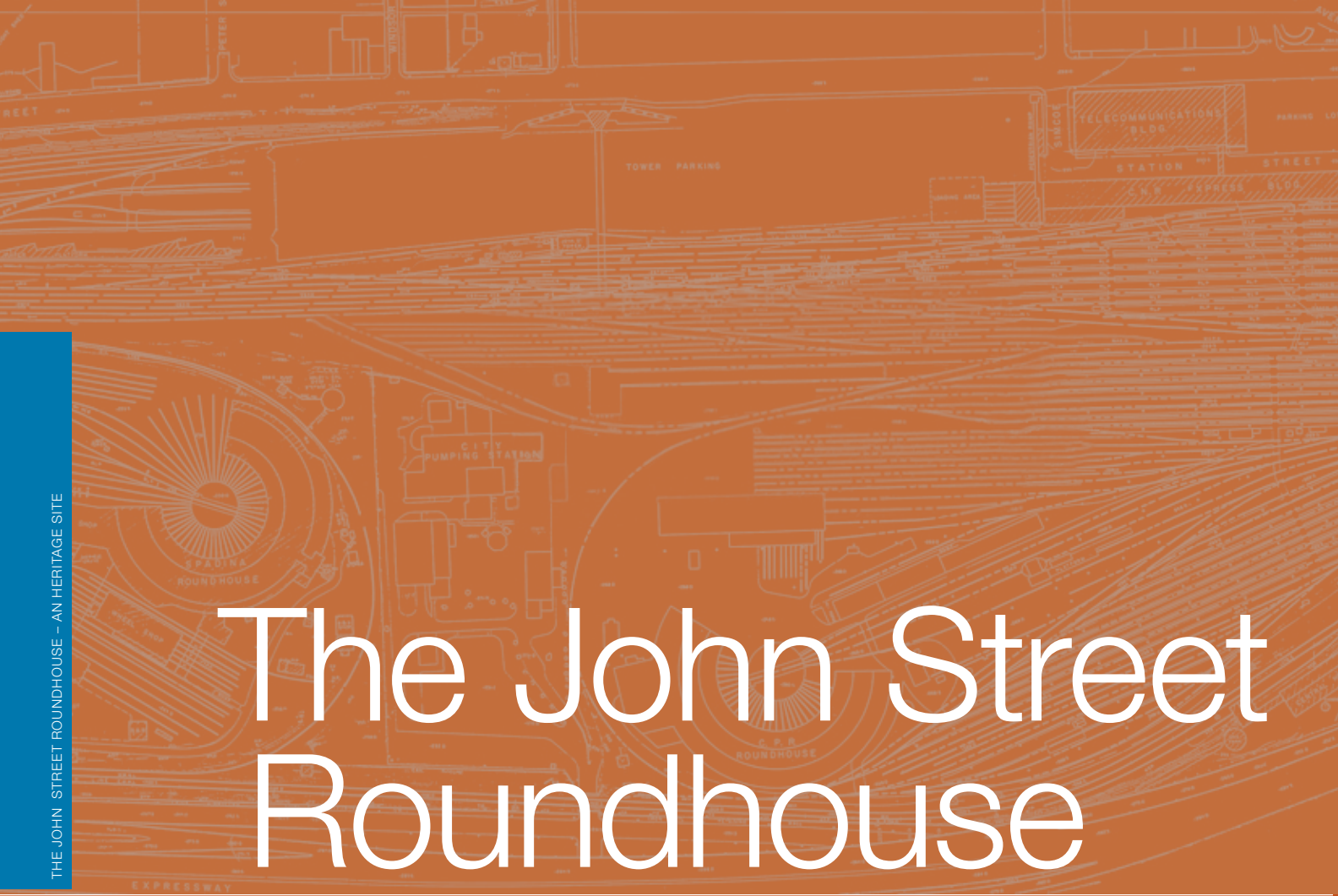
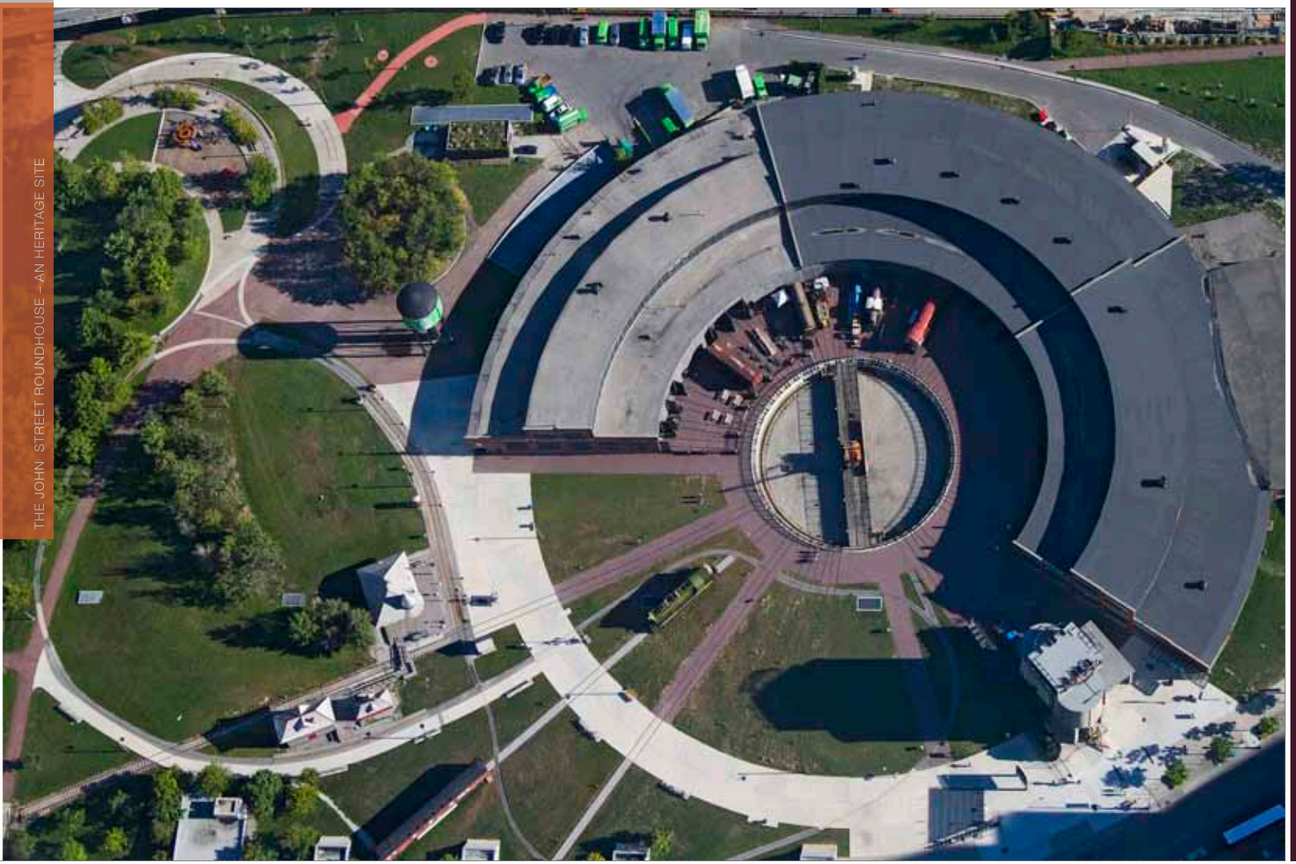


THE JOHN STREET ROUNDHOUSE – AN HERITAGE SITE

The John Street Roundhouse

1884 – 2013

The City of Toronto acquired the Roundhouse and what has become Roundhouse Park, as part of land deal and it remained vacant until the mid 1990's. Designated as a national heritage site in 1991, it was described as, "arguably the finest surviving roundhouse in Canada."



ROUNDHOUSE SITE EVOLUTION

1926

1930s

mid-1960s

1974

1993

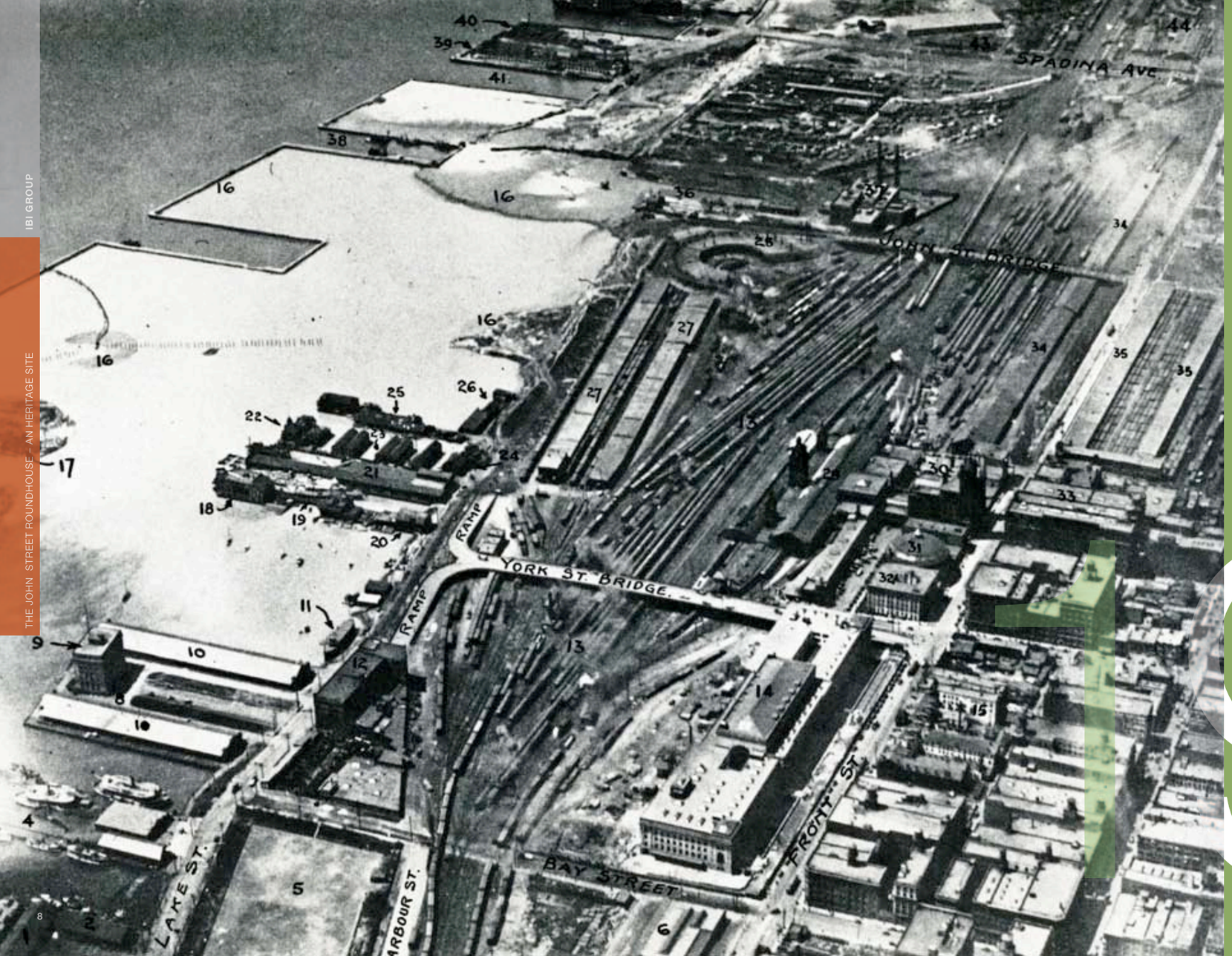
early 1990s

2012 – The John Street Roundhouse and Park - a restored heritage icon, home to successful enterprise, and a growing rail museum, embedded in a new urban open space, surrounded by the intensification of the growing city.

1884, LOOKING EAST ALONG THE WATERFRONT TOWARDS THE FIRST UNION STATION.

IN 1897 THE CPR CONSTRUCTED THE FIRST JOHN STREET ROUNDHOUSE ON LANDFILL IN THE CENTRE OF THIS PHOTOGRAPH OF THE HARBOUR.

1884



1919 – THE FIRST ROUNDHOUSE IS AT THE TOP OF THIS IMAGE (28). THE CREATION OF THE NEW HARBOURFRONT IS DEFINED BY THE DOCK-WALL EDGE (16) AND THE DREDGING AND FILLING HAS BEGUN.

1919

1920

1926 – THE UNION STATION GRADE SEPARATION PROJECT WAS UNDERWAY. TO SEPARATE RAIL AND VEHICLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC. THIS IMMENSE ENGINEERING WORK REQUIRED 2.6 MILLION CUBIC YARDS OF FILL TO RAISE THE RAILWAY EMBANKMENT18'. IN THIS PHOTO THE LAKESHORE RETAINING HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED AND THE ROUNDHOUSE IS ABOUT TO BE BURIED.

1929 – THE ROUNDHOUSE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

1920S – BY THE MID-1920'S THE LANDFILLING WAS COMPLETE AND THE FIRST JOHN STREET ROUNDHOUSE WAS SERVICING ENGINES FOR THE EXTENSIVE CPR RAIL FLEET.

1920S – NOTE LAKESHORE BOULEVARD IN THE FOREGROUND AND THE AREA BETWEEN THAT AND THE ROUNDHOUSE

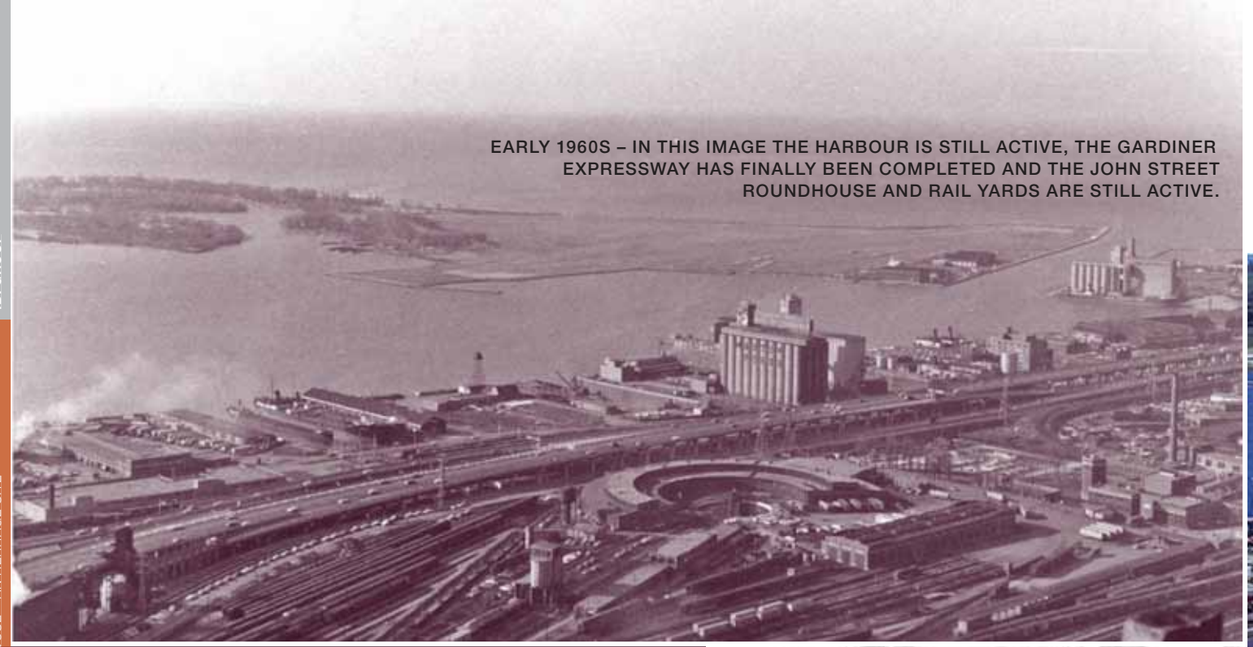
1928–1929 THE SECOND ROUNDHOUSE IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND PARTS OF THE FIRST ONE CAN BE SEEN ON THE LEFT AS IT WAS PARTIALLY DEMOLISHED AND BURIED.

1929 – THE ROUNDHOUSE IS FINISHED AND THE INTERIOR WHITEWASHING IS JUST BEING COMPLETED. THE WHITEWASH HELPED TO ENHANCE THE LIGHT LEVELS TO IMPROVE THE WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE ROUNDHOUSE.

1930 – AN IDEALIZED, HAND-TINTED POSTCARD VIEW OF THE ROUNDHOUSE AND CITY.

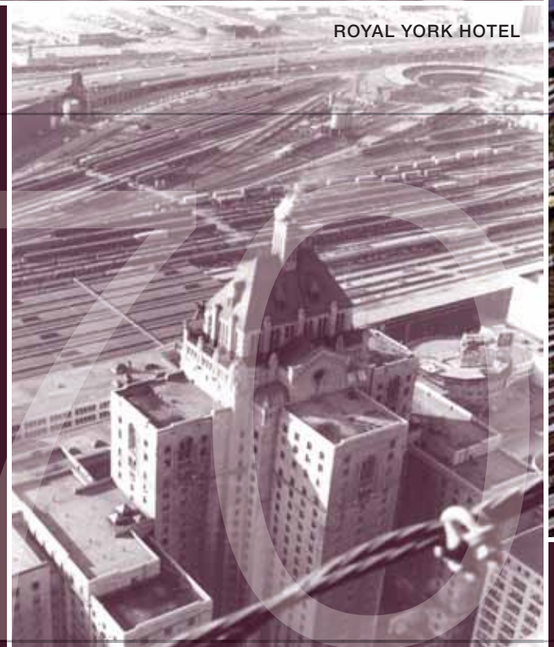
1930 – A PHOTO OF THE SAME SCENE SHOWING THE REALITY OF COAL-FIRED STEAM ENGINES AND THE SCALE OF THE RAILWAYS WITH THE RH SERVICING 60 ENGINES A DAY.

1930



EARLY 1960S – IN THIS IMAGE THE HARBOUR IS STILL ACTIVE, THE GARDINER EXPRESSWAY HAS FINALLY BEEN COMPLETED AND THE JOHN STREET ROUNDHOUSE AND RAIL YARDS ARE STILL ACTIVE.

1970



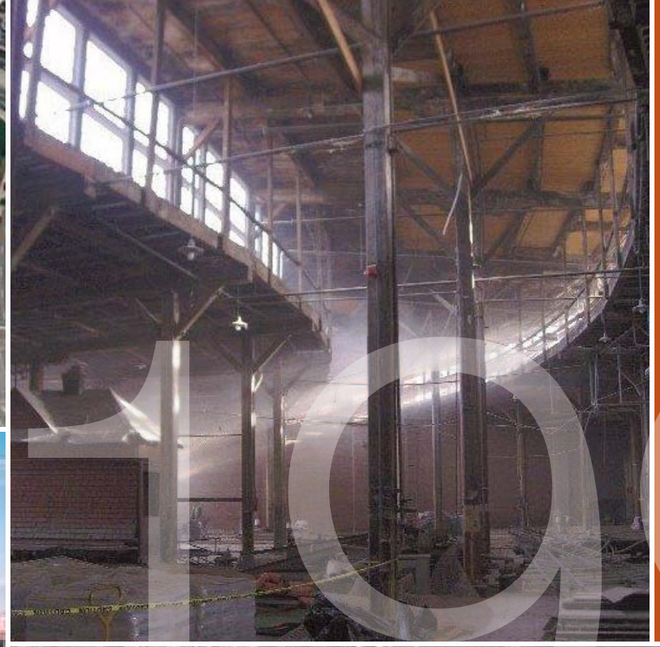
ROYAL YORK HOTEL

1974 – THIS PHOTO SHOWS THE CONSTRUCTION OF CN TOWER FOUNDATION IN 1974. THE TOWER WAS COMPLETED IN 1976 AND WAS THE TALLEST FREE-STANDING STRUCTURE IN THE WORLD AT THAT TIME. BOTH THE CN AND CP ROUNDHOUSES CAN BEEN SEEN. RAIL TRAFFIC WAS DIMINISHING AS THE ENTIRE DISTRICT STARTED TO CHANGE.

1974

1992–1994

IN 1991 THE FEDERAL HERITAGE SITES AND MONUMENT BOARD OF CANADA DESIGNATED THE ROUNDHOUSE AS HAVING NATIONAL HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE – " ARGUABLY THE FINEST SURVIVING ROUNDHOUSE IN CANADA."



1994 – IN 1994, THROUGH A LAND DEAL BETWEEN THE CITY, CPR AND THE MTCC, THE CITY GOT THE RH AND 9 ACRES OF LAND AROUND IT AND THE MTCC GOT TO BUILD AN EXTENSION TO THEIR FACILITIES AND PARKING, UNDERNEATH THE RH, (MTCC SOUTH BUILDING, BY B+H ARCHITECTS)

1994

1995

1995 – THE COAL AND SAND TOWER WAS RELOCATED USING NASA ROCKET MOVING TECHNOLOGY. THE DISASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST 10 BAYS OR ALMOST 40,000 SF OF THE RH (BY HOTSON BAKKER ARCHITECTS) AND THE DEMOLITION OF SOME OTHER RAIL STRUCTURES AND EXCAVATION BEGAN.

1995 CONSTRUCTION START

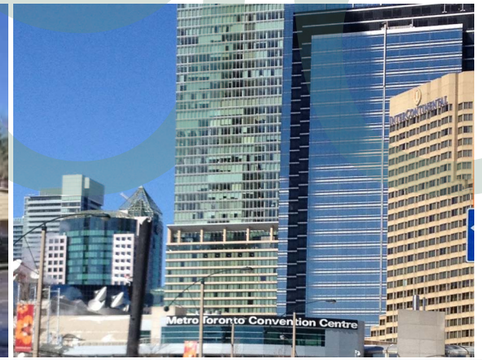
1995 – THE RH BAYS 1-10 HAVE BEEN DISASSEMBLED AND STORED OFF-SITE. THE WATER TOWER HAS BEEN MOVED AND EXCAVATION FOR THE SOUTH BUILDING IS UNDERWAY.

1996

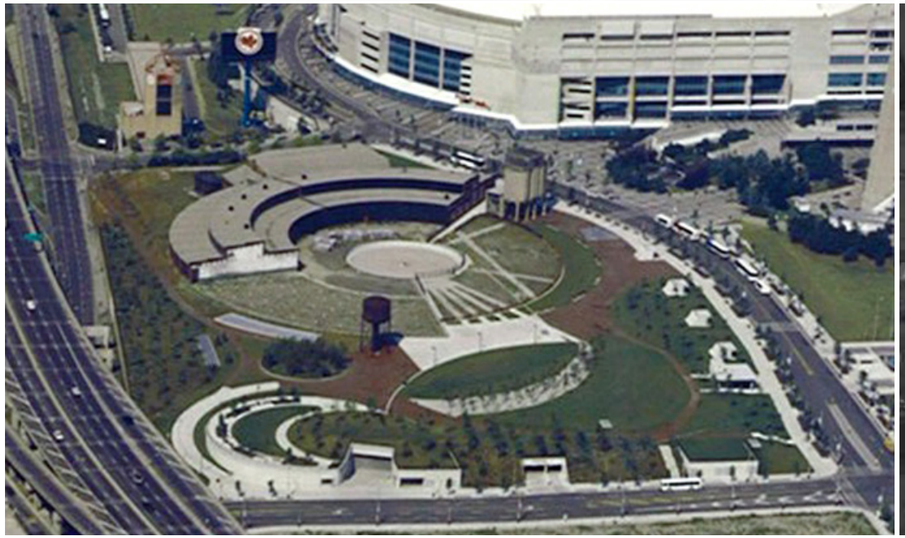
THE MTCC SOUTH BUILDING STARTS TO TAKE SHAPE.

THE MTCC ROOF IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AS THE LAST PORTIONS OF THE PARKING STRUCTURE ARE FINISHED.

1996



PARKING STRUCTURE ENTRY



ROUNDHOUSE PARK (ORIGINALLY DESIGNED BY LANDPLAN) IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION ON THE MTCC ROOF, THE WATER TOWER HAS BEEN MOVED BACK AND THE PARKING STRUCTURE IS ALMOST COMPLETE.

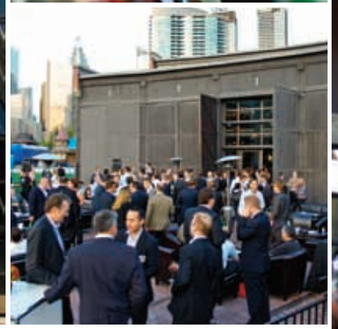
REASSEMBLY OF BAYS 1—10 (HOTSON BAKKER ARCHITECTS) THE TIMBER STRUCTURE WAS ERECTED AND A NEW WOOD ROOF DECK WAS INSTALLED. THE BRICK WALLS WERE RE-ASSEMBLED AND THE NEW, REPLICATED WOOD WINDOWS WITH STORM SASH WERE INSTALLED.

REASSEMBLY OF BAYS 1—10, THE INTERIOR WAS COMPLETED WITH A NEW, MILL DECK ROOF AND CONCRETE SLAB FLOOR. DAMAGED ENGINE DOORS WERE REHABILITATED OR REPLICATED AS REQUIRED. THE EXTERIOR OF BAYS 11-32 WAS RESTORED AS WELL.

1997

THE REASSEMBLED AND RESTORED RH WAS UNOCCUPIED UNTIL STEAM WHISTLE BREWERY LEASED BAYS 1-11 FROM THE CITY IN 1999.

1999



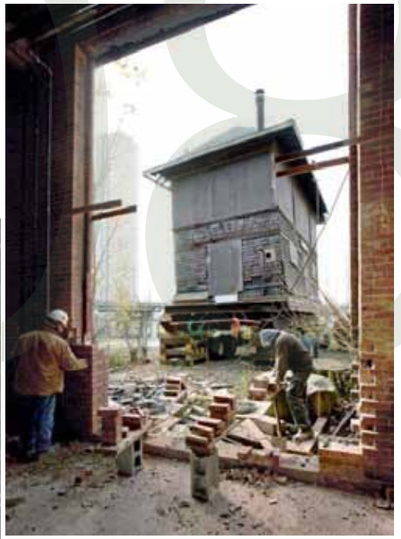
STEAM WHISTLE LEASED BAY 1–10 IN 1999 AND BEGAN THE PRODUCTION OF BEER AND HOSTING EVENTS IN THEIR ‘GREAT ROOM’.

2004 – THE EVOLVING URBAN CONTEXT

A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE CITY, THE STATE BUILDING GROUP AND LEON'S FURNITURE RESULTED IN THE REMAINING INTERIOR, 60,000 SF OF THE RH BEING PLANNED TO BE REHABILITATED, RESTORED AND REUSED.

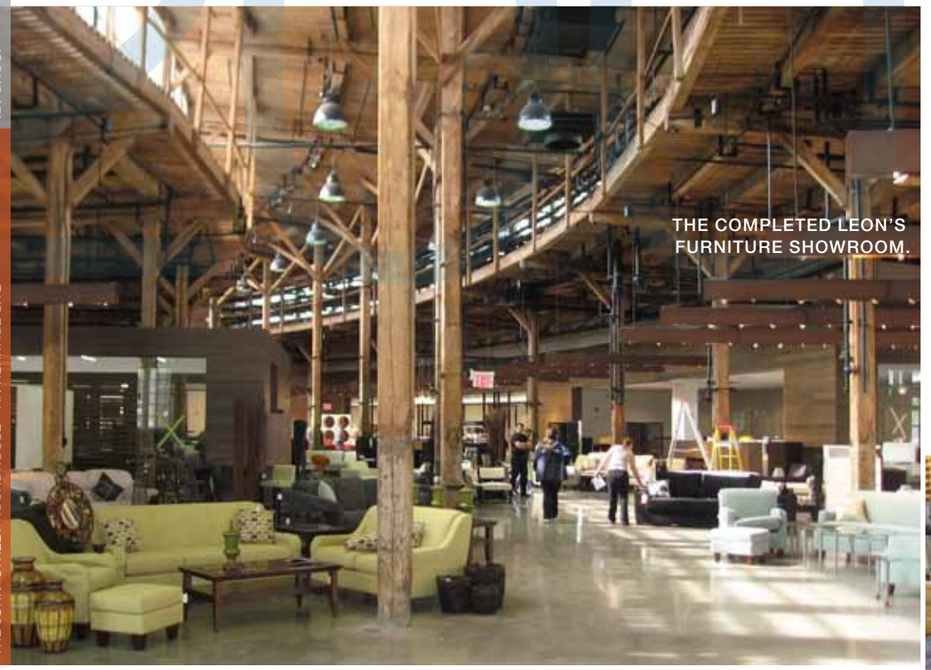
THE ARTIFACTS, TURNTABLE TRUSS AND STORED BUILDINGS, LIKE THIS ONE – CABIN D – WERE MOVED OUT OF THE RH SO THAT THE INTERIOR REHABILITATION WORK COULD BEGIN.

THE CLERESTORY CATWALK WAS RESTORED AND USED TO CARRY CONDUIT AND DUCTWORK TO SERVICE THE ENTIRE 60,000 SQ.FT. OF THE NEW LEON'S.



CONCRETE BLOCK PARTITIONS WERE REMOVED TO RESTORE THE ORIGINAL, CONTIGUOUS INTERIOR SPACE.

2009



THE COMPLETED LEON'S FURNITURE SHOWROOM.

THE OPEN, RESTORED ENGINE DOORS AND THE INTERIOR GLASS WALL GIVE LIGHT TO THE INTERIOR, CONSERVE ENERGY AND PROVIDE VIEWS TO THE CITY SKYLINE. THE TURNTABLE COURTYARD HAS 32 SETS OF RADIAL TRACKS TO DISPLAY ROLLING STOCK.

THE OPENING CEREMONY - MAYOR DAVID MILLER CALLED THE ROUNDHOUSE, " ONE OF THE BEST CANADIAN EXAMPLES OF AN ADAPTIVE RE-USE OF AN HISTORICAL BUILDING." AND COUNCILOR VAUGHAN CALLED THE REVITALIZED RH A "TERRIFIC GIFT TO THE CITY"

2010

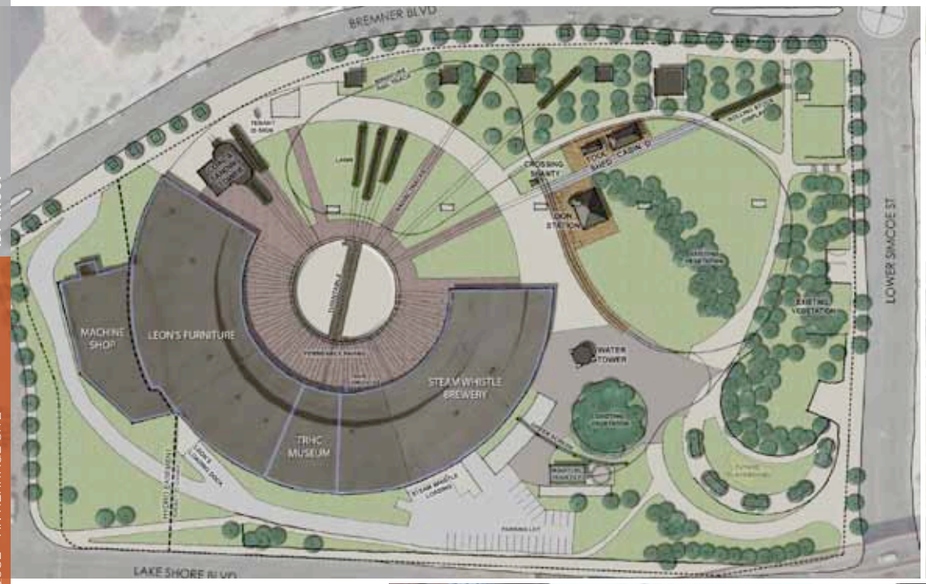
THE TORONTO RAIL HERITAGE CENTRE MINATURE STEAM TRAIN

THE DON STATION BEING MOVED TO ITS PERMANENT LOCATION IN ROUNDHOUSE PARK, WHERE IT WAS COMPLETELY RESTORED.

THE RESTORED CABIN D.

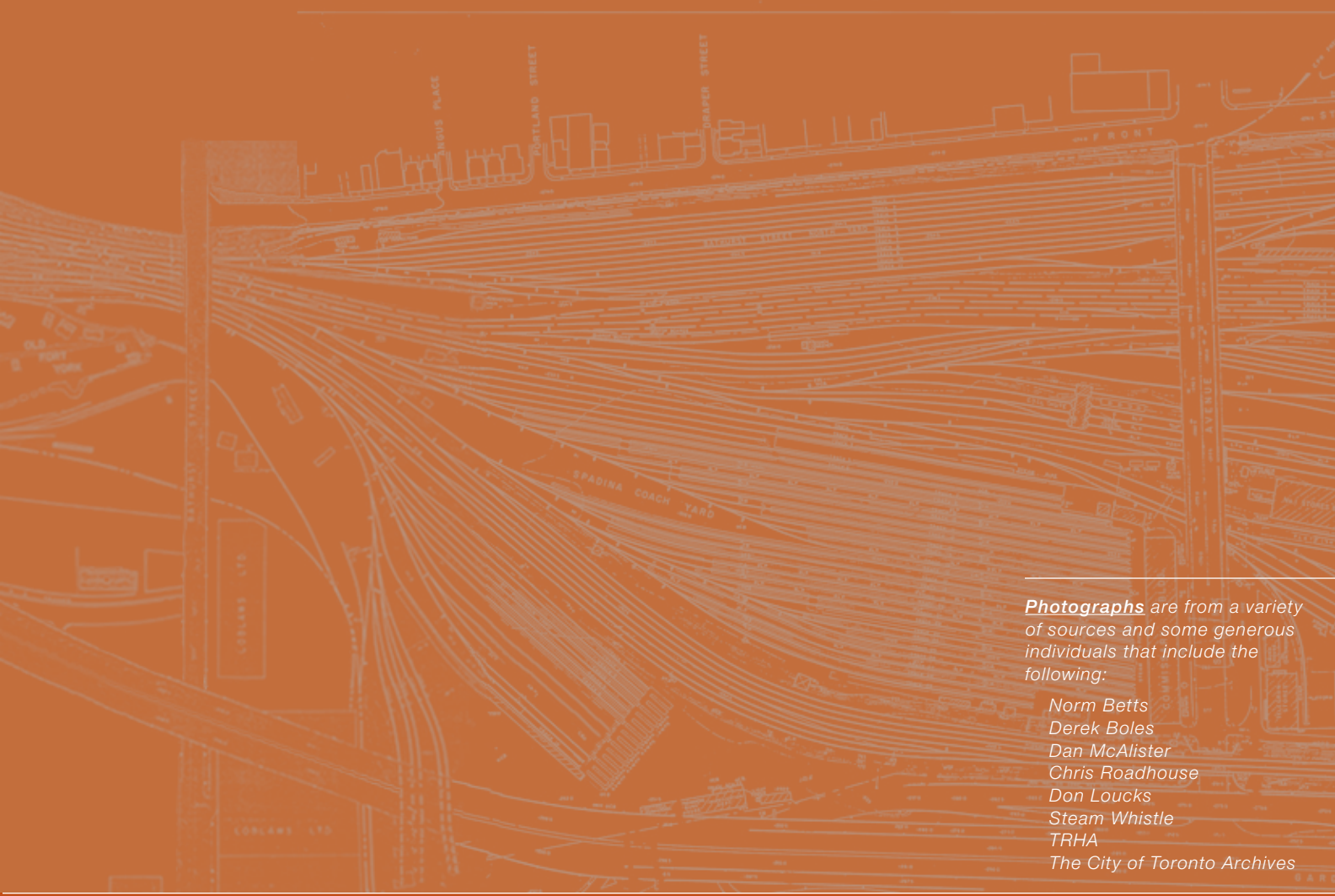
THE FOUR RESTORED RAILWAY BUILDINGS AS PART OF THE MUSEUM INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM WITHIN THE RH PARK.

2013



FUTURE PROJECT PHASES – HIGH LINE PLAZA

THE FINAL PHASE (PHASE 2) OF THE ROUNDHOUSE PARK LANDSCAPE SEES A NEARBY HYDRO TRANSFORMER STATION RELOCATED BENEATH THE NEW HIGH LINE PLAZA AND RAIL GARDEN PUBLIC GREENSPACE. THE FORMER MACHINE SHOP HAS BEEN CAREFULLY DISMANTLED TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEW TORONTO HYDRO COPELAND STATION, UNDERNEATH AND WILL BE RESTORED TO A BETTER STATE AS PART OF THIS PHASE.



Photographs *are from a variety of sources and some generous individuals that include the following:*

Norm Betts
Derek Boles
Dan McAlister
Chris Roadhouse
Don Loucks
Steam Whistle
TRHA
The City of Toronto Archives

Awards

2014 CSLA
(The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects)
National Citation award – Design

2011 Heritage Toronto Award of Excellence, John Street Roundhouse and Ancillary Buildings and Roundhouse Park – Adaptive Re-use

2010 CUI
(Canadian Urban Institute) Brownie awards
Category 4 – Excellence in Project Development, Building Scale

2009 CAHP
(Canadian Association of Heritage Professionals) awards –
Adaptive Reuse of a Heritage Building Award