

THE CHURCHILL PARK PUBLIC ART PROJECT

Appendix E History and Evolution of Westdale and Churchill park

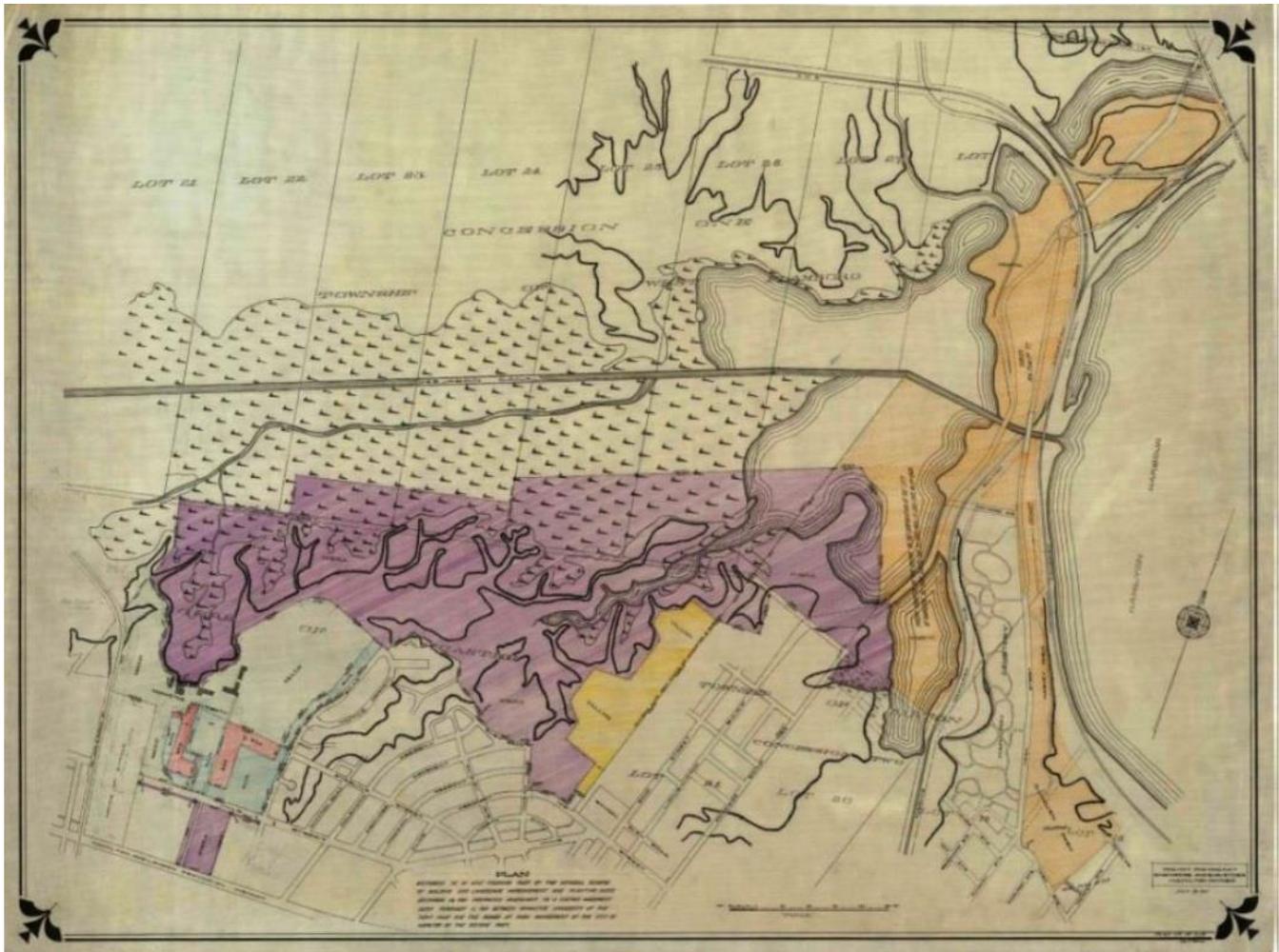
The following is an excerpt from the City of Hamilton Churchill Park Management Plan.

The community of Westdale was founded in the 1920s as one of Canada's first planned communities. Westdale Park, later to become Churchill Park, was established as part of a grand beautification scheme for the north-west area of Hamilton that encompassed lands that now include Cootes Paradise, the Royal Botanical Gardens, and McMaster University.

Cootes Paradise was initiated as a nature reserve in 1927 through an Act in parliament. The initial boundary of Cootes Paradise Nature Reserve did not include Churchill Park. Upon the formation of Royal Botanical Gardens in 1941 the park was included in the Cootes Paradise Property. The park itself was one of several elements put together by the Hamilton Parks Board led by T.B. McQuesten during the formation of the Royal Botanical Gardens.

Prior to European colonization the park area would likely have appeared as an oak savannah connected with the Princess Pont culture inhabiting the area, and may even have been used for agriculture by the native people. Early surveyor maps prepared by Augustus Jones indicate this likely was the case, although at the time of European settlement in the 1790s native people did not inhabit the site. The site was used for agriculture throughout the 1800's, listed as the Buttrum farm on the 1875 Wentworth County Atlas (Part of Ancaster). A portion of the park was stripped for clay to make bricks during the early 1900s.

In 1927, the City of Hamilton Parks Board purchased 152.57 hectares (377 acres) of land comprising 53.83 hectares (133 acres) of water lots, 52.61 hectares (130 acres) of hillside, and 46.14 hectares (114 acres) of developable land. A portion of these lands was donated to McMaster University to establish a new campus in Hamilton. In 1931 a land use agreement was signed between the Parks Board and McMaster University to address a "General Scheme of Building and Landscape Improvement and Planting". An accompanying plan to this historic agreement denotes the area in yellow to be developed as a "playing field or fields" (Refer to Figure 3). The lands coloured in purple and orange on Figure 3 were established by the agreement to be used "for the purposes of botanical gardens". Churchill Park is located within the orange area on the map



Map Accompanying 1931 Agreement between the Hamilton Parks Board and McMaster University

Initial work began in 1934 by the Hamilton Parks Board. Churchill Park was then designed as a park in the 1940's by K. Matthew Broman, Landscape Architect, with construction occurring in 1945. The park, while in ownership of the RBG, was maintained by the Hamilton Parks Board until incorporated into the City of Hamilton, with the exception of the Teaching Garden property which was maintained by RBG until 1996. The Teaching Garden area is currently managed by the City of Hamilton and present uses are an aviary and community allotment gardens.

In 1945, Westdale Park was renamed Churchill Park in honour of Sir Winston S. Churchill. Lawn bowling greens and a clubhouse were developed in between 1958 and 1960 and operated as the Churchill Fields Lawn Bowling Club until 2008 In June 1996, the City took over operations of the Teaching Gardens (sometimes called the Children's Gardens) from the Royal Botanical Gardens and established community garden plots which are rented seasonally. The

greenhouses and ancillary buildings of the Teaching Gardens were redeployed as an aviary with the relocation of birds from the Dundurn Park Aviary. The aviary is operated by a volunteer organization called 'The Friends of the Aviary'.