

## 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.

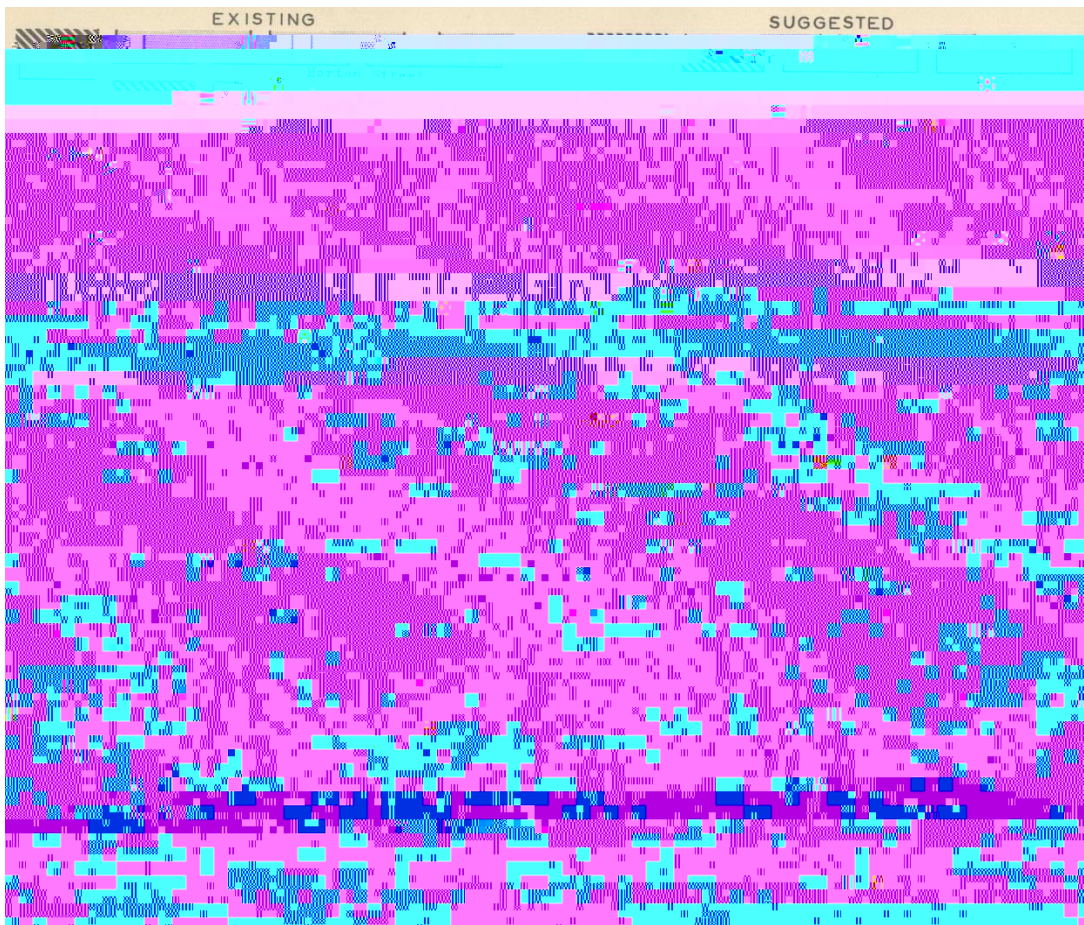
While significant academic study has been produced analysing and evaluating the legacy of Stephenson's plans for Halifax (1957) and Kingston (1960), much less focus has been attuned to the plan Stephenson co-authored for London. This is a result of both implementation and legacy. Unlike Halifax and Kingston, 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

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



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







