

## Executive Summary

### *Gordon Stephenson's 1960 Plan for London, Ontario: Noble Intentions, Unfulfilled Promise, and Lasting Influence*

The purpose of this Master's Report is to examine *Urban Renewal - London, Ontario: A Plan for Development and Redevelopment* for two specific reasons. The first is to develop a clearer and more complete picture of the physical growth and urban fabric of London, Ontario, up to 1960. To assess what conditions within the city and beyond had precipitated the need for the development of such a plan, whether Guard and Stephenson's plan itself would have been considered a plan that fit the criteria for Modernist planning, and the effects of the plan on the subsequent development of urban planning in London as a result. The second purpose is to provide additional discourse into the career of Modernist architect and urban planner Gordon Stephenson, particularly regarding the years he worked in Canada. Through his appointment to the University of Toronto's planning school, Stephenson; was an English-educated, twentieth-century planner who studied under Le Corbusier, author of Modernist planning principles. He was instrumental in helping many cities across Canada develop urban renewal schemes and comprehensive plans which relied heavily on Modernist planning.

While significant academic study has been produced analysing and evaluating the legacy of Stephenson's plans for Halifax (1957) and Kingston (1960), much less focus has been attuned to the plan Stephenson co-authored for London. This is a result of both implementation and legacy. Unlike Halifax and Kingston, the recommendations found within *Urban Renewal - London, Ontario: A Plan for Development and Redevelopment* were generally not implemented on as wide a scale as those contained in other Stephenson plans. Unlike Halifax and Kingston, no major urban renewal project in London was immediately undertaken in the years following publication of the 1960 Plan. The shift from and reactionary examinations of the true effects of Modernist planning has led to serious criticism of most elements of Modernist planning. Specific to Stephenson's work in Canada were the purportedly scientific method his studies employed to provide evidence of what specific areas within cities

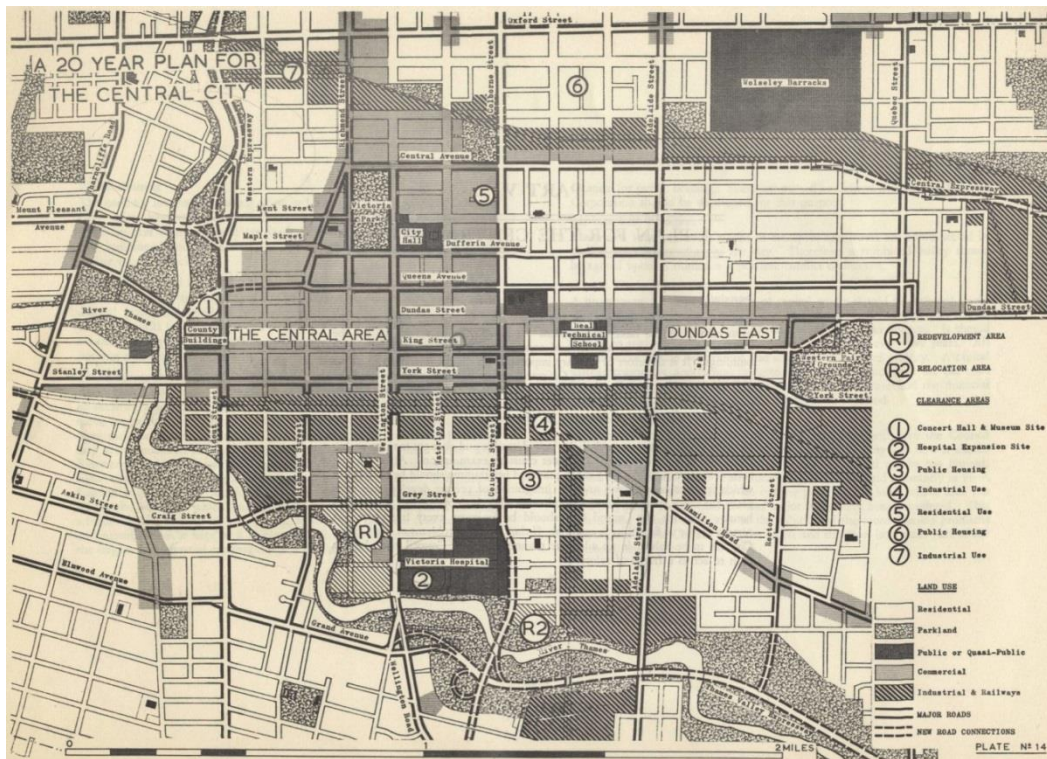
required widespread renewal in order to revitalize and benefit the residents as well as the city at large. In order to assess the legacy of the 1960 Plan, other means to gauge subsequent influence are necessary for this report.

The methodological process involved in compiling, analysing, and conveying the research contained in this report is that of a *time-series analysis*. Primary documents from a number of sources related to London's urban growth and planning history are utilized to form a clear picture of the situation that Gordon Stephenson, Donald Guard, and their staff faced when compiling the research for *Urban Renewal - London, Ontario: A Plan for Development and Redevelopment*. Primary sources from the years following the publication of Guard and Stephenson's plan are utilized in order to further inform and enhance the time-series analysis. The primary sources relating to London's history are augmented by scholarly secondary sources examining London's history. Primary and secondary sources are also utilized to inform a discussion of Modernist planning and urban renewal in Canada. These sources are invaluable because they provide a means of gaining insight into the application of, and theories behind, Modernist planning principles in Canada. Scholarly secondary sources augment primary sources and provide retrospective insight into the shortcomings of Modernist planning.

A short account of London's planning history provides a background to the city for which Stephenson found himself working as a consultant. The renowned Scottish-born planner, Thomas Adams, was consulted by the city during the early 1920s; leading to the creation of the city's first zoning by-laws. During the post-World War II period, London experienced sustained robust economic growth. This resulted in rapid development and expansion; however the planning guidelines and zoning within the city and beyond were outdated and obsolete by the time Stephenson was hired as a consultant.

An in-depth analysis of *Urban Renewal - London, Ontario: A Plan for Development and Redevelopment* written by Donald Guard and Gordon Stephenson and published in 1960 by the Corporation of the City of London, Ontario is contained within this report. It is completed by evaluating the 1960 Plan based on a variety of criteria from the Modernist planning era.

<b>Summary Evaluation Chart: The 1960 Plan's Conformity with Urban Renewal Criteria and Implementation</b>  <b>Circa-1960 Urban Renewal Criteria used to Evaluate the Guard and Stephenson Plan</b>		<b>1960 Plan Conformity with U.R. Criteria</b>	<b>Actual Implementation of U.R. Criteria</b>
<b>4.1 - Identification and classification of areas for urban renewal programme.</b>			
i)	<u>Clearance areas</u> : residential areas that are either in such poor condition or surrounded by totally incompatible land-uses and no longer function as a residential area.		
ii)	<u>Rehabilitation areas</u> : older residential neighbourhoods requiring extensive rehabilitation and gentrification in order to re-emerge as vibrant, strong areas.		
iii)	<u>Conservation areas</u> : neighbourhoods that required attention but had an intrinsic value in their preservation.		
iv)	<u>Recreation (open space) areas</u> : areas that are devoted solely for recreational use, and are located relatively close to high concentrations of population, specifically children.		
<b>4.2 - Designation of Blight and Slum Conditions</b>			
i)	<u>Identification of blight and slum conditions</u> : social factors including crime patterns, fire rates, welfare recipients, family problems.		
ii)	<u>Relocation</u> : Provisions made to relocate residents to new or temporary public or private housing.		
iii)	<u>Integration and Improvement</u> : Additional park/open space, pedestrian isolation, improved municipal infrastructure and municipal services		
<b>4.3 - Automobile and Traffic Considerations</b>			
i)	Provisions for Roadways: providing for enhanced accessibility and decreased congestions		
ii)	Provisions for Streets: encouraging repairs, alterations, and extensions where necessary		
iii)	Provisions for Thoroughfares: enhanced entrances and exits to the city contained in the plan.		
iv)	Provisions for Parking: parking accounted for in the plan, both at present and future		
v)	Hierarchy of Streets: presence of a hierarchy of streets in plan		
vi)	Vehicle and Pedestrian Separation: separation between vehicles and pedestrians in plan		
<b>4.4 - Administration and Authority</b>			
i)	<u>Administration and Coordination</u> : Establishment of means to administrate plan as well as coordination amongst various levels of government and private sector.		
ii)	<u>Authority</u> : specific authority/powers granted by either legislative or judicial authority for redevelopment purposes.		
<b>Legend:</b> Fully included,  Partially included,  not included			

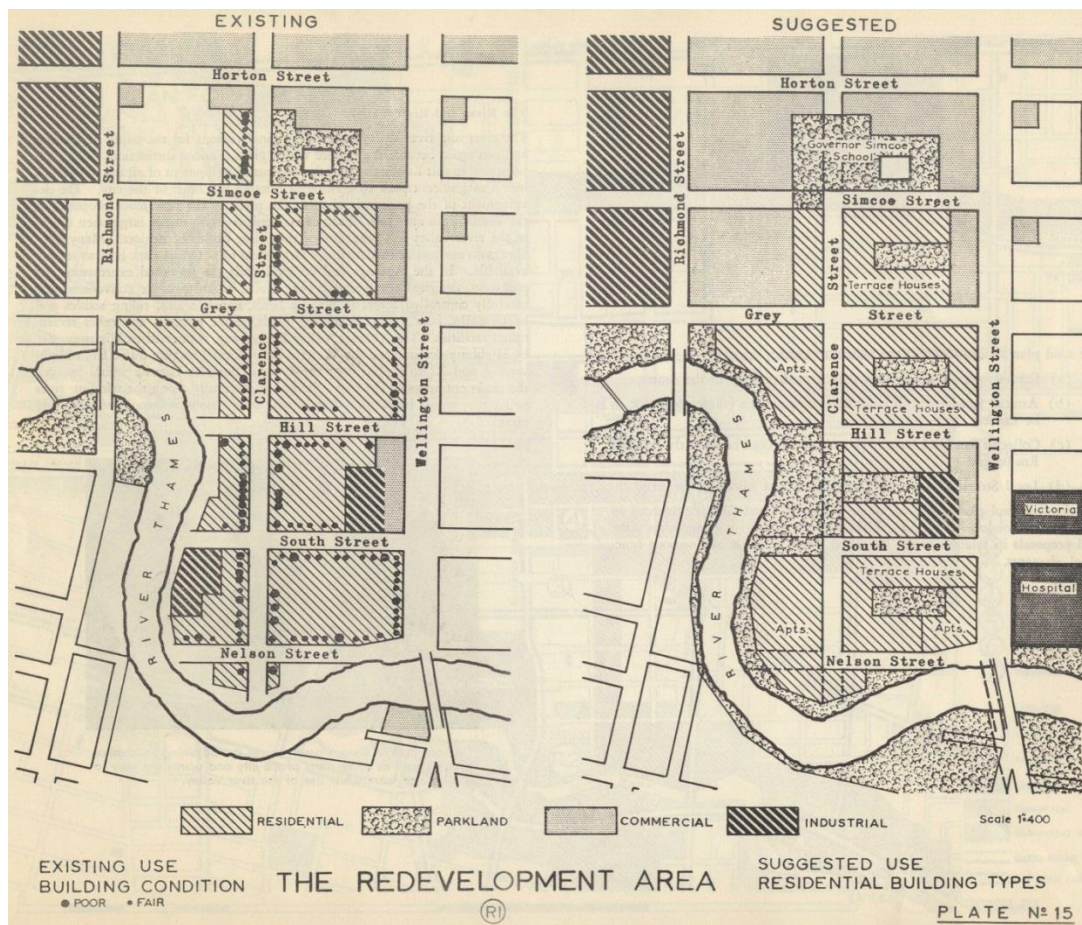


"A 20 Year Plan for the Central City." London, Ontario.

Source: Guard and Stephenson's *Urban Renewal - London, Ontario: A Plan for Development and Redevelopment*.

The result is a plan that appears to be fairly well-thought out and suitable for the conditions specific to London, Ontario during the height of the post-World War II era. It is a plan that utilizes a number of methods, considered by the authors of the study, Guard and Stephenson, to be as objective as possible. The background information enables the authors to identify areas of London that were in need of urban renewal, leading to regeneration of these neighbourhoods while, at the same time, modernising the dwellings and employment facilities of many of the residents. The authors attempt to use the Plan to enact a variety of changes to London through urban renewal to reshape the urban area into a better one. They correctly recognize the need for a new Official Plan for the city, one that charts a course of growth for the next twenty years. Guard and Stephenson advocate for the use of the Thames River, cutting through the city, as open space, the demolition of derelict housing and the construction of new high-rise towers, increasing the residential-density of the urban core. The Plan also identifies the need for a modernized traffic plan. Guard and Stephenson ensure their work adheres to traffic plans that were created at

the same time as their own work and ensure the 1960 Plan is in sync with the *London Area Traffic Plan*.



"The Redevelopment Area." London, Ontario. 1960.

Source: Guard and Stephenson's *Urban Renewal - London, Ontario: A Plan for Development and Redevelopment*.

Following the analysis of *Urban Renewal - London, Ontario*, the legacy of the 1960 Plan for the city of London is discussed. This is important because the actual physical implementation of the plan was not as widespread as other Stephenson consulted Canadian urban renewal schemes. The next major urban renewal scheme is completed by Murray V. Jones and Associates in partnership with the City of London in 1967. It takes an increased critical tone of the urban core of London, advocating for more concentrated and acute renewal within the city. It concurs with the recommendation of the Official Plan, and adopts similar general patterns for more efficient and better uses of land within London. However, the 1967 scheme should not be regarded as a legacy of Guard and Stephenson's work. It appears that factors beyond the control

of Gordon Stephenson, Donald Guard, and the City of London's Planning Department played a significant role in the lack of implementation of the 1960 Plan. Unlike Halifax and Kingston, London was a city with a rapidly growing suburban population. This fostered a stronger condition of outward expansion. In conjunction with the significant annexation of the surrounding communities, resulting in tensions in municipal governance for the city during the 1960s, implementation of the plan fell by the wayside.

The implementation of Guard and Stephenson's 1960 Plan was limited to adoption of their recommendation of increased open space along the Thames River, some adherence to the recommended modernizations in the *London Area Traffic Plan*, and spotty implementation of some specific urban renewal sites in London's urban-core. Stephenson himself left Canada for Western Australia soon after the publication of the 1960 Plan. Focus and initiative appear to have been more attuned to the improvements of the street network, both urban and suburban, contained within the traffic plan.

One important legacy from Stephenson's time as a consultant for urban renewal in London does emerge. Much like he operated as a consultant in Halifax and Kingston, Stephenson ensured he collaborated closely with an eager member of the London's planning department, one who would remain in the city to oversee implementation of the plan. Although implementation was limited, Donald Guard rose to become head of London's Planning Department within a decade. In 1970, the City of London did fulfill the principle recommendation of Gordon Stephenson. An Official plan was published by the city's Planning Department. This plan established London's urban and suburban physical growth patterns for the next twenty years and codified the procedures for future development within the boundaries of the municipality.

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