History and development of veterans' housing

The veterans' housing subdivisions in Carlington North are representative examples of veterans' housing projects (alternatively referred to as wartime or victory housing) designed and constructed by the Crown corporation Wartime Housing Limited. These housing projects were initiated out of necessity. Their completion across Canada was a solution to the national housing shortage of the late 1930s and early 1940s. The housing shortage arose from the lack of house construction and maintenance during the depression years, material shortages due to the prioritization of war industry, and mass relocation to urban centres that resulted in overcrowding.[1] Later, these already pressing circumstances were compounded by the influx of returning soldiers looking to re-enter civilian life and start families and needing new homes to do so.[2]

It became clear that to avoid a repeat of the social turmoil that had followed the First World War,[3] the government would need to directly intervene and change the Canadian housing system from being solely free-market or private into a system that included social housing programs.[4]

Wartime Housing Limited

In 1941 under advisement of the *War Measures Act* and the *Department of Munitions and Supply Act*, the Privy Council ordered the creation of Wartime Housing Limited (WHL), a wartime housing company that would construct single-family, detached-dwelling rental properties across Canada.[5] WHL was created as a Crown corporation and reported to the Minister of the Munitions and Supply, C.D. Howe.[6]

Despite being a federal corporation, WHL operated like an independent business with its own board of directors consisting of professionals who were established in their respective fields, such as architecture, administration, and the like.[7] As such, WHL was involved in every phase of a housing project which included house designs, negotiating

[1] Jill Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947: Canadian Housing Policy at the Crossroads," *Urban History Review* 15, no. 1 (1986): 42, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43559634
[2] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 42.
[3] Bruce S. Elliot, *The City Beyond: A History of Nepean, Birthplace of Canada's Capital, 1792 – 1990* (City of Nepean, 1991), 231.
[4] Leonard J. Evenden, "Wartime Housing as Cultural Landscape, National Creation and Personal Creativity," *Urban History Review* 25, no.2 (1997): 42, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43552096
[5] Wade, 44.
[6] Wade, 44.
[7] Wade, 44.

construction contracts, sourcing materials, financing, collecting rent, managing tenants, and facilitating relationships with municipal governments.[8]

WHL's approach to addressing the housing shortage was quite direct: they built more houses. However, the outward simplicity of this solution did not mean that large stretches of wartime housing were built up indiscriminately. The final locations of the projects were determined by WHL's assessment of which municipalities had the greatest need for housing.[9] These assessments involved site visits to assess the suitability of the land and whether the local community would benefit from the project.[10] These steps were undertaken prior to any concrete decisions regarding site selection.[11]

One of the top indicators for housing need was a municipality's proximity to industrial sites.[12] Unlike previous initiatives, WHL recognized the housing shortage's connection to war industry, and thereby used the latter to solve the former.[13] As a result, WHL located their projects near industrial sites to provide housing specifically for war workers and their families, and thus provided them with a community space that would incentivize their relocation to these homes.[14] The fact that these homes were rental properties made them affordable for those with low incomes, and their locations outside city centres also offset the urban overcrowding issues of the time.

Wartime housing design & construction

Originally, WHL housing was meant to be a temporary solution.[15] The units were built with the principles of speed, cost efficiency, and impermanency in mind.[16] Speed was a priority because the delays in housing construction caused delays in the supply chain for the war effort. The faster houses were built, the faster employees could move in and start work.

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[8] Evenden, "Wartime Housing as Cultural Landscape, National Creation and Personal Creativity," 42.
[9] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 47.
[10] Evenden, 45.
[11] Wade, 47.
[12] Wade, 44.
[13] Evenden, 42.
[14] *Wartime Housing*, directed by Graham McInnes (National Film Board of Canada, 1943) https://www.nfb.ca/film/wartime_housing/
[15] Annmarie Adams and Pieter Sijpkes, "Wartime Housing and Architectural Change, 1942-1992," (Montreal: McGill University, 1995): 18, https://www.mcgill.ca/architecture/files/architecture/1995adamsasijpkespwartimehousingandarchitectualchange.pdf
[16] Adams, "Wartime Housing and Architectural Change," 16.

Because WHL was supported by federal funding, cost effectiveness was a requirement.[17] As a result, housing design had to stay on budget and make the most of every dollar. Decorative elements in the houses were limited and luxury materials were entirely absent.

Figure 1 - A photograph of Veterans' Housing Project No. 1 under construction on Carling Avenue, Ottawa, 1945 / City of Ottawa Archives / CA024989.

The simple design of the wartime house's appearance belies the innovation behind its construction method: prefabrication.[18] For this method, WHL took inspiration from the National Housing Administration and its director, F.W. Nicolls, who developed this new procedure. With prefabrication, both the manufacturing of housing components and the assembly of the complete house occurred together in a factory.[19] Where WHL's version differed was in the decision to conduct the entire manufacturing and assembly process on-location.[20] Carpenters and woodworkers operated out of temporary workshops to provide the hardwood flooring, plywood walls, roofs, interior partitions, ceilings, and even standardized windows and doors.[21] Each crew of WHL workmen were assigned to one step in the construction process, such as raising exterior walls or installing interior electrical wiring, and then moved from house to house to complete that step.[22] Using this worksite assembly line technique, a crew could finish a house in under 36 hours.[23]

During the design phase, these projects were tied to the operational lifespan of the industrial production sites. The federal government and municipalities did not plan for, nor in most cases even want, wartime housing to outlast the war effort.[24] Once the

[17] Evenden, 43.
[18] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 47.
[19] Wade, 47.
[20] Wade, 47.
[21] McInnes, *Wartime Housing*.
[22] McInnes, *Wartime Housing*.
[23] McInnes.
[24] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 47.

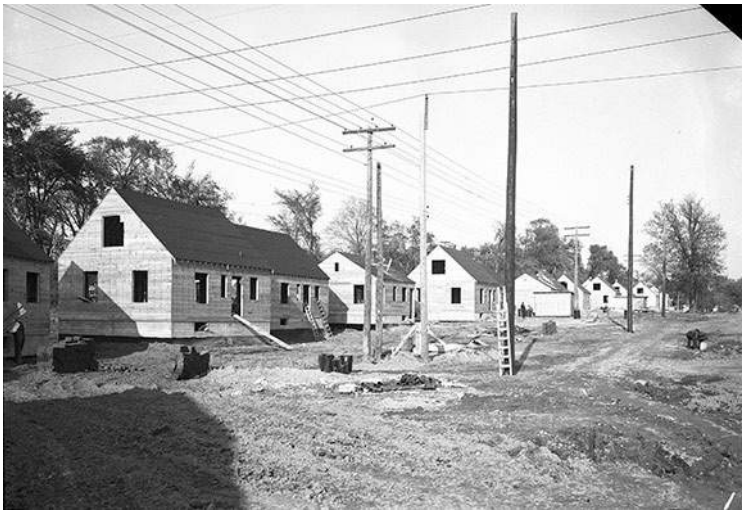

Figure 2 - Wartime homes on Carling Avenue, mid-construction, Ottawa, 1945 / City of Ottawa Archives / CA024990.

manufacturing work came to an end, there would be no employment for the workers, and therefore no need for the workers' houses. The idea was that the construction methods used to build these houses should be easily reversible so that the houses could be dismantled.[25] To allow for this, early WHL houses were built on cedar posts (or concrete blocks at locations where the natural soil was more wet) in lieu of full foundations with basements.[26]

From wartime housing to veterans' housing

The terms wartime housing and veterans' housing are often used interchangeably; however, they do refer to slightly different types of housing projects associated with WHL. The distinction between them is generally defined by their construction dates - those built before 1944 and those built after. Before 1944, WHL focused on the construction of wartime housing projects for war workers.[27] After 1944, following a directive from the federal government, WHL broadened their target clientele to include housing for servicemen returning from the war.[28] The federal government foresaw that the influx of these veterans would put renewed strain on a housing market that had barely begun to stabilize.[29]

The general design and construction process of veterans' housing (or victory housing) was essentially the same as wartime housing because WHL had already established methods that were readily applicable to this new phase.[30] However, the transition did require some adjustments that applied to three areas: placement, purpose, and permanency. The construction of veterans' housing did not depend on proximity to

[25] Wade, 47.
[26] McInnes, *Wartime Housing*.
[27] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 44.
[28] Wade, 47.
[29] Elliot, *The City Beyond,* 231.
[30] Elliot, *The City Beyond*, 232.

industrial centres because the houses were no longer being built for war workers. Instead, the target tenants were veterans, hence the name change from wartime housing to indicate the transition into peacetime. In fact, only veterans or their dependents were able to apply to be tenants in these new communities, which means they were entirely purpose-built structures.

The government directive also required that the homes for veterans should be of a higher quality than previous wartime models.[31] WHL began to implement frame construction and replaced the individual cedar posts with foundations that supported the entire base of the house, meaning that they could no longer be readily dismantled.[32] When the government directive was combined with WHL's growing experience in the field of housing construction, the quality of interior and exterior fixtures also improved.[33] Each of these efforts was aimed at longevity.[34]

Veterans' housing subdivisions in Carlington North

In their initial assessments of Ottawa in 1941, WHL had determined that the city was not a candidate for wartime housing because it was not a centre of overcrowding caused by industrial activity.[35] By 1942, the federal government announced that WHL could assist municipalities that did not have direct connections to war industry.[36] This announcement, paired with WHL's post-1944 foray into housing veterans, repositioned Ottawa as a suitable location. However, the deferred timeframe means that Veterans' Housing Projects No. 1 and No. 2 are not *wartime* housing projects per se, but examples of WHL's later projects for veterans' housing.

The origin of the veterans' housing subdivisions in Ottawa was a joint effort between three parties: WHL, the City of Ottawa, and Nepean Township. Nepean's involvement began when Ottawa councillors and WHL determined that there was insufficient room within Ottawa's boundaries for a new housing development.[37] The site selection process for veterans' housing was slightly different from that of wartime housing. Proximity to war industry was no longer a prerequisite, but the projects still needed to be well

[31] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 46.
[32] Wade, 48.
[33] Evenden, "Wartime Housing as Cultural Landscape, National Creation and Personal Creativity," 44.
[34] Wade, 48.
[35] "300 War Temporary Homes May Be Constructed in Ottawa," *The Ottawa Journal,* October 17, 1944.
[36] "Plans for Housing Outlined in House by Minister Howe," *The Evening Citizen* (Ottawa), July 30, 1942.
[37] Nepean Township, Nepean Council Minutes, May 17, 1945, 20.

separated from established neighbourhoods where pre-existing street layouts and houses could restrict WHL's construction process.[38]

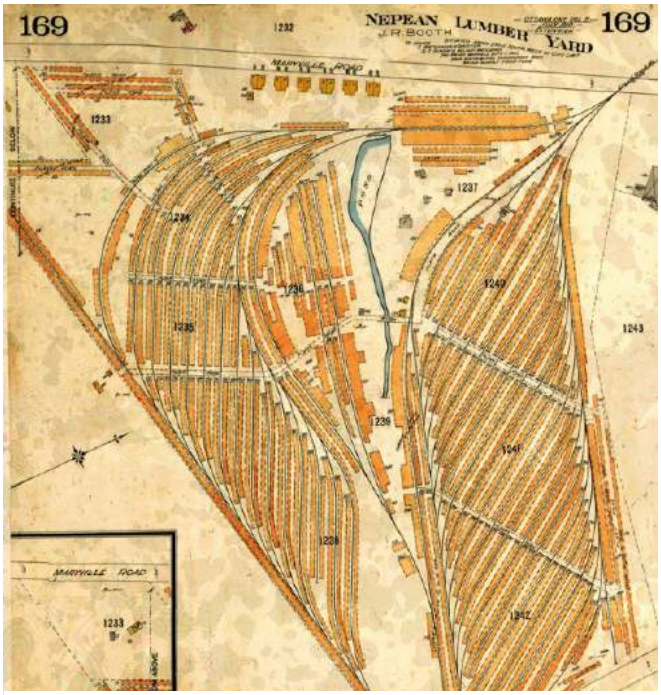

Figure 3 - Detailed plan of the Nepean Lumber Yard (J. R. Booth Limited) in 1922 showing plank roads, shingle piles, stables, and the Grand Trunk Railway line. Source: Underwriters' Survey Bureau Limited, Fire Insurance Plan, Revised 1922, Volume II, Sheet 169.

The old site of the J. R. Booth lumberyards had land that was suitable for WHL's purposes, but it belonged to Nepean Township.[39] In order to start the veterans' housing project, Ottawa had to negotiate with Nepean to annex the Booth lands. Nepean readily agreed on the condition that Ottawa would provide services and utilities to the new WHL housing community. This was deemed acceptable, and so the Crown (through WHL) purchased the lands from the Booth estate.[40] The Booth lumberyards were an ideal site because they provided the space necessary for WHL while keeping close to Ottawa which made servicing more convenient.[41] The tenants of veterans' housing would never go to work at any Booth lumberyard, as this site had not been operational since the late 1930s,[42] but subtle reminders of the site's previous use would continue to connect them to it: the housing project's location aligned with the old railway spur line into the lumberyards and early residents would often find railway ties or spikes while gardening in their yards.[43]

In 1945, Ottawa City Council formally approved "Project No. 1 – Veterans Housing", which included the construction of houses for war veterans at the junction of Carling Avenue and Merivale Road in former Nepean. The agreement stipulated the housing

[38] Adams, "Wartime Housing and Architectural Change," 15.
[39] Elliot, *The City Beyond,* 232.
[40] Nepean Township, Nepean Council Minutes, May 17, 1945, 20.
[41] Elliot, *The City Beyond,* 232.
[42] Ed Barks, "Flashbacks: Salary - $2.77 per Day: A Flashback to 1939," *Carlington Summit* (Ottawa), August 1984.
[43] Bruce Deachman, "The Vet's neighborhood, where 'everybody's mother was everybody's mother'," *Ottawa Citizen*, November 11, 2017.

accommodation was available to lease for sailors, soldiers, or airmen of the armed forces of Canada who had returned from general service in the war in which Canada was involved since September 10, 1939, and included their dependents.[44] This opportunity was not limited to servicemen of Canadian citizenship as it included those veterans who had lived in Canada prior to the war and subsequently served in the Canadian forces.[45] Sometimes these and other veterans would return to Canada with war brides and children who were born outside Canada, as well.[46] Veterans applied for tenancy and were added to a waitlist, but the only discernible preference for a successful application was for veterans who had children (or who were Ottawa residents).[47] In some cases, the waitlist process took a few years.[48]

It is important to note that due to the lack of information on eligibility, it is unclear who may have been excluded from applying for veterans' housing, whether explicitly or implicitly. After the Second World War, female veterans and racialized veterans faced unequal access to government benefits and programs, including housing.[49] Widows were eligible through their veteran husbands, but there is no confirmation of eligibility for female veterans, such as ambulance drivers or combat nurses who may have applied on the merit of their own veteran status.[50]

"Project No.1 – Veterans' Housing"

The first veterans housing subdivision included approximately 200 homes over 30 acres that is roughly bounded by the current Merivale Road at Carling Avenue, southwest down Merivale to Crerar Avenue, east along Crerar to a western point before Anna Avenue, and directly north back up to Carling.[51] The land itself is fairly level and is without prominent rises or valleys – a setting that perfectly pairs uniform vantage points with the uniform housing designs. The soil composition was a mixture of sand and clay – but mostly sand. Tenants recounted how before the roads were paved or the landscaping had grown in, the sand would blow through open windows and into the house, leaving a fine coating of grit on the furniture.[52]

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[44] Ottawa City Council, Minutes of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Ottawa, August 7, 1945, 511 - 519.
[45] Lee B. Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets," The Vets Neighbourhood Kids, private Facebook post shared with authors, September 23, 2011.
[46] Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets."
[47] Barb Robertson, "A Vet's Story," *Carlington Summit* (Ottawa), February 1985.
[48] Robertson, "A Vet's Story."
[49] R. Scott Sheffield, "Status Indians and Military Service in the World Wars," in *Canadian History: Post Confederation*, ed. John Douglas Belshaw (Victoria, B.C.: BC Campus, 2016), https://opentext.ca/postconfederation/.
[50] Lee B. Wainwright, email message to authors, November 18, 2021.
[51] Peter Robertson, "City Annexes Vets Housing Project: A Flashback to 1946," *Carlington Summit* (Ottawa), January 1984.
[52] Robertson, "A Vet's Story."

Four months after the lumberyard's annexation, the first veteran's home was completed on Carling Avenue, near the intersection with Merivale Road. The house's first tenant was T. E. Bishop, a 30-year-old veteran who moved in with his wife Maria Bishop along with their three young children.[53] Quickly following Carling, the lots along Merivale, Viscount Avenue, Harrold Place, and Crerar Avenue were built up, but Veteran Avenue was not constructed until later.[54]

Built character

The veterans' homes were built according to the familiar WHL plans. For each of the nearly 26,000 rental homes constructed across Canada by WHL, there were only four essential design layouts.[55] The interior arrangements always included a living room, a kitchen, one bathroom, and anywhere from two to four bedrooms, depending on whether the model had an upper storey.[56] The interior layouts followed the same general patterns, but the placement of the living room might trade places with the kitchen from one plan to the next.[57] However, there were no entry halls, or dining rooms.

Figure 4 - 1958 aerial image of Veterans' Housing Project No. 1, GeoOttawa, 2022.

[53] "Burned Out in Apartment Fire Veteran Occupies New Home," *Ottawa Journal,* December 29, 1945.
[54] Robertson, "City Annexes Vets Housing Project."
[55] Evenden, "Wartime Housing as Cultural Landscape, National Creation and Personal Creativity," 41.
[56] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 48.
[57] Saul Svirplys, "The Small Post-War 1 ½- Storey House - Part One," *Modern Realtor* (blog), https://modernrealtor.blogspot.com/2020/11/the-small-post-war-1-12-storey-house.html

Figure 5 - A photograph of Tunis Avenue, Ottawa, 1956 / City of Ottawa Archives / CA038365.

There were even fewer options for the building's exterior. Every house was a simplified interpretation of the 1930s Cape Cod cottage: plain frames of single-pitched and side-gabled structures that were either bungalows or one-and-a-half storeys within a condensed, rectangular plan.[58] Exterior sidings were uniform, and were either wood clapboard or asbestos. Minor variety on the exterior was achieved through the occasional "flip" of the front entrance's placement. Depending on the interior layout of the home, the entrance would either sit at the centre, right, or left of the front façade.[59]

[58] Evenden, "Wartime Housing as Cultural Landscape, National Creation and Personal Creativity," 43.
[59] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 48.

However, front entrances were uniformly oriented towards the street. The original windows were multi-paned, typically six-over-six, and their balanced arrangements did not dominate the front façade. Small, wooden porches sometimes framed the front doors, where the porch roof extended from the main roof.[60] The one-and-a-half storeys were no more than 1200 square feet, with slightly larger kitchens, a living room, and three bedrooms, with one on the main floor, and two on the upper floor.[61] In some cases, as many as nine family members lived within this one space.[62] At approximately 680 square feet, the bungalow models were even smaller, yet they still housed families of four or more.[63]

The rooms were plain yet spacious, especially when compared to the city apartments that some tenants relocated from.[64] Hardwood floors ran throughout the interiors, except for the kitchen and bathrooms, which had linoleum flooring.[65] While it could be a point of pride for tenants, maintaining the hardwood floors was a process: scuff marks had to be removed with steel wool and Varsol, and the boards were then re-treated with paste wax applied by cloth.[66] Once dry, the floors were buffed and shined using non-electric, wooden floor polishers.[67] These were new, young families, and many were caring for individual homes for the first time. A common sentiment in the first-hand accounts and recollections of occupants was that *“it may not look like much, but it’s ours.”*[68] The earlier notion of temporary wartime housing sits in contrast with the mindset of these veteran families who sought to establish a home, have a living space, and put down permanent roots. The cohesion in the housing design of the veterans' subdivisions was paralleled in the unity of the residents: because the houses were built specifically to house veterans, all the tenants had the same point of reference. The shared experiences between the veterans, the war brides, and the vets’ kids created a close-knit community based on mutual understanding and support.[69]

The units were all built with original basements. Nearly half the space of these basements was occupied by metal, bulky coal furnaces that were necessary to heat the

[60] Robertson, “A Vet’s Story.”
[61] Lee Wainwright, David Darwin, David Flatters, and Wendy Murray, “Veterans Memorial Bench Consecration,” (Ottawa: The Vets Neighbourhood Kids, 2017).
[62] Wainwright, “Veterans Memorial Bench Consecration.”
[63] Wainwright, “Veterans Memorial Bench Consecration.”
[64] Robertson, “A Vet’s Story.”
[65] Wainwright, “Growing Up in the Vets.”
[66] Wainwright, “Growing Up in the Vets.”
[67] Wainwright, “Growing Up in the Vets.”
[68] Wayne Beaupré, “A Child’s Eye View,” *Carlington Summit* (Ottawa), February 1985.
[69] Beaupré, “A Child’s Eye View.”

homes through the Ottawa winters.[70] Coal to feed the furnace had to be shovelled into the firebox, so each basement would have a wooden storage bin for coal located beside the furnace.[71] When coal supplies ran low, tenants had to call a coal supplier to bring a new truckload, which was then poured down a chute through the basement window and into the storage bin.[72] Black coal dust would end up everywhere. To adjust the furnace and moderate the indoor temperature, there were pull chains on the main floor that were used to open and close the draft.[73] Over time, the original coal furnaces were converted to oil and the coal bins were removed, which left more room in the basements. This was a timely benefit for growing families, who could convert the extra space into an additional bedroom.[74]

Another small detail of the veterans' housing units was a small door at ground level that connected the unit's exterior to the interior. This door, known as a milk chute, was designed for milk deliveries and so that milk bottles could be exchanged between the household and the milkman: empty bottles were placed in the hatch from the kitchen with an order slip, which the milkman replaced with new bottles during his deliveries.[75] The milk was delivered by horse and wagon because this system did not often break down or get stuck in the muddy streets.[76]

Streetscape character

While the houses of the veterans' housing subdivisions are uniform, the streets are anything but. There is a strong emphasis on curves; their widths defy conventional notions of proper proportion in respect to the small homes. This relationship is best illustrated along Harrold Place, where its unique "dog-bone" shape encloses a public park that pushes the houses to the periphery in favour of the public greenspace. The streetscape is emphasized by the lack of sidewalks. Before construction began, Nepean Council made inquiries to influence the setbacks and zoning of the veterans' housing subdivisions. The response they received was that WHL was handling the design and

[70] Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets."
[71] Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets."
[72] Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets."
[73] Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets."
[74] Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets."
[75] Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets."
[76] Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets."

Figure 6 - Photograph of Harrold Place, Ottawa, September 2021, City of Ottawa.

Figure 7 - Insurance Plan of the City of Ottawa, Ontario. 1948, Volume III, Sheet 329. Underwriters' Survey Bureau.

development of the community.[77] This confirms that these unique layouts were entirely a WHL creation.

The design of these layouts was deliberate: they served to disrupt the homogeneity of the houses, which was furthe r achieved by the alternating or staggered setbacks of the houses on their lots.[78] The result is a contrast between architectural uniformity and a spontaneity in street design. These street layouts gave the community kids the ideal space for popular outdoor pastimes like hopscotch, road hockey, hide and seek, bicycling, and soapbox car races.[79] Furthermore, the setbacks paired with the consistent low massing ensured that there were clear sightlines down the interior streets. This combination established a convenient supervision model for the community, whereby parents could stand on their front porch and see their children playing almost anywhere around Harrold Place Park.[80] However, WHL's streetscapes were not fully completed until later in its development: in 1946, the streets were still unpaved, and the few existing sidewalks were wooden.[81]

[77] Nepean Township, Nepean Council Minutes, August 2, 1945, 30.
[78] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 48.
[79] David Flatters, "Childhood Memories," The Vets Neighbourhood Kids, private Facebook post shared with authors, October 3, 2011.
[80] Flatters, "Childhood Memories."
[81] Wainwright, "Veterans Memorial Bench Consecration."

Figure 8 - 1955 photograph of Harrold Place. Courtesy Lee Wainwright and The Vets Neighbourhood Kids Facebook Group.

The size of the veterans' homes is further emphasized by the large lots on which they are situated. Every lot is approximately 2000 square metres, with room at the rear of the property provided for gardening, or even small livestock.[82] The idea behind this small-house-to-large-lot ratio was to provide tenants a way to produce their own food as a failsafe against food shortages. In doing so, WHL meant to deter a repeat of the conditions that had followed the First World War.[83] While this concept was more prevalent in the housing projects administered through the Veteran's Land Act (VLA) in communities like Carleton Heights, it would appear that the similar WHL lots were created with the same purpose in mind.[84] Additionally, the large lots, the small houses, and the wide streets all contributed to an open environment that encouraged outdoor, communal activities. With time, shrubs, gardens, and the tree canopy matured and filled in these spaces such that greenspace now dominates the landscape.

[82] Elliot, *The City Beyond*, 232.
[83] Elliot, *The City Beyond,* 232.
[84] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 48.

In keeping with a subdivision purpose-built to house veterans, the streets feature names of military origin or reference. Some obvious examples include Veteran Avenue, Crown Crescent, and General Avenue. Gordon Street was renamed Crerar Avenue in honour of the prominent WWII commander General Harry Crerar; Tunis and Viscount Avenues were named after the Viscount Alexander of Tunis.[85] Harrold Place was named in memory of Ernest William Harrold, a local man who reported for the Ottawa Citizen in 1913 until he went overseas to serve in the First World War.[86] When he returned to Ottawa in 1923, Harrold became the assistant editor, and a collection of his popular columns was published in a book.[87] His death in 1945 coincided with the construction of Veterans Housing Project No. 1, and so Harrold Place Park was named in his memory.[88] These street names stand as "living war memorials,"[89] but ones that are a part of the community's everyday life, like the veterans themselves.

Figure 9 - Photograph of mature trees on Marshall Avenue, Ottawa, September 2021, City of Ottawa.

"Project No.2 – Veterans' Housing"

Project No. 1 was completed in January 1946. By February, WHL offered to purchase the lands immediately south of the first subdivision to construct an additional 200 veterans' homes.[90] The timing of this offer shows the success and the demand of the first project. However, when Ottawa approached Nepean Council with the proposal to

[85] Deachman, "The Vet's neighborhood, where 'everybody's mother was everybody's mother'."
[86] Robertson, "City Annexes Vets Housing Project."
[87] Robertson, "City Annexes Vets Housing Project."
[88] Robertson, "City Annexes Vets Housing Project."
[89] Richard Longley, "Saving Sunshine Valley," *Now Toronto*, November 1, 2017, https://nowtoronto.com/news/saving-sunshine-valley
[90] "Wartime Housing Offers 200 More Homes for Ottawa," *Ottawa Journal*, February 20, 1946.

Figure 10 - Detail of 1958 aerial photograph, GeoOttawa, City of Ottawa.

increase the size of the project, Nepean had some reservations: it had come to their attention that applications for tenancy in Project No.1 were only being considered from veterans that were residents from the city of Ottawa.[91] Since there had been no provision to include Nepean residents in the original agreement, this qualifier could not be modified.[92]

Therefore, when Nepean Council was presented with this opportunity to renegotiate their terms, Nepean refused to agree to further annexation until they were assured that Nepean veterans would not be prevented from applying, and that they would be granted the same consideration as those veterans from Ottawa.[93] This matter was settled to the satisfaction of both parties, and so "Project No.2 – Veterans Housing" was approved in April 1946.[94]

"Project No.2" covered approximately 70 acres and included an additional 200 housing units; it was completed by January 1947.[95] Its boundaries complete the remainder of this report's study area: from Crerar and Merivale in the southwest to the southern side

[91] Elliot, *The City Beyond*, 232.
[92] Nepean Township, Nepean Council Minutes, December 20, 1945, 45.
[93] Nepean Township, Nepean Council Minutes, April 5, 1946.
[94] Nepean Township, Nepean Council Minutes, April 5, 1946.
[95] Peter Robertson, "Part 2 of the Annexation Story: 1947," *Carlington Summit* (Ottawa), February 1985.

of Anna where it curves to include the south sides of Marshall and General avenues, then moves across to the west side of Fisher Avenue, up to the north side of Tunis Avenue, and diagonally back northwest to Crerar on the west side of Anna. There appears to have been some overlap between construction phases because Admiral Avenue had several houses built up before the second project commenced.[96] As such, it was the first occupied street of "Project No.2".[97] Tenants began to move into units on Anna Avenue in the fall of 1946, when the walkways up to the front doors were still boards in the mud,[98] while Tunis Avenue saw occupants move in by 1947 and its streets were finally paved later the same year.[99]

The streetscapes in "Project No.2" are slightly less inventive than their counterparts in "Project No.1", where the former features longer, meandering bends that would prove popular in later suburban developments of the 1960s.[100] The tighter curves of "Project No.1", especially the layout of Harrold Place, were not seen again until much later into the 1970s.[101] One explanation for this shift could be the transition period between Wartime Housing Limited and the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC): between 1946 and 1947, WHL was in the process of dissolving and transferring their assets to CMHC.[102] George Wregglesworth was in charge of street layouts for CMHC (company employees took to calling his layouts "Wreggle's Wiggles"), so it is plausible that it is his designs that form "Project No.2".[103] However, considering that WHL also completed a housing project in the Kitchener neighbourhood of St. Mary's in 1947,[104] and that CMHC was not officially incorporated until January 1947,[105] it is unclear to what degree CMHC was influencing WHL's operations at this time. An alternate explanation for the difference is the pre-existing street boundaries (such as Gordon Street), which would have limited the space for street layout experimentation.

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[96] Robertson, "Part 2 of the Annexation Story."
[97] Wainwright, "Veterans Memorial Bench Consecration."
[98] Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets."
[99] Robertson, "A Vet's Story."
[100] Elliot, *The City Beyond,* 232.
[101] Elliot, 232.
[102] Ann McAfee, "Housing and Housing Policy," *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, 2015), https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/housing-and-housing-policy.
[103] Marc Denhez, *The Canadian Home: From Cave to Electronic Cocoon* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1994), 100.
[104] City of Kitchener, "Cultural Heritage Landscapes Data Sheets," December 2014, 44, https://www.kitchener.ca/en/resourcesGeneral/Documents/DSD_PLAN_CHL_Study_Appendix_6_CHL_Data_Sheets.pdf
[105] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 47.

A major milestone in the area's development came in May 1947 with the opening of the W. E. Gowling Public School.[106]Before this, Carlington school kids were bused to the Elgin Street Public School in downtown Ottawa. They could not attend the nearby Maxwell Public School because it was part of Nepean Township, and Carlington had been annexed to Ottawa.[107] The opening of Gowling consolidated the community character of the area, whose significant grade-school demographic finally had a local education space of their own where they could learn and socialize. In the evenings and on weekends, the school doubled as a community event space for dances and meetings that brought together other members of the neighbourhood.[108] This community was united through their shared histories: while they may not have understood the psychological nuance of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), they certainly understood its impact. The street parties, volunteering

Figure 11 - A photograph of children walking along Anna Avenue in front of W. E. Gowling Public School, Ottawa, 1955 / City of Ottawa Archives / CA035119.

[106] Peter Robertson, "Gowling Opening – Not a Moment Too Soon: A Flashback to 1947," *Carlington Summit* (Ottawa), September 1984.
[107] Robertson, "Gowling Opening – Not a Moment Too Soon."
[108] Wainwright, "Growing Up in the Vets."

opportunities, and social events were their makeshift and local methods of therapy and healing.[109]

Figure 12 - Soap box stock car racing in Harrold Place, Ottawa, 1954 / City of Ottawa Archives / CA005022.

This final stage of construction reflected the attitude behind WHL's project planning. WHL understood that "housing, social status, location and community formation were intimately related...With the construction of community halls, schools and other facilities, and the fostering of various programs, [WHL's] work took on proportions and qualities well beyond the mere building of dwelling units."[110]

Development

As Canadian society officially entered its post-war years, the social housing projects began their transition from the tenancy system mediated through WHL, back into individual property ownership. The Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) was formed in January 1947 and absorbed WHL's operations.[111] As Veterans' Housing Projects No. 1 and No. 2 were already completed at this time, CMHC's influence did not affect the community until 1951 when they made the housing units available for renters to purchase, with all previous rent paid counting towards the down payment.[112] Tenants were offered the right of first refusal,[113] but most decided to purchase the homes once they went up for sale.[114]

CMHC clearly recognized the potential of WHL's models;[115] after they took over operations, CMHC added considerably to WHL's design modules and showcased how the simple "saltbox" design was actually an effective starting point for adaptation.[116] The

[109] Deachman, "The Vet's neighborhood, where 'everybody's mother was everybody's mother'."
[110] Evenden, "Wartime Housing as Cultural Landscape, National Creation and Personal Creativity," 45.
[111] Ann McAfee, "Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation," *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (Historica Canada, 2013), https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/canada-mortgage-and-housing-corporation.
[112] Deachman, "The Vet's neighborhood, where 'everybody's mother was everybody's mother'."
[113] Evenden, "Wartime Housing as Cultural Landscape, National Creation and Personal Creativity," 46.
[114] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 47.
[115] Svirplys, "The small Post-War 1 ½- Storey House - Part One."
[116] Wade, 48.

residents of the veterans' housing subdivisions demonstrated this through their numerous modifications to the WHL design, which they were able to carry out once they were property owners.[117] Common alterations include the addition of detached garages, attached additions at the rear of homes to create more space (and the less common second storey additions for the same reason), changes to the siding material, expansions to front porches, and window replacements, among other interior modernizations.

Figure 13 Photographs of veterans' homes along Fisher Avenue, Ottawa, September 2021, City of Ottawa.

[117] Evenden, 41.

What is remarkable is that throughout many of the modifications, which were motivates by style or necessity, the essential form of the WHL model is still evident.[118] There are several examples where the original design has been altered beyond recognition, but overall, the WHL subdivisions in Carlington North still look like a veterans' housing community. Arguably, the alterations enhance, rather than detract from, the character of the buildings by creating contextual layers – contextual in that they arise from contemporary trends in architecture and design, or they were motivated by the needs of the property owners.[119]

By 1949, the projects from both Wartime Housing Limited and CMHC had completed a combined total of 45,930 housing units and CMHC had already started on an additional 49,611.[120] These houses were built in subdivisions from coast to coast to create a national icon of construction recognized for its ubiquity, rather than its rarity.[121] As a result, it can be easy to overlook the impetus of their construction: these were purpose-built communities for specific tenant demographics, built on specific sites.

Figure 14 - Photograph of veterans' houses and grassy median island on Viscount Avenue, Ottawa, September 2021, City of Ottawa.

The veterans' housing subdivisions in Carlington North are a component of a larger national housing legacy that aided in the relief of housing shortages and is an example of early suburban planning.[122] Yet within the context of Ottawa, Projects No. 1 and No. 2 are the *only* examples of WHL housing projects. The area is unique, even though the style of the individual houses may not be rare. Its position as a veterans' housing project instead of a wartime housing project signifies how, during the Second World War, Ottawa's role was not significantly connected to war industry. Instead, the city's efforts

[118] Evenden, "Wartime Housing as Cultural Landscape, National Creation and Personal Creativity," 41.
[119] Evenden, 46.
[120] Wade, "Wartime Housing Limited, 1941-1947," 47.
[121] Evenden, "Wartime Housing as Cultural Landscape, National Creation and Personal Creativity," 41.
[122] Denhez, *The Canadian Home*, 100.

to establish veterans' housing indicates how it was affected by mid-century urban overcrowding. Construction of these veterans' housing subdivisions represents Ottawa's post-war population growth. More specifically, the location outside the city centre represents the beginning of Ottawa's mid-century, post-war suburban development.

What can be confirmed about tenant eligibility shows how the area was not only a community that was purpose-built for veterans, but it was purpose-built for Ottawa and Nepean veterans, which firmly situates the project within a local context as a solution for serving and benefiting a specific community. The WHL subdivisions created a space for these residents to support one another in the post-war social adjustment; the personal recollections of past and present residents paired with the built modifications yield information that contributes to an understanding of Ottawa's post-war culture, and post-war housing.

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