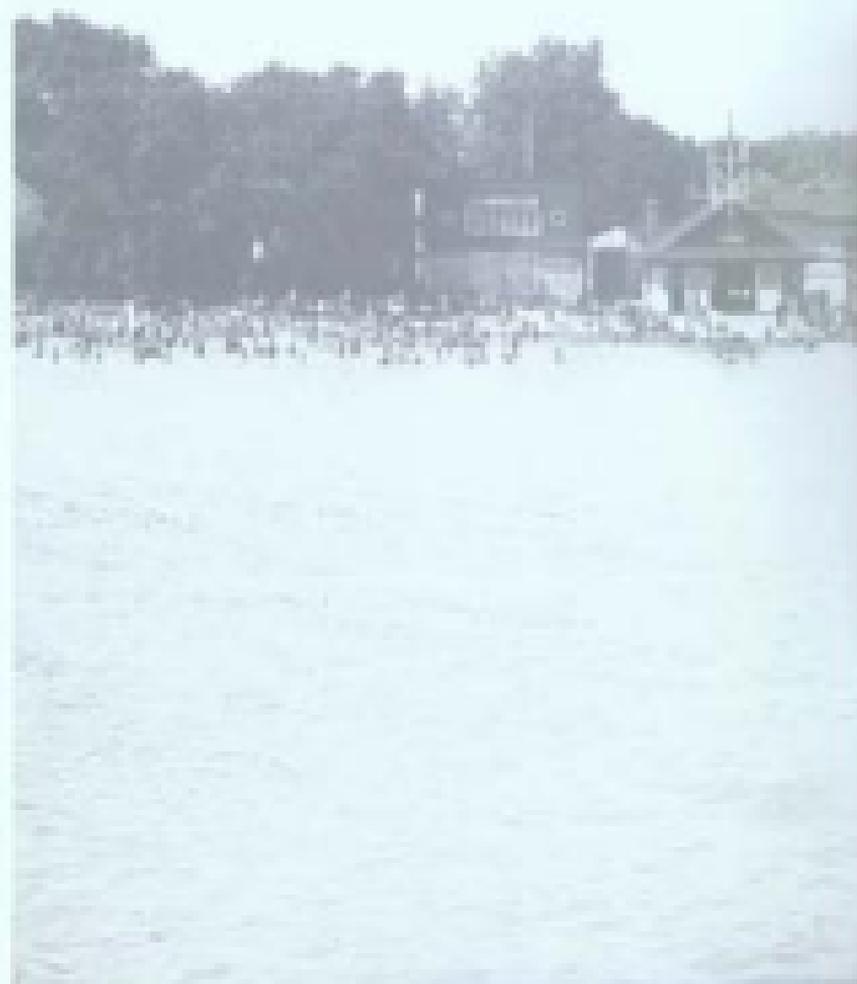


Historical Walking Tour of **Kew Beach**

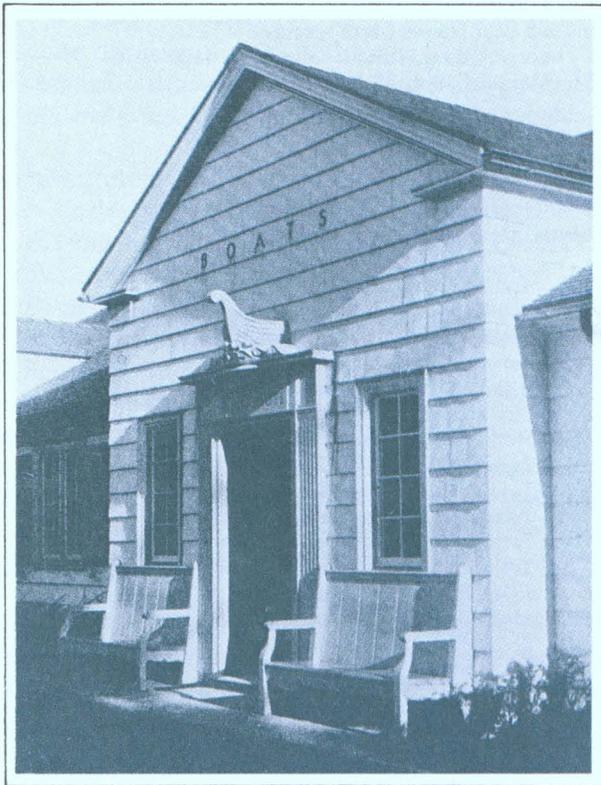
Mary Campbell
Barbara Myrvold





Historical Walking Tour of Kew Beach

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Toronto Public Library Board

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Cover Illustration

Kew Beach at the foot of Waverley Road looking east toward Lee Avenue, 1895.
AO James M. Kidd Collection, S11553

Inside Cover Illustration

The waterfront at Kew Beach between Lee and Leuty avenues, showing
(from left) Kew Beach Club, Leuty Lifesaving Station and Shedden's boathouse,
August 8, 1928.

THC Arthur Beals/PC1\1\7988

Title Page Illustration

Kew Beach Park Boat House, north entrance, c.1933.

Source: *Art in architecture; Toronto landmarks 1920-1940*.

Toronto: The Market Gallery of the City of Toronto Archives, 1988.

Illustration on pg. 56.

Leuty Lifesaving Station, August 6, 1995

Photo by Herta Ziemann

Key to Abbreviations in Credits

AO	Archives of Ontario
Bell	Bell Canada Telephone Historical Collection
BÐS	The Beach and East Toronto Historical Society
BNSA	Bank of Nova Scotia Archives
BUC	Bellefair United Church
CTA	City of Toronto Archives
MTRL	Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library
TBE	Toronto Board of Education Archives
T-D	Toronto-Dominion Bank Archives
THC	Toronto Harbour Commission Archives
TPL.BE	Toronto Public Library. Beaches Branch.
TPLA	Toronto Public Library Archives

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A special thanks to John Sewell, who grew up at the Beach in the 1940s and '50s, for leading the inaugural walk through the Kew Beach area on September 17, 1995.

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Barbara Myrvold
Mary Campbell
September 1995

Kew Beach: An Overview History

Kew Beach is the name by which the Toronto waterfront community between Woodbine Avenue on the west and Leuty Avenue on the east came to be known in the early days of its development. West of Woodbine was the Woodbine race track and the area known as Woodbine Beach, and east of Leuty was a large farm, which later became an amusement park. This property separated Kew Beach from Balmy Beach, as the area east of today's MacLean Avenue was known. These communities were sometimes referred to as the Beaches, until the residential development of the former farm/park land in the late 1920s unified the area into one neighbourhood, which then became known as The Beach.

The first known permanent settlers in the Kew Beach area, and the ones indirectly responsible for its name, were Joseph and Jane Williams, who came to the area bounded roughly by today's Queen Street, Wineva Avenue, Williamson Road, and Glen Manor Drive, and built themselves a log cabin, which was still standing in the 1950's on a lane just north of Queen Street. Joseph named his property Kew Farms, after a fondly-remembered district of his former London, England, home.

A hand-drawn map of the area dated 1865 shows only seven houses in what became Kew Beach; and two of Joseph Williams' sons recalled in later years that Queen Street at that time was "a country trail with stumps of trees scattered in its midst." [Howard, 1938.] However, by 1875, the Toronto Gravel Road and Concrete Company had constructed a tramway along the Kingston Road to

haul gravel from its pits in Scarborough to Toronto, and the horse-drawn trams also carried passengers to the newly-opened Woodbine Park (later Greenwood Race Track). The very next year, Adam Wilson subdivided his property and established the beginnings of Balmy Beach.

Meanwhile, Joseph Williams had been busy working on twenty acres of waterfront property that he had acquired south and west of the present Queen Street and Lee Avenue, and in 1879 opened the "Canadian Kew Gardens." (See site no. 10.)

In the early 1880s, Woodbine Avenue was opened up and Queen Street was developed east of the Woodbine race course; but the maintenance of Queen Street was complicated by the fact that the south side (as far east as the present MacLean Avenue) was in Toronto (since the City's incorporation in 1834) and the north side was still part of York Township. This problem was not resolved until 1887, when the City annexed a two-hundred-foot-wide strip of land north of Queen Street, and took over the improvement of the road. The Toronto Street Railway was able to extend its service to Lee Avenue by 1889, and by the end of the decade, the City had provided wooden sidewalks and water mains to the same point.

During this time, the area was attracting many visitors who came to Kew Gardens and other parks in the neighbouring areas to spend a day or sometimes longer. (Camping was available at Kew and elsewhere.) Forward-looking landowners registered many subdivision plans in the late 1880s, creating potential building lots

and streets like Kippendavie, Elmer, Herbert, Bellefair, Wheeler, Waverley, and Kenilworth (south of Queen). In 1882, an interdenominational Christian church had been established on the north side of Queen Street where Wineva Avenue would be; and in 1889, a school was begun in one of its rooms. (See site no. 2.)

The 1890s saw more indications of a growing year-round population, as well as an increasing number of people spending their summers at Kew Beach (and Woodbine and Balmy beaches) in tents and cottages. In 1891, a volunteer fire brigade was formed and a fire hall was erected near Queen and Lee. Local Baptists met there, but built their own church at Kenilworth and Queen in 1895. (See site no. 5.) That same year, the Presbyterians took over the interdenominational church and the Kew Beach Presbyterian (later United) Church was organized. It was about this time that the farm to the east was inherited by the Sisters of St. Joseph from its owner, Thomas O'Connor. The nuns used the property as the House of Providence Farm. In 1896 the Kew Beach Volunteer Fire Company decided to lease a piece of property in Kew Gardens and build a new fire hall. (See site no. 1.) That year, the area claimed a population of 250 families and petitioned for its own post office. In 1899, Kew Beach School had its first permanent home at Kippendavie and Queen, a four-room brick building.

By the turn of the century, Kew Beach had its post office; there was electric street railway service well beyond Kew Beach (to Balsam Avenue by 1893 and Munro Park by 1898); Hammersmith and Kew Beach avenues had made their appearance; and there was a minor building boom on,

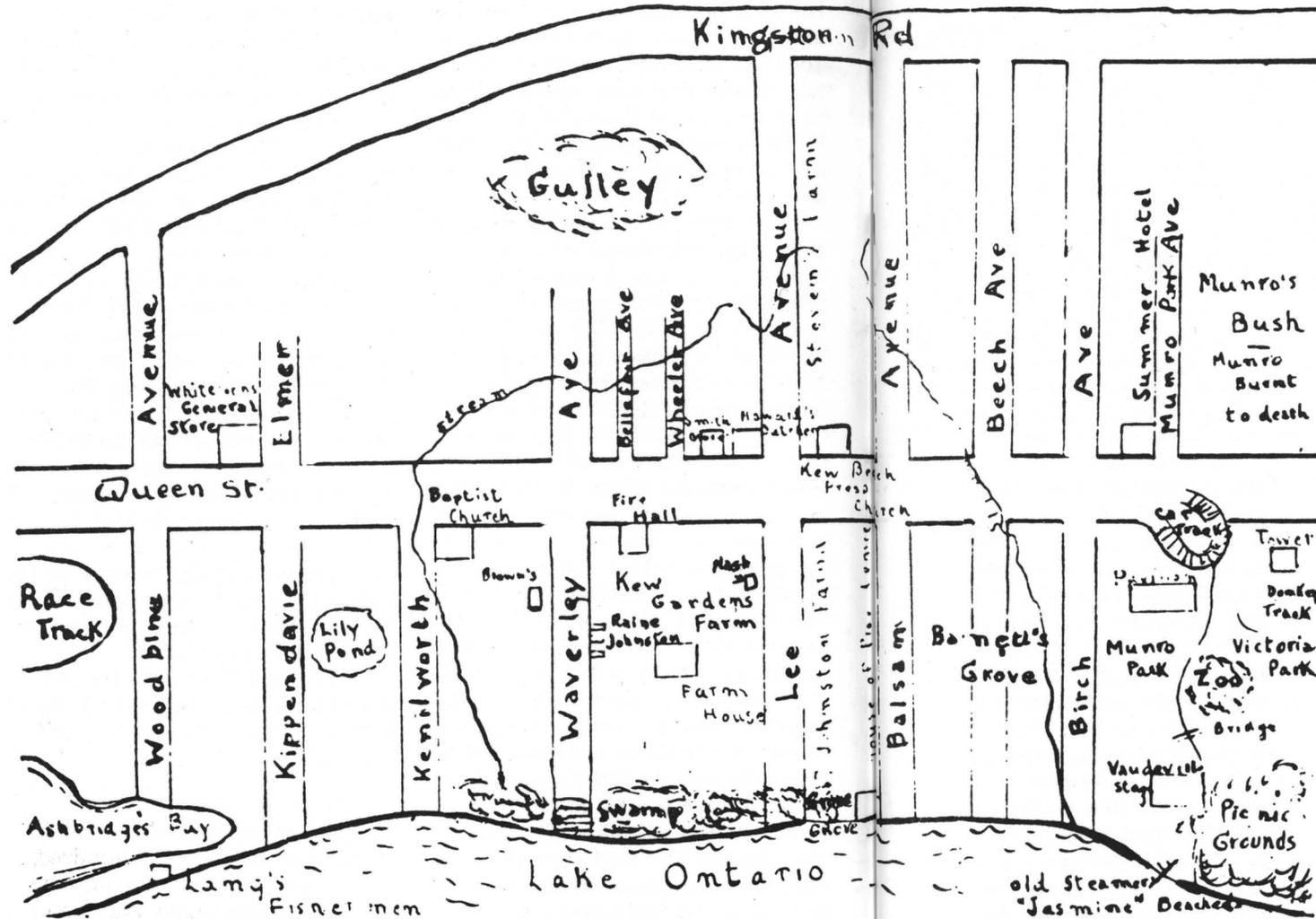
as more and more people saw the advantages of all-year residence.

The first years of the twentieth century were eventful ones. The area was becoming more and more a permanent community, instead of a summer place. The intersection of Queen Street and Lee Avenue was developing as the centre of the Kew Beach shopping district, with new stores being built all the time. New streets were being created (Leuty and Violet avenues, and Alfresco Lawn). The City was constructing sidewalks and laying water mains and drains; electrical wires were being strung. The ratepayers were agitating for better police and fire protection, faster postal service, and better drainage schemes for the swampy areas. They were concerned about land speculators, and houses being built too closely together and spoiling the appearance of the Beach. They felt that the City tended to neglect their problems because they were an outlying district.

The *Toronto World* ran regular articles about Kew Beach (and Balmy Beach) matters. On June 21, 1902, it reported:

It is estimated that the total number of residents at the Beach is between four and five hundred. They are a sort of communistic people, all thoroughly happy and free, within their own little circle, and obedient to the ruling of that most august body known as the Kew Beach Association. The association is, comparatively speaking, a mighty institution, embodying many minor bodies, who have to do with the arrangement of sport and enjoyments of all kinds. . . [*Toronto World*, 1902.]

BEACHES DISTRICT 1900



Beaches District Map, 1900 Drawn 1938?

Sports were various at both Kew and Balmis Beach, and lively competitions were enjoyed between the two areas.

In 1903, the first Beach Telephone Exchange was opened at Queen and Lee. (See site no. 14.) A Methodist congregation was established at Kew Beach in 1904. (See site no. 9.) In 1905, a large farm north and east of Queen and Lee was sold, leading to the open-

ing of Hambly and Wineva avenues and Williamson Road. 1906 brought the opening of the City fire hall at Queen and Herbert (see site no. 1) and new buildings for the Kew Beach Presbyterians on Wineva and for the Methodists on Bellefair. That same year there were plans to run one or more railway lines through the Beach area, but the ever-vigilant citizens rallied

new streets -- a southern continuation of Bellefair called Cinque Ports Avenue, and a cross street which was to come out on Lee just south of Violet, called Lord Warden Avenue. In 1908, the Kenilworth Avenue Baptists moved to Waverley Road north of Queen and built a new church. 1908 was also the year that the City annexed the Town of East Toronto to the north and east. The Balmis Beach area was annexed in 1909, as well as the remaining area north of Queen at Kew Beach. The whole Beach area was now part of the City, but Balmis and Kew remained separated by Scarboro' Beach Park, and by the Ames and Howard estates north of Queen.

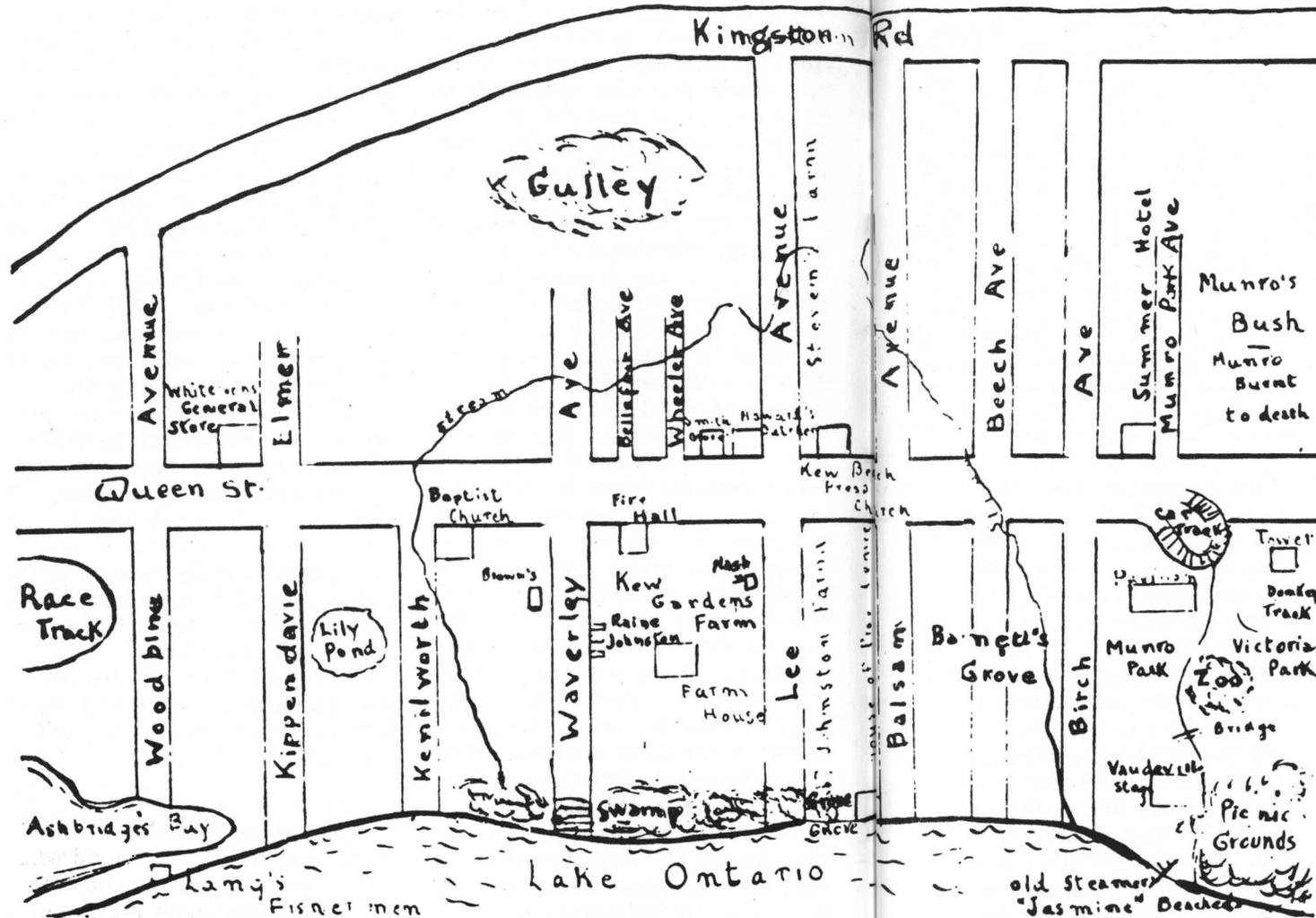
On October 5, 1909, the *Evening Telegram* reported that landvalues at Kew Beach had increased by 30 to 50 percent over the previous two years. The area continued to thrive. By 1914, there was a substantial new stone-and-wood bathing pavilion at the south end of Kew Gardens, a new public school on Williamson Road, a new, larger Kew Beach Presbyterian Church on Wineva, and a Toronto Public Library branch in a store at Queen and Hambly, relocating to Kew Gardens two years later (see site no. 11).

At this time, building suffered a setback because of the First World War, but Kew Beachers had other problems to solve at home. Southeasterly storms off Lake Ontario were continually eroding the beach and damaging the board walk along the waterfront. In 1916, a residents' meeting was called to protest to City officials about the lack of waterfront improvements, especially in view of the work being done to protect Sunnyside Beach at that time. The Toronto Harbour Commissioners made plans, but nothing was actually done for many years.

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Several notable events occurred in 1920. The Leuty Lifesaving Station was built (see site no. 19), the Beth Jacob congregation opened the Beach Hebrew Institute in the former Kenilworth Avenue Baptist Church (see site no 5), and the McLean Howard estate, north and west of Queen and MacLean, was sold for residences and stores. In 1923, Stewart Manor (the Ames estate), north of Glen Manor and Queen, was beginning to be developed as a residential district. The Glen Stewart Ravine became a public park. The sale of Scarboro' Beach Park in 1925 and its subsequent development as a residential neighbourhood (see site no. 21) completed the link between Kew Beach and Balmy Beach, and signalled the birth of a unified Beach district.

By this time, the Kew Beach Methodists had managed to complete their new, larger church (begun before the First World War) on Bellefair Avenue. Two years later, at the time of church union, both Kew Beach Presbyterian and Bellefair Methodist became United Churches, and the dissenting Presbyterians formed their own church, now called Beaches Presbyterian.

In 1927, the *Christian Science Monitor* said of the Beach district:

It is a suburb of homes. Its inhabitants are, for the most part, young or middle-aged married people. It has no foreigners, no very poor and few really wealthy families. Sport -- aquatic and otherwise -- still forms one of its chief interests. There are stores of the suburban type and elementary schools, but there are no factories and there is not a high school. [*Christian Science Monitor*, 1927.]

1928 saw some action finally being taken in the Beach area by the Toronto Harbour Commissioners: experimental wooden groynes were built out into the lake to try to arrest the outward drift of sand. Although the residents doubted that this measure would prove effective, by 1929 there was a discernible improvement to the beach. Wayne Reeves, in a 1992 report to the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Department, summarized the development of the Beach area waterfront:

The \$2.4 million Eastern Beaches Park was developed on water and land lots acquired by the City as early as 1921. Actual construction, which began in 1930, was financed largely out of relief work appropriations. Some 211 dwellings and an unspecified number of boathouses were removed; in their place rose a public boathouse, a refreshment booth, a lavatory building, an athletic field, and a 4,800-foot boardwalk. Though a throng of nearly 60,000 welcomed the park's opening on Victoria Day, 1932, squabbling broke out when the Parks Commissioner suggested that the new facility be named "Kew Beach Park." Residents of the Balmy Beach area felt that they had "a certain community autonomy, a certain identity by virtue of the adopted name, which they [were] unwilling to forfeit"; Kew Beachers feared that the neighbourhood's "peculiar exclusiveness" would wane if its name was applied too broadly. "Eastern Beaches Park" became the compromise choice. [Reeves, 1992.]

This account explains why the lettering over the new public boathouse's door said "Kew Beach Park Boat House." (See site no. 20.)

This huge new park, of course, attracted many visitors from elsewhere in the city, who were not always entirely welcome by the local residents. They had always fought for the welfare of the area and tended to feel that it was THEIR beach. They did not particularly want to share it with the rest of the city. Much has been said and written about the extent of this attitude, especially as it relates to the Swastika Club movement of 1933. Robert Fulford, writing in 1989-90 about the Beach, had this to say:

[Its] history has taught local people to be vigilant. Vigilance, unfortunately, sometimes turns to prejudice and a bitter sense of exclusivity. In the summer of 1933, the district had a brief anti-Semitic movement, the swastika clubs, to protest against the appearance of outsiders on the beach. For a few weeks a number of young men actually walked the boardwalk wearing Swastika badges (the Nazis had been in power for some months in Germany), but the organized opposition of Jews and the negative publicity quickly destroyed the movement. Besides, the members of the clubs claimed not to be anti-Semitic anyway. The swastika was just an old Indian emblem, they insisted, and as for hostility to outsiders, it was based entirely on their tendency to leave orange peel on the sand and their wretched habit of changing clothes in their cars. [Fulford, 1989-90]

Whether you agree with Fulford's reading of the situation or not, you will not find any account of a confrontation between the two groups.

After this flurry of excitement (of which many Beachers appear to have been unaware), things seem to have settled down to the point where old-timers would say, "The Beach never changes!" (usually with a general air of approval); but change was on the way.

In the 1960s, local business people were worrying about the competitiveness of the Queen Street shopping district, when a new shopping mall, Shoppers World, was only two miles away. They were concerned that the recently-established municipal parking lot off lower Lee Avenue was usually half-empty. Talk of rezoning for apartment development south of Queen alarmed local residents, who rallied to defeat a major project. (See site no. 12.) The aging housing stock, much of which had been built as summer homes, was being bought up by those interested in redevelopment on a grander, more expensive scale. Many home-owners, too, were aging, and were susceptible to pressures to sell and move.

Robert Fulford dated the "discovery" of the Beach around 1970, when he began to hear people calling the area "the Beaches." That was when the area started to become fashionable, he said, and real estate prices began to climb out of the reach of those who had traditionally lived in the neighbourhood. A group of architects, writing about the area in 1972, noted that:

This small precinct has become a very desirable and highly sought after area in which to live. . . . This is one district which will not tempt walkers

who would like to refresh themselves with an interesting meal. There are enough eateries to sustain life, but if good food is required - eat before or after your visit here. . . . Queen itself has a small town quality. There is a great mixture of boutiques, meat markets, health food stores, and antique shops. . . . The Beaches, unfortunately, is under some pressure for redevelopment. It would be a pity if this occurred in a way which changed or altered its essential character. [Klein, 1972]

The previous year, the *Toronto Star* had reported that ForWard 9, "a broad-based local citizens' group" was attempting to deal with redevelopment and housing, although it had formed "as a reaction to the proposed construction of a downtown STOL (short take off and landing) airport and the extension of the Gardiner Expressway through residential sections of the Ward." [Daly, 1971.] A few years later, Gregory Glover noted in the *Toronto Sun* that the area had changed little in forty years, but that now an infusion of young people was making it more interesting, although he also noticed the addition of many "characterless low-rise apartments . . . adding an unwelcome feature to the quaint jumble of architectural styles that had grown out of the former cottages." [Glover, 1974]

In 1975, the granting of a liquor licence to a restaurant at Queen and Beech (in the Balmy Beach area) signalled the beginning of a new era in dining out on Queen Street. This was the first liquor licence ever granted on Queen Street east of Woodbine, and led to the opening of many more licensed establishments at the Beach. (See site no. 4.) Percy Rowe, writing

in the *Toronto Sun* in 1980, noted that there were "interesting restaurants there", mentioning a coffee house "like a breath of Old London", Swiss pastries, nature foods, and "good meals in small surroundings." [Rowe, 1980]

Unfortunately for local residents, the new-found popularity of Queen Street made it less a community-oriented place and more a regional affair, as well as adding to the area's critical shortage of parking space. Second-hand stores had given way to boutiques and craft stores. Many small leased stores, increasingly unable to cover the escalating rents, were replaced by chain stores, which in turn put pressure on smaller owner-run stores. In 1985, a city-wide survey showed that Queen Street East had become a major place to shop and the most popular neighbourhood strip for dining out. Redevelopment pressures also threatened to change the balance of the thoroughfare's traditional mixture of commercial and residential uses, and led to new zoning in 1989. (See site no. 7.)

Another trend that was viewed with some alarm was that of renovations designed to turn affordable rental housing into luxury rental housing or back into single family dwellings, thus reducing the over-all housing supply and driving up rents. [*Globe and Mail*, 1981.] This posed a severe hardship for the area's high ratio of seniors, who were sometimes forced to move out of homes they had lived in for years, and indeed right out of the neighbourhood which they had always called home.

In 1984, Rosie DiManno wrote in the *Toronto Star*, "What was once a sleepy Anglo enclave of working-class families has turned into The Neighbourhood of the upwardly mobile pro-

fessional." She also observed that, "In another sense, the neighbourhood has not changed. Originally settled by staunchly monarchist British descendants, it is still basically a white Anglo-Saxon bastion, where English is the mother tongue of more than 17,000 residents, with hardly any ethnic input." [DiManno, 1984.]

Tensions between new and old Beachers came to the surface in 1985 when the Beach business community had the City erect signs along the Kew Beach section of Queen street -- the busiest commercial section -- designating the area as "The Beaches." A sometimes heated battle of words ensued, followed eagerly by the Toronto media, and ended with the signs' being removed altogether, much to the delight of long-time Beachers and the

disgust of the merchants who had arranged for the signs to be installed.

Some of the contentious issues facing Beachers evaporated somewhat with the onset of the recession in 1989, which slowed the pace of redevelopment, brought real estate prices down to a more reasonable level, and shifted the focus of Beach residents, in their traditional role of defenders of the area, to environmental issues such as sewage treatment, garbage incineration, and water quality. However, the closure of Greenwood Raceway at the end of 1993 and the Ontario Jockey Club's decision to sell the 82-acre site, rallied the community to demand a voice in the redevelopment of the property; at this point nothing has been decided.



A view of Kew Beach, looking southeast from Kew Beach Firehall No. 17, showing Kippendavie Avenue, c.1906.

1. Kew Beach Firehall No. 17

**1904 Queen Street East, northwest corner of Herbert Avenue.
Robert McCallum, 1905-6.**

This handsome brick and stone firehall was one of the first buildings planned by Robert McCallum as City architect, a position he held from 1905 to 1913. William Forbes & Son did the masonry and carpentry. (They were local builders and lived on Lee Avenue.) The firehall was designed in the Queen Anne Revival style. McCallum took the theme of commercial buildings of the Flemish Renaissance: a simple box with a crow-step gable end facing the street. [Maitland, 1990.] The tower was not only decorative but also practical, being used primarily to dry the fire hoses and, sometimes, to give excellent views of the neighbourhood. (A picture taken from the tower is in the overview history.) Space was left in the tower for an illuminated clock, which was installed some years later. Eventually the cupola was removed and a one-storey bay was added on the west side. Kew Beach Firehall no. 17 was listed on *The City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties* on June 20, 1973.

The City provided this firehall only after Kew Beach residents had spent years asking for a permanent branch of the fire department. In 1897, for example, the *Toronto World* reported that, "Appeals have been made repeatedly for connection with the city system, but such has not been granted." And, in 1903, local residents pointed out the need for a City firehall to protect some 350 area buildings, mostly wood. [*Toronto World*, 1903.] A public referendum, held on October 22,

1904, approved a by-law to issue City debentures for \$25,000 to purchase a site and build a firehall at Kew Beach. [Toronto City Council, 1904.] The following spring, on April 29, 1905, ground was broken and construction began on the building, which Fire Chief Thompson assured would be "thoroughly up-to-date." [*Toronto World*, 1905.] The firehall opened without ceremony on August 15, 1906. The City supplied a two-horse hose wagon and a regular force of a captain, a lieutenant, a driver and two firemen. They were responsible for the district west to the Grand Trunk Railway crossing at De Grassi Street, and east, north and south to the City limits.

Before the permanent firehall was built, the Kew Beach community had provided its own fire protection. In June 1891, about 20 men formed a volunteer fire brigade. Property was leased on the south side of Queen Street, just west of Lee Avenue, and a firehall was erected. On November 17, 1896, the Kew Beach Volunteer Fire Company resolved to take a ten-year lease for a 50 by 125 foot section of Joseph Williams' property a little farther west along Queen, and "to erect a building suitable for the purposes of the Company." [Kew Beach Volunteer Fire Company, 1896.] On the same day, the *Toronto World* related that the firehall "has been moved from its old site and will do business again on a more solid foundation." The brigade relocated to



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Kew Beach Firehall No. 17, 1905.

where the war memorial now stands near the northwest corner of Kew Gardens. In both locations, the firehall was used for other community activities, including Kew Beach School classes and Baptist and Methodist church services. Most of the brigade's

expenses were paid by the volunteers, supplemented with some equipment and eventually an annual grant from the City.

For further information consult *The Beach in Pictures, 1793-1932*, p . 24.

2. Kew Beach School

101 Kippendavie Avenue. 1962.



TBE

Kew Beach School

The school now on this site was opened in 1963, having been built to the south of the original building before the older structure was demolished. The photograph reveals part of the original building during the construction of its 1921 addition, before the bell tower was removed. (Other additions to the original four-room school had been made in 1904 and 1906.) Fortunately the bell itself was preserved, and now occupies a place of honour in the present school's entrance hall.

Of the beginnings of Kew Beach School in 1889 (in rented church quarters), Waverley Wilson, of Wilson Beverages fame, told this story in a 1975 interview:

....[Miss Wray] wanted to start a school down here, and she had to have twelve children, and all she could get was eleven, except [my uncle], and he was in diapers at that

time; so this teacher went back to my grandmother and said, "If you let me enrol Norman as he is, then I can get the government grant." So they took him to school in diapers and brought him home again. Now that's how Kew Beach School started. [Wilson, 1975.]

Other accounts place the original number of pupils as high as twenty.

Miss Wray retired in 1903, at the time of her marriage, but in February 1940, a banquet was held to honour the woman who had founded the school half a century earlier. Also honoured on this occasion was Miss Kate Bell, one of the first teachers at the school, who had retired after 35 years.

On May 27, 1989, the school celebrated its 100th anniversary. For more information on the early history of the school, see *The Beach in Pictures, 1793-1932*, p.24.

3. Originally Whitelock's Grocery Store

1961 Queen Street East, southwest corner of Kenilworth Avenue.
Mudd & Knapton, bldrs, 1906- 08.



Herta Ziemann

Originally Whitelock's Grocery Store, now Whitlock's restaurant,
August 2, 1995.

This wood-clad frame building was constructed for James and Louise Loney. J. E. Loney operated a real estate business at 25 Toronto Street, and lived on Rose Hill Avenue, Deer Park. In 1908, Phillip and Rebecca Whitelock acquired the building for a grocery store and residence. (They also owned the building next door at 1959 Queen Street East, built for them in 1908-09, which they rented out.)

Whitelock had opened the first grocery store at Kew Beach in about 1887 at the northwest corner of Queen and Elmer. It was in his adjoining house in the winter of 1889-90 that he started a Baptist mission Sunday School, attended by 17 children including his family of four. This was the beginning of Kenilworth Avenue Baptist Church. (See site no. 5.)

Toronto City Council placed 1961 Queen Street East on *The City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage*

Properties in May 1990. At the time, Toronto Historical Board staff noted that it was "not aware of another wood corner building still standing in Toronto." It also commented, "The integrity of the building is diminished by the store front, insulbrick, and side picture window." These flaws were corrected in 1991 when a new owner spent five months restoring the building. Subsequently, it was opened as a restaurant named Whitlock's, a variation of the name of the original occupants.

Note that Kenilworth Avenue does not intersect with Queen Street in a straight line. This is a common pattern along Queen, and gives extra prominence to corner buildings and helps to deflect outside traffic from residential side streets. Earlier patterns of land ownership caused this situation - at the time of the first subdivisions, different land owners held property on either side of the street.

4. Originally Bank of Toronto

1958 Queen Street East, northwest corner of Kenilworth Avenue. Blackwell, Blackwell and Craig, 1950.



Bank of Toronto, c.1949

This one-storey yellow brick building was built as a branch of the Bank of Toronto, at a cost of \$25,000. It replaced two earlier twentieth century commercial buildings on the site. Over 600 guests, including Mayor Hiram McCallum and local M.P. Joseph Harris, attended an open house marking the completion of the new building on April 8, 1950. It became a Toronto-Dominion Bank branch in 1955, and was closed on August 28, 1981.

1958 Queen Street East is included on *The City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties* for architectural reasons. At the meeting of Toronto City Council on February 3 and 4, 1992, it was noted: "The building displays the profile,

symmetry and stylized features of mid-20th century Modern Classicism which recalls the earlier Art Deco style. With its simplicity and carefully-crafted details, the Bank of Toronto is an uncommon example of bank architecture of the 1950s in the neighbourhood and the City of Toronto." [Toronto City Council, 1992.]

From January 11, 1928 until 1950, the local Bank of Toronto branch was located across the street, at the southeast corner of Queen and Kenilworth. Until 1923, when it went bankrupt, the Home Bank of Canada had a branch at this location. Its name is still visible through the paint on the western facade of the building.



Herta Ziemann

Queen Street East and Kenilworth Avenue, north side, August 2, 1995.

Restaurants now occupy all four corners of the Queen-Kenilworth intersection. In 1922, by contrast, there was only one restaurant listed in the city directory for the section of Queen Street between Woodbine and the eastern city limits - the Devonshire Dining Hall, just east of MacLean Avenue. After 1975, when the first Beach restaurant received a liquor licence - the Chalet Steakhouse at Queen and Beech - the number of restaurants along Queen increased substantially. To limit their numbers, moratoriums were placed on granting liquor licences at the Beach in 1978 and 1983.

However, by 1986, there were 38 restaurants along Queen between Woodbine and Victoria Park. Some local residents blamed the increased number of restaurants for an influx of outsiders into the neighbourhood; they complained of vandalism, litter, noise, traffic, parking shortages, and

“rowdy tourists wandering around and sitting on front lawns and steps.” [*Globe and Mail*, 1986.]

A campaign was launched to restrict restaurants. On February 24, 1986, Toronto City Council passed a by-law which changed the zoning of the Queen Street strip from commercial to a commercial-residential mix. Restaurants were prohibited from being within 75 metres of each other and limited to 130 square metres of floor space. The controversial distance by-law was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board [OMB] on the grounds that it gave a monopoly to the existing restaurants. On December 16, 1986, before the case could be heard at the OMB, Council replaced the by-law with a new parking by-law stipulating that all new eating establishments must have on-site parking available to customers. This by-law was repealed on November 30, 1987.

5. Kenilworth Avenue Baptist Church / Beach Hebrew Institute

109 Kenilworth Avenue. [John] Francis Brown [attributed], 1895;
Facade alterations by W. G. Hunt, c. 1927.



Waverley Road Baptist Church BÐS

Kenilworth Avenue Baptist Church and Manse, c.190-?

This year, 1995, marks two important anniversaries for this building. It is the centennial year of its construction as Kenilworth Avenue Baptist Church, and the 75th anniversary of the Beach Hebrew Institute, which has occupied the premises since 1920.

Kenilworth Avenue Baptist Church held its opening services here on Saturday, May 25 and Sunday, May 26, 1895. Before that, local Baptists had met at various locations along Queen Street East, beginning in 1889 at Phillip Whitelock's house at the northwest corner of Elmer Avenue. (See site no. 3). The church was described in *Robertson's Landmarks of Toronto* several years after it opened as being "a plain frame building panelled and rough-casted, its cost with the land being about \$2,200. It is plainly furnished and seats 214 worshippers." [Robertson, 1904, 4: 462.] The front of the church faced Queen

Street; the manse was just south of the church yard, on the east side of Kenilworth Avenue. The house still stands at 107 Kenilworth Avenue, next door to the synagogue.

Attendance at the Baptist church increased rapidly over the next decade, as Kew Beach developed from a summer resort into a permanent community. Before long, the Kenilworth Avenue building was hopelessly overcrowded. In 1908, the congregation purchased property on the east side of Waverley Road, north of Queen Street, and commissioned architect Charles F. Wagner (see site no. 8) to design a new church, which opened that November.

The old church was vacant until 1910. In the following years, it was used for a warehouse and then for a local community centre known as Kenilworth Hall, where activities included dances and meetings. It was

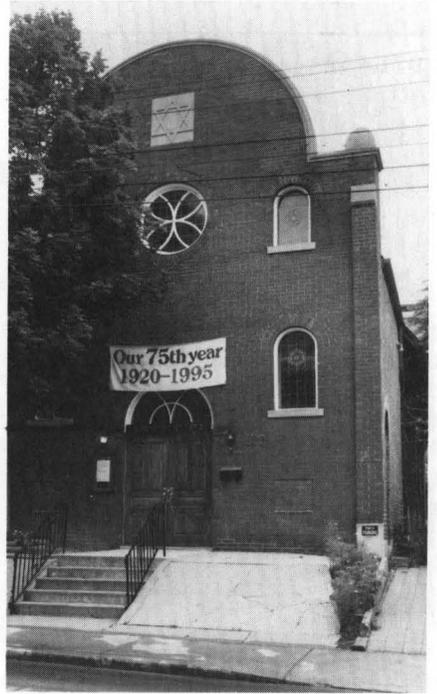
during this period that the building was moved south to its present location, and that the entrance was turned to face Kenilworth Avenue.

On October 28, 1919, the *Toronto Telegram* reported that Kenilworth Hall was “about to be altered and turned into a synagogue for the Jewish residents at the Beach.” The paper noted that “The enterprise is purely a local affair.” About \$8,000 was expected to be spent for the property and for alterations to the hall. [*Toronto Telegram*, 1919.] By 1920, the Beth Jacob congregation was holding Orthodox services in the building, which it named the Beach Hebrew Institute. The congregation’s history noted:

Some 40 families joined, mainly those with businesses and homes in the predominately non-Jewish area. Summer cottagers also attended. . .

At the outset the Beach Shul [synagogue] was [an] oasis in a kind of desert not always hospitable towards Jews. The shul’s name, Beach Hebrew Institute, deliberately did not include the word synagogue. [Chinsky, 1995.]

Several years later, under the supervision of architect W. G. Hunt, the facade was altered “to resemble the more traditional “Shtibel” architectural style of small European communities, and the arched windows, parapet and entrance were added.” [Toronto Historical Board, 1982.] (The round window is a feature of both the church and the synagogue.) Jewish symbols have been added. The Star of David is carved in the parapet and repeated in the stained glass of the four arched windows. “Beth Jacob,”



Herta Ziemann

**Beach Hebrew Institute,
August 2, 1995.**

in Hebrew, is inscribed in the lintel.

The membership and financial viability of the Beach Hebrew Institute have fluctuated over the years. There has been a resurgence in the past two decades, and an ambitious program to restore, repair and renovate the old building has been undertaken. In its 75th anniversary booklet, the Institute reported that it “has a membership of 130 households, operates in the black and looks ahead.” [Chinsky, 1995.]

A Toronto Historical Board plaque marking 109 Kenilworth Avenue was unveiled on June 6, 1982 by Mayor Arthur Eggleton. The Beach Hebrew Institute was designated for historical reasons by Toronto City Council under the Ontario Heritage Act on January 17, 1986.

6. Originally Allen Beach Theatre

1971 Queen Street East. Hynes, Feldman and Watson
[attributed], 1919.



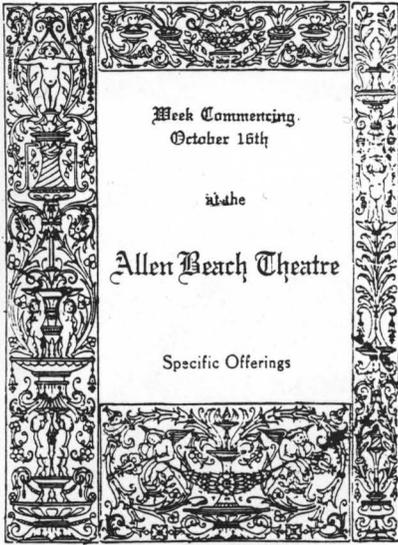
Herta Ziemann

Originally Allen Beach Theatre, now Beach Mall, August 2, 1995.

Allen Beach Theatre was the last movie theatre to be built at the Beach, and the most elaborate of the five that once operated along Queen Street, east of Woodbine. It was also the only local theatre that was not an independent playhouse. It was the sixth of ten theatres constructed in Toronto after the First World War by the Canadian firm owned by Jule and John J. Allen. *The Toronto World* called it “the latest, best and largest of the Allen chain of theatrical houses” in a December 16, 1919 report on the opening the previous evening. “The theatre . . . has its seating arrangement entirely on one floor and the audience of 1860 had an unobstructed view of the artistic walls papered in old rose, ivory and white, the beautifully circled and scrolled ceiling of the same shades.” The newspaper also praised “the simple yet classical lines of architecture, the beautiful French windows

with draped tapestries, the immense chandeliers,” and noted that “an added attraction in the near future will be the fine pipe organ.” The organ was from a Woodstock, Ontario company, in keeping with the Allen firm’s established policy of buying from Canadian manufacturers. [*Toronto World*, 1919.]

The Allen Theatres chain was taken over in 1923 by Famous Players, Paramount Pictures’ Canadian subsidiary established in 1920. The local theatre became known simply as the Beach Theatre. Plans for major alterations to the building were drawn up in April 1946 by architect J. K. Pokorny of 991 Bay Street, Toronto. [AO, RG 56.] The theatre continued to operate until the late 1960s. Then, after standing empty for several years, it was converted into a small mall, now used predominantly for medical offices.



TPL.BE



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Beach Theatre logo, 1929.

Programme for Allen Beach Theatre, October 1922.

Motion pictures were first shown at the Beach at local amusement parks, notably at Munro Park in 1900 and at Scarborough Beach Park from 1907. One of the first movie theatres was the Peter Pan. The small frame building was located on the south side of Queen, east of Kenilworth, on the site of the future Allen Beach Theatre. Although the Peter Pan Theatre was listed in city directories only from 1916 to 1919, "amusements" were listed for the site as early as 1913, and one old-timer recalled the Peter Pan being in operation several years before that. [Gregory, 1979.]

The Coliseum Theatre was on the south side of Queen, east of Leuty. First listed in city directories as the Kew Beach Pavilion (1910), then as the Beaches Pictorium (1911), the theatre was in business for about ten years. Ted Reeve (1902-1983) reminisced that he and his boyhood friends turned out in force to supply the sound effects for the old nickel

shows and famous 101 Bison Pictures at Harvey William's old Coliseum Theatre. [Reeve, n.d.] By 1920, the building was being used for Duncan Buchanan Motors; it still stands at 2215 Queen Street East as a hardware store and a microfilming business.

The Family Theatre was located on the south side of Queen, just east of Lee Avenue. It first appeared in the 1916 city directory, although "amusements" were listed as being on the site as early as 1912. Later directories indicate the building was vacant from 1940 to 1946, reopened from 1947 to 1950 as the Family Theatre, and then from 1952-53 was called the Lake Theatre. By 1955, the Beach Billiard Academy was on the site. Hooks which once held the marquee of the old theatre were visible on the front of the building until 1991, when the structure was substantially remodelled and enlarged.

"The Theatre Without a Name" opened at the northeast corner of Queen and Beech on April 14, 1914. On opening night, it was renamed the Pastime Theatre, but by 1915 it was called the Prince Edward Theatre. The Prince Edward name can still be seen in the stained glass window over the Beech Avenue doorway of the building. Since July 31, 1937, it has been called the Fox Theatre, and is the only cinema still operating in the area.

7. Originally John Wright House

1975 and 1975 A Queen Street East, southeast corner of Waverley Road. c. 1903. Store added, c. 1925.



TPL.BE

Originally John Wright house, 190-?

This is an early example of a mixed residential-commercial building, that is, a house with a store attached. The house is designed in the Queen Anne Revival style, which first appeared in Canada in the late 1870s and early 1880s and remained popular until the outbreak of the First World War. This style was characterised by asymmetrical buildings with a variety of projecting features such as towers, bays, porches, wings, sunrooms, and verandahs. It was very popular in Toronto, where most Queen Anne Revival buildings were constructed of brick; although at the Beach, which was primarily a resort area, wood was commonly used.

The Wright house exhibits many typical Queen Anne Revival features. It has verandahs, Palladian windows, a corner turret, and an irregular outline consisting of towers, broad gables, multisloped roofs and tall chimneys. The different kinds of wood siding - clapboard on the first floor and shingle sheathing on the second - are also typical of the North American version of the Queen Anne Revival style. [Maitland, 1990.]

The store addition is, according to the Toronto Historical Board, "an early and significant alteration." Heywood Florists occupied the store for many years. Notable architectural features in the store addition



House with store addition, 1975 and 1975A Queen Street East, August 2, 1995.

include the brickwork, the terra cotta details, the corner entrance with transom and canopy, the raised brick piers and the modified pediment over the entrance. 1975 and 1975A Queen Street East were designated under the Ontario Heritage Act on September 7, 1989.

Stores built on to houses are a familiar sight along Queen Street East at the Beach. For years, the street has had a mixture of residential and commercial uses. During the 1980s, though, redevelopment pressures threatened to change the balance. In an effort to encourage the production and preservation of housing while down-zoning commercial coverage, the City rezoned Queen Street from Coxwell Avenue to the

city limits in 1987. Under the new zoning, densities were limited to two-times coverage and the height limit was 12 metres. The south side of Queen from Wineva to Nursewood was allowed even less density, and the front yard setbacks in the section between MacLean and Beech were to be maintained. The Ontario Municipal Board approved this rezoning of Queen Street on January 6, 1989. In its decision, the OMB stated that it "prefers the city's evidence as supported by most area residents to maintain the character of the area and preserve the total residential community. To do otherwise would open the floodgates for redevelopment." [Hick, 1989.]

8. Inglebrook. Originally Charles Frederick Wagner House

81 Waverley Road. R. J. Edwards and C. F. Wagner, c. 1900.



Mary Denoon/TPL.BE

Inglebrook, showing Jeanne Welbanks Gemmell (left) and Mary Mabel Gemmell, 1911/12.

Architect Charles Frederick Wagner (1862-1934), designed this Queen Anne Revival style house where he lived for about five years at the turn of the twentieth century. A Toronto native of German-born parents, Wagner was educated at local public schools and Upper Canada College before apprenticing to his father, a builder and carpenter. In 1883 he began to study architecture at the firm of Gordon & Helliwell, and in 1887 opened his own office. The following year, he married Lucy Bennett, only daughter of Major James Bennett of the Inland Revenue Service. [Cochrane, 1891.]

During his career, Wagner practiced his profession mostly independently, but around 1900 was briefly in partnership with Robert J. Edwards. Wagner planned several

other local buildings, including "Pine Crest" at the northwest corner of Pine Crescent and Balsam Avenue (1904), Waverley Road Baptist Church (1908), and a double house at 332 Lake Front for Dr. J. W. Rowan (c. 1908-9, dem. c. 1931).

In 1906, William B. Gemmell, a commission agent for men's haberdashery, moved into the Waverley Road house (it was then no. 73) with his wife, Minnie, and daughter, Jeanne (1903-85). Two more Gemmell children were born there: Mary (1908) and Scott (1913). The family lived at Inglebrook until 1924. In the early '20s, the Gemmells rented out the house for two summers. One year the tenant was Frank O'Connor, founder of the Laura Secord Candy Company, who paid \$100 a month for the house.

Both Gemmell daughters have recorded memories about their childhoods on Waverley Road. Jeanne (later Jeanne Minhinnick) became an expert on Upper Canadian furniture and house decorating. She wrote books and did interior consultation work at several significant historic sites including Upper Canada Village, Dundurn Castle, the Grange, and the East Block of the Parliament Buildings. In a 1968 speech at McMaster University, she described in detail the furnishings and interior decoration of the Waverley Road house, as well as its Queen Anne Revival design features:

It was in what was then an eastern suburb of Toronto, set on a high terrace and surrounded by beautiful trees. Its name was "Inglenook," and there was scarcely a room in it that didn't afford some kind of sanctuary or retreat. . .

Our house had 13 principal rooms and many alcoves and nooks that served as rooms. It was entirely sheathed in green shingles. It had several of the best known characteristics of its American prototypes. One was an octagonal tower on a front corner, another was steeply pitched roofs - and several of them, all at variance with each other. The entrance door was concealed from the street in a side verandah, and another verandah with spindled railing (an "outdoor living room" it was called) faced the street.

Jeanne was so convinced of the attractions of her family's "romanti-

cally planned house" that she persuaded school friends to pay her three cents each for a conducted tour of the house and grounds when her mother was out visiting. She later claimed, "No one asked for money back." [Minhinnick, 1968.]

Mary (now Mary Denoon) also has portrayed the family's life on Waverley Road. In 1983, she recalled the joys of their backyard, which not only opened right into Kew Gardens, "our season-by-season playground," but also boasted its own playhouse filled with cast-off furniture, a croquet set, lawn chairs and gardening tools:

When the cottages on Lee Avenue were expropriated by the City [see site no. 10], Dad was able to buy a one-roomed one with a porch, had it moved across the park and set up in a corner of our yard . . . it became our rainy day playhouse for all sorts of activities with the neighbour kids. [Denoon, 1983.]

In 1989 a Toronto development company acquired 81 Waverley Road with plans to demolish it and construct two brick detached houses on the property. Local residents petitioned to preserve the house. Both 79 and 81 Waverley Road were listed on the *City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties* on April 21, 1989. (No. 79, although attached to no. 81, has always been a separate dwelling.) Subsequently, new owners at 81 Waverley Road have substantially restored the exterior of the house.

9. Bellefair United Church

2 Bellefair Avenue, northwest corner of Queen Street East.
Fryer & Evans [attributed], c. 1915-1922.

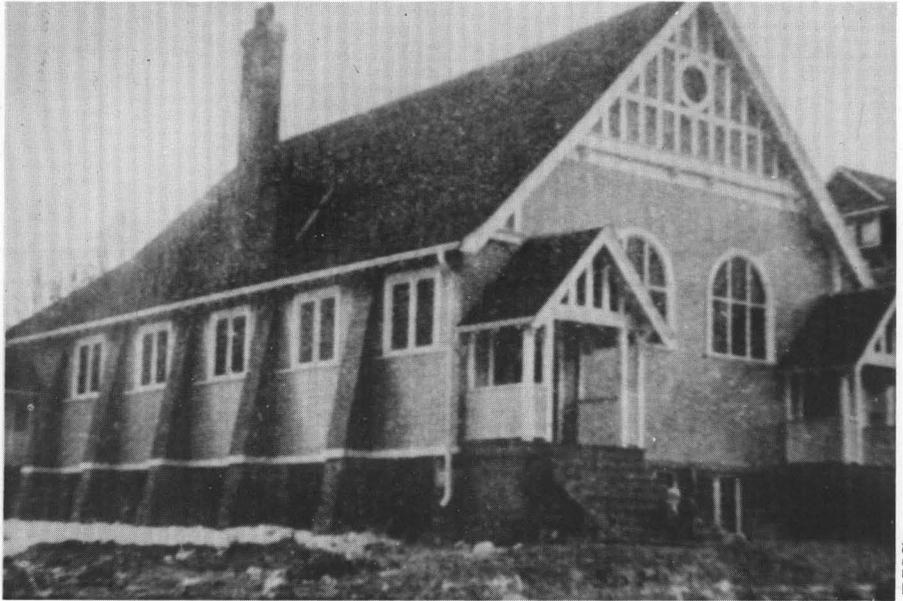


Richard Cole/BUC

Bellefair United Church, 195?

This church, built in the Neo-Gothic style using brown brick with stone trim, was dedicated in 1923, but the congregation first met in 1904 on a lawn on Waverley Road. They progressed to a private home and then to the old fire hall across Queen Street in Kew Gardens. (See site no. 10.) In 1905 they purchased part of the present lot. While the first church was being built in 1906, the congregation met in a tent, and then in the basement of the new building until the small frame structure was completed on the north portion of the

site. At this time, the church was operated as a mission of Queen Street East Methodist Church, and was known as Beach Methodist Church (sometimes referred to as Kew Beach Methodist Church). In 1910, it became independent, and was thereafter called Bellefair Methodist Church. By 1914, the congregation had become so large that it was decided to build a much more substantial church to the south. But before even the basement could be completed, the First World War intervened, and the work came to a



BUC

First church building, begun 1906.

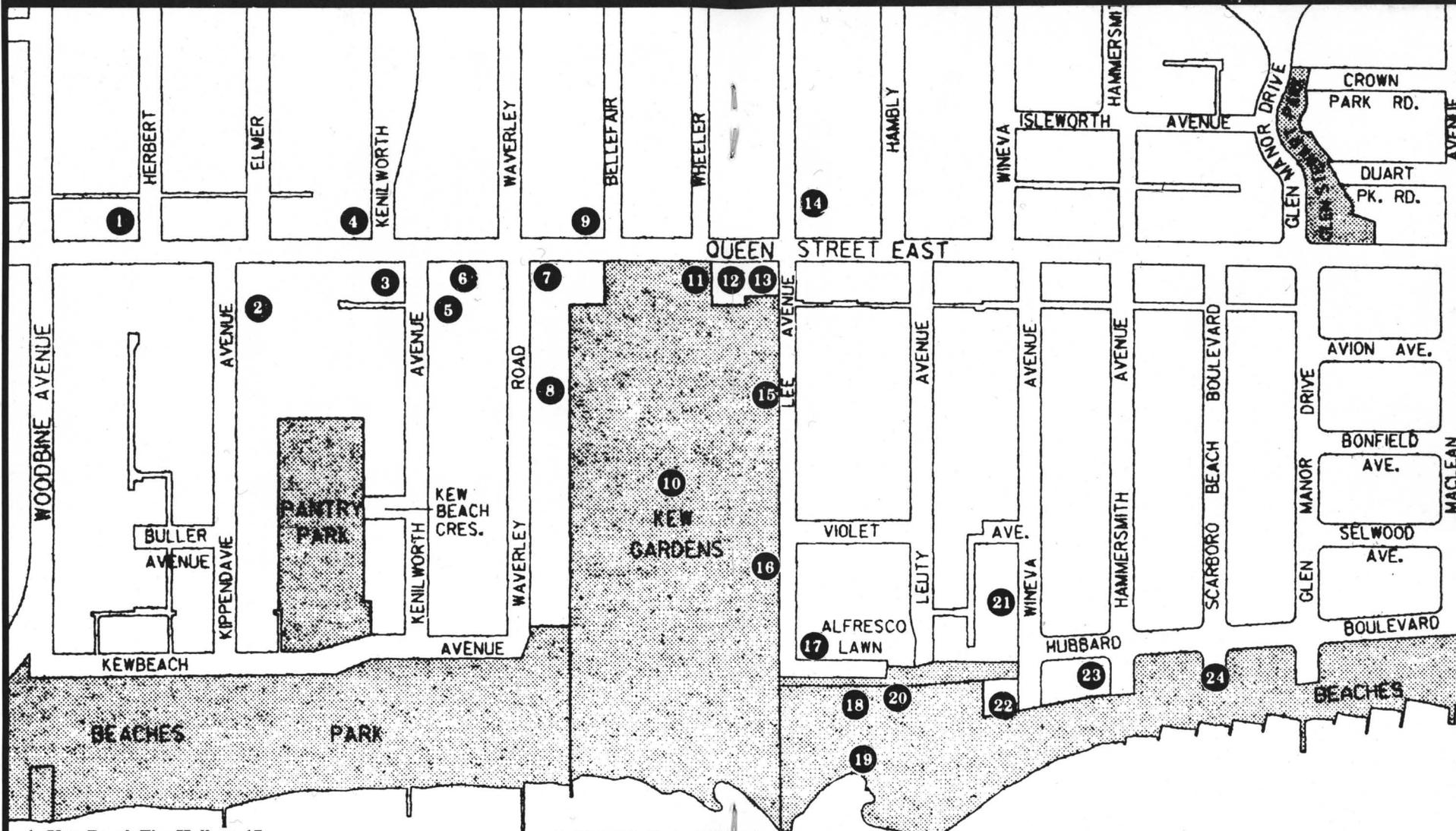
halt, not to be resumed until after the war ended. In 1925, two years after the present building was dedicated, the congregation joined other Methodists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians in the United Church of Canada.

The little old church to the north was used for many years as extra space for Sunday school and recreation, but was demolished in the 1950s to clear the way for a new Christian education building, dedicated in 1958 and later named Kerley Hall, in

honour of former minister Dr. Harry Kerley and his wife, Evelyn, who served the church between 1949 and 1964. This building is used by the community as well as by the church.

Some of the stained glass windows of the present church can be seen from the outside, but only from the inside can one see possibly the most beautiful feature of the building: the three huge stained glass skylights that let the light stream in through the flat roof of the sanctuary.

Historical Walking Tour of Kew Beach



1. Kew Beach Fire Hall no. 17

2. Kew Beach School

3. Originally Whitelock's Grocery Store

4. Originally Bank of Toronto

5. Kenilworth Avenue Baptist Church / Beach Hebrew Institute

6. Originally Allen Beach Theatre

7. Originally John Wright House

8. Inglenook

9. Bellefair United Church

10. Kew Gardens

11. Beaches Branch of the Toronto Public Library

12. Kew Park Mansions

13. Originally Dominion Bank

14. Originally Beach Central Office, Bell Telephone Company

15. Dr. William D. Young Memorial

16. Originally Kew Williams House

17. Alfresco Lawn

18. Kew Beach Club (demolished)

19. Leuty Lifesaving Station

20. Originally Kew Beach Park Boat House

21. 18-36 Wineva Avenue

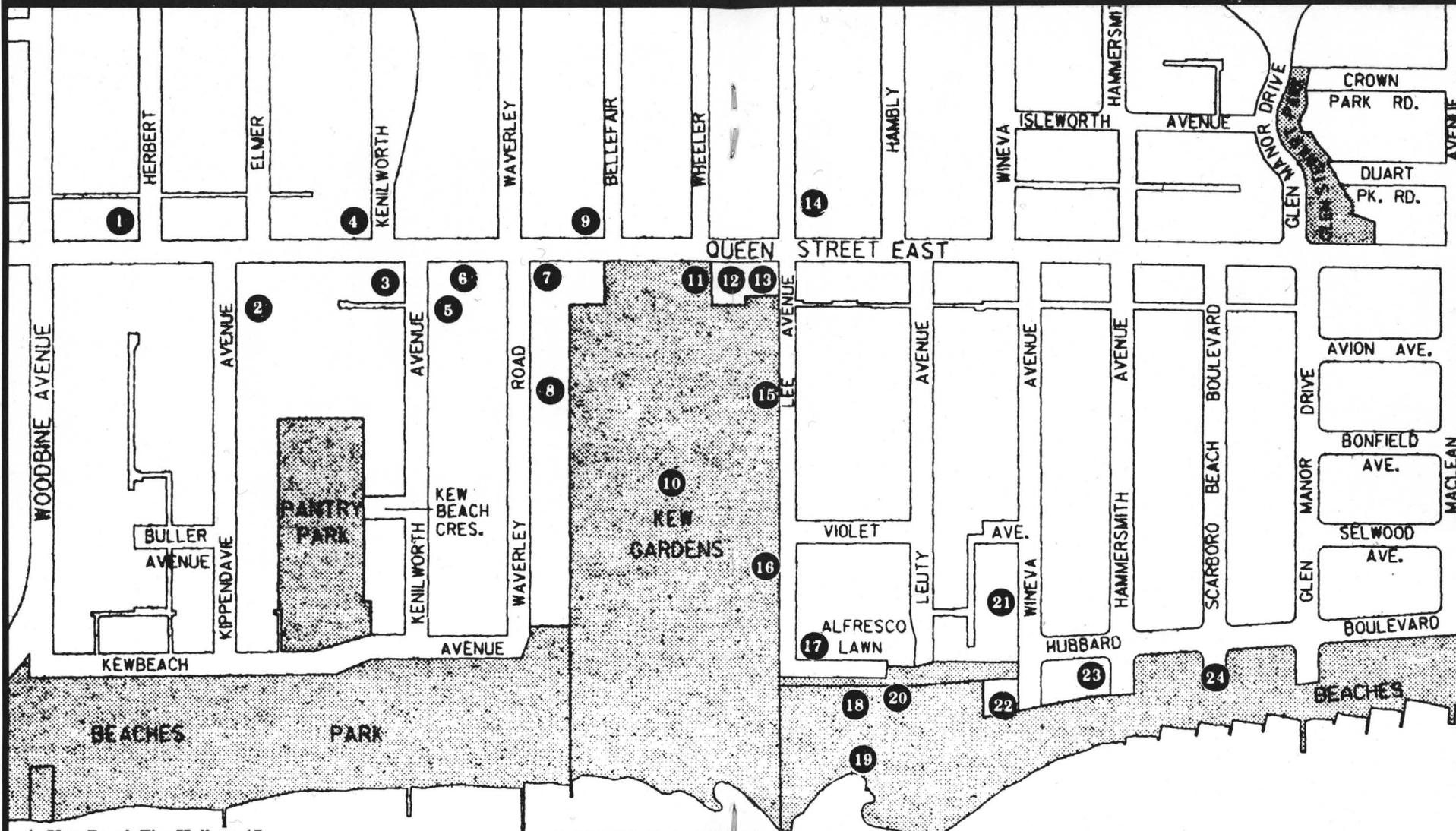
22. The Boardwalk

23. Hubbard Court and houses on Boardwalk

24. Scarboro' Beach Amusement Park plaque

Note: Alfresco Lawn continues east to Wineva Avenue

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10. Kew Gardens

Queen Street East, south side, between Waverley Road and Lee Avenue. 1879.



CTA Salmon 547

Kew Gardens Pavilion, August 2, 1914

When Joseph and Jane Williams came to the Beach area in 1853 looking for farmland, they bought four acres to the north and east of this site, and established "Kew Farms." (Joseph was nostalgic about his former London, England home.) The family prospered and Joseph bought more properties, including this one, which he developed into "The Canadian Kew Gardens," opened to the public in 1879 for camping and picnicking and other "innocent amusements". Meals were available, and featured fresh fruit from the farms, but no alcoholic beverages were tolerated. (For more detail, see *The Beach in Pictures, 1793-1932*, p. 26.) Holidays such as Dominion Day

were celebrated there in great style.

However, by 1907, when the city paid Joseph \$43,200 for the property, he had laid out roads through the park (Cinque Ports and Lord Warden avenues) and sold lots for houses, some of which were already built. He had also, in 1896, leased a 50- by 125-foot lot on Queen Street to the Kew Beach Volunteer Fire Company who had erected a fire hall on it. It took the city many more years and thousands of dollars to clear all the buildings from the park (except Kew Williams' house - see site no. 16), from Lee Avenue and Queen Street, and from the lakefront, to make the park what it is today.



CTA DPW 52-251

Bobsled run in Kew Gardens, January 17, 1914

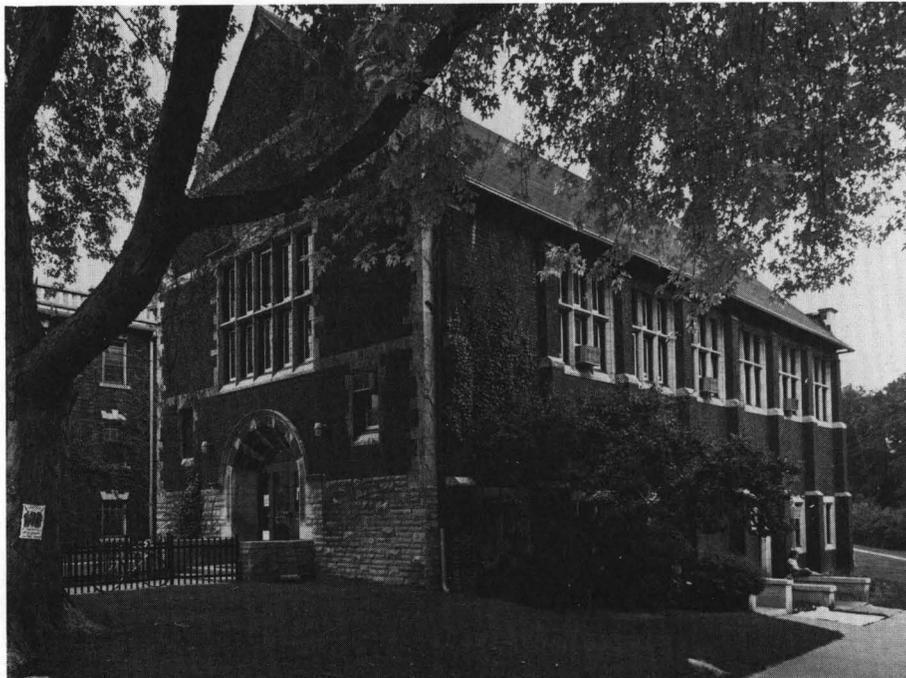
Meanwhile, the city built a substantial stone-and-wood pavilion on the lakefront (1913/14, now demolished) where bathing suits and towels could be rented, maintained tennis courts at various locations in the park, and in the early years, erected wooden bobsled runs for the children in the winter. For many years now the city has provided a skating rink, a refreshment booth, a baseball diamond, a childrens' playground and wading pool, and free summer concerts at the bandstand (replaced in 1992).

There are still grand celebrations in the park: the Christmas tree and menorah lighting in December, an arts and craft show in June, Canada Day on July 1, a jazz festival in July, and various other events. These occasions have proven so popular that there was growing local concern about the neighbourhood disruption caused by increased traffic, loud music and obtrusive signage, leading to a new bylaw in 1994 limiting major events in public parks to one per calendar month.

11. Beaches Branch of the Toronto Public Library

2161 Queen Street East. Eden Smith & Sons, 1915.

Renovation: Stinson, Montgomery Sisam, 1980.



TPLA

Beaches Branch of the Toronto Public Library, c.1979.

Beaches Branch of the Toronto Public Library opened on December 13, 1916 in a corner of Kew Gardens. The red brick building was one of three identical city libraries constructed with a \$50,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The simplicity of the design contrasted with the classical detailing and monumentalism of earlier library styles. "It is a decided revolt in style from the traditional library architecture," stated the chief librarian George Locke in his annual report for 1916. The building was "after the fashion of the Collegiate Grammar School of the Seventeenth Century in England." [Toronto Public Library, 1916.]

The Tudor Gothic interior was also innovative. It consisted mainly of two large rooms, modelled on the Great Hall. The ground floor room, complete with fireplace, was for the children's library, and also for community meetings. The main floor, for adult books, included a minstrel's gallery along the north wall, an open-timbered ceiling, a stone fireplace with oak settles, and leaded glass windows. Book shelves lined the walls: Beaches was one of the first library branches in the city to use the open shelf book storage system where readers could browse the actual books instead of having to request them from staff.



MTRL T12130

Beaches Library Drama League, c.1925

From the very beginning, Beaches Branch was an important part of the community. Picture exhibitions started in 1916, Booklovers' Evenings in 1921, the Beaches Library Drama League in 1924, and a Music Hour in 1929. Beaches Branch was a pioneer among public libraries in reaching out to the community in this way. The innovative work attracted attention not only in Canada, but also in the United States. The *Christian Science Monitor* of June 2, 1927 reported: "Some interesting experiments of community service are being carried out in the Beaches Branch of the Toronto Public Library. . . . Today, it exerts a real influence not only in the cultural but in the social and business life of the district." [*Christian Science Monitor*, 1927.] Two outstanding librarians were responsible for much of the

early work: first Jessie E. Rorke who came to Beaches in 1919, then Louise Boothe who succeeded Miss Rorke in 1929 and was at the branch until 1948.

Beaches Branch of the Toronto Public Library was listed on the *City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties* on October 1, 1979. Nevertheless some of the original character of the building was altered when the library was redesigned and enlarged in 1979-80. The original Queen Street entrance was turned into a bay window and a new entrance was incorporated into the shed addition on the Kew Gardens side of the building. The architect's stated intention to return to the original open design, and reduce the "crowded hodge-podge" of the interior has not been realized. [Stinson, 1980.]

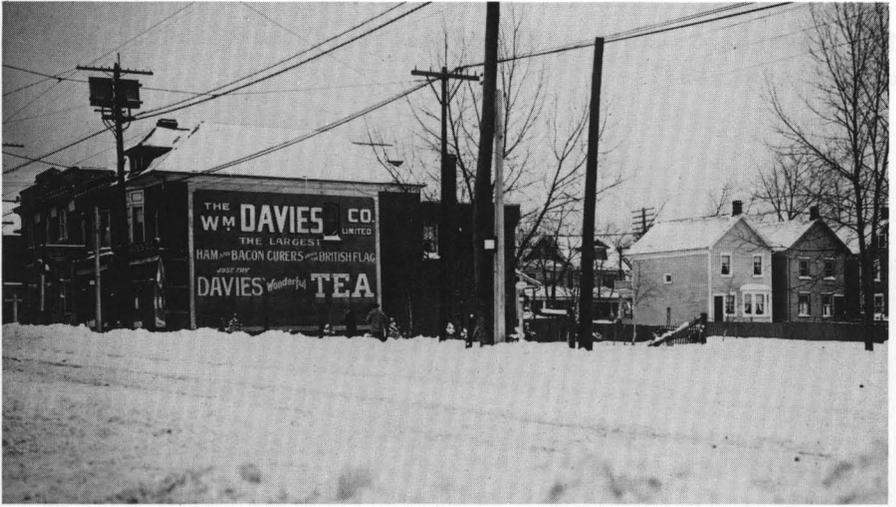
12. Kew Park Mansions

2163 Queen Street East. 1928-29.

This 28-unit apartment is built in an L-shape which wraps around the bank building on the southwest corner of Queen Street East and Lee Avenue. (See site no. 13.) It has entrances on both streets, featuring the name of the apartment in stained glass in the transom over each set of double glass-panelled doors. It is similar in size and scale to quite a number of other apartments which sprang up in the Beach area in the late 1920s, especially along the south side of Queen Street to the east of this location. These buildings are generally two or three storeys high, and contain up to 29 units. Examples of different styles of this genre can be seen at Scarboro Beach Boulevard, at MacLean, Willow and Silver Birch avenues, and between Silver Birch and Munro Park avenues.

Kew Park Mansions were built for Walter Snell, who owned the property and had operated a grocery store on the premises. Part of the property had also been a butcher shop, at one time the well-known William Davies Company. The Toronto Historical Board notes that the building displays the formal composition, Classical elements, and smooth brick surfaces identified with early 20th century Edwardian Classicism, and, with its neighbouring buildings on either side, forms an integrated group displaying similar materials, scale and setback. The apartments joined these neighbours on *The City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties* in August 1991.

The scale of buildings and the character of the Beach area might have been very different if it were not for the quick actions of Beachers themselves. In the early summer of 1965, a local resident heard of a scheme to build 17- and 25-storey apartment towers south of Queen Street between Lee and Leuty avenues. It appeared that the development company had secured options on about 90 per cent of the properties it needed on Lee, Leuty and Violet avenues. Some neighbours were quickly alerted, and they made up brochures explaining what was happening, had them printed, and hired a professional distributing company to deliver them to every house at the Beach. The first result of this quick action was that about 200 people met to form a ratepayers and residents association to fight the rezoning which would be necessary for the development to go ahead. Members soon numbered about 1,200! When about 500 of them went to the September meeting of the Buildings and Development Committee at City Hall, wearing their DOWN WITH HIGH RISE badges, they managed to defeat the project. Not everyone agreed with the outcome, of course. Some saw the prospect of a large monetary gain disappear, and some thought that the area could use revitalizing and would be better off without all those "old" houses. Most of those "old" houses are still standing, and much sought-after on today's real estate market.



CTA Parks 488

Site of Kew Park Mansions, Queen Street East, east of Kew Gardens, showing Wm. Davies Co. and Snell's Grocery, January 23, 1915



Herta Ziemann

Kew Park Mansions, August 6, 1995.

13. Originally Dominion Bank

2169 Queen Street East, southwest corner of Lee Avenue.
John M. Lyle, 1911.



Herta Ziemann

Toronto Dominion Bank, August 6, 1995.

The former Dominion Bank at Queen and Lee was one of several Dominion Bank branches in Toronto designed by architect John M. Lyle in 1911. (The others were on Bloor at Davenport, and on St. Clair at Vaughan.) The banks were similar in style, and could be considered prototypes for the great number of Dominion Bank branches that Lyle later designed throughout Ontario. In a 1937 article, Lyle noted that a consistent character had been maintained deliberately in order that Dominion Banks would be recognizable. "Where possible red brick and limestone trimming are used and simplified wall surfaces with motifs largely confined to the main entrance and the lintel of the windows." [Lyle, 1937.] Lyle adhered to this Georgian Revival format throughout his career. Lyle's biographer, Geoffrey Hunt, commented: "the overall effect gives that sense of security required

in a bank. The scale to the street and the materials in such bank branches harmonize with the facades of Ontario's main streets." [Hunt, 1982.]

While banks were the mainstay of Lyle's architectural firm, he also planned such important buildings as the Royal Alexandra Theatre (1907), Union Station (1913-20), the Paddock Building at Woodbine Race Track (1927), and Runnymede Branch of Toronto Public Library (1929).

The Dominion Bank at Queen and Lee opened in 1912. Shaw's Business Schools rented the second floor for its Beaches Business School; Edward Morris Real Estate was another early tenant. The bank became a Toronto Dominion Bank branch in 1955, when the Bank of Toronto and the Dominion Bank amalgamated. It was placed on the *City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties* in May 1990 for architectural reasons.



BNSA

Metropolitan Bank branch, Queen Street East and Lee Avenue, northeast corner, c. 1914.

The bank is located at the intersection that has been the commercial centre of the Kew Beach community since the turn of the century. One of the early businesses located in this shopping district was Howard's Butcher Shop, established in 1898 at the northwest corner. Cec. Howard, one of the butcher's sons, later recalled that the family lived over the store, and there were stables in the back yard and chicken coops along the west side of the property. [Howard, 1977.] After four or five years, Howard's Butcher Shop relocated to the southwest corner of Queen and Lee. Another butcher, Albert Lush, was on the site just before the Dominion Bank was constructed.

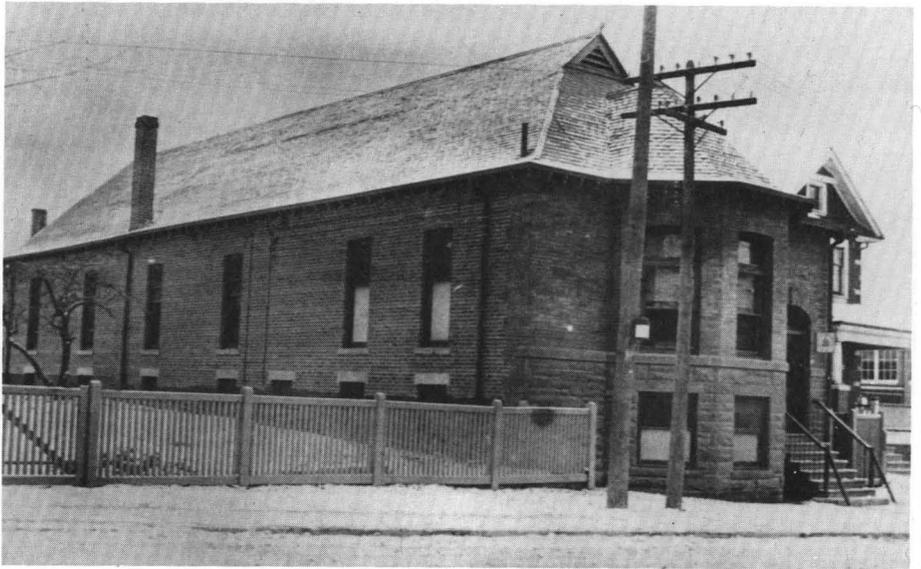
In 1904, Gordon Tamblin opened a drug store in a building at the southeast corner, which, according to a 1934 advertisement, "when acquired was in the centre of a huge orchard." [Middleton, 1934.] This was the first store in what was eventually a chain of 95, bought out

in 1977 by Boots, and sold to the Oshawa Group in winter 1988; the stores were renamed Pharma Plus in fall 1989.

The Metropolitan Bank of Toronto opened a branch at the northeast corner of Queen and Lee on March 12, 1906. (Records of the Bell Telephone company indicate that its Beach Exchange was at the same location until late in 1907 when it moved up Lee Avenue. See site no. 14.) The bank constructed a two-storey brick building on the site; the ground floor was used for the bank and the upper floor was occupied by tenants. The Metropolitan Bank amalgamated with the Bank of Nova Scotia on November 14, 1914; the branch at Queen and Lee was closed on October 15, 1942. In the early 1950s, Woolworth's moved into a new building there, where it remained until 1986. (Its previous store had been at 2012 Queen Street East since c. 1930.) A Kresge store was located on the northwest corner of Queen and Lee from 1932 until about 1960.

14. Originally Beach Central Office, Bell Telephone Company

97 Lee Avenue. 1906/7.



Bell 06309-05012

**Bell Telephone Co.'s second Beach Exchange building,
97 Lee Avenue, 1907?**

This building, now converted to apartments, was the second home of the Beach telephone exchange, as it was locally known. The first Beach telephone office, in 1903, was a small frame building just to the south, on the corner of Queen Street. Before 1903, there were very few telephones in the district, and these were served by the Bell Telephone's Main office on Temperance Street in downtown Toronto. However, the population of the area was growing so rapidly at that time that the company decided to establish a Beach office; so on August 1, 1903, two standard magneto switchboards (i.e. run by generator) were put into service, initially serving about 40 subscribers. Customers signalled the operator by turning a

crank on their phone, then asking for the connection they wanted.

As the area developed from a summer community to a permanent residential and commercial district, this office was no longer big enough to handle the demand for telephone service; so in 1905 a lot was bought at 97 Lee Avenue, just to the north, and a new and bigger brick-and-stone building planned. This was opened on December 6, 1907 with a common battery switchboard, and customers could now summon the operator merely by lifting their receiver. (The corner lot was taken over by the Metropolitan Bank, which built a fine new building there. See photograph with site no. 13.)



Bell 06115-04857

Operators in front of the Bell Telephone Co.'s first Beach Exchange building, Queen Street East and Lee Avenue, northeast corner, 1905.

Demand for telephone service continued to grow, and in 1922 the "Beach" office name was changed to "Gladstone," in preparation for the 1924 inauguration of the company's first automatic (dial) office on Main Street north of Kingston Road. (Dialing BEach would be the same as dialing ADelaide or BELmont, as the telephone would simply send "23" in each case.) GLadstone numbers were phased out over the next five years and disappeared in 1927. (The name was later used again.) Beachers were served from the Main Street office using GRover, HOrward and OXford numbers until 1955, when these numbers became OXford 4, 1 and 9, respectively. All number calling was introduced in 1961, and letters were gradually phased out of the dialing process.

After 1927, this building appears

to have been vacant until St. Michael's College opened an annex here in 1932, so that their east end high school boys would not have to travel to the main college at St. Joseph and Bay streets in the centre of the city. (There was another branch in the west end.) Starting with a first form of about 40 boys, they added one form each year as the students progressed. In 1935-6 they even had a hockey team called the East End Phantoms; but by 1937 the numbers had declined, and in 1938 the building was again listed as vacant in the city directory.

Starting in 1945, it appeared as apartments. After a major renovation in 1980, these apartments were re-named the "Beaches Exchange," with a slightly mistaken respect for the history of the property.

15. Dr. William D. Young Memorial

Opposite 61 Lee Avenue in Kew Gardens. Maurice D. Klein, 1919.



Herta Ziemann

Dr. William D. Young Memorial, August 6, 1995.

This Italian Renaissance-style drinking fountain was erected in 1920 to the memory of Dr. William D. Young (1874-1918) by the members of the Beaches community. It commemorates his devotion to public service and his dedication to the welfare of children of the neighbourhood. The fountain was designed by Maurice D.

Klein, and originally supported by a statue of a standing child by Florence Wyle, now replaced by one by Frances Gage. The medallions of Dr. Young were designed by Ivor Lewis.

Text of Toronto Historical Board plaque, unveiled June 15, 1980.

16. Originally Kew Williams House

30 Lee Avenue. 1901/2.



TPL.BE

Originally Kew Williams house, 1972.

This house was built by Kew Williams, whose family owned Kew Gardens. (See site no. 10.) When Joseph and Jane Williams, Kew's parents, first came to the Beach in 1853, they built a log cabin on their farm to the north and east of this property. (This cabin stood for many years on the laneway just north of Queen Street, between Wineva and Hammersmith avenues.) When the three oldest Williams sons left farming to become commercial sailors on the Great Lakes, the family built a large farmhouse on the park property. This house was reputed to include a huge dining room which could be used for dancing during the week - Joseph loved dancing - and for church services on Sunday.

When the youngest son, Kew, decided to get married, he built another house in the park for his own family. Although not a large house, it has several notable architectural features. The corner tower has a

surrounding verandah with a concave roof which sweeps up to the eave line, where a bell-cast roof features a ball finial. The south face has a two-faceted oriel window in the upper storey, and below this a circular window with a contrasting surround. The contrast here and in the upper storey is due to the fact that construction was begun in grey Kingston stone, brought by lake by some of Kew's brothers, but finished in Port Credit stone, which weathers to a brown colour. One of Kew's daughters stated in later years that she thought the plans may have been altered after the building was begun, and there wasn't enough grey stone to accommodate the new design.

The Kew Williams family lived here until the park was sold to the City in 1907. The house was added to *The City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties* on April 1, 1982, and, until 1995, was the official residence of the parkkeeper.

17. Alfresco Lawn

2-10 Alfresco Lawn. c.1902; 1994.



Herta Ziemann

6, 8 and 10 Alfresco Lawn, August 6, 1995.

Alfresco Lawn is a picturesque little street running east of Lee Avenue. Its five houses are ideally located, just east of Kew Gardens and facing south with an unobstructed view of the park and the lake. The street's name is unusual. "Alfresco" is from the Italian, *al fresco*, meaning "in the fresh or cool air." "Lawn" harkens back to the early 1900s when there was "a fine bowling lawn" on the south side of Alfresco Lawn. [Gregory, 1974.]

Four of the street's five houses, although altered, date to the early 1900s. Originally the frame dwellings had recessed second-floor verandahs which may have afforded residents a view of the lake, beyond the row of buildings that then lined the shore on Lake Front, in front of Alfresco Lawn.

10 Alfresco Lawn, the most easterly of the five houses, is a replacement dwelling added in 1994. The prefabricated house is much smaller than the design proposed for the site in 1993. Controversy erupted when a new owner decided to demolish the existing house, which had been built at the same time as the other four, and was identical to them in shape, height (one and a half storeys), and style (modified Cape Cod). His plans

called for a three storey dwelling, taller and larger than the others. Neighbours objected that the proposed building would not maintain "the symmetry of the streetscape." [Beach Metro News, 1993.] They gained support from City officials, and on June 22, 1993, Toronto City Council passed an interim control bylaw, temporarily freezing development on the street. Council repealed the by-law three months later, but shortly thereafter the Committee of Adjustment turned down the application to replace the existing house at no. 10. The new house that was later built on the site is more in keeping with its neighbours.

Alfresco Lawn was originally part of a block owned and developed by R. S. Williams, a manufacturer of musical instruments. It was listed in city directories from the early 1900s, but not registered in a subdivision plan until 1928. The plan showed 22 lots and 17 buildings on a property bounded by Lake Front, Lee Avenue, the back yards of Alfresco Lawn and a line west of Leuty Avenue. Included was "Blarney Castle," the whimsical wood dwelling at 11 Lee, so named for its two crenellated dormers.

18. Kew Beach Club

Lake Front, between foot of Lee and Leuty Avenues.
Stood c.1903 - c.1930.



MTRL T14081

The waterfront at Kew Beach showing the Kew Beach Club (left), 1916.

The Kew Beach Club was, in its time, a centre of sporting and social activities in the Kew Beach area. A post card written in 1909 shows a picture of the south side of the Kew Beach Club House looking somewhat like a small castle covered in brown shingle-like material, featuring a crenellated roof-line and two square tower-like extensions at the corners, all outlined in white trim. A boat ramp led from the large doors to the lake. However, by 1920, when the Toronto Harbour Commissioners photographed their new lifesaving station nearby, the towers and crenellations of the club house had disappeared, leaving a much plainer-looking south face, distinguished mainly by its two small round second-storey windows flanking the main multi-paned rectangular composite window. (The club house looked much the same in 1928: see photograph with site no. 19.)

Club sports activities included bowling, tennis (begun in 1901) and aquatic sports in the summer, while permanent residents enjoyed winter

entertainments like ice skating. (Although today's lawn bowling club dates itself from 1908, there are accounts of activities of the Kew Beach Bowling Club as far back as 1903.) There was a friendly rivalry in sporting events with the Balmy Beach Club to the east.

By the summer of 1903, a "regular weekly hop in the club house" was being reported [*Toronto World*, 1903], and in March 1904, the club house was being enlarged to double its former capacity. The assembly room was made much larger, and dressing rooms and balconies were added. That season, the Kew Beach Association (see p. 5) had a membership of 294. The organization continued to flourish, and in September 1906 was again planning "important alterations to the club house", as well as improvements to the bowling and tennis grounds. [*Toronto World*, 1906.]

It seems likely that the club house disappeared around 1930, about the same time that other structures were removed to make way for the development of the Eastern Beaches Park.

19. Leuty Lifesaving Station

Foot of Leuty Avenue. Chapman & Oxley, 1920.



THC/Arthur Beals/PC1\1\7785

Leuty Lifesaving Station, looking west from the foot of Leuty Avenue, March 11, 1928.

The Leuty Lifesaving Station has long been a landmark at the Beach, and has appeared in many a painting, photograph and poster as a symbol of the area. It has been designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act since July 19, 1993 to be of architectural and historical value.

Designed by the prominent Toronto architectural firm of Chapman and Oxley, this small wooden structure was built by the Toronto Harbour Commissioners [THC] in 1920 to oversee the safety of boaters and swimmers from Woodbine Avenue to the eastern city limits. Judging by THC photographs, the building seems to have been virtually

completed in about one month: July 6 to August 3!

The structure is raised above the water on piers and features a bell-cast gable roof with a wooden observation tower which affords lifeguards a wide view over the beach and the lake. The waterfront side has a fanlight window in the gable, and glazed doors (covered by shutters when not in use) opening on to a large wooden deck. The original location in the heart of the boat rental business was carefully chosen. (See site no. 20.) The building had to be moved to the water's edge when the beach was widened.

During 73 years of service, the ravages of time and weather took their toll, to the point where the building was deemed structurally unsound. On March 1, 1993, a group of concerned citizens and city officials met to discuss the possible restoration of the station. It was decided that the community could undertake a vigorous fundraising campaign and help the City pay for the necessary work to be done. Accordingly these people, joined by others from time to time, designed and distributed a brochure soliciting donations, sold T-shirts, mugs and buttons bearing the group's logo ("Save Our Station"), sold hot dogs on weekends and holidays, hosted several music nights and a volleyball tournament, and held a fundraising ball. The City, in consultation with the Save Our Station [SOS] committee, The Beach and East Toronto Historical Society and the Toronto Historical Board [THB], undertook the extensive repairs and restoration work necessary to return the station as closely as possible to its original appearance, while addressing function and conforming to current safety standards.

Eight thousand dollars was spent on levelling the foundation and replacing the heavy timbers which support the floor joists. A new deck was built on the south side. Much of the old wood was rotted and had to be replaced: some of the floor joists and wall studs, all the fascia and siding, and all the wooden window frames. Some of the glazed doors had been replaced with solid wood, and reproductions of the originals had to be made. A new look-out tower was essential, as the old one was deemed unsafe. (It was also made higher to afford a wider view.) Shutters, security lights and an alarm system were installed. Over \$5,000 had to be



© Bill Suddick, 1993

Save Our Station logo, 1993.

spent on new wiring. Some alterations had to be made to the interior, in the interests of efficiency, but these too were carried out with great care and attention to detail.

Historical accuracy was a primary concern, and led to extensive research into original colours and materials. Accordingly, when it came time to replace the roof, the committee agreed that it should be covered in cedar shingles, rather than asphalt. This might not have been possible without a Toronto Heritage Fund Grant for \$5,000, which was given on condition that the restoration be carried out in accordance with THB standards.

The whole project ended up costing about \$95,000, with the City paying just over 60 per cent, and the community having to raise almost 40 per cent.

Thanks to a lot of hard work, dedication and co-operation between the community and the City, the Leuty Lifesaving Station should continue to be a functional landmark at the Beach for many years to come.

20. Originally Kew Beach Park Boat House

Between foot of Lee and Leuty avenues. Murray Brown, 1932.



CTA DPW 52-1521

Kew Beach Park Boat House, north elevation, June 10, 1932.

This now-dilapidated structure was originally the Kew Beach Park Boat House. On the north side, it resembled a Cape Cod cottage, with its clapboard cladding, shuttered windows, gables, and wooden benches flanking the central doorway. The purpose of the building was indicated over the entrance: the letters "B O A T S" high on the wall, the prow of a miniature boat protruding from above the doorway, and a small sign, "Kew Beach Park Boat House," on the lintel. (For an enlarged view of the entrance, see the title page.) The south side featured eight large doorways and two ramps near the water's edge to facilitate boat launching. Later, the sides were removed from the boat house and it was converted into a picnic shelter.

Pleasure boating has long been a part of the Beach scene. In the early 1900s, many cottagers had boats, and sailing, paddling, and rowing were enjoyed. Scarborough Beach Park was a mecca for boaters, especially on warm summer evenings when there were band concerts. "The music carried all over the Beach when the wind was right - a flotilla of canoes covered the lake every evening," remembered Alice Keys, whose family moved to

Balmy Beach in 1901 when she was seven. [Keys, 1967.] Many of the canoes were a brand called the Sunnyside Cruiser, which Waverley Wilson recalled in 1975, "were varnished up to the hilt, a nice red carpet down the middle, a kewpie doll tied on the mast with an electric light in it and cushions for the girls to sit on." [Wilson, 1975.] Some boats were also equipped with parasols and wind-up phonographs.

Boats were stored in a variety of ways. "Many residents on Leuty Ave. had a canoe under their front porch," Lucille Clarke recalled in 1976, "and would wheel it down the road to the lake on a home-made dolly." [Clarke, 1976.] Lakefront residents often had their own boathouses built in front of their dwellings. Charles Gregory, whose family started to spend the summers at Kew Beach in 1900, recalled that from Woodbine to Leuty Avenue, "On the beach, about half way to the water's edge, a few rough frame boathouses were standing. . . . These were about as ugly as could be. They were built of wide rough wooden boards and never painted." [Gregory, 1974.] Boathouses also were in front of most of the lakefront houses from MacLean Avenue east to Victoria Park.



Ed Godfrey

Spink's Boathouse, c.1920.

Kew Beach and Balmy Beach both had their own canoe clubs, with clubhouses on the beach that included boat storage facilities on the ground floor. (See site No. 18.)

Some boathouses stored, rented and sold boats to the public. A 1918 directory noted: "In summer time the Beach makes one of the most delightful bathing resorts, excellent boathouses afford canoes, rowboats, motor boats, etc., for those who do not possess their own." [*Commercial, industrial*, 1918.] Boathouses in operation around that time included Shedden's west of Leuty beside the Kew Beach Club, Fred J. Humphreys' east of Fernwood Park, Harry Hyde's west of Silver Birch, William Ferguson's (with confectionery) east of Silver Birch, and Robert W. Clement's at the foot of today's Nursewood. As well, Scarboro' Beach Park had a boathouse at the foot of the present Wineva.

The Kew Beach Boat House stood on some 25 feet of lake frontage between Leuty and Wineva avenues. Charles William Spink ran the boat business, while his wife, Lorena (known as Mae), sold ice cream. After Spink's death in the early 1920's, Mae took over the whole operation, assisted by sons Gordon and Harold. When canoeing became less popular, Spink's became a dance hall.

Almost all of these private boathouses were removed when construction on the \$2.4 million Eastern Beaches Park began in 1930. Subsequently, the City opened two public boathouses, the one at Kew Beach and another at Balmy Beach. The latter, which had been Hyde's Boat House, became known as the Silver Birch Boat House. The City's Department of Parks and Recreation continues to operate the Silver Birch Boat House where spaces are rented for small boats.

21. 18-36 Wineva Avenue

Price Brothers bldrs, 1929.

Have Your Home at Scarboro Beach

On the Site of Scarboro Beach Amusement Park and Athletic Field
The Choicest Part of "the Beach"—on the Lake—on the Car Line—25 Minutes to Yonge

**Beautiful Homes in
A Beautiful Location**

Old "Scarboro Beach" with its splendid lake frontage, fine trees, clean level ground is an ideal place for your home. You've probably been there often and can recall its beautiful surroundings. Now, all this area is laid out with wide streets and attractive, but moderately priced homes. You have a chance to buy one, and it's a real opportunity. More than fifty houses now ready for sale—all solid brick, detached or semi-detached, one or seven rooms, splendid lots—and every house wonderful value. Have your city home and summer home all in one.

REMEMBER! On the Lake—On the Car Line—25 minutes from Yonge St.



**Greatest House Value
Offered for a Long Time**

\$7,800 to \$7,900! And when you see the homes you will appreciate the value that is offered. At any one particular time every one of these houses. They are built with the best materials. The terms are easy and the interest is low. 2% Applicable as to more than 1000 homes in the area. You can buy a large lot and an addition to your present home, or you can buy a new house with a garage, or you can buy a new house with a garage and a swimming pool. It is a wonderful opportunity. It is a chance to buy a home that is a real home and not a mere investment.

The beauty and freshness of a high class suburban district, but only 25 minutes on Beach cars from Yonge St.

More Than 50 Homes Ready Now—Great Choice of Designs—\$5,400 to \$7,500
All Solid Brick—All With Side Drives—All With Clean, Dry, Level Lots—All New, Modern Homes
Your Last Opportunity to Have a Lakeside Home so Close to Yonge St.—Wide Streets—All Improvements



**See These Homes Saturday Afternoon
Take a Beach Car to Scarboro
Beach Boulevard**

Builder, or representatives, will be on hand after noon and evening. Come and look around.

You can telephone any of the numbers listed below for information, or see arrange to be taken down without obligation.

1. V. Dutton, Director 12333 St. Michaels, Toronto 1000.	4. H. Laid, Director 4100 St. Michaels, Toronto 1000.
2. J. McNamee, Director 12333 St. Michaels, Toronto 1000.	5. H. Laid, Director 4100 St. Michaels, Toronto 1000.
3. H. Laid, Director 4100 St. Michaels, Toronto 1000.	6. H. Laid, Director 4100 St. Michaels, Toronto 1000.

SCARBORO BEACH HOME BUILDERS



Toronto Telegram

Advertisement for homes at Scarboro Beach, September 24, 1926.

In 1925, the Provident Investment Company, a Toronto real estate firm specializing "in the planning and disposition of subdivisions," bought Scarboro' Beach Park from the Toronto Railway Company. (See site no. 24.) That year, a subdivision plan (M490) was registered for the property, which extended from the south side of Queen Street to the beach fronting Lake Ontario, between the back yards of Leuty Avenue and the west side of McLean (now MacLean) Avenue. The plan included 217 building lots, each approximately 50 x 100 feet. It also created the new streets of Scarboro Beach, Avion, Bonfield, Selwood, and Hubbard, and extended Wineva,

Hammersmith, and Glen Manor south from Queen, although not in line with the same streets above Queen. The new development incorporated only two references to the old park. Scarboro Beach Boulevard was located on what had been the road from Queen Street to the main gate. Hubbard Boulevard was named for the park's general manager, Frederick Langdon Hubbard (1878-1953).

Only a few of the lots closest to the lake were developed: those between Wineva and Hammersmith. (See site no. 23.) In 1925, Toronto's Board of Control approved buying the southerly 2.875 acres to include in its proposed waterfront park.



Herta Ziemann

Fourplexes on the west side of Wineva Avenue near Alfresco Lawn, August 6, 1995.

The rest of the old park was built on. By September 1926, Scarboro Beach Home Builders, a group of local builders, had constructed over 50 houses on the site. The “moderately-priced homes” were advertised for sale at \$5,400 to \$7,500 - “all solid brick, detached or semi, side drives, six or seven rooms, splendid lots” [*Toronto Telegram*, 1926.]

Also constructed on the old park property were approximately 104 duplex and fourplex buildings. They were built by Price Bros. Ltd., a local contracting firm headed by Earl and Leslie Price. “The brothers bought every lot they could,” noted a writer who talked to Earl Price and his wife, Hazel, in 1975. “Just after they were put up the Depression hit and the brothers had to sell some of the

units.” Hazel recalled that originally rents for the duplexes were \$25 monthly. [Latimer, 1975.]

The buildings feature exterior brick or brick-and-stucco wall finishes, and full-width two-storey front porches. There is some variation from the basic design, especially in the verandah treatments which may feature square brick, round stucco, or arched stucco pillars, or wooden supports. Some upper storey verandahs have full roofs while others have only centre canopies.

The five fourplexes at 18-36 Wineva Avenue were listed on the *City of Toronto's Inventory of Heritage Properties* on June 20, 1973 for architectural and contextual reasons. They were among the first sites at the Beach to be so listed.

22. The Boardwalk

The Boardwalk along Lake Ontario between Ashbridge's Bay Park and Silver Birch Avenue, 1932.



CTA DPW 52-649

The board walk in front of Kew Gardens, November 20, 1916.

Board walks, in one form or another, have been around for many years, but the Boardwalk in the Beach district is one of a kind. In a 1992 article in the *Globe and Mail*, John Bentley Mays observed:

Toronto and its sister cities [on Lake Ontario] have many sandy stretches...but only one known simply as The Beach. And it is there ...that we find the only structure known to everyone simply as the Boardwalk. [Mays, 1992.]

The Boardwalk was officially inaugurated on May 24, 1932 with great ceremony, along with the opening of the Eastern Beaches Park and Pantry Park. Since that time, it has been extended to the west of Woodbine Avenue to Ashbridge's Bay Park --- about double its original length; its eastern

boundary remains at Silver Birch Avenue.

Board walks or plank sidewalks were very common along Toronto streets in the days before cement paving, and can be seen in many old photographs. These wooden walks were made of boards about four or five feet long, laid cross-wise. Former board walks along the lake were of various styles. Photographs of Woodbine Beach in 1916 show a very narrow board walk running in front of the cottages there. It appears to have been constructed of long boards laid lengthwise, about three abreast, on cross-members laid right on the sand. At the same time, the board walk to the south of Kew Gardens was similar to today's Boardwalk, but much narrower than its present sixteen foot width.



Herta Ziemann

The Boardwalk near Kew Gardens, August 6, 1995.

On the other hand, the wooden promenades at Scarborough Beach Park appear to have been much wider. Park plans show them approximately 25 feet wide, in a rectangular shape, along the three built-up sides of the park, as well as along the lake from the foot of the present Wineva Avenue almost to MacLean Avenue. The lakefront section was in roughly the same location as today's Boardwalk. An additional inner board walk ran in front of the Scarborough Inn, about where Hubbard Boulevard is now. (See site no. 24.)

Over the years, there have been many accounts of the Boardwalk and its forerunners being damaged, and parts of them being washed away, by the famous south-easterly storms that blow in off the lake. This has led to the implementation of various schemes to control erosion of the sand, usually in the form of some kind of groyne projecting into the water, originally of wooden construction and later of cement. The latter can still be seen along the beach. The latest effort has seen the dumping of tons of gigantic rocks in nine huge piles just offshore to the east, from Glen Manor Drive to the waterworks, in yet

another attempt to capture sand that washes in, and keep it from drifting out into the lake again.

Many Beachers like to jog on the Boardwalk, and the Spring Sprint and the autumn Terry Fox Run attract hundreds of participants each year. Beachers and visitors alike have enjoyed strolling on the Boardwalk, winter and summer, since it was built. However, its original character is being threatened by modern technology. There has been a proposal to replace the wooden planks with replicas made of fifty percent recycled wood and fifty percent recycled plastic, which would cost more than lumber but should last longer. To this end, a test patch was installed at the foot of Glen Manor Drive (to the east) in the autumn of 1994, and public comment invited. Needless to say, opinions are mixed, so only time will tell if the Boardwalk will remain true to its natural heritage.

For more information on the development of the Eastern Beaches Park, the cottages at Woodbine Beach, and the struggle to preserve the beach from erosion, see *The Beach in Pictures, 1793-1932*.

23. Hubbard Court and Houses on the Boardwalk

2-8 Wineva Avenue, 1-15 Hubbard Boulevard. c.1929.



Postcard showing Hubbard Court and houses along the beach c. 1929.

These are the only residential buildings on the Beach area lakefront west of Silver Birch Avenue. The group includes two fourplexes on the west side of Wineva Avenue, and a row of three fourplexes, a two-storey house, and a two-and-a-half storey 17-unit apartment building called Hubbard Court, facing the lake between Wineva and Hammersmith avenues.

Before 1925, there were houses all along the lakefront from Woodbine Beach to Victoria Park, except where the Scarboro' Beach Amusement Park was located between Leuty and MacLean avenues. After the amusement park land was bought for development in 1925, these surviving dwellings were the only ones to be built along the waterfront of the former park site. (See site no. 21.) When development began on the Eastern Beaches Park around 1930, all the other lakefront dwellings west of Silver Birch were removed. Famous local athlete and writer Ted Reeve re-

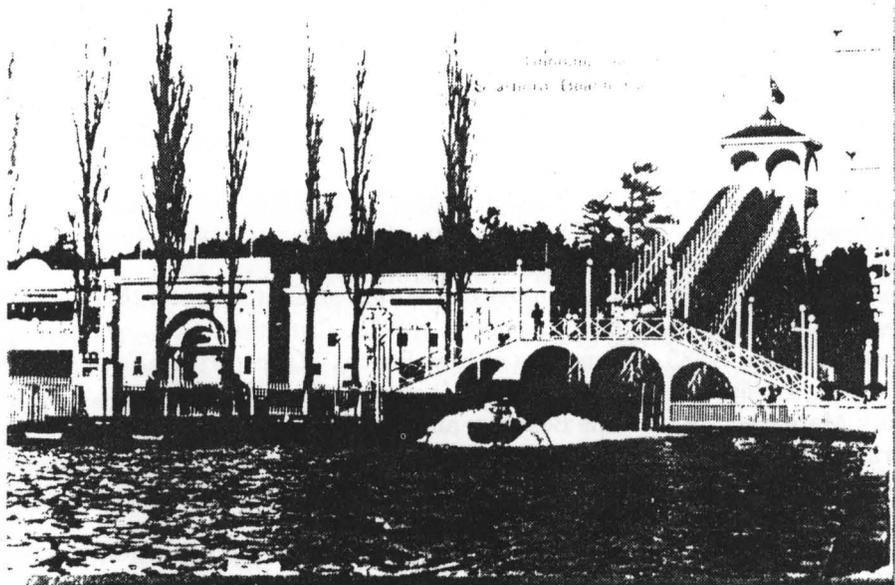
called some of these in an article entitled, "More Beach Reminiscences":

Speaking of cottages, the Linger-Longers, the Merry Widowers, the NoMotherToGuidems were three we recall. Frame dwellings along the lake bearing these titles, in old summer resort style, and housing groups of lively young men who lived a happy life, sailing, canoeing, singing, swimming, and such, when they came home from the city each night... many of the houses remained on the waterfront until the New, Big boardwalk era and as a lot of them were fairly substantial frame dwellings we often wondered why they had to be moved at all. [Reeve, 1995.]

It seems probable that these remaining dwellings owe their survival to their newness at the time of the waterfront development.

24. Scarboro' Beach Amusement Park plaque

Foot of Scarboro Beach Boulevard



MTRL T30982

"Shooting the Shutes [i.e. Chutes], Scarboro' Beach Park, Toronto"
Postcard, c.191-?

In 1906, the Toronto Park Company purchased the 42-acre O'Connor farm, south of Queen Street between Leuty and MacLean avenues, from the Sisters of St. Joseph. The Scarboro' Beach Park was formally opened on June 1, 1907 by Mayor Emerson Coatsworth. Its development was closely linked to the Toronto Railway Company's streetcar service to the area. The resort offered a hundred attractions including a quarter-mile long roller coaster ride, a "Shoot the Chutes" flume ride, a "Bump the Bumps" slide and a "Tunnel of Love." Performers used

the 125-foot tower for daredevil acts. At night, thousands of lights decorated the park. Professional lacrosse and other sports were played at the Athletic Grounds, which featured a wooden velodrome. The first public exhibition flights in Canada were made here by Charles Willard in September 1909. The amusement park closed on September 12, 1925.

Text of Toronto Historical Board plaque, unveiled May 30, 1993

For further information consult *The Beach in Pictures 1793-1932*, pp. 27-9.

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