

# Heritage Ottawa – Beaverbrook

## Walking/Driving Tour– 25 Jul 2021

### 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 – using what has been termed “Mid-Century Modern” Architecture. 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. Bill Teron’s core concept was derived from the “Garden City”, as captured by Sir Ebenezer Howard in “The Garden Cities of Tomorrow” published in 1902. 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.

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. 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.
2. 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.
3. Human connections were promoted. Each neighbourhood was centered on a school. Neighbourhoods were which are composed of 40 to 50 homes of a common type (detached single family homes, row condominiums, row apartments, ....) connected by parkland. 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.
4. Pathways also connected neighbourhoods & clusters 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.
5. Teron set 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 to create a work-live-play community.

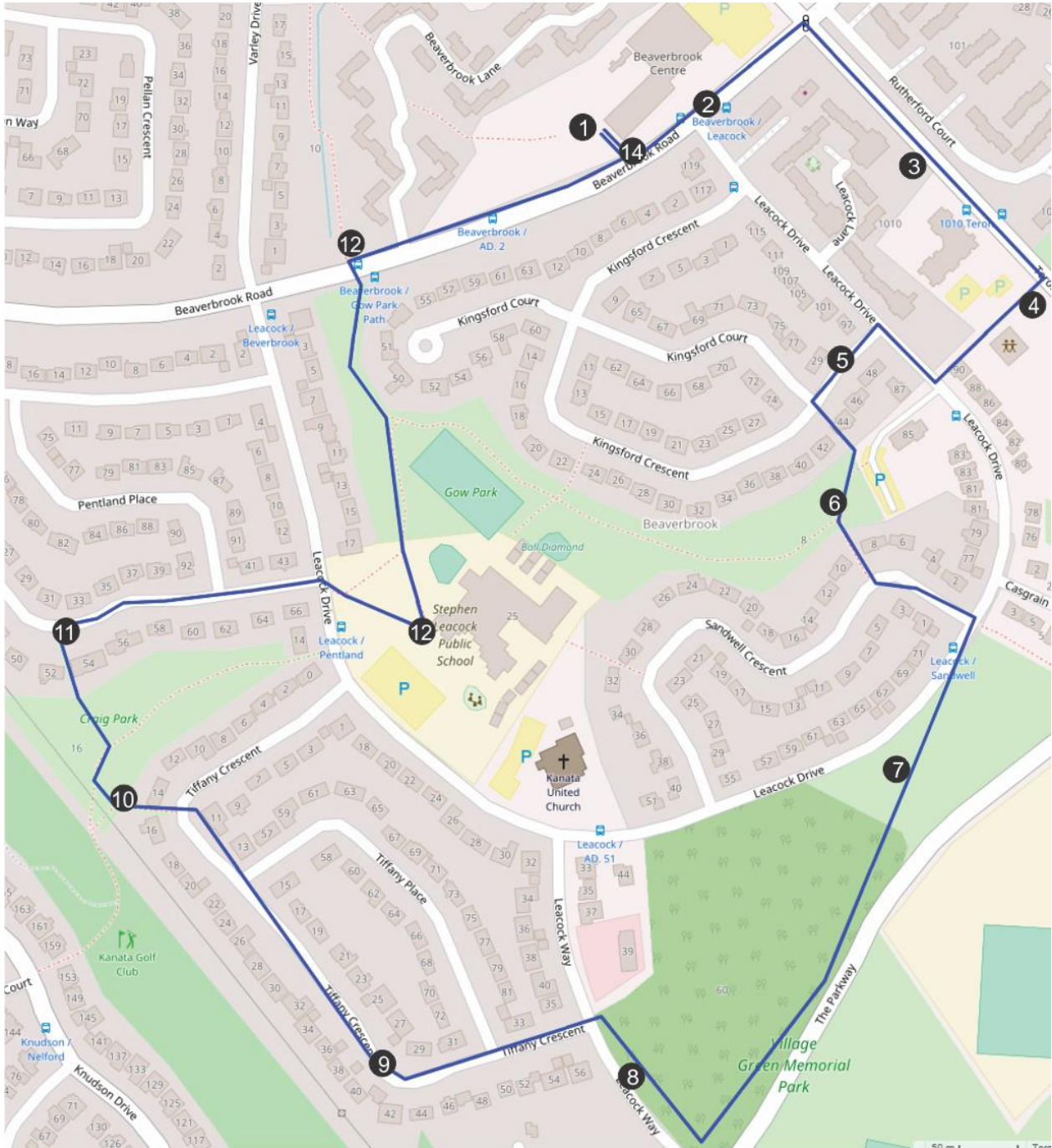
In the 1960’s Bill Teron was an urban planning visionary and a pioneer. He designed and built his original City of Kanata and the adjoining Technology Park, applying concepts that have now become the expected norm of good urban planning. Beaverbrook represents the living proof that these concepts work,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

# Maps

## Walking 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. A key emphasis is on “Nature is the architect”: Individual buildings intended to blend with environment in a planned 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.



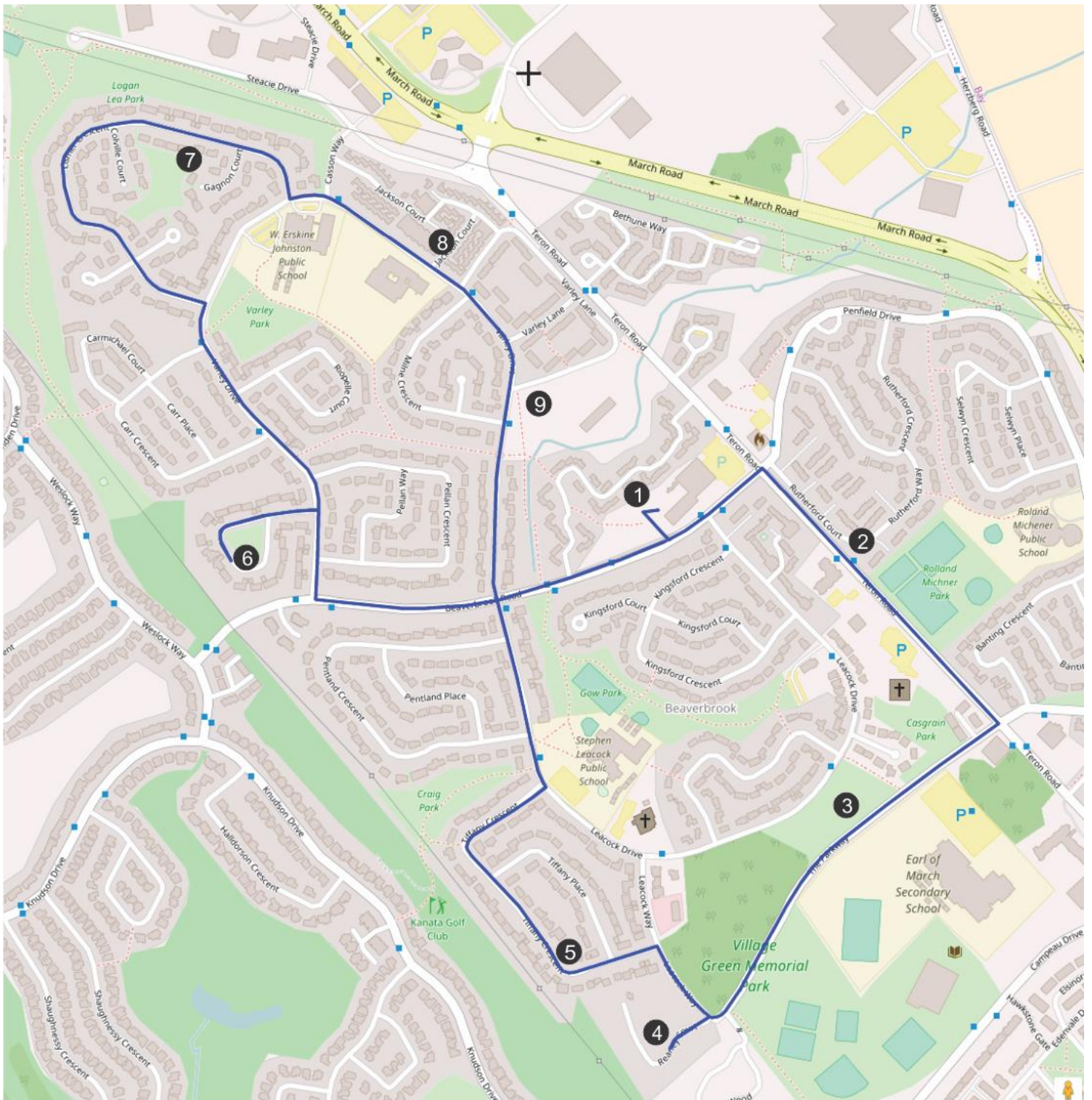
<b>10 Min</b>	<b>1. Introductory Presentation on Beaverbrook Design Concepts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Beaverbrook as a Nature inspired, complete Community/City</b></li> </ul>
<b>5 Min</b>	<b>2. Beaverbrook Mall and Central Community Services by Main Mall Entrance</b> <b>Quality of architecture - HARMONY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intended to be the community hub for Beaverbrook (local community/commercial)</li> <li>• Teron’s role in providing this right at the start – promised and delivered within the first year. Pool, tennis court; community centre</li> <li>• Grocery, bank, drug store, restaurant, barber, hair dresser, video store, (community volunteer library),</li> <li>• Across the street: lawyers, doctors, accountant, gas station (Commercial buildings were built in the same style)</li> <li>• Across Teron: fire hall; library; Seniors Retirement Building</li> <li>• Other: Riding stables; 9 hole golf course; ski trails; beaver pond skating</li> </ul>
	<b>Focus: Variety of housing for all ages and stages of life; proximity of nature</b>
<b>5 Min</b>	<b>3. Teron</b> –Co-op housing; Elsie Stapleford Child Care, Roland Michener PS; community baseball/soccer fields
	<b>4. R. through Elsie Stapleford parking lot, to Kingsford Cres;</b>
<b>5 Min</b>	<b>5. Distinct character of Kingsford Cres. as part of a cluster</b> – window, roof, door, house patterns unique within an overall Beaverbrook design
<b>1 Min</b>	<b>6. Take pathway</b> from Kingsford to Sandwell Cres – example of inter-cluster parkland and pathways
<b>5 Min</b>	<b>7. Across Sandwell Green.</b> Stop to point out Post Office – mid-century municipal building design, plus 2 the Parkway . Earl of March / Mlacak centre; Sandwell Green; Alice Wilson Woods
<b>5 Min</b>	<b>8. Reaney Court</b> –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) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitel/Matthews compound</li> </ul>
	<b>Focus: Midcentury Modern Architecture with houses designed to blend with nature rather than dominate nature</b>
<b>5 Min</b>	<b>9. Tiffany Cr.</b> –1st section built - Note building materials/colours dark cedar/brick <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nestled bungalow on corner;</li> <li>• #40 at top of hill – house is part of the rock landscape</li> <li>• Note #4 which had a huge elm on top of rock outcrop</li> </ul>
	<b>10. Pathway to Pentland</b> – pathway to golf course and Kanata Lakes and to Pentland Crescent – another inter-cluster parkland/path
	<b>Focus: Distinct elements identify each cluster</b>
<b>5 Min</b>	<b>11. Pentland Cres.</b> –2nd section built <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California house, modified Teron home, garden examples</li> <li>• Homes with Architecture from the same era, plus Pentland specific pattern variations on homes, home features</li> </ul>
	<b>Focus on unifying purpose of parks/pathways – pathways converge on school “a point of association”.</b>
<b>1 Min</b>	<b>Stephen Leacock School, park and paths -</b> <b>11.</b> Pathway to Stephen Leacock PS; Continue to Leacock Dr. (Gow Park, Stephen Leacock School) , Path between Tiffany/Leacock to Pentland Cr.
<b>5 Min</b>	<b>12. Beaverbrook Lane &amp; Varley Apts</b> – rental townhome cluster, integrated with nature <b>Varley Apts</b> How an 8 Story apt building can be integrated into a predominantly 1 and 2 storey community with a positive impact. Cover approved Retirement Plan addition and how it was integrated in keeping with the Community
	<b>13. Return to Beaverbrook Mall – end</b>

**14. The rise and fall of “15 minute neighbourhood”** – Beaverbrook was designed with a central core for retail and services all within 1,25 km – a 15 minute walk. It worked until mid-90’s when big box arrived with the Kanata Centrum (Loblaws 5 times bigger than Beaverbrook Leob’s). Reality check on 15 minute neighbourhoods?

- Winter
- Consumerism (lowest cost and largest variety)
- Reality of cost/sq ft revenue vs. rental income for retail business

## Driving Tour Map

We have included an optional driving tour of Beaverbrook which covers other unique neighborhoods, clusters and features which were not included in the Walking tour for distance and time reasons.



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<p><b>Focus: Variety of housing for all ages and stages of life; proximity of nature</b></p>
<p><b>2. Teron</b> –Co-op housing; Elsie Stapleford Child Care, Roland Michener PS; community baseball/soccer fields; Bell building</p>
<p><b>3. R. on Parkway;</b> stop to point out Post Office – mid-century municipal building design. Earl of March / Mlacak centre; Sandwell Green; Alice Wilson Woods</p>
<p><b>4. Reaney Court</b> –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)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitel/Matthews compound</li> </ul>
<p><b>Focus: Midcentury Modern Architecture with houses designed to blend with nature rather than dominate nature</b></p>
<p><b>5. Tiffany Cr.</b> –1st section built</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• nestled bungalow on corner;</li> <li>• #40 at top of hill – house is part of the rock landscape</li> <li>• Note #4 which had a huge elm on top of rock outcrop</li> <li>• Note building materials/colours dark cedar/brick</li> </ul>
<p><b>Focus: Distinct elements identify each cluster</b></p>
<p><b>6. Borduas Ct.</b> -2nd section built ; Note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• cedar/stucco finish</li> </ul> <p>Island purchased by original owners</p>
<p><b>7. Drive Varley/Lismer/Varley to Beaverbrook</b></p> <p><b>8. Schools and town homes</b> – W. Erskine Johnston, Georges Vanier, Jackson Court</p> <p><b>9. 8 storey Apartment</b> in large greenspace, change in house style</p>

## **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.

Amalgamation of Kanata into the expanded City of Ottawa eliminated community control of planning decisions with the City designating any area of the City not covered by Heritage designation or Secondary Design Plans as "General Urban Area" with no distinction.

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.





# The Tour – in Pictures

## 1. Beaverbrook Mall



Beaverbrook Mall



Professional Offices (across from Beaverbrook Mall)



Service Station (corner of Teron/Beaverbrook)

## 2. Teron Road



Fire Station – was also first public library (corner of Teron/Beaverbrook)



Seniors Residence



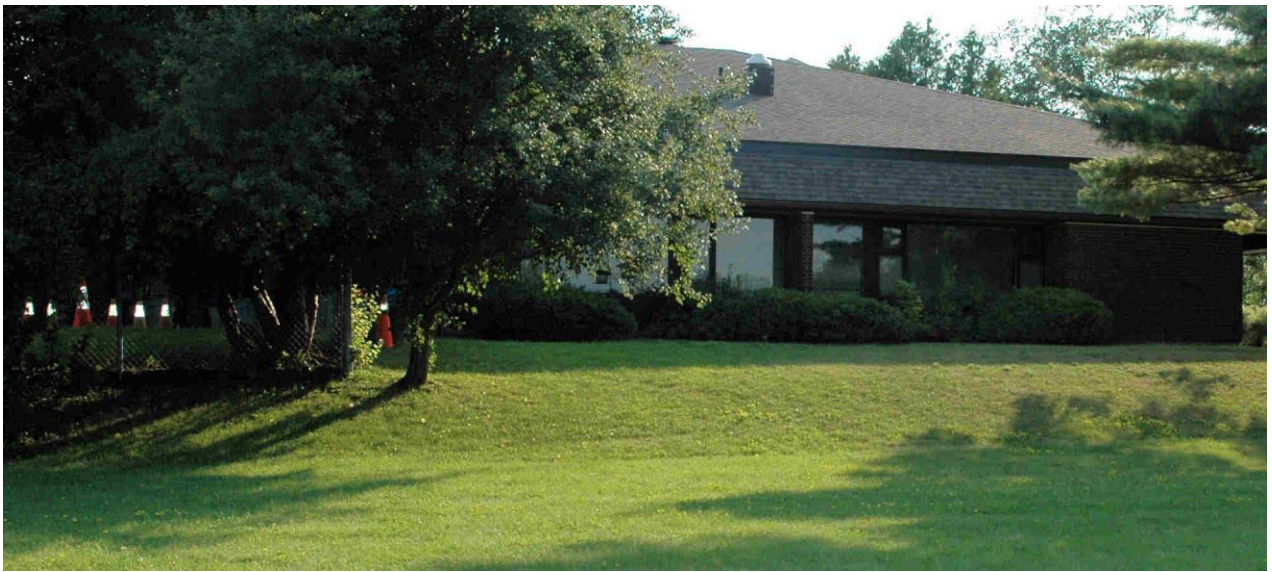
Teron Rd Facing North



Teron Rd Facing South



Co-op Housing (Teron Rd.)



Elsie Stapleford Child Care Centre (Teron Rd.)



Roland Michener Elementary



Roland Michener Elementary

### 3. The Parkway



Post office



Earl of March Secondary School



The Atriums as seen from The Parkway (extensive screening via trees, etc.)



Sandwell Green (park) looking on Alison Wilson Woods

#### 4. Reaney Court



Reaney Court - condos



Reaney Court – Condos (backing on to greenspace)



Alison Wilson Woods & Pathways (from Reaney Court)



Originally National Headquarters of Junior Chamber of Commerce,  
now Music for Young Children



Kanata United (beside Stephen Leacock School) – on the pathways

## 5. Tiffany



Tiffany – example of home nestled in the landscape



Tiffany – use of hill and rock outcropping



Tiffany streetscape



Tiffany



Tiffany



Tiffany – one of many examples of rock outcropping

6. Borduas Ct, (7) Varley & Lismer



Centre Island – Borduas Ct – purchased by residents



Out of character Post Boxes



Varley Drive



Carr Crescent: Carmichael Court Condos



Carr Crescent: Carmichael Court Condos



Carr Crescent



Lismer Crescent

## 8. Varley – Schools and Town homes



Park behind Elementary Schools/homes on Varley



Park behind Elementary Schools/homes on Varley



Varley Drive: Jackson Ct Condominiums



Georges Vanier Separate School



Varley Drive



Varley Drive Rental Townhouses

9. Varley Apts.



Varley Apts as seen from road (extensive screening, greenspace) Toboggan hill in foreground

## 10, 11 Kingsford Cluster

Note differences in colours and materials



12. Gow Park/Stephen Leacock School



Stephen Leacock Elementary

13/14. Pentland



California House



California and adjacent properties



Pentland Home – example of use of stone vs. brick

## House Patterns

Homes in Beaverbrook vary by Cluster mixing and matching unique combinations of patterns of overall design, use of materials, colours, size and shape of windows, etc.



# Examples of Parks and Pathways

