

Stories From Our Past

The Lord Mayor of London Opened Mississauga's Newest 'New Town'

by Richard Collins



Opening Ceremony, 1958

The special supplement issued by the Port Credit Weekly called Park Royal "a *dynamic new concept in balanced planning*". The paper was just quoting a catch line prepared by the suburb's project developers, but Park Royal was truly "new" in many ways.

The British called them "new towns". The first ones in the UK were planned in the 1880s, so 'balanced' communities were hardly a new idea when Mississauga's Park Royal welcomed its first residents in the summer of 1958. Park Royal wasn't even Mississauga's first planned community but it did outdo the original, Applewood Acres, in many ways.

The boundaries of the Applewood development were defined by simple curved brick entrance gates. Park Royal's guests were welcomed by a one-of-a-kind stainless steel sculpture. (It was later moved after repeated assaults by vandals.)

Park Royal was the first housing subdivision in Mississauga to hide hydro and phone lines underground and it was the first with its own community centre.

The local branch of the Mississauga Library System is located in this modernized community centre, although it's not called the Park Royal library. Park Royal is now in the heart of a much larger Clarkson, so Park Royal's former community centre is Clarkson's modern community centre.

The inspiration, and name for Mississauga's first new town, was the new town of Park Royal in Greater London. Appropriately, an invitation was sent out to the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Denis H. Truscott, and the Lady Mayoress. The two arrived in August 1958 to cut the ribbon at the unfinished development.

It might seem odd that the leader of a city as busy as London would take the time to fly across the Atlantic just to open a housing development in the outskirts of Toronto, but ribbon cutting was just the sort of thing that Truscott was paid to do. (London has an elected mayor whose job is to keep the city running, but Londoners also have a ceremonial mayor. The lord-mayor's job is to promote the city world-wide.)

Toronto mayor, Nathan Phillips, was also invited out to see just how we do things in the suburbs.



Unveiling the Entrance, 1958