

Helmsdale/Hazel Dell

With the wheat and immigration boom which gripped Western Canada after 1905, cities such as Winnipeg expanded into what had previously been surrounding rural municipalities. One of these was East Kildonan, which had benefitted from the City's annexation of Elmwood during 1906. This caused great hope among owners and speculative land holders along the East Kildonan Road (now Henderson Highway). By the spring of 1906, a number of subdivisions had come into existence among the farm lots of East Kildonan. One of these was Plan 1173, known as "Bellevue Place," on Lots 85 and 86, Kildonan. The principal street west of the main road was Helmsdale Avenue. Unfortunately for the developers, R. Ross Sutherland and Gudmundson Johnson, the tract had limited initial appeal, probably due to limited streetcar service. As a result, Helmsdale Avenue did not experience large-scale building until the early to mid-1920s.⁴⁴



By the spring of 1928, Helmsdale Avenue was covered with collection of middle-class tract houses. On 19 March of that year, a deputation of five residents appeared at the Municipal Council meeting. The subject of their visit was that the residents were planning improvements to Helmsdale Avenue which included boulevarding as well as the construction of two pillars at the east entrance to Helmsdale Avenue west of the main road.⁴⁵

The Helmsdale pillars were constructed of red brick, set atop a concrete base or plinth. A flat concrete cap adorned each pillar. Emblazoned on the inside face of each cap was the name "HELMSDALE." Along the east face of each cap was the word "HENDERSON," for the East Kildonan Road had become Henderson Highway in May 1928.⁴⁶ The red brick shafts of the pillars were decorated with inset panels on their Henderson fronts, and each face bore a brick "diamond" in the upper part of the pillar. The Helmsdale pillars presented a very handsome sight, especially at a time when Henderson Highway was still a wide, gravelled road. The pair remain in good physical condition, despite one having been struck by cars and then rebuilt.

Three blocks to the north lay Hazel Dell Avenue. The south side of Hazel Dell had come into existence in November 1912 as Oakview Park, or Plan 1955 of Lots 83 and 84, Kildonan, west of East

Kildonan Road. The reason that Hazel Dell only had one side was that the lot line between 82 and 83 Kildonan ran up the middle of the street. At the time, the speculative owners, R.N. and H.A. Lowery, did not own 82 Kildonan. As it turned out, Robert Newton Lowery remained committed to his subdivision, retaining and developing various parcels in Plan 1955 and its subsequent neighbour, Plan 2706, which subdivided 82 Kildonan in 1921. Indeed, Lowery was still active in the area as late as 1947.⁴⁷

Building on this part of Hazel Dell did not really take off until the creation of Plan 2706. Prior to that, only five houses had existed on the south side of the street.⁴⁸ The heaviest building took place during 1929-30 when fourteen new houses arose along the street.⁴⁹ The coming of the Depression destroyed much of the land value in what was then an outlying suburb of the city.⁵⁰ Lowery continued to own property along Hazel Dell, though it is likely he lost some portions of it during the 1930s. Possibly around 1936-37, the two red brick pillars were built on the west side of Henderson. No record exists of their construction. On the other hand, the brick and mortar colour found in the Hazel Dell pillars are similar to, if not the same as, those found in Chesney's Drug Store, constructed in the summer of 1937 at the northwest corner of Selkirk Avenue and Salter Street.⁵¹ Availability of brick and mortar types has been known to change even within a period of a few years. For example, though the Helmsdale pillars are superficially similar to those found at Hazel Dell, close examination shows the bricks to be of a different texture and the mortar of a different colour. The materials of the Helmsdale pillars, however, match those in use for buildings erected during the period 1925-30.⁵² Therefore, the 1936-37 dating for the Hazel Dell pillars is probably fairly accurate, given this means of interpretation.

Superficially, then, the Hazel Dell pillars resemble those found at Helmsdale Avenue. Closer inspection, however, shows the Hazel Dell units are smaller in size and less elaborate than the others. Though each features brick diamonds on their shaft faces, the Hazel Dell pillars do not exhibit the panelling effect of those at Helmsdale. Where the Helmsdale pillars rely upon fairly substantial bases for part of their height, these bases are less apparent at Hazel Dell. The top caps at the latter place also do not herald "HENDERSON" as at Helmsdale, but merely proclaim "HAZEL DELL" as the location. The attempt to link Hazel Dell to Helmsdale as an attractive subdivision is apparent, though at a lower cost. The Hazel Dell pillars remain in very good physical condition.



LOCATION: Hazel Dell Avenue at Henderson Highway, North-West and South-West
Corners

REGISTERED PLAN: 1955 (Oakview Park) and 2706

DATE OF SUBDIVISION: 1912/1921

TYPE: Pillar

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: Possibly 1936-37

MATERIALS: Red brick and concrete

ORIGINAL DEVELOPER: Probably Robert Newton Lowery

REMARKS/RECOMMENDATIONS: Similar in design to the pillars at Helmsdale Avenue, though less elaborate.
In very good physical condition. Strong neighbourhood landmark.



LOCATION: Helmsdale Avenue at Henderson Highway, North-West and South-West
Corners

REGISTERED PLAN: 1173 (Bellevue Place)

DATE OF SUBDIVISION: 1906

TYPE: Pillar

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: 1928

MATERIALS: Red brick and concrete

ORIGINAL DEVELOPER: Sutherland and Johnson/Residents Group

REMARKS/RECOMMENDATIONS: Only known pillars erected by a residents group. Possibly the first public usage
of name "Henderson" Highway. In very good physical condition. Strong
neighbourhood landmark.