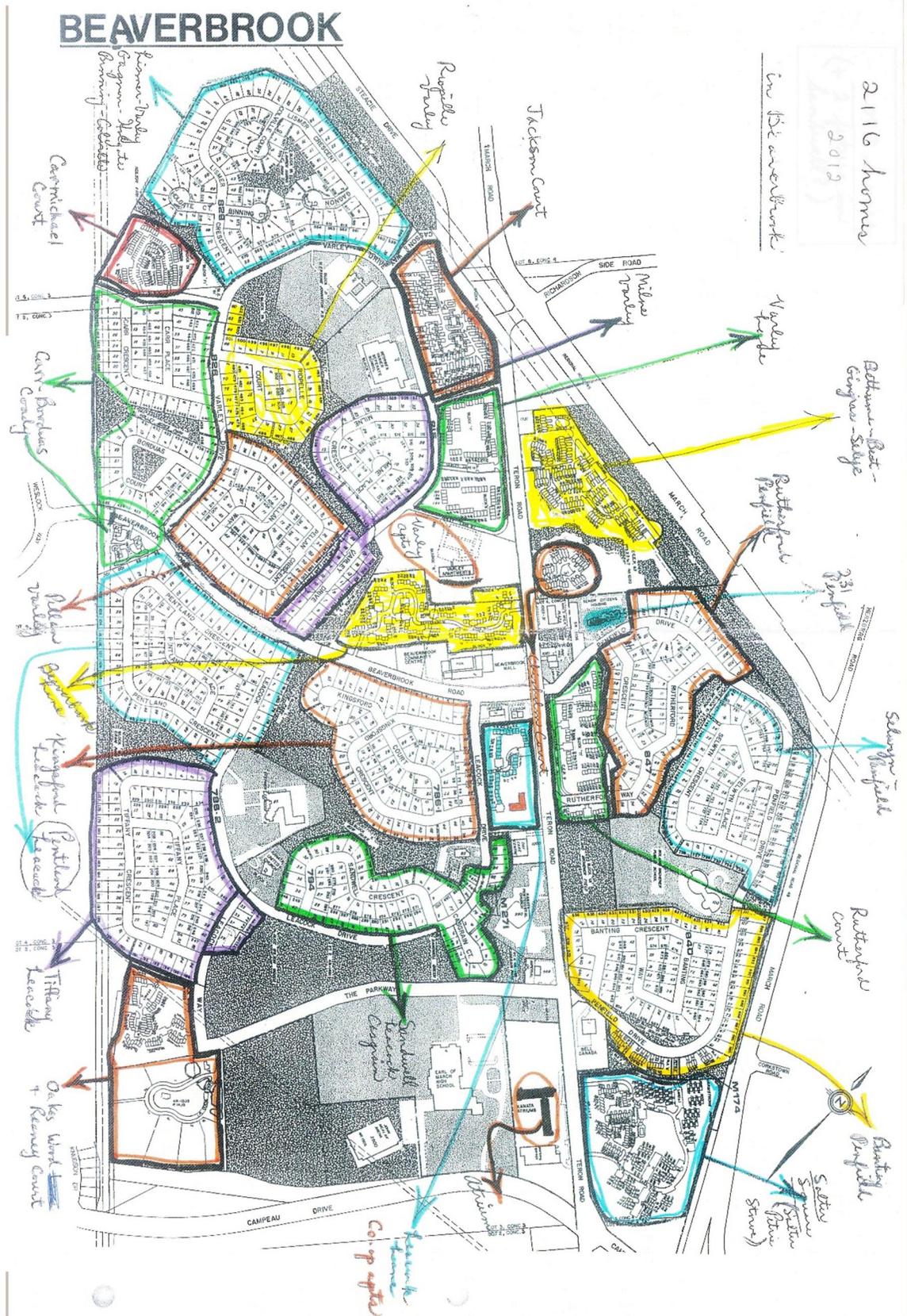
Increasing risk of development

The location of three future transit stations along the March Road bypass puts most of Beaverbrook at risk

SUMMARY: Beaverbrook is a real example of how intensification targets can be met while still creating a livable community. It embraces a philosophy of planned diversity. It is a gold standard EXEMPLAR that should be available to future generations.

Cluster Map

A key feature of the Community is the concept of "Clusters" which are composed of 40 to 50 homes of a common type (detached single family homes, row condominiums, row apartments, ...), intended to foster a feeling of local neighborhoods



Map showing in-Community pathways

Note that the pathways provide inter-cluster and cross community connections without having to walk on or cross major roads:

