Forest Hill
Forest Hill

• An exclusive Toronto suburb
• Was originally (1910s) mixed in incomes and uses
  • Some upscale residential, some cheaper
  • Some farms, industrial businesses
Forest Hill: early 1920s

• Suburb is beyond city limits
• Its wealthy residents want
  • High quality services (paving, lighting, water, hydro etc.,)
  • Protection from encroaching industry, poor people
• York Township able to arrange the high-quality services
Incorporation

- Incorporates as Spadina Heights police village in 1923
  - Within York Township
  - Begins to fund services, but can’t make the village exclusive upscale residential

- Incorporates as a village 1925
  - Gains control over servicing, planning
  - Immediately restricts land uses to upscale residential
Forest Hill 1925-1939

• Wealthy residents exclude industrial land uses
  • Removing existing ones, preventing new ones
  • Controls machinery, excludes billboards
  • Requires expensive architect-designed single-family homes
  • Effectively excludes Jews (except the wealthy)
"Residents of Forest Hill village! You moved out here to escape the noise and din, the dust and dirt of the city, to enjoy pure air and sunshine, and healthful and restful conditions of living generally". And now comes a proposal to establish an industrial zone to the north "with blowing of whistles and shunting of cars, with its belching forth of smoke and dirt". Forest Hill would become factory hill or smokestack hill (Toronto Star 10 Nov 1925 p. 19).
• Resident H F Ritchie: “When the village was formed it was said it would be a Westmount. Let us remember our promises. There has been too much real estate development in the village. The north can also be a residential area, but we must grow up with it.” “We came here and spent a lot of money in a home and now we don’t want a lot of smoke stacks to look at.” (Toronto Star 17 Feb 1928 p. 26).
• “The industrial area is a menace. It is a blot on an otherwise beautiful landscape, and the mere handful of asphalt plants, cement mixers and the like, now located there, is simply a foretaste of what might be expected if allowed”: James B Allen president of the Mashquoteh Residents Association ([Toronto] Globe 29 Oct 1930 p. 13).
Forest Hill 1920s-1960s

• An exclusive residential suburb
• Did not adopt a zoning system
  • Becoming standard elsewhere from the mid 1920s
• Instead relied on bylaws and amendments
• Depended on the village clerk, Mr. Hall, to keep track of it
  • Hall eventually retired, taking his planning knowledge with him
Forest Hill, 1940s

• Remains an affluent suburb
• Attracts significant Jewish settlement from 1940s onwards
Crestwood Heights

- a.k.a. Forest Hill
- Participant-observer study of a modern suburb in the 1940s-1950s
  - Families ambitiously pushing their children to compete for status, recognition
  - Families competing to impress the neighbours
  - The suburban nuclear family cutting its ties to extended kinship, ethnic tradition
Forest Hill

• Tried to become an exclusive residential suburb
  • Tried to exclude industry, Jews in the 1920s-1930s
• Acquired/retained special privileges
  • Side-of-the-house garbage collection
  • All-day junior kindergarten in Cedarvale PS
• The architecture says old money, stability, tradition
  • But homes are rapidly torn down, radically refurbished